

*Biography of*

# PARMANAND PRASAD

A CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE

SHARAT KUMAR



**Dr Parmanand Prasad (1921-67)**

Biography  
of  
**Parmanand Prasad**

*“Eminent Economist and Freedom Fighter”*

**A Centennial Tribute**

Sharat Kumar

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# FOREWORD

**I**t gives me great satisfaction that the commemorative volume in the memory of our father Dr Parmanand Prasad, born in January 1921, is being brought out on his Birth Centenary Year, 2021. He passed away at an early age. As this initiative could be taken up after five decades of his demise in 1967, it has indeed been an uphill task to recollect from the past the important incidents of his life.

The section on ‘Reminiscences’ in this book does bring to life those years gone by, and we are most grateful to the contributors. I may add here my own perception about his persona. As his eldest son, I know he was a multi-faceted person – an eminent economist, a freedom fighter, an ideal husband, a loving father, a friend and a guide to one and all. I also had the good fortune of being taught by him when I was doing my B.A. (Honours) in Economics. He introduced to me what we all know as ‘Keynesian Economics’.

He was opposed to the devaluation of Indian rupee in 1966 as he argued this would increase the government expenditure by 57 per cent just on account of defence import. Moreover, in view of the government’s earlier commitment for no ‘deficit financing’ during the Fourth Five Year Plan, this decision amounted to reduced public expenditure. As he observed, large scale public expenditure when judiciously spent ushers economic development and bring about cultural transformation in the country.

His D.Litt. thesis titled ‘Some Economic Problems of Public Enterprises in India’ is a pioneering work and continues to be a widely referred book. The Cambridge University Press made it available online in the year 2016. The private corporate sector is also important and it has been continuously evolving, although all private companies

are not alike. The financial crisis of 2008-09 was, however, a grim reminder of the need for regulatory reforms in the functioning of the private corporate sector. These reforms when implemented would make the private corporate sector look like the public sector enterprises.

His role as a freedom fighter continues to be inspirational. He was also closely associated with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and contributed to the economic writings of his later works. He also wrote numerous articles for the different economic journals, both at Patna and in New Delhi. In his short span of life, he was on several committees as a Member, such as, the Agrarian Reforms Committee and the Economic Advisory Committee of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee, the Research Programme Committee of the Planning Commission and the Jute Wage Board of the Government of India.

Although he left us very early, his blessings have always been there and have helped us all in the family to come up in life. This commemorative volume is an expression of our respects for him. This book, in great measure, is the result of the efforts made by his youngest son Sharat. Needless to say, his efforts have had to be supplemented by others. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of all the members of the Editorial Board and the cooperation of all the members of the extended family in bringing out this book.

Bangalore

Shri Harsh

# PREFACE

This book is a tribute to the memory of Parmanand Prasad (1921-67) who was an eminent economist and had been a freedom fighter in his youth. As his younger brother I can also vouch for the fact that he was very popular in our large joint family. He exemplified empathy for fellow human beings and that was the secret of his popularity with others. That he was a humanist, first and foremost, endures through most of the chapters of this book.

The decision to bring out this centennial volume has indeed been a challenge. Best possible efforts were, nevertheless, made to collect information on his life. Broadly, the method adopted has been that of a researcher. The danger of such an approach is that it may be piecemeal and disjoint. We would have wished to hear his story directly from him, but that was not to be so. 'Letter addressed to Niece' in the chapter on "Select Letters" does provide a glimpse of the person that he was in his own words.

The little we know of him, he would certainly have produced an all together different product. Perhaps, he would not have agreed for this as he was more interested in others than himself! I believe the Reader will bear these limitations in his mind while going through this book. We hope, nevertheless, that this biography will capture the minds of the people who will read it. In the absence of the Autobiography, moreover, we have taken the help of numerous photographs to tell the story of his life.

In the course of collecting information on his life, we came across the idiosyncrasies of the place he grew up, the times he lived in, the different places he visited and about his contemporaries - both his elders and people younger to him. We have not wavered from shedding light on them as well in this biography.

This Coffee Table Book has been a collaborative effort. Everyone in the extended family came forward to contribute for the successful completion of this long pending project. Besides the painstaking effort of Sharat, I may mention the members of the Editorial Board, Priyaranjan and Ira for 'Remnicences', family members including the extended family namely Rajiv Prasad (my grandson), Ashish and Maneesh (my nephews), Ayush and Akash (my grandsons), Chaitali (my daughter-in-law), Antriksh (my grandson) and Ravinandan Sahay Sinha (my nephew). Errors and shortcomings that remain are, however, those of the Editorial Board, alone.

I take this opportunity to thank Mohani Printing Solution, Delhi NCR for printing the book in a short period of time despite 'the near lockdown' arising from the COVID pandemic.

Ranchi

Wg Cdr R.C. Sinha (Retd.)  
Chairman  
Editorial Board

*Part I: The Life Story*



# CHILDHOOD

**H**ow must have been his childhood? This begs the question what his family was like he was born into, and what were his natural and social environment? “Parmanand’- meaning “ultimate bliss”- as he was fondly called by his elders was born to Bisheswar Prasad and his wife Saraswati Devi on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 1921. He had three elder siblings – two sisters and a brother who were older than him by more than ten years. His mother, however, passed away within one year of his birth, putting the whole family into a crisis. The responsibility of his upkeep fell on the ladies of the joint family besides his young sisters who were thirteen and fifteen years old. Soon after his father remarried and the child Parmanand was brought up largely by his mother Meetmaya Devi, a soft spoken and kind hearted woman.

His grandfather Munsii Ram Lal, was a Diwan in the services of the owner of a large estate/ a jagirdar, namely ‘the Sonbarsa Raj’. Munsii Ram Lal originally belonged to Nalanda-Rajgir in south Bihar. He decided to make this place his home after his marriage to Karo Devi whose family belonged to Hajipur near Sanhauli. She was given six bighas of land as dowry at the time of her marriage. This piece of land comes in the Khagaria Nagar Parishad. In 1864, Munsii Ram Lal bought some land in Sanhauli to build his homestead. He had two sons, Singheswar Prasad and Bisheswar Prasad. Together with his sons, he augmented his wealth and came to own around four hundred bighas of agricultural land .

They also maintained cattle - bullocks for ploughing the fields and cows and she-buffaloes for milk. The cattle was

mostly kept on their farmland away from the village home. During the rainy season, however, the cattle had to be brought home to the village because the farms would get submerged under water due to recurring floods caused by the river Kosi and its tributaries. It was always very scary for the small children of the family to see so many animals suddenly in the vicinity of their house. Moreover, since the family lived on the banks of the dead river Moyan, they utilised the wetland so created for transportation of grain from their farms to their house using their own boat.

**“Mankind  
owes to the  
Child the  
Best it  
has to Give”**

U. N. Declaration

Although floods were damaging to both lives and crops, the land was proverbially very fertile. They were, therefore, able to grow a variety of crops and vegetables on their farms. Maize, in particular, grew in plenty and they also grew paddy, wheat and sugarcane. In order to ensure that they sold their agricultural produce at remunerative prices, they had constructed a big storage (‘badaar’) where maize, wheat and rice were kept. Plenty of jaggery and curd were prepared at home. Bullock carts with vegetables, arriving home on a daily basis, was a common sight.





'Thakur Bari'  
the village Temple

The joint family was very God fearing and religious. While the earth went around the sun on its annual journey, they celebrated the Hindu festivals of Makar Sankranti, Holi and Diwali, which were associated with the coming of a new season and coincided with the harvests. Durga Puja was celebrated with austerity and they also celebrated Chhath Puja, the worship of Sun God. People in the family enjoyed the stories from the sacred

scriptures of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas. There was a village temple known as 'Thakur Bari', which was dedicated to the worship of Janaki-Ram. The more philosophically inclined, discussed the Bhagwat Gita and the Upanishads.

The fertile  
fields (Sanhauri)

## CHILDHOOD

Both Singheswar Prasad and Bisheswar Prasad were known for their integrity. Both the brothers recognised the value of education and encouraged their children to do well in their studies. Singheswar Prasad's eldest son, Parmeshwar Prasad went to Calcutta for his higher studies. He obtained a degree in law and began his practice at Munger. The most remarkable of all students in the joint family was Bisheswar Prasad's elder son Ranchor Prasad, who broke all records in the school and at University. It can only be conjectured that Ranchor Prasad had a great influence on young Parmanand besides the influence of his father, father's elder brother and grand father.

Another person who may have influenced him was his mother's brother (mama) who was a saintly person (sadhu) devoted to the service of mankind. Known as 'Naga Baba', he traveled from one village to another on his horse. Both the rich and the poor welcomed his very arrival in the village; he listened to their woes and rendered advice related to health and medicine. All the children were attracted to him as he was very affectionate and he blessed them all.

Many marriages in the family also took place during this period of his childhood. The daughters of both the brothers, Singheswar Prasad and Bisheswar Prasad, got married. His elder sister Mahamaya, however, became a widow soon after her marriage. As the couple did not have any child/son, she could not inherit her husband's share in the property under the prevailing law (The law was subsequently amended, known as the Sharda Act). She returned to her father's home where her father, Bisheswar Prasad rehabilitated her by providing a piece of cultivable land for her exclusive use.

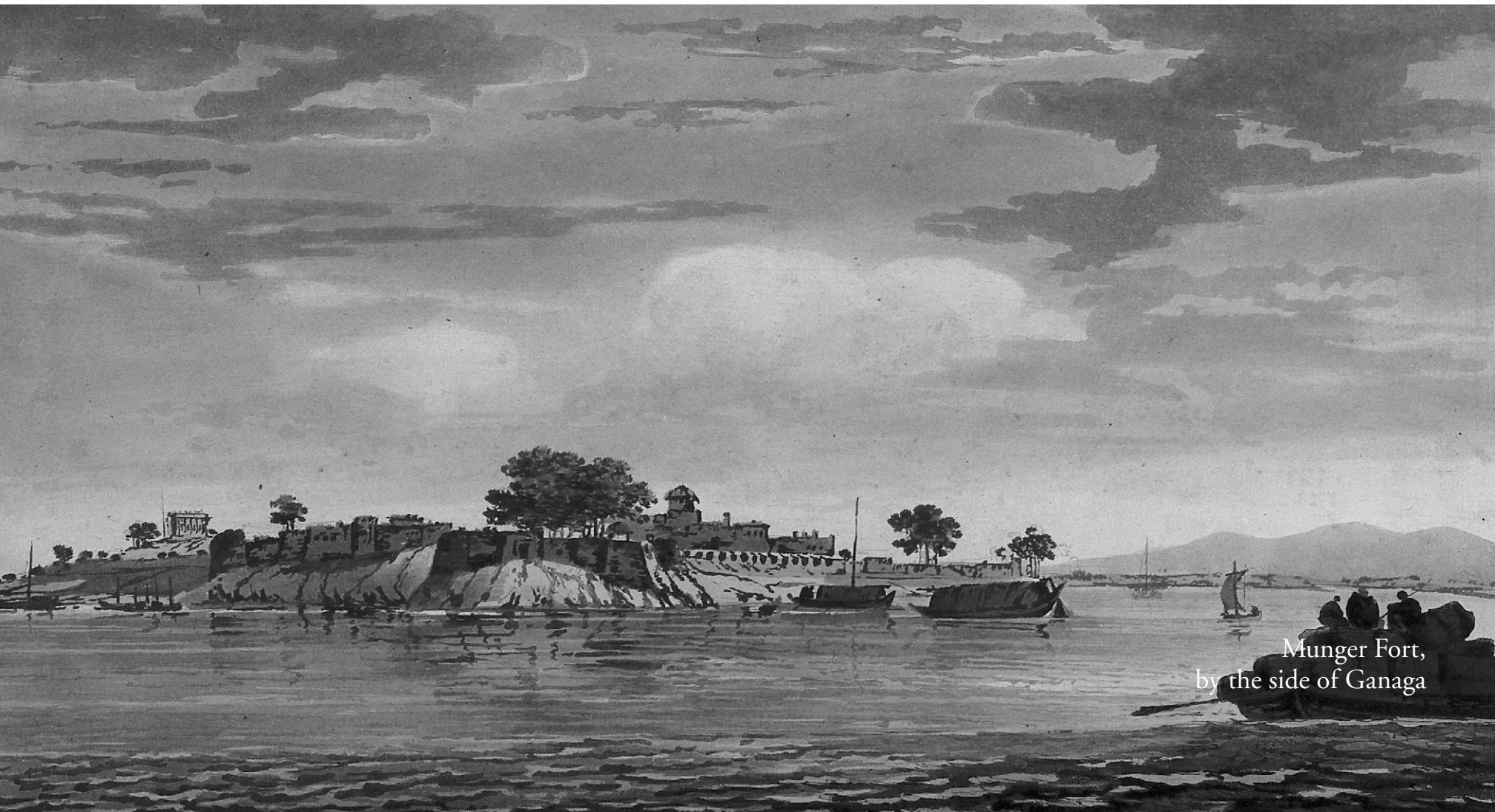
When Parmanand Prasad was of only thirteen years of age, the Bihar-Nepal Earthquake of 1934 occurred. The 8.0 earthquake is said to have completely destroyed the erstwhile Munger (including Khagaria) and

Muzaffarpur districts of Bihar, besides causing great devastation in Nepal. His aunt, Munderi Devi (Singheswar Prasad's wife) got killed in this earthquake. During this time his elder brother Ranchor Prasad was away in England appearing for his ICS exams. He was not told about this tragedy as that would have greatly upset him.

Parmanand Prasad's early schooling was in his village. Later his elder cousin, Parmeshwar Prasad got him admitted to Munger Zila School where he himself was practising law. Parmanand Prasad obtained his matriculation from there in 1937, at the young age of sixteen. He then took admission in J.J.College, Munger where he completed his Intermediate Course. After obtaining the requisite degree, he moved to Patna College, Patna University for graduation.



Munger Zila School

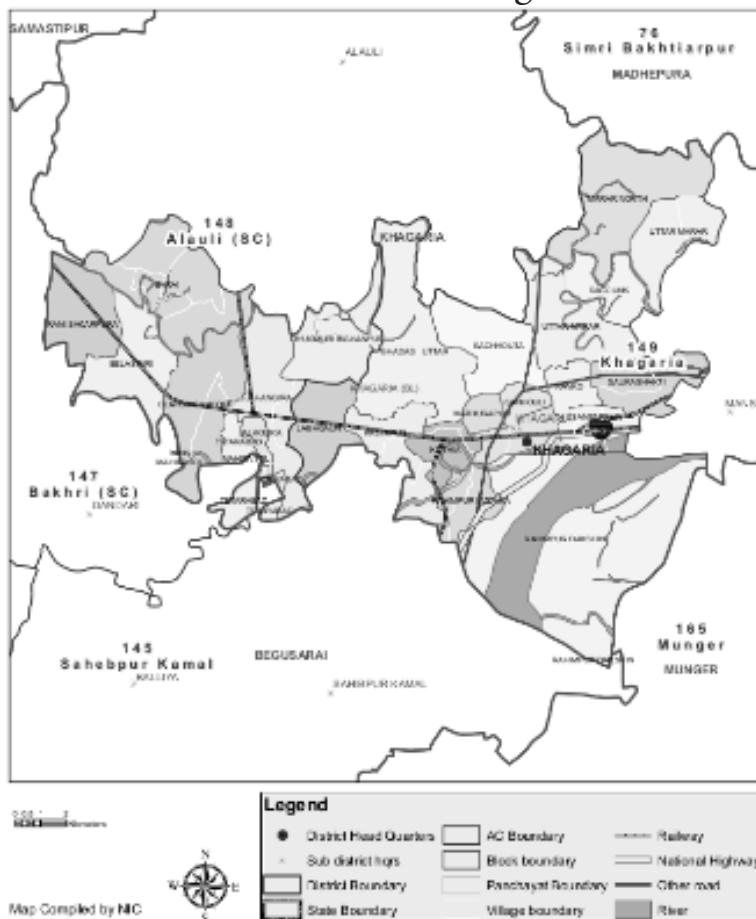


Munger Fort,  
by the side of Ganaga

# CHILDHOOD

Notes. 1. These agricultural lands were, however, spread over a large area. As of today, they are in the different revenue villages of Sanhaulti, Bachauta, Marar, Ranko (Khagaria Block ) and Hathwan, Cherakhera, Sarabjita, Alauli, Amousi, Dahma (Alauli Block ) in the Khagaria district.

State : Bihar  
Block Name : Khagaria



State : Bihar  
Block Name : Alauli



## THE VILLAGE

The place of his birth, Sanhauli, is a village in Bihar on the outskirts of Khagaria township. Moving from West to East, the river Ganga divides Bihar into two parts of north Bihar and south Bihar. Khagaria comes in the north Bihar. It was earlier a subdivision of the Munger district and is a separate district today. A rail and road bridge built recently, over the river Ganga, links Khagaria to the Munger township in the south Bihar. To its West lie the districts of Begusarai and Samastipur; to its East lie the districts of Madhepura and Katihar. Saharsa and Supaul districts lie to its north.

Etymologically, Khagaria is said to be made up of 'khag' meaning bird and 'aranya' meaning forest. Many wetlands in the district have been permanently lost due to encroachments as these water bodies have been converted into arable land. Sanhauli itself had a large wetland called 'Moyan'. It was spread over an area of seven square kilometres and linked the two major rivers of the Kosi and the Burhi Gandak. Construction of the railway embankments in Khagaria broke this linkage and changed the landscape of this region. Birds of different kinds can be seen even today here. The famous 'Kanwar lake', with the record sighting of around sixty migratory birds and more than hundred resident birds comes under the neighbouring district of Begusarai.

The village society constituted of the land owning cultivators and the rest, which included landless agricultural labourers (casual and attached), share-croppers, artisans, fishermen and shop keepers. Whereas the Brahmins, the Rajputs, the Kayasthas, the Koiris, the Kurmis were the land

owning cultivators, the scheduled caste people - mainly the Paswans - were share-croppers and agricultural labourers. The Rajputs were the single largest community in the village and had a dominating influence. It has always been a thickly populated village, and although they all lived in very close proximity there was a clear distinction between the quarters of the land owners and those of the landless.

Parmanand Prasad's family belonged to the Kayastha community who are known historically for their record keeping skills, as administrators and agriculturists – although they rarely tilled land with their own hands. They also ran village schools in Bihar prior to the advent of public education in the state. Parmanand Prasad's father was a well educated person conversant in Maithili, Persian and English. He was, therefore, a very respected person of the village and was later made a member of the Managing Committee of the Khagaria City High School.

**“Where  
there is love,  
there is life”**

**Mahatma Gandhi**





Ladies and children of the joint family, on the rooftop, with the newly married daughter-in-law (1958)

The courtyard (aangan) of the ancestral home in Sanhauili (1956).

In the Land Revenue Records during British India, the village was referred to as Mauja Sanhauili having 521 acres of land and coming under Zamindari Tauja No. 4958. In the year 1940, the zamindari right over this Mauja (village)/Sanhauili was auctioned by the Government as the erstwhile zamindar failed to pay his dues. The bid against the auction was won by the family in the name of Parmanand Prasad's

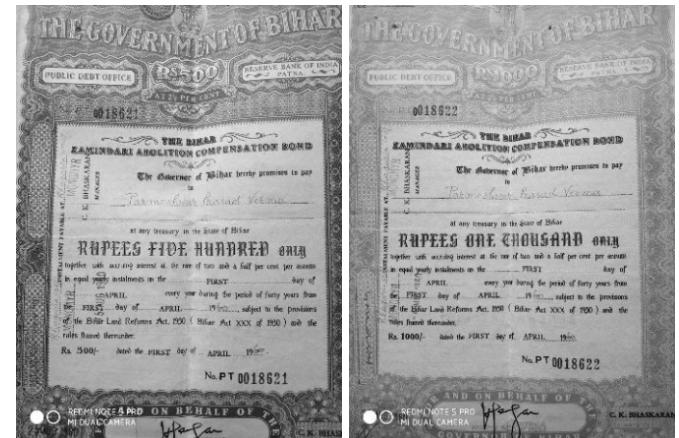
elder cousin Parmeshwar Prasad along with three other persons. When the zamindari system was abolished in Bihar after Independence, the zamindari right over Sanhauili village ceased to exist and the family's zamindari right over common property resources like the village pond (Pokhar) was all vested in the state in 1960.

## THE VILLAGE

Independence also saw the enactment of the Panchayat Raj Act (1947) in Bihar. As a result, direct election for the executive post of 'Mukhia' in the Sanhauli Gram Panchayat was held in 1952. His younger brother Suresh Prasad stood for the post of Mukhia and won the election. Under the Act, elections are to be held periodically after every five years. Elections to the Gram Panchayats were, however, not held in Bihar regularly. His younger brother, however, won the elections whenever these were held, primarily with the support of the landless agricultural labourers who perceived the family more kind and considerate than other landowners.

His younger brother was elected as the Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti as well on several occasions, which is the next tier of governance after the Gram Panchayat. In this way, his brother continued to hold these positions for almost 40 years. The family continued to enjoy the respect in the village on account of this public office. In contrast to collection of revenue from 'the ryots' (farmers) by the zamindars, 'the mukhiya' was responsible solely for

development of the village. However, since sufficient administrative powers were not dovetailed to the elected functionaries under the Panchayati Raj, very little development could be ushered in the villages.



Bonds as compensation for abolition of Zamindari Rights



Huts of the landless agricultural labourers..

# FREEDOM STRUGGLE

‘Hum to ghar se nikle hi the, bandh kar sar pe kafan,  
Jaan hatheli par liye, lo barh chale hain ye qaadam,  
Zindagi to apni mehman, maut ki mahfil main hai,  
Sarfarooshi ki tamanna, ab hamaare dil main hai’.

*Ram Prasad ‘Bismil’*

**T**he colonial exploitation of India by the British, in terms of both men and material, was too obvious to need an explanation. The country was simmering with discontent and the Congress Party under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was spearheading the protest against the imperialist rule in a non-violent manner. By the time he completed his Matriculation, Parmanand Prasad joined the Congress Party in 1937. His cousin, Parmeshwar Prasad had been earlier arrested while participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 launched by Mahatma Gandhi.

On completion of his Intermediate Degree at Munger, Parmanand Prasad took his admission in B.A. (Honours-Economics) in Patna College, Patna University in 1939. World War II, amongst the imperialist countries, was

looming on the horizon. The British Government in India soon declared war against the Axis Powers, without consulting the Indians and the Congress Party. In protest, all the Congress Ministries in the different Provinces resigned. The mood of the confrontation with the Government was very much in the air, and it is difficult to

imagine that the student community would have remained unaffected by these developments.

**“We left our homes fearless of death,  
Is life not a mere guest, in this mortal world?  
It is revolution- freedom for the country  
-that we cherish in this life.”**



Patna College

Patna University, in turn, was one of the prestigious universities of the country. Its jurisdiction extended to colleges in Orissa and to the Kingdom of Nepal besides Bihar. The Department of Economics had luminaries such as Professor Gyanchand and Professor Gorakh Prasad Sinha. We cannot say anything about the content of their teachings, but the speeches of Dadabhai Naoroji and Rameh Chandra Dutt regarding colonial exploitation must have been common knowledge with the graduate students. It is in this backdrop that we notice Parmanand Prasad corresponding with Lala Hardyal, one of the prominent Marxist leaders of the Ghadar Movement.

We do not know about his other activities in Patna University, but it was taken cognizance of by the British Government. He was, therefore, arrested for the first time in June 1940, when he must have been doing his second year of his B.A.(Honours) course. He was kept in the Munger jail for eight days and then released on bail. The case against him was, however, started by the Government under Section 12 (i) I. P. C and under Sections 34

and 39 of the Defence of India Rules.

The Lower Court (Rai Sahab J. P. Mukherjee) convicted him for nine months of rigorous imprisonment under Section 120 (B) of I.P.C. and nine months of rigorous imprisonment under different sections of the Defence of India Rules. On approaching the higher Court, the appeal was preferred/admitted. But the higher Court upheld the judgement of the Lower Court. Moreover, while the hearing of the cases was going on in the Judges' Court, Munger, he was arrested on January 26, 1941 and detained under Section 26 (i) of the Defence of India Rules. He was taken to Hazaribagh and kept as a detainee for more than five months in the Detainees Ward of the Hazaribagh Central Jail. Later, on a representation to be treated as a political prisoner, he was transferred to the Ward of the Political Prisoners and kept there for the next four months.

## FREEDOM STRUGGLE

As a result of this detention, he missed his classes. His elder brother, Ranchor Prasad who was a topper of the University and had joined the Government on his return from England was continuously corresponding with him and sending him books. As he assures him in one of his letters dated May 18, 1941, 'If you build character and ability, as I am sure you will, you will do better in the long run than other young men who are having a cozy time outside' (may see Select Letters). Having spent the period of detention for five months as a detainee and another four months as a political prisoner, he was released on November 7, 1941.

On November 8, 1941, however, the Government issued yet another Order interning him at Chaibasa in implementation of the judgement of the Lower Court. This Order was subsequently cancelled and another Order was served on November 21, 1941 directing him to go to Bhagalpur. Briefly, the Order signed by the Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar reads as follows: 'Whereas the Governor of Bihar is satisfied with respect to the person known as Parmanand Prasad son of Bisheswar Prasad that with a view to preventing him from acting in a manner prejudicial to the efficient prosecution of the war, to the Defence of British India or the public order.....he shall observe the following conditions...'.

He was earlier allowed to take his B.A. exams from inside the Hazaribagh Jail as a private student along with his friend, Surendra Missir. Both of them were, however, denied by the University to appear for the Honours exams as they did not attend the classes. After his involvement in the 'Quit India Movement', he joined the M.A classes and obtained his M.A. degree from Patna University in November 1944.

People like Jayaprakah Narayan were also arrested under similar Orders. On February 6, 1942, the Orders were modified still further. He was allowed to go to Patna in July 1942, but he had to report at the Police Station in person daily between 5.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M.

Meanwhile, Mahatma Gandhi launched the 'Quit India Movement'. On August 8, 1942, Mahatma Gandhi gave the call for the 'Quit India Movement' as a mass protest on non-violent lines, asking the British for 'an orderly withdrawal from India'.

As Mahatma Gandhi apprehended his own arrest and of the other top leaders of the Congress Party by the Government, he said to the people, 'Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide'. Parmanand Prasad escaped the eyes of the Police and joined 'the Quit India Movement', violating the Internment Orders. During this period, he was in hiding in Patna with senior Congress leaders like Jagat Narayan Lal, Singheswar Prasad and Sarangdhar Sinha. They asked him to go to his village home to take forward the agitation.

There he began to work together with the well known political activist Namdhari Singh. They succeeded in making the symbols of government, namely, the police station, the railways and the post and telegraph dysfunctional in their locality. As noted in his diary, 'The nature of my work was such that I had ultimately to abscond for full four months'.

Writing on this mass movement, his elder brother Ranchor Prasad later wrote in his memoirs 'The Quit India Movement launched by the Congress in August 1942 hit Bihar like a tornado. There was almost a complete paralysis of the administration for some time, more especially in the far flung rural areas...As the 1942 movement gathered rapid momentum, the Sub-Inspectors and Constables hurriedly vacated the Police stations of which they were in charge and withdrew to their Sub-divisional headquarters other than a few Treasury Guards. The Sub-divisional Officers were themselves very panicky and felt obliged to burn the currency notes kept in the Government Treasury after disbursing salaries to the Government staff' (Points of View, Ranchor Prasad Commemorative Committee, Patna, 2000, pp. 520).

After the frenzy of the movement had calmed down, he surfaced again and went to Patna to resume his studies. As he observes in his diary, 'The Government, however, did not trouble after this'. World War II (1939-45) was still raging and as the Allied Powers had the support of the Communists, the perception of the British Intelligence seems to have undergone a change, and they did not bother to go after him.



Hazaribagh Central Jail

# MARRIAGE

**P**armanand Prasad got married to Shyam Mohani Devi in the year 1944. She was daughter of Girish Nandan Sahay, a well known lawyer of Patna High Court<sup>1</sup>. The proposal of the marriage was received by his elder cousin Parmeshwar Prasad from the father of the bride, both of whom were Advocates. The marriage was finalised after his elder brother's wife, Sharda Devi gave her consent and blessings for the marriage.

Girish Nandan Sahay lived in a joint family with his elder brother and his younger brother.

They were all lawyers by profession. While he himself practised at the High Court, his two brothers practised in the Civil Court, Patna. They had three sisters who were all married<sup>2</sup>. Their house at B. M. Das Road was the highest building on that street. It had a temple on the terrace of the second floor. While his elder brother offered the prayers (Puja) in the morning, he himself offered his prayers in the evening. The more conspicuous portraits, amongst others, in the temple were those of Ramkrishna Paramhansa, his wife and of

Goddess Kali.

As true for the Rig Veda, Ramkrishna Paramhansa preached unity of all religions. He is, moreover, claimed to have observed: 'When I think of the Supreme Being as inactive – neither creating, nor preserving, nor

destroying – I call Him Brahman or Purusha, the Impersonal God. When I think of Him as active – creating, preserving and destroying – I call Him Sakti or Maya or Prakriti, the Personal God. But the distinction between them does not mean a difference. The Personal and Impersonal are something like milk and its whiteness.....'. (Sri

**'That which exists is One,  
sages call it by  
various Names'  
(‘Ekam Sat,  
Vipra Bahudha Vadanti’)**

Rig Veda

Ramakrishna The Great Master by Swami Sardanand et al, Ramakrishna Math, Chennai)



Marriage photograph



Father-in-law's House

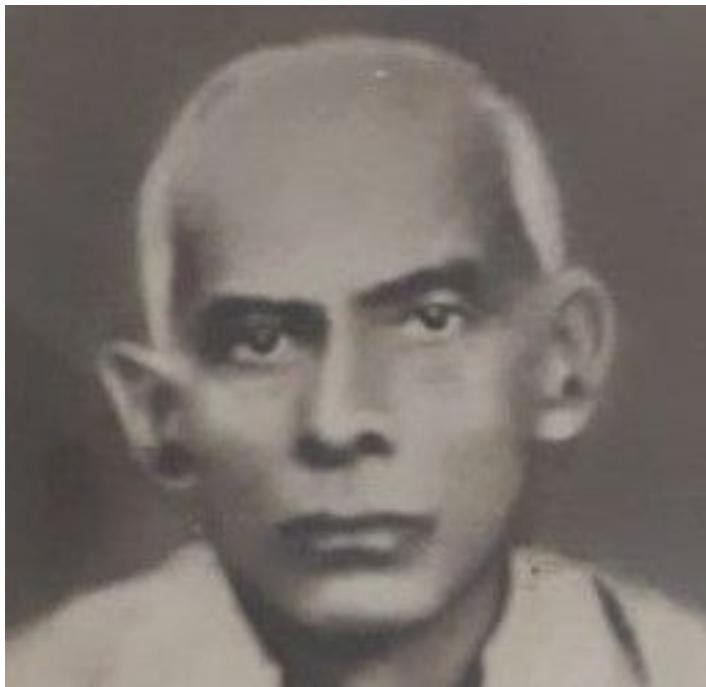
## MARRIAGE

**G**irish Nandan Sahay was a spiritually inclined person and liked the company of saints. He was a disciple of a sufi saint who held the Gaddi of Kambal Shah at Muzaffarpur. The saint was earlier a lawyer known as Ramchandra Prasad. The 'sufis' are unorthodox Muslim saints who have a deep understanding of the Vedantic philosophy<sup>3</sup>. The Sufi movement, moreover, provided a common platform to both the Hindus and the Muslims, especially to those who had a craving for spirituality.

The joint family was full of youngsters: three children of Girish Nandan Sahay and his wife Jaya Devi, four children of his elder brother Hari Nandan Sahay Sinha and his wife Sumitra Devi and four children of his younger brother Nand Kishore Sahay Sinha and his wife Radha Devi. Parmanand Prasad's bride Shyam Mohini, was the eldest of all the children in the joint family and Didi (an elder sister) to all of them. This put Parmanand Prasad in a unique position in this family.

All his young brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law were studying. As Parmanand Prasad was teaching at the University, they looked up to him for guidance. Moreover, since he had been a freedom fighter, he was a much admired person both in the joint family and the extended family. They all addressed him as 'Mehman', which meant son-in-law. As time passed by, his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law grew up and got married<sup>4</sup>.

His own family expanded over the years and the couple was blessed with one daughter and four sons. These children witnessed a sea of love and affection whenever they visited the house of their maternal grandparents. Girish Nandan Sahay owned a horse driven palanquin for going to the High Court and back home in Patna. When he bought a new Desoto Car later on, he gifted his horse-driven carriage and their much loved horse Moti, to the family of Parmanand Prasad in his village. He, however, passed away in June 1957 and his wife passed away in October 1960.



**Girish Nandan Sahay Sinha**



**Jaya Devi**

## MARRIAGE

The new host to these children now were their maternal uncle Ram Nandan Sahay Sinha (known also as Nunu Babu—a nickname given to him by his mother) and his wife, Sudha Sinha. Together they won the hearts of not only these children, but of their cousins, uncles and aunts. Parmanand Prasad was himself very fond of both of them and recognising the great skill of his sister-in-law in cookery would demand from her to pack for him ‘pappad’, ‘tilauri’ and ‘achar’ made by her.

On his part, he entertained the family of his in-laws in Patna by taking them on a boat ride for picnic across the Ganga and at times to some good movies. Parmanand Prasad was very fond of narrating one incident in the Netherlands where he had gone for his D. Litt. degree. He was once faced with a piquant situation when the women of his guide’s family expressed their desire to see the photograph of his wife. Realising that his wife was no stunning beauty, he replaced his wife’s photograph by the photograph of the prettiest of his wife’s sisters; on which the response of the ladies was ‘WoW’.

Most members of the extended family lived in the same vicinity. Lakshami Narayan Prasad (nick name ‘Nanhe’) and Murli Manohar Prasad (nick name ‘Munna’) were the two sons of Rambasini Devi and hence brothers-in-law of Parmanand Prasad. They had made Patna their home as it provided a greater job opportunity. R.K.P. Bariyal was yet another brother-in-law who lived nearby and worked in the administration branch of Patna University; the University being next door to their house. Interestingly, all these brothers-in-law were younger to Parmanand Prasad’s wife and they all showed their regards to them.

When Parmanand Prasad moved to Ranchi in 1962 from

New Delhi, it was his father-in-law’s youngest sister Chandrakali Devi’s family who was there. The couple had four sons namely Krishna Kant Varma, Dr Radha Kant Varma, Rama Kant Varma and Mohan Kant Varma and six daughters namely Kusum, Shail, Saroj, Beena, Munni and Rita. All the sons were highly qualified and did very well in their career and lives. So were the daughters who did well in their education and got married into very good families. They were all amazingly loving and affectionate to the children of Parmanand Prasad and his wife.

Parmanand Prasad bought his car in 1965. Until then, it was this family who took the family in their vintage car for picnics to the various waterfalls near Ranchi. Both the families, moreover, visited each other’s houses on Holi, Dussehra, Chhath and Diwali. Parmanand Prasad and his wife, furthermore, attended almost all the marriages of these young relatives and showered great affection to them throughout their life and were equally respected by them.

## MARRIAGE

### Kamal Mama

Whenever Parmanand Prasad visited his in-laws place at B.M. Das Road with his family, one of his brothers-in-law Kamal Sharan Jamuar made it a point to call on them. Although quite advanced in age, he had remained a bachelor. He was, however, very fond of children. He used to be clad in a white dhoti and a full shirt, and wore a Bandi (half coat). As he used to limp, it was quite an ordeal for him to climb up the stairs to meet Parmanand Prasad and his family members. But his enthusiasm was such that he would not mind it. He would further insist on taking the youngest of his nephews who was five/six years of age for buying toffees and chocolates. As the child observed his father not objecting to this request, he would accompany his uncle for the purchase. Kamal mama would make him sit on the crossbar of his bicycle along with himself, and despite his physical limitations almost race to the nearest shop selling those sweets. This would happen umpteen times on their visit to their maternal grandfather's place and everyone enjoyed the sweets. Since Kamal mama was a hospital compounder by profession, his services were required when the children fell sick. In this role of giving injections, however, he was a much feared person! Fortunately, as long as Parmanand Prasad stayed in Patna, it never happened that his youngest nephew needed to be given an injection. At the age of fifty, moreover, Kamal mama got married and had his own children: Pankaj and Neeraj.

#### NOTE

1. His colleague and close friend B. P. Sinha later became the Chief Justice of India.

2. The eldest sister was married at 'Barh' in Patna district and hence everyone knew her as 'Barhwali'. As her husband passed away soon after, she decided to return to her parents and later lived close by adjacent to her brothers' house. The second sister Rambasi Kunwar was married into a family at Samrigadh in Nawada district. The youngest sister Chandrakali Devi was married into a family at Kalapahar in Gaya district. She settled down in Ranchi where her husband Uma Kant Sahai was posted.

3. 'The union of the human soul with God through love and devotion was the essence of the teachings of the Sufi saints.....The Sufis did not attach importance to namaz, hajj and celibacy.....The method of their realizing God was renunciation of the World and the Worldly pleasures....They regarded singing and dancing as methods of inducing a state of ecstasy which brought one nearer to realization of God'. (www.historydiscussion.net) The Sufi philosophy comes very close to the Bhakti philosophy as the latter also emphasizes devotion to God. Both the Hindu epics Mahabharata and Ramayana preach 'Bhakti', that is, 'devotion to God' as a means to achieve salvation. While Arjun is the devotee of Lord Krishna in Mahabharat, 'Hanuman' is the symbol of devotion to Lord Rama in Ramayana.

4. His wife's younger sister Asha Devi got married to Kanan Bihari Lala of the well known Lala family of Nawagarh who were zamindars and coal mine owners in Dhanbad. His wife's younger brother Ram Nandan Sahay Sinha got married to Sudha Lala whose father was a district judge and later became Law Secretary in the Government of Bihar. His wife's cousin Ram Narayan Sinha got married to the sister of Kanan Bihari Lala. Amongst the sisters-in-law, Lakschami Sinha got married to Girish Kumar Sinha, a ground engineer in the Airline services, Sashiwala got married to Lakkchman Prasad who was employed in the Bihar Health Services. Parwati Sinha became a doctor and got married to Dr. Anjani Kumar Sinha. His other sisters-in-laws Sheela and Madhubala were very young during his lifetime. Amongst the other brother-in-laws, Shyam Nandan Sinha joined the Law Department of Government of Bihar, Hirendra Kishore Sinha joined HSL (now SAIL), Salendra Kumar Sinha took to teaching and Birendra Kumar Sinha joined the National Coal Development Corporation (NCDC) after obtaining a degree in Mining Engineering; he rose to become the Chairman of SECL, a subsidiary company of NCDC (Coal India Limited). Surendra Kumar Sinha and Basant Kumar Sinha took to business. The youngest of the brother-in-laws Anil Sinha suffered epilepsy and passed away at an early age.

## PATNA UNIVERSITY

**H**e joined as Lecturer and Head of the Department (HOD) of the Economics Department at Rajendra College, Chapra in December 1944, soon after his masters in Economics. He was there until July 1945. Subsequently, he moved to Ganesh Dutt College, Begusarai as Lecturer and HOD of the Department of Politics and Economics and was there until 1948. From Ganesh Dutt College in Begusarai, he went to B. N. College, Patna as a Senior Lecturer where he continued to work until 1958.

The Patna University allowed students to answer their

papers in the Hindi medium soon after Independence. Recognising the paucity of books in economics in Hindi, he authored several books during this period, that is, between 1947 and 1952. These were

recommended by the various universities of Bihar as basic text books in economics at different levels. During this time, he also wrote a book on 'Citizenship' (Nagarikta) in three volumes for students appearing in their final year examination in social

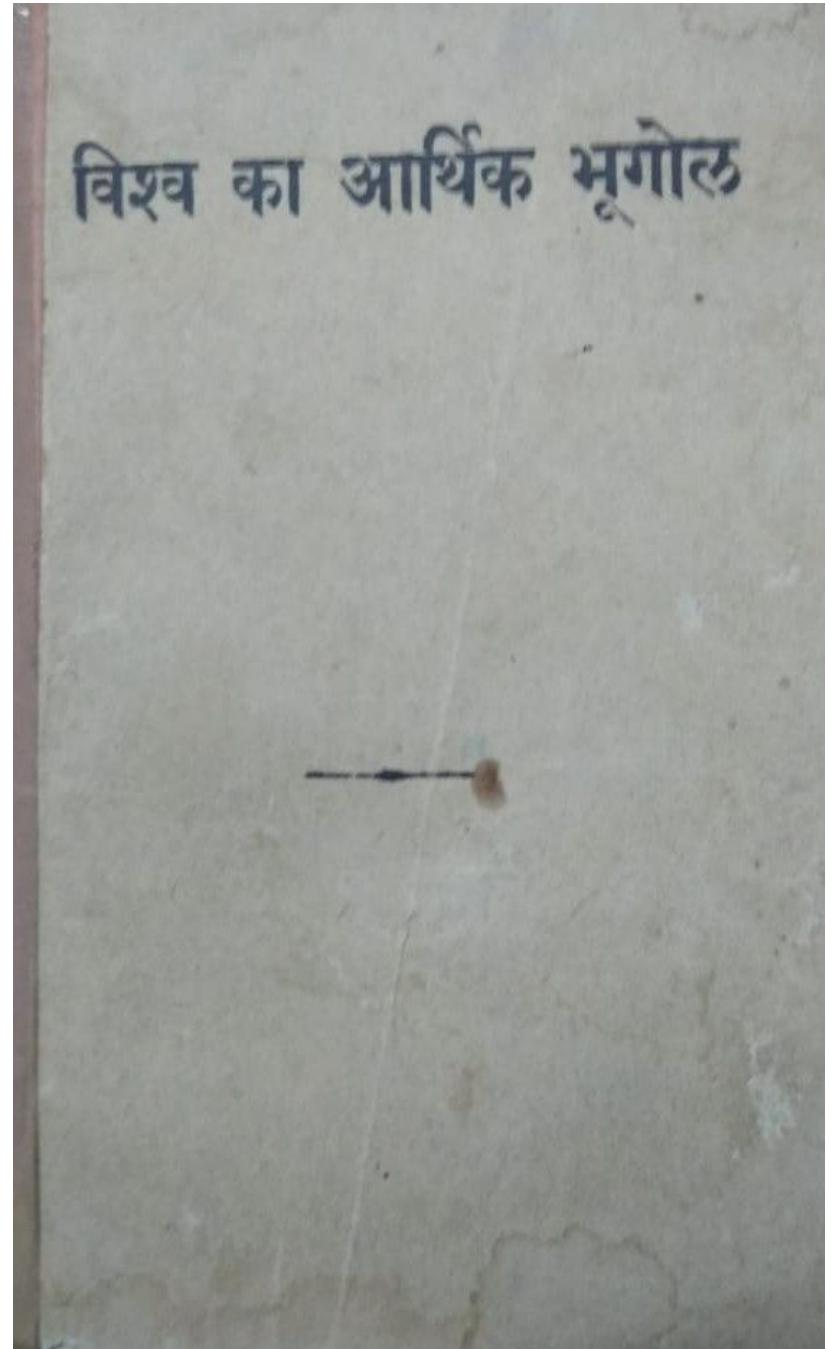
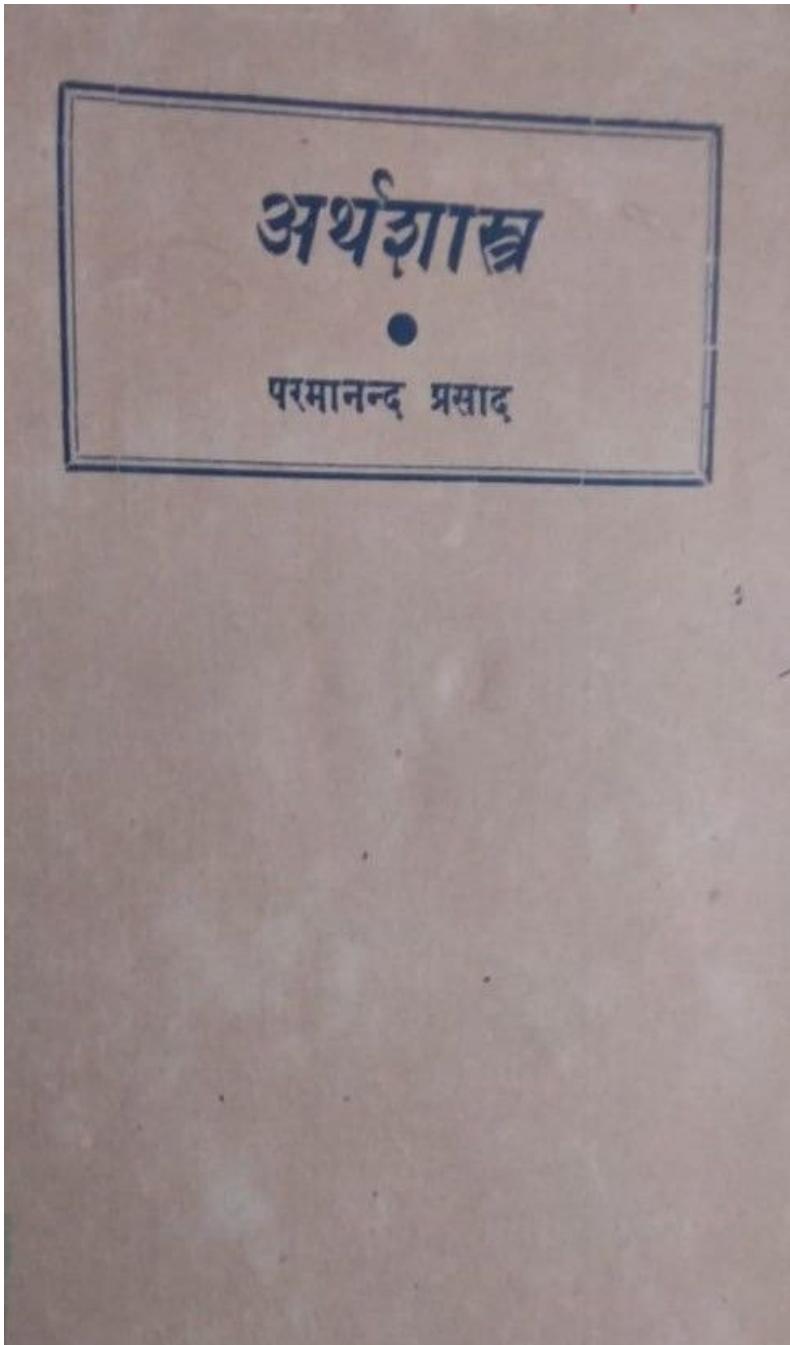
**“ ‘This is mine, and this is not’ -  
Thus do the small-minded see.  
The large-hearted have always thought  
The world itself is a family.”**

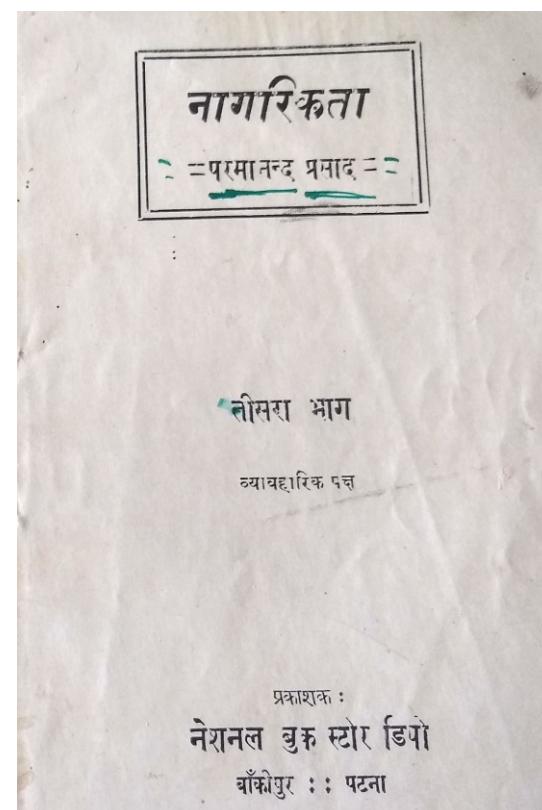
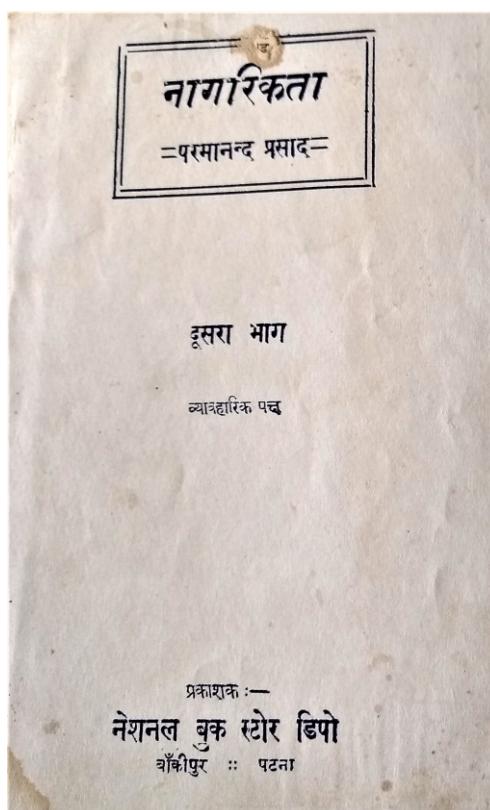
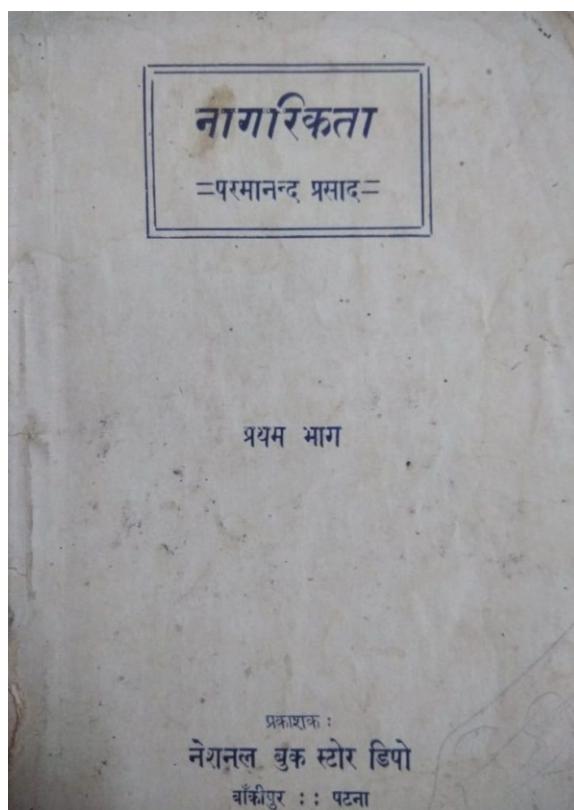
Hitopadesa

studies in the High School.



B. N. College (Patna)





The life of a political prisoner in Hazaribagh Central Jail had left an indelible mark on his world outlook. He came in contact with the leading lights of the country such as Jayprakash Narayan, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and Sri Krishna Sinha in the jail who played very important roles in their respective ways in the resurgence of independent India. They had a great impact on him.

With independence on August 15, 1947, the long cherished dream of freedom had been achieved. There remained, however, the task of reconstructing the country. Notwithstanding his teaching assignments, he was made a member of the Agrarian Reforms Sub-Committee of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee and a member of its Economic Advisory Committee.

He was also associated with the State Reorganization Committee along with Baldev Sahay who was a leading lawyer, Advocate General and President of the Bihar Association (1954/55). He wrote regularly for The Spark, which was an English weekly journal as well as for the two prominent dailies of Bihar namely The Indian Nation and The Searchlight. He was also the President of the Planning Forum of B.N. College, Patna University.



Parmanand Prasad with wife, two younger children and students at Marina Beach, Chennai (1954).

## Gifts from the Maharaja of Nepal

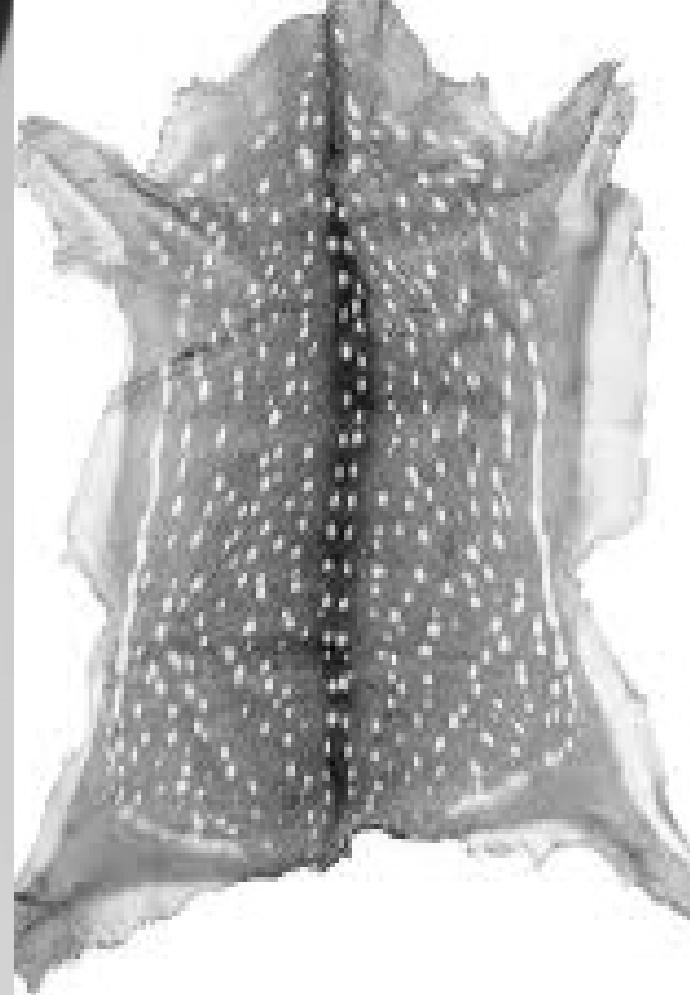
Since the colleges of Nepal, during this time, were affiliated to Patna University, he was sent to Kathmandu for conducting their exams and also perhaps to take some classes. He must have been there for a month or so, in the year 1954. The Maharaja of Nepal, Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah -- subsequently felicitated him at his palace presenting him a Nepali kukri knife, deer skin and antler of chital (spotted deer), a decorated vase and several silver coins. These gifts from the Maharaja continue to be the prized possessions of the family.

Writing about his tenure in Patna University, Dr B.P. Sinha, Professor Emeritus Patna University wrote, 'He was a live wire and soon became a loveable social figure among teachers and public men. He threw his weight in favour of the teaching faculty and was mainly instrumental in making the non-government B. N. College into a constituent college of Patna University' (Sinha, B.P., *Kayasthas in the making of Bihar*, Impression Publications, Patna, 2003, pp.188).

Some two decades later in 1975, his youngest son Sharat joined

Patna University. He had just then completed his masters in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, which was a new University and is a well renowned University today for its academic excellence. His selection was quite a surprise as he had been preferred over many of his seniors in M.A. (Economics). On joining the Patna University, he thus encountered many of his father's old colleagues who continued to work there. Parmanand Prasad was, however, no more as he had passed away in 1967. Nevertheless, when they came to know that the new lecturer was his son, there was a sparkle in their eyes and a broad smile on their faces, which spoke of the unspoken popularity of Parmanand Prasad amongst his colleagues.

Antler and  
Deer Skin  
of Cheetal



Nepali Kukri Knife  
(small dagger)



## UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

**H**e had offered his candidature for nomination to the Constituent Assembly in 1949 and subsequently for contesting the membership of Lok Sabha in the General Elections of 1952 on a Congress ticket. He was, however, not successful in getting the nomination for either, from the State Congress Committee. Henceforth, he concentrated on academics notwithstanding his services to the political parties in an advisory capacity from time to time. One of the visiting professors from the London School of Economics to the Patna University at this time advised him to do his Ph.D from abroad.

In 1954, he applied for admission to the London University for doing his Ph.D from the London School of Economics, which was approved. Patna University subsequently gave him the permission to pursue his Ph.D granting him half-pay leave provided he served the University on his return to India. By now he had five children, one daughter and four sons. Leaving his wife and all the children at his village home in the care of his father, he left for London by ship for his Ph.D degree

Professor W. A. Robson of London School of Economics, a well known expert in public administration was his guide. He worked under him for a little more than two years

On Professor Robson leaving for the USA in September-October, 1956, he moved to the University of Amsterdam where Prof. Robson's colleague, Abram May was a professor. Yet another reason for moving to the

University of Amsterdam was supposedly the unique opportunity the Netherlands provided for learning about the reconstruction of the country after its annexation by Nazi Germany during World War II.

Parmanand Prasad was there in the Netherlands (Holland) for the next six months, and submitted his thesis to the University of Amsterdam in March/April 1957. He was finally awarded the D. Litt degree by the

University of Amsterdam in April 1957; the title of his study being: "Some Economic Problems of Public Enterprises in India". The award ceremony of D. Litt at the University of Amsterdam is a public event, which is announced in prominent dailies of the Netherlands. The faculty members interviewing the candidate also come dressed up for the occasion in the traditional robe

(gown) and cap (square hat with a tassel).

**“East is East and  
West is West,  
In Holland the  
Twain did Meet.”**

Family of Prof. Abram May



Prof. . W. A. Robson (in the centre) and Parmanand Prasad ( extreme right) with other colleagues.



Viva Voce  
for the  
Award of  
D.Litt.



Parmanand Prasad and Prof. Abram May

**H**e, thus, completed his D. Litt in the short period of less than three years. Besides his own concern for the family that he had left behind, he was receiving letters from others to return to India at the earliest. Baldev Sahay, President of The Bihar Association, for instance, wrote, 'I would like you to try your best that you return to your country in two years' time without being wiser, if need be, but with the degree of a Doctor, because it has got academic value'.



Viva Voce  
for the award  
of D.Litt.

Greetings by the University Head



Congratulations for the  
Award of the D.Litt



A hearty laugh with friends



Bertrand Russel gracing the occasion of the Award of the D.Litt. degree.

One of the highlights of this event was the presence of the Nobel Laureate (and famous British philosopher) Bertrand Russell who graced the occasion. Bertrand Russell and W. A. Robson have been both members of the Fabian Society. Professor Abram May may also have been a member of the Fabian Society and he invited Bertrand Russell to attend the award ceremony. Incidentally, India's Prime Minister at that time Jawaharlal Nehru was also a member of the Fabian Society.

His stay in Holland for the D.Litt. degree was made memorable by the warm affection and the great hospitality of his new guide, Prof. Abram May. It appears Parmanand Prasad had taken a one room apartment close to his guide and could visit his guide's home without much inconvenience. Very soon he became part of their family rendering advice to the younger members of the family on matters of their personal concern. The photographs presented to him on his departure to India by Prof. Abram May's family speak for themselves.

# Rector et Senatus Universitatis Amstelodamensis

## Lectoribus Salutem!

Sapienti consilio a maioribus nostris institutum est, ut bonarum artium studiosi, antequam doctrinam ad communem vitae usum conferrent, laudabiliter peractis studiis academicis publicum peterent industriae et eruditionis testimonium et documentum. Quamobrem cum Ornatissimus

**Parmanand Prasad**

ex urbe c. n. **Bombay**

legibus academicis satisfecisset atque ad summos honores iam contenderet ipsius eruditioni debitos, Nos, quo causam honestissimam adjuvaremus, cum de progressibus eius in disciplinis ad facultatem **Disciplinarum Oeconomicarum** pertinentibus disquisitionem instituimus, tum audivimus eum defendentem dissertationem cui titulus:

**Some economic problems of public enterprises in India**

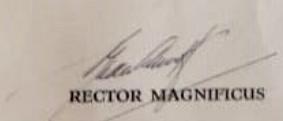
In quibus omnibus cum sese talem praestitisset, ut Nobis doctrinam et diligentiam probaret, honorificum quod ei debetur virtutis testimonium tribuimus.

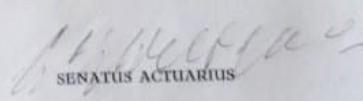
Quapropter Nos, pro potestate Nobis concessa, eundem

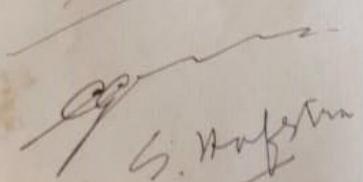
**Parmanand Prasad**

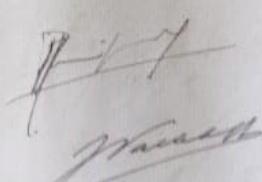
**Disciplinarum Oeconomicarum** DOCTOREM sollemni more creavimus et renuntiavimus et ei concessimus quidquid iuris et honoris doctori legitime creato aut lege aut longa consuetudine tribui haberique solet. Cuius rei quo sit certior et testatior fides, Diploma hoc publicum, manu **Actuarii** Nostri subscriptum et maiore **Universitatis** sigillo confirmatum, ei tradendum curavimus.

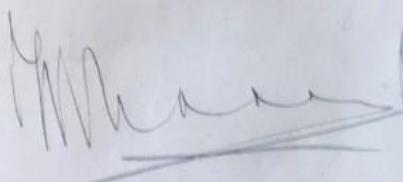
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RECTOR MAGNIFICUS

  
SENATUS ACTUARIUS

  
S. Hofstede

  
Prasad



The Degree  
of D.Litt.



The Box  
containing  
the Degree.



Parmanand Prasad  
with Prof. May's family



In his preface to the D. Litt thesis, which was later published as a book, Prof. May wrote, 'India's planning is an interesting specimen of what can be done by the Government of a huge country, having a large population and developing along the line of democracy....I wish this book... in the hands of leading and responsible personalities not only in India, but also in other countries...Cooperation—worldwide—and exchange of ideas, principles and practices open a way of progress to unity of mankind...Mr Prasad's work can be a building-stone for the bridge from man to man that will unite the nations'.



Family and friends enjoying Indian meal

# INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

On his return to India, he was offered a faculty position at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi on loan from Patna University for a period of two years. He, however, served the IIPA for more than two years having suitably negotiated with Patna University. He had joined the Institute as Senior Research Officer in September 1958; by 1961, he was promoted as Assistant Chief Research Officer. The Director of the Institute combined in his post the office of the Chief Research Officer.

He had sent a copy of his book to Dr P. S. Lokanathan, an acclaimed industrial economist and

Director General of National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi. After going through the book, Dr Lokanathan, wrote, 'I have had the

last few days which were holidays. May I say how much I enjoyed reading it'. He had earlier sent his book to the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. The Prime Minister's office forwarded the copy to the Planning Commission, Government of India for review. He was subsequently

made a member of the Research Programme Committee of the Planning Commission, New Delhi.

**“Bureaucracy is introduced  
to serve a System,  
soon it turns the  
System to serve itself”**

Anonymous



## INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



Vice-President of India S. Radhakrishnan at the I.I.P.A. on the occasion of the Annual Day and the award of the Master's Diploma in Public Administration (1958-59 Session); Parmanand Prasad is on the extreme left.

The Institute organised training programmes primarily for senior officers and executives of the Government of India, of State Governments and of Central Public Sector Enterprises. While Prof. V.K.N.Menon was the Director of the Institute, Prof. N. Srinivasan, Dr. B.S.Khanna, Dr. V. Jagannadham, Dr. H.K.Paranjape and Dr. A. Awasthi, were his colleagues. The Vice-President of India being the President of the Governing Board of IIPA presided over its Annual Meetings. Since the Prime Minister took interest in the work of the Institute, he was a frequent visitor to the campus in those years.



I.I.P.A.  
Hostel  
New Delhi



Quarters of  
the Faculty Members  
on the I.I.P.A. campus.



The Pipal tree  
that continues to  
be worshipped by  
the residents  
on the campus

Besides imparting training to the trainees at the Institute, he wrote extensively in the institute's journal, The Indian Journal of Public Administration (IJPA). Some of the important papers that were published in The IJPA were: 'Resource Mobilisation for the Third Plan' (July-September, 1959), 'Planning Process in India' (March, 1960), 'Efficiency and its Evaluation in Public Enterprises' (January-March, 1961) and 'The Expansion of the Bokaro Thermal Plant' (July-September, 1962). Some of the Book Reviews done by him were the book titled 'Managerial Problems in Public Enterprises' by A.H.Hansen (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962) and 'Capital Formation in

Public Enterprises in India' (Prize Essay by R.K.Jain, IJPA, Jan-March, 1961).

All the faculty members lived on the campus. There was a hostel for the trainees on the campus of the Institute. The campus used to be very well maintained in those days with lush green grass and beautiful beds of roses. The good upkeep of the gardens was due to the dedication of its chief gardener (Mali). At the back of the campus, however, there was a jungle. Every day at the fall of the night the hauling of jackals in groups could be heard for hours. There was a kutchra road between the jungle and the campus, and the campus was protected by a barbed wire. The Firoz Shah Kotla and 'Raj Ghat' of Mahatma Gandhi were at walking distances and they added further lustre to the campus.



Firoz Shah Kotla



Raj Ghat



India Gate

Moreover, since all the foreign dignitaries visited the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi at Raj Ghat to offer their respects, they had to go by the Ring Road. Since the Institute is situated on the Ring Road, it became an easy vantage point to see these dignitaries. Three prominent world leaders/ personalities who visited India during this period were President Eisenhower of the USA, General-Secretary Nikita Khrushchev of the USSR and Queen Elizabeth of the UK.

Since Parmanand Prasad got the Government Passes for attending the Republic Day Parade on 26<sup>th</sup> January and Independence Day on 15<sup>th</sup> August, he never missed to attend these events with his family. His younger children were often seated close to the Salami Manch from where the President took the salute during the Republic Day Parade. In those days the President

Dr Rajendra Prasad used to come in an open carriage. The people stood up on both the sides of the Raj Path to greet him and cheer him all along the way. His children were thus witness to the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru waiting for the President at the Salami Manch, and literally running to receive the President when his carriage arrived.

Parmanand Prasad's elder brother was also in New Delhi at this time as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs (Government of India). He had his bungalow at Pandara Road near India Gate in Lutyens Delhi. This enabled the two families to visit each other regularly. Their widowed sister lived mostly with them, dividing her stay between the two families. His mother and younger brother, R.C.Sinha visited the family during one of the summer months bringing bagful of mangoes from the village home. All the living members of the two families today cherish those days as one of the most memorable periods of their lives.

## Memories of my visit to IIPA

Wg Cdr R. C. Sinha (Retd)

It was in the month of June, 1961 that I visited bhaiya (elder brother Parmanand Prasad) in New Delhi. During this stay in New Delhi, bhaiya took me to a public lecture at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) on July 6, 1961 that was being addressed by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP). The topic of his talk was 'Decentralised Democracy: Theory and Practice'. His speech was later published in the Indian Journal of Public Administration (July-September, 1961).

Broadly speaking, he equated democracy with self-governance and envisioned a pyramedal structure of governance whereby different tiers of elected bodies were linked to each other. Under this structure, while the members of the Gram Panchayats and the Town Panchayats were to be elected through direct elections, members of the subsequent tiers of governance such as the Zila Parishads, the Municipal Councils, the Vidhan Sabhas and the Lok Sabha were to be indirectly elected by and from amongst the members of the tier immediately below them. The electoral college comprising the members of the tier below had, furthermore, the right to recall their (elected) representatives.

As he argued this would reduce the cost of electioneering on a large scale and reduce corruption in public life. Bhaiya always kept JP in high esteem who was nineteen years his elder. Both of them were, however, imprisoned in the Hazaribagh Central Jail during World War II. It was my first opportunity to listen to JP in person and it left a lasting impression on me

# HINDUSTAN STEEL LIMITED

The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) was coming to a close; the highest allocation of plan investment was made for heavy industries, fifty per cent of which went to the steel sector. The Government of India, therefore, asked him to join the Hindustan Steel Limited (HSL), Ranchi as its Economic Adviser. He joined the HSL in August 1962, which he served until his passing away in October 1967. Significantly, HSL was a public sector enterprise and his own D. Litt. was a study on the public sector enterprises of India.

While the Head Office of HSL was at Ranchi, its three steel plants were located at Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur. As these plants had been set up keeping in view the country's needs, it must have required keeping abreast with the plan targets as visualised under the Five Year Plans. HSL had also a Management Training Institute (MTI) at Ranchi for imparting training to the new recruits for Executive positions in the Company. Parmanand Prasad used to give lectures to such Trainees on a regular basis. One of the themes that emerged in these lectures - which were recorded and are fortunately still preserved - is discussion on the Five Year Plans.

The Government of India (Ministry of Steel) and the Planning Commission must have also needed to know from the office of Economic Adviser, HSL the projected demand and supply of steel in the country. Issues relating to transfer-pricing, that is, price of products being sold from one unit of the company to another must have also required soliciting the views of the Economic Adviser. His advice must have been also sought in regard to fixing the price of final

products. HSL had its own captive iron ore mines as well as captive power plants. Since the demand for steel was at the countrywide level, it had to set up go downs and sales depots in the different parts of the country.

The top management of HSL comprised the Chairman, the Secretary, the Director (Personnel), the Director (Technical), the Financial Adviser, the Economic Adviser and the Director (Training). These were supported by the General Managers of the different Steel Plants and the qualified workforce of the engineers (mechanical, civil, electrical) and the other workers. It was indeed a team of very dedicated officers led by its Chairman, M.S.Rao who was a senior ICS officer and had been formerly Chief Secretary of Bihar. The other officers in the Head Office being Hiten Bhaya, Ramanand Sinha, P.P.Dani, R.P.Nakra, Parmanand Prasad and H.K Das.

**“The mystic bond  
of brotherhood  
makes all men one”**

Thomas Carlyle

India was also exporting iron ore to Japan from time to time. This required negotiating the price of iron ore with the Japanese. As this required the knowledge of the commodity markets, the services of an Economic Adviser must have been very indispensable. He produced some pioneering studies during his sojourn in HSL, namely 'Public Sector Steel Industry' and 'Organisation of Steel Sales in UK, USA and Japan, which were published in 1965. HSL was later re-structured into a Holding Company on the lines as recommended in these two books



A panoramic view of the landscape in the Ranchi district.



Chairman, HSL M.S.Rao making a point to Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, the then Union Minister of Steel (Ranchi, 1964). Dr. Prasad is on the opposite side of the table.

When he shifted from New Delhi to Ranchi, he had to face the uphill task of the admission of his five children in the school. They could finally get their admissions in different schools depending on the vacancies available in the different classes. Later his nephew Manoranjan also came to stay with him as he was completing his M.A. (History) from Ranchi University. HSL had its Head Office and the residential colony in close proximity. He was at first given the bungalow no. B-1; later he was shifted to a much bigger bungalow no. A-14.

The tenure at Ranchi brought out the values Parmanand Prasad stood for. One such episode was when the Union Steel Minister paid a visit to Ranchi (1966). During one of the official meetings, the Minister appeared to doubt the integrity of the officers. It was most demoralising and not acceptable to the top Management. The matter must have been discussed amongst the colleagues. Parmanand Prasad offered to seek an apology from the Minister for his

unreasonable outbursts. He also told them that he would tender his resignation if the Minister did not comply with his request. It happened the same way. The Minister did not expect this, but then in his wisdom he gave in and apologised.

There was a lighter side to his personality as well. HSL being a well organised colony, it had all kinds of sports facilities. In the evenings, while his children played badminton and table-tennis he played cards: 'Bridge' with his friends. There were Annual Bridge Tournaments and he would take part in them. On one such occasion, he reached the finals along with his partner. They were losing in the finals and they could win in the final round only if they took 'all hands', that is, a Grand Slam. He gambled and without looking at the cards declared Grand Slam. As it turned out, both the partners had got good cards and one after another they took all hands winning the game and winning the tournament!



A-14,  
H.S. L Colony,  
Ranchi.

## HINDUSTAN STEEL LIMITED

In the General Elections of 1967, during this stay at Ranchi, the Congress Party lost majority in most of the State Assemblies, including Bihar. When the new Government was to be formed in Bihar, he was requested by the coalition partners to join the Coalition Ministry as its Finance Minister. (This offer was made by the veteran communist leader from Bihar Jagannath Sircar.) He, however, declined the offer in the face of the uncertainty that went with party politics.

Simultaneous with this change of Government in Bihar, the Government of India asked his elder brother, Ranchor Prasad to join the National Coal Development Corporation, Ranchi as its Managing Director. He stayed at his younger brother's place for about a month before his own family joined him. At this time, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed visited Ranchi. A communal riot broke out in the city, which was apparently instigated by the spying agency of (East) Pakistan. Both the new Chief Minister and the new Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar were in Ranchi at this time.

The situation appeared to take an ugly turn. The new heads of the State turned to Ranchor Prasad for advice- given his long years of experience in the Government. Since he perceived rumours to be the immediate enemy, he recommended all necessary steps to stop rumours. The same night the Chief Minister gave his Speech on the All India Radio prepared by him. Normalcy was soon restored to the relief of everyone.

In the month of October, 1967 he decided to take his family and his nephew Anuranjan to Jagannath Puri in Orissa. All preparations were made and the family was to start on the journey early in the morning in their Ambassador car. During that night, however, he developed pain in his stomach. While the other members were asleep, his wife, his daughter and his eldest son rushed him to the company hospital in the HSL colony. He had to be hospitalised there. The condition only deteriorated every next day despite the best doctors in the city attending to him.

The Chairman, HSL M.S.Rao did not spare any effort to ensure the best medical care. Dr Madhudan Das (Medicine Expert) and Vijay N. Singh (Surgeon) were flown from Patna and Dr Dhillon, Director, Steel Plant Hospital, Rourkela came to Ranchi to treat him. The eminent philanthropist and famous homeopath Dr

Roshan Lal also tried his medicines. His elder brother was himself there with all the resources of N.C.D.C. Parmanand Prasad's niece Usha and her husband Dr Anil Sinha were also there in Ranchi then and attended to him night and day, besides his wife and three of his elder children Ira, Shri Harsh and Shri Prakash. All their efforts, however, went in vain and he breathed his last in the early hours of October 18, 1967.

The Indian Nation and Ranchi Express covered the news in their respective dailies of October 19, 1967. It was an irreparable loss to the family and the whole joint family was shocked. His mother came all the way from the village, all his brothers and his elder cousin Parmeshwar Prasad, all his brothers-in-law and his nephews from different parts of the country came to Ranchi to show their respects and participate in the last rites. His long time comrade and fellow prisoner in Hazaribagh Central Jail Surendra Missir also came to console the family. Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) later visited Ranchi, and accompanied by his elder brother Ranchor Prasad met the family members to express his condolences.

During this tenure at Ranchi, he was instrumental in setting up the Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad. In his letter to the Chairman, HSL, the Director of the Institute of Public Enterprise Dr V.V. Ramanadham observed, 'Dr Parmanand Prasad's contribution to the Institute of Public Enterprise, ever since its establishment, has been continuous, extensive and distinguished. In his death, the public sector in India has lost an able and purposeful economist with deep insight knowledge'

At the Institute of Public Enterprises, Hyderabad.



*Part - II : Joint Family and Swamiji*



## THE JOINT FAMILY

As the family elder Ram Lal was living, both his sons Singheswar Prasad and Bisheswar Prasad lived together. Joint family was, moreover, the norm amongst the well to do families. It was also the only form of social security available to individuals. Since decisions were taken by the elders in the family, there was, however, less independence for youngsters. It allowed members of every single household, nevertheless, to share the responsibilities and thus reduce the burden of work. Ideally, the joint family norm stood for equal treatment to all, that is, 'each according to his need and each according to his ability'.

Everyone's basic needs were met without any discrimination. The women, quite often, did not have any right; it was incumbent on the joint family, however, to look after them. When it came to supporting the brighter child of the family, similarly, they all came together to make it possible. As mentioned by his elder brother Ranchor Prasad, several thousand maunds of wheat were sold by the joint family to finance his travel and other expenditures for appearing in the examination of I.C.S in London.

He returned to India in 1935 after appearing in the exams. Both his grandfather Ram Lal and his uncle Singheswar Prasad, who were instrumental in sending him to England besides his father, were no more when he returned to India. His uncle had, nevertheless, left a letter asking him to never stop his interest in studies. As it happened, Ranchor Prasad was one of the successful candidates against the declared number of vacancies.

Since there was no British examinee within this list, the Authorities in England took the decision to limit the number of Indians in the select list and pushed up the British examinees from below to fill up the total number of

vacancies. As a result, although he had made it into the I.C.S., he still did not make it! On his return to India, therefore, he had begun to contemplate joining the freedom movement.

His elder cousin Parmeshwar Prasad, however, took him to the Collector of Munger. Having come to know the extraordinary circumstances that led him to miss the I.C.S, the Collector recommended to the Governor to use his discretionary powers of direct appointment to government service. Ranchor Prasad was thus appointed to the Bihar Civil Service, which he joined in January 1937.

Given the shortage of officers, he was ever busy with the work. In his letter to his younger brother (Parmanand Prasad) he writes, 'I have applied for two months leave from June 1 (1941). There is little chance of leave being allowed'. He was, therefore, hardly available to the joint family after joining the government service.

We also notice that the family got much more enlarged during the childhood of Parmanand Prasad than what it was during the childhood of Ranchor Prasad. There were children born of his father (Suresh,

Shanti, Parvati, Savitri, Mahesh, Manorama, Ramesh), children born of his cousins: Shyam Sunder, Sushila, Krishnand, Asha, Vijayakrishna (Parmeshwar Prasad's children) and Hari Mohan, Brij Mohan, Surendra Mohan, Madan Mohan (Saryu Prasad's children). The older siblings amongst them were only a few years younger to him although he was their uncle by relation. As they could all relate to him better, they were friendly with him. That he was very popular amongst them goes without saying.

**“When there seems to be a duality of self and not-self.**

**One sees, smells.....and knows something other.**

**But when all is the Self,**

**There is no consciousness of anything other than Self.**

**...This is Immortality !”**

(Yajnavalakya to Maitreyi:  
Brihadaryanaka Upanishad)

## THE JOINT FAMILY

**W**e do not know in what all ways the young Parmanand Prasad must have helped the other children: perhaps in their studies, perhaps through teaching them to learn games! The joint family set up provided a sense of togetherness and members of the family derived strength from each other. In a crisis, there were people to fall back upon. This becomes clear from one incident in his own life. It appears that he spent the money given to him for paying the school fees on something else (perhaps on buying playthings for the younger kids). This may have happened in 1935 when he was only fourteen years of age. As a result his name was removed from the school register.

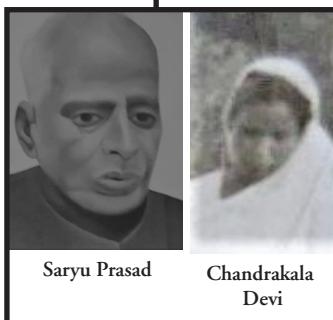
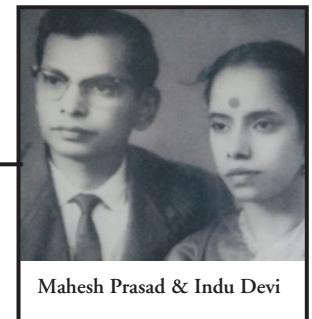
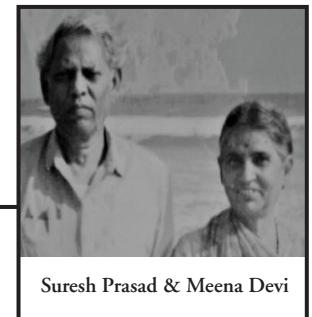
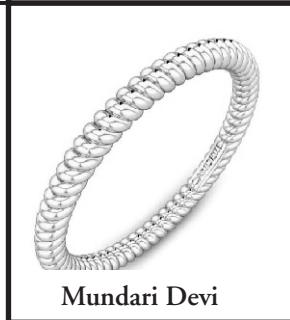
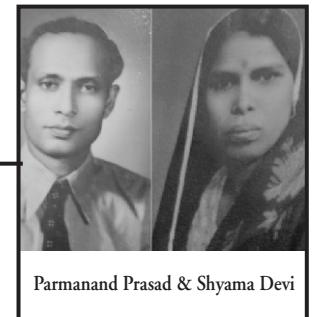
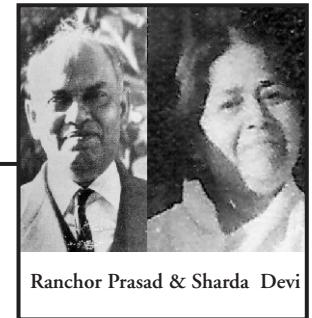
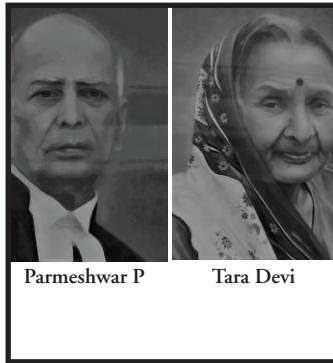
When he reported the matter to his father who was at the farm house, he was unforgiving and told him this only showed that he was not interested in studies and that he might better take to agriculture. This only panicked him. His

grandfather, his father's elder brother were no more and his own elder brother was far away in England. Since his father gave him money to return to the village, he used this money to buy a ticket for the steamer instead that ferried people from Khagaria to Munger where his elder cousin Parmeshwar Prasad lived. He must have cried before him and told him that he wanted to study. His brother told him not to worry and said that he would get him admitted to Munger Zila School and that he should stay with him and study. He was eventually admitted to Munger Zila School from where he completed his matriculation in 1937. This did not lead to any bitterness between the father and the son. His father subsequently financed his higher studies at Patna. Moreover, when he left for London for his Ph.D. later on, he left his family in the care of his loving father.



Shri Ram Lal (second from left), Bisheswar Prasad (next to him) and others (1917). Parmanand Prasad's elder brother Ranchor Prasad - as a child - is seated on the right hand corner.

# FAMILY GENEALOGY (Patrilineal Descent)





Family photograph at the marriage ceremony of Manorma Prasad and C.P.Sinha (1959).  
The family patriarch Bisheswar Prasad is in the Centre.



B-1, H.S.L. Colony, Ranchi.

## THE JOINT FAMILY

There was a natural concern for each member by every member in the joint family. Marriages of daughters have been an important issue in the Indian families. When he must have been only twenty years of age, he called on the father of the prospective bridegroom - a Bar-at-Law in Munger - with the marriage proposal of his elder cousin's daughter. The father is said to have been much amused to see a young man with such a proposal. The marriage was soon solemnised (June 30, 1941) between the bridegroom Kameshwar Prasad Sinha, son of B.P.Sinha and the bride Sushila Prasad, daughter of Parmeshwar Prasad. Approximately 1000 plus baratis (marriage party accompanying the bridegroom) came from Gogri who were all very well received at Sanhauli, the home of the bride. The guests had a memorable reception, which was talked about for generations in the bridegroom's family.

Marriages in India are not only a bonding between the girl and the boy, but also between the two families. With every new son-in-law, moreover, the stature of the family in the society grew. Parmanand Prasad was also the driving force in the marriage of his younger sisters Satyabhama and Manorama. While Satyabhama got married to Dr B. P. Sinha who was a Ph.D in History from London, Manorama got married to C.P.Sinha, a Textile Engineer.

He, furthermore, contributed significantly in the marriages of his two nieces Usha and Veena, the daughters of his elder brother Ranchor Prasad. They were married into two very well known families of Patna, their respective husband's being Dr Anil Prasad (son of Dr Brijwanshi Prasad) and Sunil Prasad (son of Rai Bahadur Ram Kishun Prasad).\*

As their father Bisheswar Prasad had passed away in December 1961, the responsibility of his sons who had not yet settled in life fell, in great measure, on his two elder sons, Ranchor Prasad and Parmanand Prasad. The marriage proposal of his fourth son, Mahesh Prasad was thus received by Parmanand Prasad in the year 1964 when he was Economic Adviser to Hindustan Steel Limited. The proposal had come from Professor N.L.Vidyarthi of Kanpur University.

Prof. Vidyarthi was the nephew of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi who was killed while pacifying the rioters belonging respectively to the Hindu and the Muslim faiths. Eulogising his great sacrifice Mahatma Gandhi remarked. 'I feel jealous of his death'. Given this unique stature of the family, Parmanand Prasad was inclined from the start to

accept the proposal. There was, however, opposition in the joint-family to this proposal. His younger brother, Mahesh Prasad, however, sided by his elder brother and the marriage was happily solemnised from his house (B-1) in Ranchi and the house of Prof. Vidyarthi in Kanpur.

Earlier the marriage of his nephew Priyaranjan Prasad, son of Ranchor Prasad in 1961 throws much light on his closeness to each member of the family. His nephew had decided to marry the girl who was studying together with him in the same college. He was, however, not sure how the elders in the family would react to such a decision. The nephew finally got in touch with his uncle Parmanand Prasad in whom he felt he could confide his inner feelings. All these have been beautifully narrated in his reminiscences produced in this volume. The President of India Dr Rajendra Prasad got to know about this marriage, which was an intercaste marriage, the girl hailing from the same district of Chapra as his own. Arrangements for the marriage were thus made with his blessings! The marriage took place in New Delhi with a lot of pomp and show.

No less significant was a letter that he received during his stay at Ranchi from his niece Veena. She had done badly in her exams although she had been a brilliant student otherwise. As he tells her, 'I am myself shocked and surprised at your result. I, however, do not share your mood of defeat. All is not lost, in fact, all is never lost by anyone. This is the lesson of life. You need not therefore lose heart.... Your anxieties should not lead you to seek appointments in low posts. This will be a tragedy of the highest order. Career girls suffer both financially and emotionally in low posts. Our society, in fact, society anywhere treats them cruelly' (may see Select Letters).

\*Asha Prasad, daughter of Parmeshwar Prasad got married to Manohar Sahay who was a mechanical engineer and retired as General Manager. Meera Prasad, daughter of Ranchor Prasad got married to Rajeev Verma who retired as Professor of English, Delhi University. Meera Verma (nee Prasad) herself retired as Professor of Political Science, Delhi University.

## From Joint Family to Extended Family

As all the male members and their families were not living in the village home, the joint family was slowly and steadily taking the form of an extended family. A beginning in this direction was first made by Parmeshwar Prasad who set up his law practice in Munger as early as 1925. He was followed by Ranchor Prasad who joined government service in 1937 and did not return to the village thereafter. Next in line was Parmanand Prasad who joined Patna University in 1944 and subsequently rose up from one high position to another, and did not go back to the village. The same could be said of Dr Shyam Sunder Prasad, Hari Mohan Prasad, Mahesh Prasad, Ramesh Chandra Sinha and Vijay Krishna Prasad who left the village in the different years.

With the demise of Ram Lal and Singheswar Prasad in 1935, Bisheswar Prasad became the patriarch of the family. Agriculture is, however, a tough occupation. For the next two decades, the responsibility of managing the farms was shared by his nephew Saryu Prasad. In 1957, however, Saryu Prasad died because of food poisoning. Bisheswar Prasad was thus left alone to manage the farms as his sons were either working outside or studying. Later his son Suresh Prasad joined him and he soon took over the full responsibility of cultivation as his father had grown too old. Around this time Parmeshwar Prasad's son Krishnand and Saryu Prasad's son Brij Mohan also took to cultivation.

Bisheswar Prasad passed away in December 1961 at the age of eighty-two years. Almost all the family members got together in the village home to show their respects to the last family patriarch of the joint family. Both the brothers, Ranchor Prasad and Parmanand Prasad came from New Delhi, accompanied by their wives and two of their younger sons (Niranjan, Anuranjan, Shishir and Sharat), as they were both employed there. The cremation ceremony extending to several days, with the attendant rituals of feeding the Brahmins and numerous other guests, was faithfully performed. Gifts were also given as ordained under the tradition and a young bull was released as part of the function of 'Shradha' (a ceremony to show respect). As it almost took the shape of festivity, his eldest son Ranchor Prasad could not resist saying that in truth it was 'A-shradha' (disrespect) to the departed soul.

At the close of the rites, it was decided to amicably divide the property to everyone's satisfaction. It was, however, not a legal division. This was done with a view to manage the farms separately. The Congress Government at the Centre, at this time, was advocating 'co-operative farming'. Parmanand Prasad also suggested to the family to adopt co-operative farming as the best management practice. The contours of co-operative farming were, however, not well understood. As such, the concept did not make any headway. The families henceforth lived as an extended family and joined together only on occasions of marriages and other social events.

His nephew Shyam Sunder Prasad was only three years younger to Parmanand Prasad and grew up together with him. He would often mention that his young uncle was an admirer of Sage Yajnavalkya. He would also relate that his uncle was very fond of telling about a little girl who was running up the hill carrying her young baby brother on her back. All those who saw her exclaimed 'how can you run up the hill with a heavy weight on your back'. She shot back saying, 'it is not heavy weight, it is my brother!' She continued to run and reached her house, which was not far away. The lesson of this small story being that if you are enthusiastic, no task is burdensome.

Sometime in 1963, Shyam Sunder Prasad came to see his uncle (Parma Cha) at Ranchi regarding differences with his father. On the one side was one of the noblest members of the family - a medical doctor by profession and a very successful person in life; on the other, was an affectionate father and the most respected elder of the family. The son was deeply hurt and wept before the only person he felt he could share his anguish. It must have been a great dilemma to come across, and certainly very difficult for the children in the family to comprehend the closed door conversation. It showed the mystic bond between persons, and revealed Parmanand Prasad's wider acceptability in the extended family.



Group photograph on the occasion of the marriage of one of the daughters in the family and 'the mundan' ceremony of Ayush (child in the lap); Venue: 'Sanhauki Kothi', Lal Darwaja, Munger (1986) Seated in the chair: Ranchor Prasad (second from left), Shyam Sunder Prasad (second from right)

## ASSOCIATION WITH SWAMI SAHAJANAND SARASWATI

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati (1889-1950) has a unique place in India's modern history. His childhood education was at German Mission School, Gajipur in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. He did not, however, complete his matriculation and took to 'sanyas' instead. Later he became an 'Ekdandi Sanyasin' - a saint who carries a long bamboo staff (Danda) - belonging to the Dashnami sect established by Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th century C.E.

Exploitation of India under the British rule did not escape his eyes. When Mahatma Gandhi launched his Non-cooperation Movement in 1920, he joined it and was later arrested. While in the jail, however, he was appalled by the hypocrisy of the Congress workers. As a result he withdrew from politics. He took up, nevertheless, the cause of the farmers ('the kisans') who had to face the exploitation of both the Zamindars and the British. Since he noticed a class character to this exploitation, he became an advocate of Marxism-Leninism.

In this way, Swamiji combined in himself the teachings of Vedant, Gandhian influence and Marxism. That he was a brilliant mind, at the same time, is reflected from the several books he has left behind. In the words of Subhash Chandra Bose:

'Swami Sahajanand Saraswati is, in the land of ours, a name to conjure with. The undisputed leader of the peasant movement in India, he is today the idol of the masses and hero of the millions'. (Ramgarh, March 20, 1940)

Swamiji established a small body called the Kisan Sabha at Bihta near Patna in 1927. Soon it grew into the Provincial Kisan Sabha of Bihar (1929). Subsequently when the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) was established in 1936 at Lucknow, Swamiji was elected its President. (Prof. N.G.Ranga was elected its General Secretary and E.M.S. Namboodripad was elected its Joint Secretary). The AIKS got the support of the Congress Socialist Party that included Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia as well as the support of Jawaharlal Nehru within the Congress Party.

### Land Revenue System under the British

Before we evaluate the contribution of Swamiji and his Kisan Sabha to the peasant movement, it may be worthwhile to briefly dwell upon the land revenue system introduced by the East India Company (and subsequently continued by its successor the British Crown), especially so in the eastern part of British

India. Following points are worth mentioning:

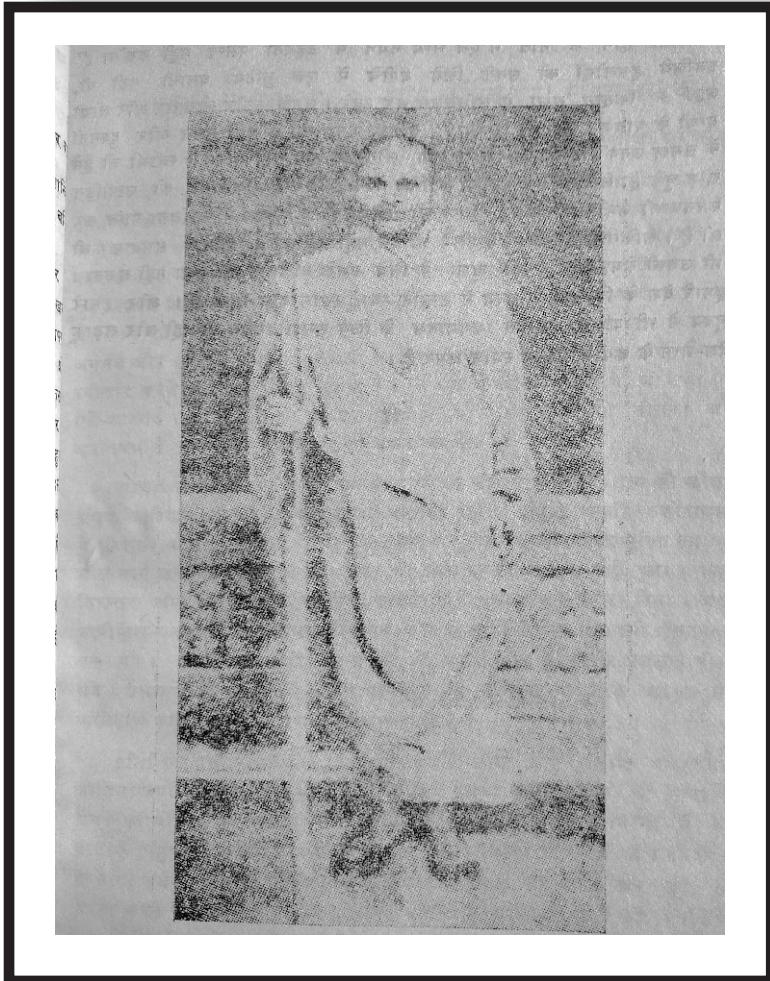
**“I will give my life  
for the poor.  
Apart from them,  
there is no other God  
in my heart.  
They are my God.”**

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati

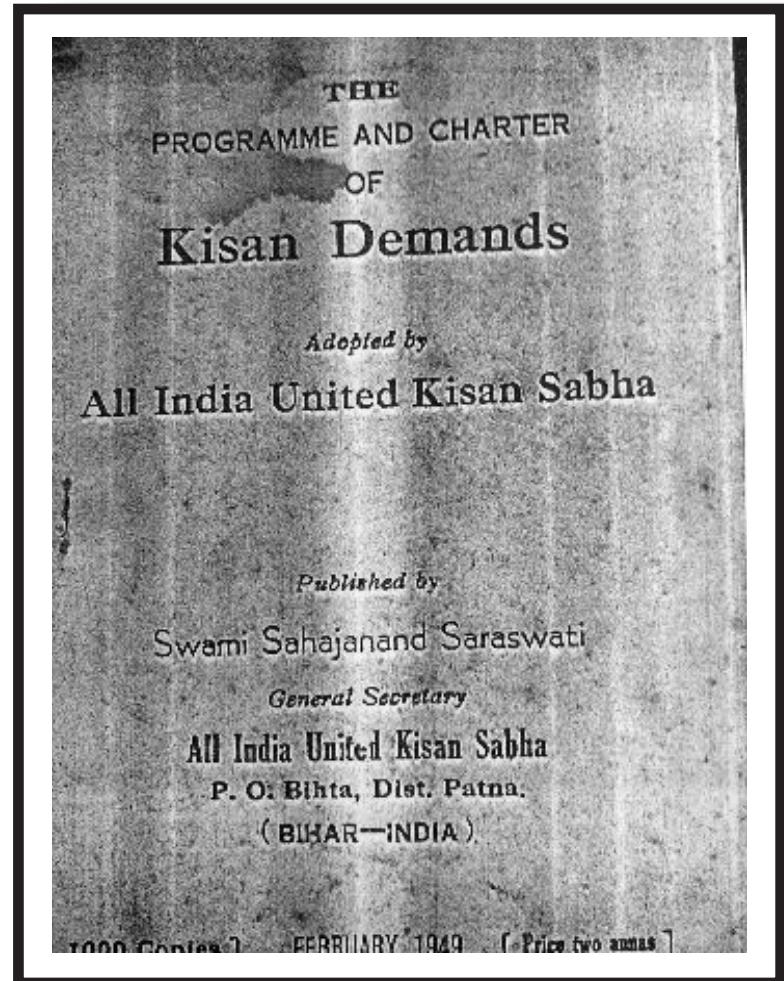
## ASSOCIATION WITH SWAMI SAHAJANAND SARASWATI

- ❑ The Permanent Settlement in Bengal Presidency (Bengal, Bihar and Orissa), which began in 1793 and went up to 1860 destroyed the peasants' (ryots) traditional right to land of usufruct (use and profit) and inheritance. These were all replaced by proprietary rights of the zamindars/jagirdars/rajas in return for a fixed rent to the East India Company.
- ❑ The rent payable by the zamindars to the Government was fixed based on the productivity of the land as assessed during the Survey and Settlement of Land Records . It was, furthermore, postulated that the tenant cultivator who worked on the estate of the zamindar will part with 50% of the gross produce as rent to the zamindar– which was seen as 'fair and equitable rent'. This was, however, much higher than what prevailed at the time of either Akbar or the Hindu kings of yore.
- ❑ The zamindar, in turn, was required to transfer 9/10 th of the rent collected from the cultivator to the East India Company and keep for himself the balance 1/10 th of the rent.
- ❑ Each zamindar was given a number and assigned the responsibility of collecting rent from the tenant cultivators – both occupancy and non-occupancy tenants. While the payment made by the tenant cultivator was called 'rent', payment made by the zamindar to the Company/the Crown was called 'land revenue'. Land revenue by the zamindar had to be paid in money and not in kind.
- ❑ If the zamindar failed to pay the land revenue (in predetermined instalments) during the year– irrespective of the fact that the crops failed – the zamindari right over the village (mauja) /estate was auctioned to the highest bidder.
- ❑ Every-time the price of agricultural commodities went up, it reduced the land revenue liability of the zamindars. As a result, the distribution of the rent appropriated from the tenant cultivators between the zamindars and the Crown got reversed -over the period- with only 1/10 th of the rent going to the Crown and 9/10 th of the rent going to the zamindars.
- ❑ Inflation also helped the occupancy tenants with more than 100 bighas of land – also known as Talukdars who were as good as the zamindars- as they had their rents also fixed in perpetuity and they paid the rent on land directly to the Crown/ the Collector.
- ❑ The other tenant cultivators – non-occupancy tenants and occupancy tenants with smaller holdings working on the estate of the zamindar were not as fortunate. As they came under the control of the zamindar, he had the right to fix the rent as he willed and could also revise upward the rent. (In the case of occupancy tenants, however, if the rent was fixed in cash - in money terms - then the zamindar could not alter the rent for a period of fifteen years).
- ❑ Under the Tenancy Reforms of 1885, a non-occupancy tenant could become an occupancy tenant by cultivating the same land for twelve years. The occupancy tenant enjoyed the right to sell, lease or mortgage his land. As the zamindars did not want non-occupancy tenants to become occupancy tenants, they saw to it that non-occupancy tenant cultivators did not work on a particular farm for long.
- ❑ If the tenant cultivator raised agricultural output because of his ingenuity, the zamindar could raise rent and reap the benefit without having contributed anything. It was pointed out that when a class of cultivators took to potato cultivation and increased their incomes, the zamindars increased the rent on land.
- ❑ If the price of agricultural commodities fell (deflation), instead of rising, then the rent fixed in money terms implied paying a higher rent in kind than before.
- ❑ If the occupancy tenant defaulted on payment of the cash rent, the zamindar could sell his land or else take possession of the land for self-cultivation ('Bakasht' land) and recover the money.

ASSOCIATION WITH SWAMI SAHAJANAND SARASWATI



Swami Sahjanand Saraswati



The Booklet

There was, therefore, a direct conflict between the interests of the tenants and the zamindars, which was greatly resented by the tenants. The famous Champaran Satyagrah led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1917/1918 also related to the conflict between the tenants and the zamindars. In that case, the Indigo planters were all Britishers and foreigners.

The period of the mid-1920s was that of lower prices of agricultural commodities, which got further aggravated with the Great Depression of the 1930s. As the occupancy tenants defaulted on payment of rent, the zamindars took possession of their land under self-cultivation. The former tenant cultivators were, moreover, made to work on the same land as share-croppers/ non-occupancy tenants.

These were the 'Baksht' land taken in possession by the zamindars against which Swamiji and his Kisan Sabha launched a statewide agitation in Bihar. The other prominent people who followed his lead were Karyanand Sharma (Munger), Pt. Yadunandan Sharma (Gaya), Pt. Jamuna Karjee (Saran) and Rahul Sankrityayan (Saran).

It was a Congress Government in Bihar in 1937 when these agitations took place. The Premier of the state Sri Krishna Sinha had earlier been the General Secretary of Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha. The State Government generally took the side of the tenants and the zamindars were made to reduce the rent payable to them. Measures were also initiated to see that the Baksht land was restored to the occupancy tenants as registered in the Survey and Settlement records. This was a major achievement of Kisan Sabha.

The broad approach to the kisan movement was that of 'agitation' to register protest against atrocities and to raise the consciousness of the toiling masses. Addressing the kisans at Gaya (1935), Swamiji explained, 'We do not teach you to assault zamindars, only to get what is your right. We do not seek to create trouble between zamindars and tenants. The Government, the zamindars and the capitalists are strong. I want you to be strong too and the way to do it is to hold meetings.....You must speak in great numbers. Government officials are here and when you come in tens of

thousands they will listen, otherwise they will think you need nothing because you are silent'.

#### Swamiji and Parmanand Prasad

Both Swamiji and Parmanand Prasad were imprisoned in the Hazaribagh Central Jail in the wake of World War II. Swamiji was in jail since 1940. Parmanand Prasad was imprisoned in January 1941 and was there until November 1941, after which he was released from the jail and was under house arrest. While Swamiji was a well known name by this time, Parmanand Prasad was a young student activist. There was more than a thirty years age difference between the two. Swamiji appears to have developed a liking for Parmanand Prasad and later looked forward to his cooperation in the cause of the kisans.

From his letter dated 8.7.1947, it becomes clear that Parmanand Prasad had offered to resign his lecturership in Begusarai and come over to Patna to assist Swamiji. He eventually got the post of Senior Lecturer at B.N. College and thus moved to Patna. He did not, therefore, need the financial support of the Kisan Sabha. In another letter dated 9.1.1947, Swamiji says, *'Now you are to prepare a statement on behalf of the Kisan Sabha which may very cleverly avoid the main point of difference and emphasise the agreed ones'*.

Assuming that the pamphlet titled 'The Programme and Charter of Kisan Demands' published in February 1949 had his share of contribution, we reproduce below some of the landmark suggestions made therein:

- i. Minimum living wage shall be assured and the Workmen's Compensation Act shall be extended to all agricultural workers.
- ii. Whereas the landless peasants and agricultural labourers and those having less than 10 to 25 acres as the case may be for a family of five shall have to be provided with land to cultivate on the basis, preferably, of co-operative farming without, of course the right of alienation.



Group photograph with Raja of Sonbarsa, fifth from the left (1939). Parmeshwar Prasad, with his two children, is second from the left in the front row..

## ASSOCIATION WITH SWAMI SAHAJANAND SARASWATI

- iii. The peasants shall forthwith be completely relieved of all liability to pay old debts and interests thereon and the State shall immediately put into operation the necessary machinery to provide cheap agricultural credit for peasants current needs.
- iv. There shall immediately be imposed an adequate and graduated income tax, death duty and inheritance tax upon all agricultural and other incomes of landlords and capitalists.
- v. All land revenue assessment on and rents from uneconomic holdings and all rents in kind shall be abolished.
- vi. There shall immediately be granted the right of remission of rent for all tenants of landlords and for the ryots of ryotwari areas whenever crops fail.
- vii. State credit and cooperative and Land Mortgage Credit shall be advanced at not more than 2% simple interest and for 20 years or more and Land Mortgage Banks shall soon be established everywhere.
- viii. The Government shall develop gardens and intensive cultivation and supply to the kisans cheap and tested seed.
- ix. The surplus population in the villages amounting to at least 50 per cent shall be absorbed in industry..... Simultaneously with the development of new industries the State shall encourage and assist in the rehabilitation of decaying cottage industries.
- x. There shall be compulsory fixation of minimum fair price of sugarcane on a rising scale to give fullest benefit to the kisans and Government shall suitably protect the cultivators of cotton, jute, coconut and other commercial crops by fixing a gainful minimum price.
- xi. The Government shall develop cooperative and State marketing and thus prevent the exploitation of peasants by middlemen.
- xii. The Government shall establish a parity between the price of agricultural and industrial products.
- xiii. The State shall develop irrigation and drainage facilities for protecting peasants from famines, shall take all other steps to insure peasants against such calamities.
- xiv. The Government shall provide for cattle insurance, fire insurance and health insurance for the kisans.
- xv. There shall be established village Panchayats for the administration of the civic affairs of every village and the distribution of irrigation, water supply and forest products shall be entrusted to it.
- xvi. There shall be immediate establishment of a free compulsory education for girls and boys upto matriculation standard and higher education shall be brought within the reach of the kisans.
- xvii. Adequate provision shall be made for prompt medical and sanitary aid and drinking water for the villagers, and the State shall forthwith adopt a national housing policy.
- xviii. The State shall empower the kisan organisations to bring to book all those officials who take bribes from peasants and workers.

Swamiji did not have confidence in the Congress Ministry, either in the state or at the Centre. He was making all possible effort for the Left Unity in the country. Within the Congress Party, however, the Revenue Minister of Bihar K.B.Sahay was relentlessly making his efforts for the Zamindari Abolition, which fructified after the death of Swamiji in 1950.

With the enactment of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, the interests of zamindars and tenure holders were vested in the state. This did help the tenant cultivators, but it did not go beyond that. There was little in it about the share-croppers and the agricultural labourers. According to Swamiji, however, 'kisans are the agricultural labourers who have very little land or no land at all, and the petty cultivators who anyhow squeeze a most meagre living out of the land they cultivate'.

It is in this context a re-look at the recommendations of the pamphlet 'The Programme and Charter of Kisan Demands' becomes all the more important. It is true that the point no. (i) to (vi) are, more or less, the same as made earlier in the Kisan Manifesto of 1936 that was submitted to the All India Congress Working Committee, but the remaining other points are much different and could be taken advantage of even today.

## Land Reforms and K.B.Sahay

**O**n account of his efforts for the Zamindari Abolition in Bihar, K.B. Sahay was the target of vested interests. Ridiculing him *The Indian Nation* in its editorial dated April 6, 1948 observed, 'The Revenue Minister is either one-eyed or wilfully blind. Bihar is screeching under the stewardship of an aggressive politician who has no vision and faith, but who is obstinate and petty. He is impatient to see the zamindars out.....We plead for rational, cool and calm thinking on this great issue'. (As quoted by Tomasson Januzi in his book 'Agrarian Crisis in India – A Case of Bihar' published by Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1974.)

It is in such trying times that K.B.Sahay received a congratulatory letter from Parmanand Prasad soon after the introduction of the Bihar Land Reforms Amendment Bill, 1953 (Bihar Act XX of 1954), removing some of the procedural impediments for implementation of the Bihar Land Reform Act, 1950. K.B.Sahay, in his reply dated April 4, 1955, therefore, says, 'It is so refreshing to get a letter from London, and still more heartening your appreciation for the Land Reforms Bill which I am trying to introduce' (may see Select Letters).

*Part III: Reminiscences*



## PARMANAND CHACHA

If there was one person who gave shape to what I am today, he is no other than Parmanand Chacha (uncle). While my debt to my parents is infinite, Chacha was with me through all my growing years, and provided a direction to my developing personality.

The earliest memory of him is of the early 1940s, when he was staying with us at our house in Bhagalpur. He was suffering greatly from ill health, perhaps gastronomical in nature (I have an impression that Chacha lived with his incipient ailment all along, leading to his untimely demise). I have also a very clear image of my visit to Hazaribagh jail, when I had gone to see him along with Babujee (my Father); the image which I have retained is that of a corner of the jail, enclosed within vertical metal bars on two sides, which was perhaps our meeting-place.

I remember him again when we were staying in the upper floor of a Kadamkuan house in Patna in the mid-1940s. The interest I developed those days in the current independence movement I owe to him chiefly. It was at his encouragement, I believe, that I began reading the daily newspaper.

We stayed together at 10, Serpentine road in the New Capitol area of Patna. It was due to him that I discovered interest in learning. I remember, I bought a set of volumes on Popular Science at his instance. He introduced me to current events like the Jewish movement for a separate State, to writers like Bertrand Russel, to ideas like World Government, to books like Churchill's on the Second World War etc. It was during that period that I developed interest in reading and even buying books; I bought a set of Pocket Books edition books with the Rs. 10 that my mother gave me, opening up a world of reading for me.

Chacha had, with Babujee's approval, given shelter to a needy student, Bhim Dev Prasad, in our house at 10 Serpentine Road. The latter was known as Masterjee, though I do not remember taking any lessons from him. Over the years he became quite

close to the family. Chacha had at one time thought of joining politics. I remember that I accompanied him on a visit to the first Chief Minister of Bihar, Sri Krishna Sinha.

Ultimately, he did not join politics, and stayed on pursuing an academic career beginning with a lectureship in B.N.College, Patna. I have vivid memories of Naya Tola when it became his sasural after his marriage, which I would visit a number of times to meet Nana, and Chacha and Chachi, when they were there. Chachi took to me instantly and showered me with affection through all the years that I had known her. Nana was a devout person, and I remember reciting to him the doha: :”chitrakoot ke ghat per bhaye santan ki bhir.....’

I lost touch with Chacha when he went to London, and later to Amsterdam, for his doctorate—we did not have mobile phones those days, and there was thus no WhatsApp too. But I remember going to the airport with Babujee in his old Chevrolet car to receive Chacha on his return—of course Chachi and my Mother had also gone along.

Around the time Babujee moved to Delhi, Chacha shifted to a house in Salimpur Ahra, and I would cycle my way there many times to see Chacha and Chachi. I recall that I was so close to Chacha and Chachi that I thought it strange that they should stay separately. As I was continuing my studies at Patna, with Babujee being in Delhi, I stayed with Chacha and Chachi for some time before they also moved to Delhi.



**Priyaranjan Prasad**

## PARMANAND CHACHA

I recall once when visiting Babujee and Ma at Delhi, I got a telegram from Chacha and Chachi congratulating me on my results at the BA (Hons.) examination. Chacha was keen that I should also move to Delhi for my studies, having regard to better career prospects, but circumstances were such that I chose to stick to Patna College, and later Patna University.

After Chacha and Chachi moved to Delhi, on my visits to Delhi I would frequently go to IIPA New Delhi, to look them up and spend some time with them. Irrespective of where I was, I remained in touch with Chacha. Over the years, he was not only a mentor, but became also like a friend, so that in my growing years I could turn to him for guidance, whenever need arose.

Such a need arose once when I was contemplating my marriage to Leela. The problem was that it would be an inter-caste marriage. I had written to Babujee and Chacha on the subject. I met Chacha while he was visiting Calcutta, and gained confidence that the marriage would have the blessings of my elders. Chacha gave me detailed advice in the matter as to what action I could possibly take. I took his advice, and the marriage was duly solemnized at Delhi after Leela and I reached Delhi.

I lost touch with Chacha and Chachi again when they moved to Ranchi, but I would visit them there, whenever I could.

One morning, when I was posted at Delhi, in the early morning hours I got a call from someone in the organization in which Chacha was working, to the effect that he had passed away. I could not take in the news, wondering whether it could be true. I visited a close family elder, who was also in Delhi, who got the news verified, and had me put on a train to Ranchi.

What helped me to come to terms with this kind of loss was the harmony and closeness of relations in our big family; Babujee was a pillar of support to all on such occasions of distress. I should not forget to mention Surendra Mishra Uncle, who was Chacha's closest friend. My earliest memory of his, dates to the 1940s when he met me

at the gate of the school where I was then studying. A long time after, after he had married and settled down, I remember asking Parmanand Chacha about him, and cycling to the house in Patna where he (Surendra Mishra Uncle) was then staying.

That Chacha gave me so much, was possible only because he had a keen intellect, a sharp mind and an affectionate heart, and also because he adhered to a code of values throughout his life. I believe that I owe to him what I believe are my liberal and universal outlook on life and things. Chacha's code of values was put to test in an episode concerning the organization in which he worked at Ranchi; he earned well-deserved plaudits for upholding his values.

Chachi remained kind and affectionate to me all through while she was alive. She had been a great support for Chacha, accepting him as he was and being devoted to the welfare of all.

Cogitating about these past remembrances, I am struck by the nature of the relationship between Babujee and Parmanand Chacha. They both shared the quality of empathy, but at the same time believed in non-interference in the affairs of others, including youngsters. Chacha was ten years younger than Babujee—I was fifteen years younger than Chacha---, but there was such balance in their relationship—Chacha had his own views in matters, but always gave respect to Babujee.

What I learnt from both of them was concern for other beings, and, in particular, regard for family values. Their stature was such, the leadership they provided helped keep the larger family together. The manner in which they conducted themselves in their own lives has also been an inspiration for all of us.

## REMEMBERING MY FATHER

I was my father's eldest child and the only daughter. It was a family of seven of us, father, mother and five of us. That I was very stubborn, made things difficult for my father. I remember one such incident when he had received the Pass to visit the Rahtrapati Bhawan (President's House) in New Delhi. He asked all of us to come along for this visit to the President's House. For some unknown reason I refused to go. He requested me several times, but I did not yield. Finally, he gave in, and while I remained at home others went.

During this time, he was a faculty member at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. The quarters of the faculty members are situated on the same campus as that of the Institute. All of us children went to the nearby school of Andhra Education Higher Secondary School on the Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg. Since father had a D. Litt. in Economics from the University of Amsterdam and had been active in politics as a freedom fighter, he was often consulted by the Members of Parliament

On one occasion, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar visited our house. He was a Rajya Sabha member and may have felt like consulting father on some economic issue. Incidentally both of them belonged to the neighbouring districts of Khagaria and Begusarai in Bihar. I must have been thirteen or fourteen years of age and as we used to read his poems in our textbooks, father introduced me to 'the national poet' and asked me to sit in the drawing room while they discussed. I do not remember, however, what all they discussed. Lalit Narayan Mishra was another Member of Parliament who often visited our house.

After nearly five years of our stay in Delhi, we shifted to Ranchi after he joined the H.S.L as Economic Adviser. I was admitted there in the Government Girls High School. The school was quite far away from our house, but a school bus used to pick me up from our house. It was a much bigger house at Ranchi than our house in Delhi. The campus was also much bigger with more quarters for the employees. It had various sports

facilities as well besides a hospital. Soon after, father was allotted a still bigger accommodation in the (H.S.L) Colony. Consequently we became neighbours of Mr Hiten Bhaya who was then holding the charge of Secretary, H.S.L

Father would regularly visit their house. I too became a regular visitor to their house to learn painting together with Mr Bhaya's daughter Rukmini. While Mr Bhaya was from Bengal, Mrs Bhaya was from Goa. She was a very suave and warm lady. The couple had two more children, a daughter aged nine years and a son aged seven years. As my father was a very social person we often had dinner parties at our home, which was attended by all his senior colleagues. Caterers from the nearby Management Training Institute were called in to make the preparations for these parties.

As the others soon reciprocated, the colony life during this period became very festive. When the son of Mr M.S.Rao, Chairman, H.S.L. got married, father invited the newly wed to his house as is the custom amongst near relatives. Such invitations provide people to know each other better and enables the young couple to seek the blessings of their elders at the start of their married life. Much later, when my husband and I visited Geneva in Switzerland, we stayed at the house of Rao's uncle's daughter Chitra for a few days.

I was very much a pampered child of my father being the only daughter. Whenever he would go on tour, he would bring a new dress for me. My brothers were given games to play. On one occasion, he brought the whole cricket kit from Delhi comprising bat, ball, pad, stumps and wickets for them. During this stay at Ranchi, he took us all to the Hazaribagh National Park and we also visited the nearby waterfalls around Ranchi. By the time, I was about to complete my B.A., he had initiated negotiations for my marriage.



**Ira Prasad**

## REMEMBERING MY FATHER

**H**e also planned to visit Jagannath Puri Temple in Orissa with all of us in our new car, in the month of October 1967. Night before the day of journey, he developed severe pain in his stomach and he had to be hospitalised. His condition went on deteriorating every next day and despite the best efforts he could not be saved. He passed away in the early hours of October 18, 1967 on a very different journey.

It was a rude shock to all of us. Father was the pride of the family and he was also the breadwinner. With him gone, our world had turned topsy-turvy. Fortunately, my brother who is just after me Shri Harsh had completed his B.A. (Honours) in Economics, and H.S.L. gave him a job as well as a quarter to live in. We had to move from a bigger accommodation to a much smaller one. That was indeed very disturbing, but at the same time a big relief in the circumstances. Later when the Government of India and the Government of Bihar announced pensions for the freedom fighters, my mother became a beneficiary of these schemes. The Indian Railways also extended to her a free Pass to travel in the AC coach along with an attendant.

Marriages are a great event in one's life. Marriages

arranged by parents/elders are, moreover, considered the best kind of marriages in India. As I could not be married while my father was living, this responsibility now fell on the old shoulders of my father's elder brother (and his wife) besides my mother. In those trying times, my mother's younger brother came up with a proposal of my marriage with Dr Narmedeshwar Prasad who was a younger brother of one of his lawyer colleagues. He was completing his Ph.D from U.K. in metallurgical engineering and had come to India to get married.

The marriage was soon solemnised on February 13, 1971 from my uncle's house 'Mayfield'. I soon joined my husband in Cardiff in the U.K. where he was completing his Ph.D. All the three of my younger brothers were, however, still in college. With the blessings of our late father, they all came up in life. Shri Prakash and Shishir joined Ranchi University as lecturers of English Literature and Ancient Indian History respectively. The youngest of us all Sharat followed in his footsteps and joined the Indian Economic Service.



Sitting (L to R)  
: Shri Harsh; Dr Narmedeshwar Prasad  
(with daughter Sarita)  
Standing (L to R):  
Shri Prakash; Shishir and Sharat.

*Part IV: Select Letters*



SELECT LETTERS

Letter From Elder Brother in Jail

chaihaca  
18/5/41  
PASSED  
SUPDT

My dear Parina,  
your letter without date. I am glad you are keeping good health. Health is the first essential. In Hararileq, it should not be difficult to keep good health if you keep regular hours, take some exercise daily & manage to keep your mind off every minute with play & study. There is no cause for brooding, or feeling bitter or for worrying about the future. If you build character and ability - as I am sure you do - you will do better in the long run than other young men who are having a cushy time outside. You should study your text books as thoroughly as possible. I shall try

my best to persuade the authorities to allow you a chance to appear at the B. A. Honors Exam. There are no better books than those published in the Pelican series on general Science. I particularly recommend Sir James Jeans' 'The Mysterious Universe', Sullivan's Principles of Science & The Limitations of Science & Whitehead's book on Mathematics. Will's book on The Life in 3 volumes will also repay study. I shall try to obtain a copy of Parson's Every-day Science for you. You need not read more on this subject. On general history, Will's Outline of History is still the best book. St. Nehru's Glances of History is also

SELECT LETTERS

worth reading. Both these books  
 have been written with a  
 certain bias but both are  
 eminently readable &  
 well worth reading. If the  
 14<sup>th</sup> ed. is available  
 in your local library, you may  
 read articles in *Nature* &  
*Scientific Monthly* & other sociological  
 subjects — especially the  
 articles written by Dr. Malinowski.  
 I shall send you some select  
 books on philosophy &  
 other subjects as soon as  
 I get them. There is no  
 book shop at Chai-hang.  
 Would you know if the  
 books mentioned above  
 are available there — especially  
 the *Scienc* books. Do  
 you get any monthly  
 there? From the point of view  
 of engaging one's mind &  
 general culture, there

can be nothing more <sup>PASSED</sup> fascinating  
 than literature, especially  
 poetry. Shall I send a copy  
 of the Golden Treasury <sup>SUPOT</sup> by  
 Tolstoy, Turgeniev, Dostoevsky,  
 Hardy & Dickens is also  
 worth study. There are also  
 a number of good Norwegian  
 & Swedish writers whom I can  
 recommend. Let me generally  
 what the jail library there  
 is like. Shashila's marriage  
 is worrying me. It means  
 more than 8000 in 1 month.  
 I am very hard up at present  
 & a variety of presents  
 I cannot help Bhuiya.  
 I have applied for months  
 leave from June 1, but there  
 is little chance of leave  
 being allowed.  
 By the way, I shall  
 be glad if you purchase

SELECT LETTERS

a letter pad — I shall send  
 you one in my parcel,  
 books — The book of your  
 jail paper is very sickening  
 & not acceptable.

We are alright,  
 more or less. I shall  
 send you the photographs  
 of the children by the  
 1st week of June. No photos  
 are available just now.  
 I am getting them photographed  
 this Monday for the purpose.  
 The previous photos have  
 been lost or misplaced.

Try to improve your  
 style — both English &  
 Hindustani. Command  
 over language is a great  
 asset especially so in  
 the war & in public life.  
 Also if you want to  
 improve yourself you

must avoid guard yourself  
 against the influence <sup>PASSED</sup>  
 slogans, formulas & short  
 -cut solutions to problems  
 social & political. A sincere  
 student of social & political  
 phenomena has to practice  
 close <sup>scrupulous</sup> thinking. An understanding  
 of psychological factors is  
 also necessary.

With best wishes &  
 love.

yours self  
 Rancho

To  
~~Bhramanand~~  
 Bhramanand Das  
 Political prisoner  
 Narasimha jal

## Handwriting Converted into Typed Text

My dear Parma,

Chaibasa  
18.03.1941

Received your letter without date. I am glad you are keeping good health. Health is the first essential. In Hazaribagh, it should not be difficult to keep good health if you keep regular hours, take some exercise daily and keep your mind engaged every minute with play and study. There is no cause for brooding, or for feeling bitter or for worrying about the future. If you build character and ability as I am sure you will, you will do better in the long run than the other young men who are having a cozy time outside.

You should study your textbooks as thoroughly as possible. I shall try my best to persuade the authorities to allow you a chance for appearing at the B.A Hons. Exam There are no better books than those published in "Pelicon Series on General Science". I particularly recommend Sir James Jean's "The Mysterious Universe". "Sullivan's Principals of Science" and "The Limitations of Science" and Whitehead's books on Mathematics. Will's book on Life in 3 volumes will also repay study. I shall try to obtain a copy of the "Parsons' Everyday Science" for you., You need not read mere on this subject.

On general history, H.G. Well's "Outline of History" is still the best book. "Pt. Nehru's Glimpses of History" is also worth reading. Both these books have been written with a certain bias, but both are eminently readable and well worth reading. If the Encyclopedia Britannica (11th Edition) is available in your jail Library, you may read articles on Anthropology, Marriage and other sociological subjects especially the articles written by Dr. Malinowski's. I shall send you some select books on philosophy and other subjects etc. as soon as I get them. There is no bookshop at Chaibasa. Do let me know if the books mentioned above are available there especially the science books. Do you get any monthly (magazine) there?

From the point of view of engaging one's mind in general culture, there can be nothing more fascinating than literature specially poetry. Shall I send a copy of the "Golden Treasury"? The

fiction of Tolstoy, Turghev, Dostovoisky, Hardy and Dickens are also a worth study. There are also a number of good Norwegian and Swedish writers whom I can recommend. Let me personally know what the Jail Library there is like.

Shushila's marriage is worrying me. I am very hard up at present due to a number of reasons and cannot help Bhaiya. I have applied for 2 months leave from June 1. There is little chance of leave being allowed. By the way, I shall be glad if you purchase a letter pad. I shall send you one in my parcelled books. The look of your jail papers is very sickening and distasteful. We are all right, more or less. I shall send you the photographs of the children by the first week of June. No photos are available just now. I am getting them photographed. The previous photos have been lost or misplaced.

Try to improve your style both English and Hindustani. Command over language is a first asset especially so in the bar and in public life. Also if you want to improve yourself, you must guard yourself against the influence of slogans, formulas and short-cut solutions to problems social and political. A sincere student of social and political phenomena has to practice close and accurate thinking. An understanding of psychological factors is also necessary.

With best wishes and love.

Yours affectionately  
*Ranchor*

To,  
Parmanand Prasad,  
Political Prisoner,  
Hazaribagh Central Jail.

SELECT LETTERS

Letter from Dr. P.S. Lokanathan

48840  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF APPLIED ECONOMIC RESEARCH  
BOMBAY MUTUAL BUILDING,  
PARLIAMENT STREET,  
NEW DELHI-1.  
S. LOKANATHAN  
FOR-GENERAL  
Telegrams : ARTHSANDAN  
005  
12 1P  
October 10, 1960.

Dear Dr. Prasad,

I must apologise for the delay in acknowledging your excellent publication on "Some Economic Problems of Public Enterprises in India". I have had time to read it a little leisurely during the last few days which were holidays. <sup>Plan</sup> I must here say how much I enjoyed reading it.

*with best regards*

Yours sincerely,

*(P.S. Lokanathan)*

(P.S. Lokanathan)

Dr. Parmanand Prasad,  
Senior Research Officer,  
Indian Institute of Public Administration,  
Indraprastha Estate,  
Ring Road,  
NEW DELHI - 3.

SOME ECONOMIC PROBLEMS  
OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES  
IN INDIA

BY

PARMANAND PRASAD  
M.A., B.L., D. LITT. (ECON. - AMSTERDAM)  
*Lecturer in Economics, Patna University*

1957

H. E. STENFERT KROESE N.V. - LEIDEN

SELECT LETTERS

Letter addressed to Niece (Bina/Veena)

HINDUSTAN STEEL LIMITED  
P. O. HINOO  
RANCHI

My dear Bina,  
I am glad you wrote to me.  
I am myself shocked and surprised at your result. I, however, do not share your mood of defeat. All is not lost, in fact, all is here lost by any one. This is the lesson of life. You need not therefore lose heart. Apply yourself fully to complete at the I. A. S. exams and try to better your result at the next M. A. exam. <sup>from the University of Patna.</sup> Your anxieties should not lead you to seek appointments in low posts. This will be a tragedy of the highest order. Career girls suffer both financially and emotionally in low posts. Our society in fact society anywhere, treats them cruelly. The theory of dignity of labour holds good in text books only for persons working in low paid jobs. It is no use throwing realities under the dressing room carpet in order temporarily to feel emotionally happy. You say, you do want to take up a job so to ease the burdens of your parents. Firstly, your anxieties in this respect are exaggerated and secondly, you should realise that by taking up some useless job you will make us more miserable. I do not think if I or Pabuya

need any financial relief from you or any other child of the family in this manner. We have both of us been proud in some ways and have stamina enough to suffer in silence rather than in the public place. Do you know your marriage and having heard about your preferences for taking up a job for financial reasons, I, for the first time, realised that it was wrong on our part to discuss our financial worries with both children. We have, perhaps, transferred our worries to you. I am quite aware of the difficulties of Pabuya. If anything, I have had more, so I know about your difficulties in respect either of finance or position in life have humbled me. No doubt, but they have never killed me. My ambitions to succeed and go ahead are still alive. It takes time to have what I want, but can you cite a single example of success from life which did not have a price cost? Similarly, my dear daughter, you must take life as you are and not as you wish to be. You are only now entering life. To be defeated in spirit before even joining the battle is certainly not wisdom. Take life normally, abide by the logic of the time, never try to be unnecessarily out of the way and extraordinary, always have faith in your abilities and never regard difficulties as mountain peaks, they look so from a distance only. Go ahead with your studies and you will do well. The rest, for God's sake, leave to us to work after.  
yours affly  
Pamauan.

## Handwriting Converted into Typed Text

Hindustan Steel Limited  
Ranchi

My dear Bina,

I am glad you wrote to me. I am myself shocked and surprised at your result. I, however, do not share your mood of defeat. All is not lost, in fact, all is never lost by any one. This is the lesson of life. You need not therefore lose your heart. Apply yourself fully to compete at the I.A.S. exams and try to better your results at the next M.A. exams from the University of Patna.

Your anxieties should not lead you to seek appointments in low posts. This will be the tragedy of the highest order. Carrier girls suffer both financially and emotionally in low posts. Our society, in fact, society anywhere treats them cruelly. The theory of dignity of labour holds good in the text books only for persons working in low paid jobs. It is no use throwing realities under the drawing room carpet in order temporarily to feel emotionally relieved.

You say, you want to take up a job to ease the burden of your parents. Firstly your anxieties in this respect are exaggerated and secondly, you should realise that by taking up some useless job you will make us more miserable. I do not think if I or Bhaiya need any financial relief from you or any other child of the family in this manner.

We have both of us been proud in some ways and have stamina enough to suffer in silence rather than in the public place. Do you know that having talked to you last time regarding your marriage and having heard about your preferences for taking up a job for financial reasons, I, for the first time realised that it was wrong on our part to discuss our financial worries with children. We have, perhaps, transferred our worries to you.

I am quite aware of the difficulties of Bhaiya. If anything I have had more so: I know about this myself also, but they have never killed

me. My ambitions to succeed and go ahead are still alive. It takes time to what I want, but can you cite a single example of success from life which did not have a time-cost ? Similarly, my dear daughter, you must take life seriously. You are only now entering life. To be defeated in spirit, before even joining the battle is not wisdom.

Take life normally, abide by the logic of time, never try to be unnecessarily out of the way and extraordinary, always have faith in your abilities and never regard difficulties as mountain peaks – they look so from a distance only. Go ahead with your studies and you will do well. The rest, for God's sake, leave it to us to look after.

Yours affectionately, Parmanand

SELECT LETTERS

Letter from Sahajanand Saraswati

All India Kisan Sabha  
(Hind Kisan Sabha)  
Secretary  
SHRI SITARAM ASHRAM  
P.O. & TEL. BHITA E.I.R.  
PATNA.  
SWAMI SAHAJANAND SARASWATI  
Camp  
Laheriasarai  
3.7.47  
No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 194

Dear Paramanandji,  
your note of the 6th. I got it yesterday prior to my departure for Darbhanga (Laheriasarai). The conference will be held today and tomorrow instead of on the 1st and 2nd. These dates had been settled at Jehanabad. Pt Karji too is here as also Pt Jadumandan Sharma.

I was glad to read your letter. It is good that you have decided to reside at Patna after resigning your post at Begusarai. I am writing these lines after having consulted Karji. We are ready to make your person economically free to the best of our capacity as we badly need your services especially just now. We are also glad to note that you do not want your wife and children to be supported by us. You write that you ~~cannot~~ must be housed and fed. All right. But this requires a bit of clarification. So please do write clearly what minimum amount will suffice for the purpose. You know it is very difficult to get a residential house at Patna at a cheap or tolerable rent. Hence we must know your hard and actual needs in rupees, annas and pice so that we may be in a position to make up our mind and see that the same is arranged if it lies within us. As you are frank which we like very much, we too want to be equally frank. We do not and cannot treat as selfish what you write. There is no occasion for that.

requirements between the various solid and lasting bases for cooperation and smooth work. It is why we too are a bit frank.

And if your wife and children are not to be supported, who will take care of them why and how long? And suppose if after sometime you are forced by the circumstances beyond your control, what will you do then? How do you think to meet that emergency? Please reply in brief to all the points raised here.

I shall be proceeding to Calcutta on the 10th to participate in a conference of chosen few called by Shri Sarat Prasad to exchange ideas and review the situation created by the proposed divided India and chalk out if possible a programme to meet successfully that situation and see the "United India" of our dream and conception. The conference lasts for two days - on the 11th and 12th. From there I go to Biharsharif (Patna) for 3 days and to Ekangarsarai (Patna) for a day. Hence I hope to reach back Bihar anytime on the 17th and not before that.

Hoping this finds you cheerful,  
Sincerely yours,  
Swami Sahajanand Saraswati.

P.S.  
It is dangerous to rely upon Prasad Prasad's help in the matter. It is my experience. He will do his work like without our pecuniary help and that is all, at least for some time to come.

SS

## Handwriting Converted into Typed Text

President  
Swami Sahajanand Saraswati

Camp Laheriasarai  
8.7.1947

Dear Parmanand Ji,

Your note of the 6<sup>th</sup>, I got it yesterday prior to my departure for Darbhanga (Lahsiasarai). The conference will be held today and tomorrow instead of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. These dates had been settled at Jahanahad. Pt. Karji too is *here* as also Pt. Jadunandan Sharma.

I was glad to read your letter. It is good that you have decided to reside at Patna after resigning your post at Begusarai. I am writing these lines after having consulted Karjya. We are ready to make your person economically free to the best of our capacity as we badly need your services especially just now. We are also glad to note that you don't want your wife and children to be supported by us. You write that you must be housed and fed. All right. But this requires a bit of clarification. So please do write clearly what minimum amount will suffice for the purpose. You know it is very very difficult to get a residential house at Patna at a cheap or tolerable rent. Hence we must know your hard and actual needs in rupees, annas and pies so that we may be in a position to make up our mind and see that the same is arranged if it lies within us. As you are frank which we like very much, we too want to be equally frank. We do not and cannot treat as selfish what you write. There is no occasion for that. A free and frank expression of ideas needs and requirements between the comrades is the only solid and lasting basis for cooperation and

smooth work. It is why we two are a bit frank.

And if your wife and children are not to be supported, who will take care of them, why and how long? And suppose if after sometime you are forced by the circumstances beyond your control, what will you do then? How do you think to meet that emergency? Please reply in brief to all the points raised here.

I shall be proceeding to Calcutta on 10<sup>th</sup> to participate in a Conference of chosen few called by Sarat Babu to exchange ideas and review the situation created by the proposed divided India and chalk out if possible a programme to meet successfully that situation and see the "United India" of our dream and conception. The conference lasts for two days on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. From there I shall go to Biharsharif (Patna) for 3 days and to Ekangarsarai (Patna) for a day. Hence I hope to reach Bihta anytime on 17<sup>th</sup> and not before. Hoping this finds you cheerful.  
Sincerely yours,  
Sahajanand Saraswati



## Handwriting Converted into Typed Text

President Swami  
Sahajanand Saraswati

Shri Sitaram Ashram  
Bihta, Patna  
19.12.1947

Dear Parmanand Ji

I got your letter of the 2nd after my return here on the 7th. I am awfully tired and yet I must start for Gaya via Naubatpur (Patna) only tomorrow afternoon and meanwhile I must reply to all the letters that are accumulating here. So you may better imagine my condition while writing these.

We held our leftist meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November at Lala Shankarlal's 16, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi. R.S.P., F.B., Democratic Vanguard, Kisan Sabha, I.N.A., C.P. and T.U.C. were represented at the meeting. First day Com. Faruqui of C.P. came to me to enquire if the C.P. had been invited saying that it had got no formal invitation. After I had told him in the affirmative he attended the first day meeting only as an observer on behalf of the C.P. In the end he requested me to meet Mr. P.C. Joshi who was near at hand and promised to bring a car next morning to take me to P.C. Joshi's residence. I went there, had a brief talk with P.C. and requested him to attend the meeting, which he did that (next) day.

Com. Sudhan Gupta had a brief draft in his hands next day, because the real meeting took place that day, first day being one of the preliminaries only. Sudhan Gupta's draft was in English while Com. Keshava Sharma of R.S.P. had a Hindi draft. These two had been prepared by way of preamble to the actual programme to be adopted and attached to them by us. They both narrated the gradually ripening crisis leading to the 1942 August days which most clearly strengthened the united front of the oppressed masses. It further made it clear that democratic evolution having succeeded it was time now for revolutionary forces to march towards social or proletarian revolution and fight the reactionary leadership in and outside the Congress. It declared that the Congress had entered into an alliance with the British vested interests for fear of the masses and their upsurge. According to this draft the division of the country was a desire simply to strengthen and continue the hold of the Indian vested interest, and through it that of the British capital over the

Indian people.

Comrade P.C. Joshi did not like the reference of 1942 though he did not say so openly. He in that context wanted to avoid it. This was the first point of vital difference. The next point according to him was that a democratic revolution remained yet to be fulfilled and the stage for social revolution had not been reached. So he wanted to strengthen the congress government's hands, which was fighting the fascism and its tendencies in the forms of communal riots.

Thus we stood face to face with two opposite approaches to the political situation with no meeting ground. We went on discussing for hours together and even on the third day when P.C. and Shah Nawaz prepared a draft but that too was unacceptable to others. At first P.C. did not lay blame on the reactionary leadership of the Congress for affording opportunity for the reactionary tendencies to raise their hands, but later on he inserted somewhere in the latter part his statement a sentence more or less to that effect, and yet his draft was not acceptable to others.

In the end it was decided to hold a bigger and formal conference at Patna from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1948 and as a preliminary to it all the left organizations were asked to send to me their criticism of these statements to reach me by the 16<sup>th</sup> of January. I am to prepare a statement, if possible on the basis of those statements and criticism and the same should be placed before the Conference on the 21.1.48.

These are in brief the facts and points that have emerged out of our efforts so far at Delhi and elsewhere. I hope I have clarified the position. Now you are to prepare a statement on behalf of the Kisan Sabha which may very cleverly avoid the main points of difference and emphasize the agreed ones. Comrade do it? If not come to Bihta or Patna between 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> for the purpose.

Sincerely Yours  
Swami Sahajanand Saraswati

SELECT LETTERS

Letter from Premier, Bihar and Letter from Revenue Minister, Bihar

PREMIER, BIHAR  
PATNA.  
The 20th January 1955

no 205

Dear Parmanand,

I have your letter of the 3rd January.

I am touched with your sentiments for me and thank you for the same. I am glad that you have taken the whole thing in the right spirit and I am happy that you are thinking and acting on the right lines.

Yours sincerely,  
*S.K. Sinha*  
(S.K. Sinha),

To  
Shri Parmanand Ji,  
10 Serpentine Road, Patna.

D. O. No. 804 M(R)  
MINISTER,  
REVENUE, FOREST AND  
EXCISE, BIHAR.  
PATNA.  
3. 4. 19 55.

My dear Parmanand,

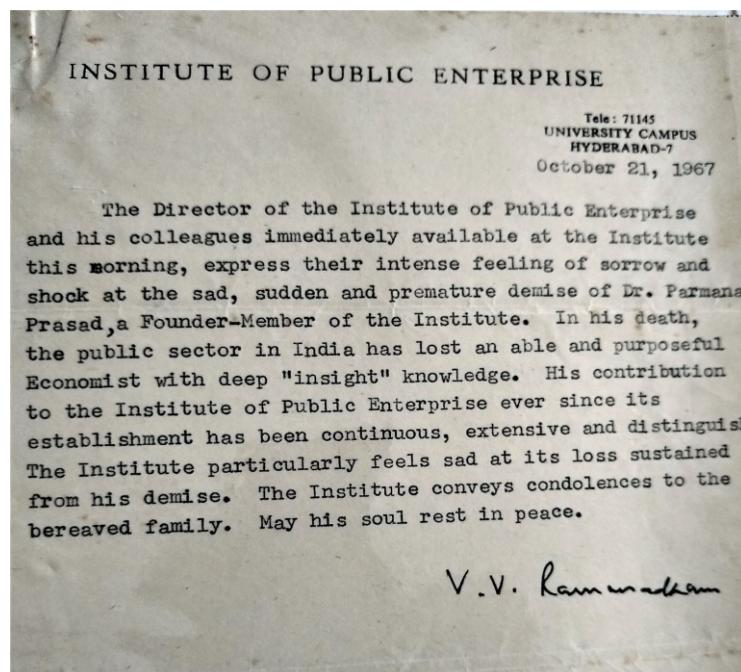
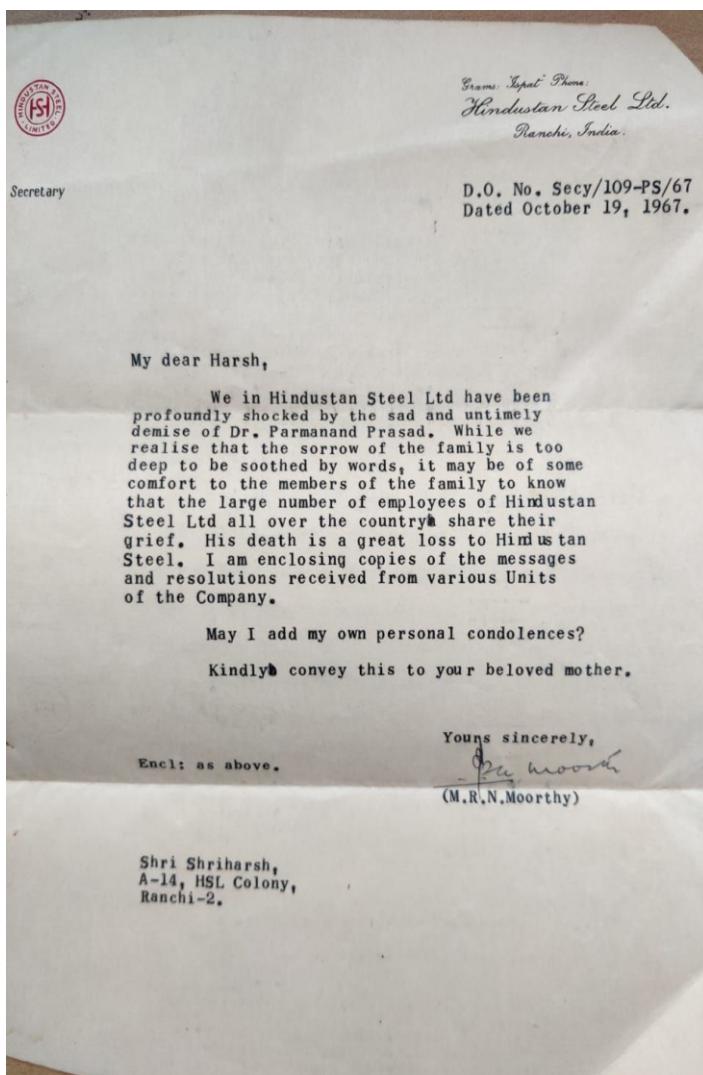
This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 22.3.55. It is so refreshing to get a letter from you from London and, still more, heartening your appreciation for the Land Reforms Bill which I am trying to introduce. You seem to be leading a very hard life in London which is not bad. But if I could help you I shall certainly extend my co-operation.

Yours sincerely,  
*K. Sinha*  
4/4/55

Shri Parmanand Prasad,  
28, West Cromwell Road,  
LONDON. S.W.5

## SELECT LETTERS

### Letter from Secretary, H.S.L and Letter from Director, I.P.E.



The Coffee Table Book is a tribute to the memory of Parmanand Prasad (1921-67) who was an eminent economist and had been a freedom fighter in his youth. Although he lived a short life, three distinct phases in his life are easily discernible namely, struggle against the imperial power, speaking for kisans and against zamindars and playing a part in the reconstruction of the country after Independence.

He received his D. Litt. from the University of Amsterdam in 1957 on his thesis titled 'Some Economic Problems of Public Enterprises in India', which was later published. In his Preface to the book, Professor Abram May, his guide stated, 'I wish this book... in the hands of leading and responsible personalities not only in India, but also in other countries....Cooperation – worldwide - and exchange of ideas, principles and practices open a way of progress to unity of mankind...Mr Prasad's work can be a building-stone for the bridge from man to man that will unite the nations'.



Bertrand Russel gracing the occasion of the Award of the D.Litt. degree.