

R K SWAMY

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

From humble village origins to the top rungs of a contemporary profession.



V S Chakrapani

V Ramnarayan

R K Swamy was an unusual advertising professional. He was born in a humble background in a village near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu, India in 1922. The family's poverty made them move to Bombay in an effort to make a living. He was enrolled in a neighbourhood School where the primary language was Gujarati. As soon as he finished School, he had to go looking for a job.

His break with the world of advertising took place when he was given a temporary posting at J Walter Thompson Eastern Limited as a translator from English to Gujarati in 1940. From thereon, he became a self-taught professional through sheer hard work.

Later in his life, when faced with a professional crisis, he created his own enterprise, R K Swamy Advertising Associates which went on to become a leader in the business.

As an educationist he was instrumental in expanding the Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls Schools in Chennai to serve the needs of over 3,500 students.

An ardent devotee of his religious order the Ahobila Math, he served with great dedication, renovating old temples and even building new ones.

In all walks of life, he was acknowledged as a man of principles and unquestionable integrity.

This book is for all young men and women who wish to take a peek at the origins of a leading Indian advertising and marketing services group. It is the story of a man who lifted himself, and thousands of others, up in life, without compromising his values, and standing tall and unwavering by the causes he held dear.

Threats and Coercion (Force)
The rise of a multitude of competing
ideas open the consumer to the consumer
desires of his controlling power and
choice

of new commodities, improvements
in old commodities. A basis for
It is clear from the history of
new ideas were thus brought
to national advertising became
an educational force. This
was due to scientific invention
because one could straightaway
to the court of public opinion.

The teacher, editor, publisher are
personal biases through their own
and racial. Concealed bias is
than avowed bias; for advertisement
commercial purpose, the reader
discovers its statements.

10. Advertising has to appeal
promptly buying. Advertising
desire. As an undelivered
message, the advertiser finds it
insure a reading by making it
interesting. An author can also
verdict of passing, but the advertiser
to reach his public today, fails

R K Swamy's Credo:

The ability to separate

- milk from water
- the core from the mass
- the essential from the irrelevant

R K SWAMY

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

From humble village origins to the top rungs of a contemporary profession.

EDITOR **V S CHAKRAPANI**

BIOGRAPHER **V RAMNARAYAN**



V RAMNARAYAN, *Biographer*

Ramnarayan is a prolific writer known for his fluent style and interesting anecdotes delivered with precision and authenticity. His published works include his Mosquitos and Other Jolly Rovers, The Story of Tamil Nadu Cricket, All in the Game (a book on Madras Cricket Club) and Winning Through (a book on Indian players at the 1999 Cricket World Cup).

He has over the decades been a contributor to The Hindu, Businessline, Business India, Economic Times, Indian Express, Sunday Express, Wisden Cricket Asia, Cricinfo, Chennai Online, Sportstar and Sportsweek. As a first class cricketer, he enjoyed considerable success at the Ranji Trophy, Duleep Trophy, Deodhar Trophy and Irani Cup levels, representing Hyderabad, South Zone and the Rest of India. An off spinner, he figured in BCCI's official list of Test probables on more than one occasion during the Prasanna-Venkatraghavan era.



V S CHAKRAPANI, *Editor*

Mr V S Chakrapani joined R K SWAMY BBDO Private Limited in 1989 as Secretary and Financial Adviser. He became a Director in 1994 and from 2000 onwards he was involved in special tasks assigned to him from time-to-time.

He started his life in Railway Workshops like Chittaranjan Loco Works and Integral Coach Factory, Perambur. Later he worked for two decades in BHEL, Trichy where he rose to the position of General Manager (Finance). Prior to joining R K SWAMY BBDO, he was Director - Finance of Kudremukh Iron Core Company.

Mr Chakrapani took on the task of editing this book and engaged the services of the biographer. He has been fully involved in getting all the finer details ironed out before getting this book published.

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The book contains certain advertisements designed and released by J Walter Thompson when R K Swamy was working there and other advertisements designed and released by R K SWAMY BBDO on behalf of its clients. These ads, photos and other designs find a place in the book to portray the contributions made by Swamy and the respective copyright of the advertisements, photos & designs vest with various companies and not with the copyright holder.

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P R E F A C E

What makes this gentleman, Mr R K Swamy so special? Is it the fact that he came from a very humble village background and made his mark in the world of advertising? Is it because of his success in an intellectually oriented profession without being formally educated? Is it because that this person could make such an impact on an all India basis starting out his agency in Chennai, in a Bombay-centric world? Is it because of his ability to quote from itihasas, puranas, vedas and epics and relating it to any issue at hand? Or is it because of his devotion to religion, education, women's empowerment, management movement or as an ardent spokesman for the advertising industry?

To me he was special because he valued self-respect beyond anything else. When he had to give up all the comfort, security and position he enjoyed at a leading organisation at the age of 50, and started his own business, he did so to hold his head high. For a conservative brahmin from Chennai who had four daughters for marriage and all his six children either in school or college, he risked all his savings in a new business. A major, shaky step indeed!

But that he succeeded is no miracle, in hindsight. His hard work, meticulous planning, financial discipline, coupled with a risk taking ability based on his confidence of tomorrow being better... he was no ordinary man!

After his demise in June 2003, the Board of Directors of R K SWAMY BBDO met to record his contribution to the industry and to the Company. After some discussions, the Board felt it would be unfair to this great man if his story was not told in a manner that befit him! Hence this book!

Many people have been involved in getting this book written and published. Our beloved Director, Mr V S Chakrapani was

assigned the responsibility to be the Editor of this book and he took on this challenging assignment with tireless enthusiasm. But for his effort and dedication, this book would have been a mere idea.

Mr Chakrapani engaged the services of Mr V Ramnarayan a renowned writer. Between Ram and he, they decided that Ram would meet with many people Mr Swamy worked with in his various capacities, to get to the essence of the man. Ram spoke to dozens of people in different parts of India and the first section of the book, the biography, is the outcome of such an effort.

Section 2 contains 'Tributes' written by 25 people who have had personal experience with Mr Swamy. These are his clients, friends and other associates in various organisations he was involved in.

Section 3 comprises Reminiscences of 17 people extracted from what they wrote as articles. Editor has taken the liberty to condense them for which he wishes to apologise to each one of the authors.

Interesting advertising examples from R K SWAMY BBDO, a collection of principles he used to guide the destiny of his company, and a brief introduction of the enterprise he created are added to this book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is important that I record here the help that we received from many people. I would like to express my thanks to them individually. Various organizations like Advertising Club, Madras, Madras Management Association, Advertising Agencies Association of India, Audit Bureau of Circulation, Advertising Standards Council of India helped by providing photographs, identifying past president and members, besides giving the list of participants in the events which Mr Swamy attended. Mr C L D Gupta, retired Group Creative

Director of J Walter Thompson and a close associate of Mr Swamy provided old photographs and advertisements that were released during Mr Swamy's period with HTA.

M K Raju Consultants has provided a nice photograph of Mr Swamy and Mr M K Raju. Picture of Subhas Ghosal and R K Swamy came from the former's son Sumantra. Various offices of R K SWAMY BBDO provided us samples of creative work and photographs for the book. The Hindu and The Statesman, Kolkata were kind enough to provide various ads released by R K Swamy Advertising Associates in its early days. Sri Sukar Ashramam provided us with some photographs of their events with Mr. Swamy.

Mr K R Bilimoria, Mr R Raman and Mr P Dhanasekhar provided us with certain unique photographs/ads. The staff members of Sri Nrisimhapriya were helpful in providing valuable inputs for the book. The company employees have contributed their skills and creativity (in particular S Ramesh, Raju Gondhlekhar, Kumar Aiyar, S Ranganathan, R Guruvayurappan, Dhawal Malekar, M S Ramesh, S K Sivasankar, K Ravi and a host of others) to bring the book to its final shape. Artist Anil Naik has done fine illustrations of Mr Swamy separating the sections. My thanks are due to all of them.

I also want to formally thank the family members of Mr Swamy who not only found time to give interviews readily, but also provided us with photographs for the book.

Mr Swamy was always humble while doing remarkable things. It is our duty to continue to build on what he has left. Whatever we do, given the start that he has given us, it will hardly compare to the legacy he has left behind.

Srinivasan K Swamy
March 5, 2007

B I O G R A P H Y





“R K Swamy
was indeed an unusual man.”

He left us a few years ago, but even today the name R K Swamy evokes eulogistic responses from a wide spectrum of people who came into contact with him. Paeans of praise - what appear to be platitudes, hyperbole, occasionally words of grudging respect - come tumbling out from admirer after admirer, until you start wondering if the object of all this adulation could have existed in flesh and blood. Was this man for real? Can a single individual combine so many admirable traits, such a variegated array of talents, yet remain unspoiled by it all, essentially god-fearing and philanthropic, putting community before self, knowledge before worldly wealth? Somewhere along the way, you realize that these are not mere words dictated by the need to praise someone for gain, real or imagined.

R K Swamy was indeed an unusual man. Professional, social, religious - take any aspect of life - he was a complete individual, according to one former employee, “very well read in Vedic philosophy, totally devoted to the Ahobila Math, and we all know his eminence in advertising.”

According to another, he contributed more of his energies to causes that would benefit the advertising profession than any of his peers.

“In the cynical world of advertising, in which good-humoured deprecation is the farthest form of expression of loyalty to their vocation most practitioners allow themselves, he was unabashedly committed to what he described as the greatest profession in the world,” marvels an ad filmmaker who admired him from a distance. “I knew he cut a striking figure in suit and tie in boardrooms and at agency presentations, towering over everyone with his tall, imposing presence,” he continues, “but to go on a temple tour and see him emerge from the inner courtyard of one of them, resplendent in traditional dhoti, and

INTRODUCTION



Swamy as President of Advertising Agencies Association of India organized a Convention of Advertising Agencies in 1984 to discuss the industry's problems for the first time. Others seated L - R: Prakash Hansraj, Harish Jain and P V Gadgil.

vermillion and sandal marks of devotion to the Lord prominent on his forehead and upper body, was a stunning revelation of a side of his personality I had not known till then.”

A contemporary senior advertising professional describes him as a strong man in a weak world, one of the early icons of Indian advertising, a living embodiment of the ethic that equates work with worship.

“He was a humanist and laid stress on the social and national obligations of his enterprise as well as those of his clients,” is the assessment made by a long time associate.

A contemporary advertising legend describes him as a strong man in a weak world, one of the early icons of Indian advertising, a living embodiment of the ethic that equates work with worship.

“He understood the DNA of the client,” says a senior executive in the agency he founded; he has never got over the awe Swamy inspired in him when he started working with him a couple of decades ago.

“Any problem of the client is a problem of the agency. They have placed their trust in us, and we are spending their money for them. We should produce results for them,” quotes a veteran art director, who worked in close proximity with him, in the heady days of JWT's beginnings in Madras.

“I was twice the copywriter, four times the ad man, working under Mr Swamy”, confesses another hard-core advertising man.

A finance professional, who found in him an expert in finance, law, and advertising, likens him to the HANSA, of the R K SWAMY logo, capable of separating milk from water.

A long time associate and major client of



Swamy supported the formation of the Advertising Standards Council of India in 1985. He was the Chairman of ASCI in 1988-89.





Swamy's contribution to the Rotary movement is noteworthy. Here he receives a memento from Sardar Ujjal Singh, Governor of Tamil Nadu, at a Rotary District Conference in 1966.

“I think with this approach you will be wasting your money, but if you are determined to waste your money, you may as well waste it through me!”

the past remembers Swamy as a clear thinker and analyst. He places him on par with Subhas Ghosal, Gerson da Cunha, Mani Ayer and other members of Indian advertising's super elite of all time.

“I would put him right there at the top. He was not lesser than any of them.” According to him, Swamy was one of the first advertising professionals to foster the concept of client-agency partnership. “Most advertising agency heads tend to be very good advertising professionals but very few are good



Swamy as Chairman, Audit Bureau of Circulations, addressing the AGM in 1984. Seated L - R: Saroj Goenka (Indian Express), Mammen Varghese (Malayala Manorama), R Lakshmiopathy (Dinamalar) and M Yunus Dehvi (Shama Magazine).

business leaders,” he continues, “Mr Swamy was an outstanding business leader. He had a very clear vision of what he wanted to be, and where he wanted to go. His vision was to be world class.”

Almost all the people he came into contact with, be they clients, colleagues senior, peer or junior, creative or business, fellow Rotarians, school principals,



Swamy enjoyed a close relationship with the 44th Jeer of the Ahobila Math.

bureaucrats, recipients of his largesse, members of his religious fraternity, newspaper publishers and members of his extended family are unanimous in their view that he was a man of integrity: principled, disciplined, ethical. He would sacrifice business if it meant compromising his values.

An oft repeated story has him telling his client, bent upon an approach he did not approve of, “I think with this approach you will be wasting your money, but if you are determined to waste your money, you may as well waste it through me!” He always saw the agency as the custodian of the client's finances, which it spent for the client, and therefore must do so as if the money belonged to the agency.

“He was a perfectionist, always punctual, always well dressed, a strong critic of his own agency's output”, according to a former client. He would not hesitate to withdraw a campaign, if he thought it did not fit in with his own expectations.

A strong critic of his own agency's output

he might have been, but he also almost never berated or treated harshly any member of his team if a campaign or advertisement did not meet these standards but instead offered constructive criticism that stood the recipient in good stead. Ask any employee who was ever at the receiving end, and this is the standard response.

Swamy was known to be a superb communicator whose preparation for his speeches and presentations was thorough and based on solid research. Even though he never went to college, he had an excellent grasp of the English language, which he used to telling effect - with eloquent passion when the occasion demanded. He was known for his clarity of expression, his unambiguous style. He was widely read and knowledgeable, especially in the Hindu scriptures, from which he could quote at will.

To many who came under his influence professionally, he was an elder brother and an old friend who was available to them as a staunch ally, especially in times of adversity.

He encouraged young talent, especially if it came from a humble background, and was known to fight for the underdog throughout his career. Even in the evening of his career, he made time for young people who could go to him with their troubles or philosophical, moral or ethical dilemmas, and he would give them a patient hearing, though his response was not always predictable.

To him, friendship and loyalty meant standing up for people in times of trouble. He never turned away anyone who approached him with a request for help, financial or otherwise, say his family and friends. When an intrepid journalist was harassed by the government for an expose, Swamy unwaveringly stood by him. The journalist's moving tribute to Swamy appears elsewhere in this book.

For a man of a charitable disposition who grew up steeped in the traditions common to his orthodox vaishnavite Brahmin background, it may not be surprising that

Swamy gave generously to temples for their upkeep and renovation. But his religiosity and philanthropy went beyond that. What struck people involved in conserving our traditions and heritage was his total dedication to the sustenance, nurturing and resuscitation of institutions of religious and philosophical learning. His deep interest in reviving and furthering the beautiful temple rituals which were vanishing for want of support was commendable. So were his enthusiastic attempts to network with NRI youth by involving them in the upkeep of temples in their homeland.

His role in the preservation and propagation of vaishnavism included his contribution of the ninth tier of the Srirangam temple tower erected in 1983, from his personal funds; the rebuilding and consecration of an eighth century shrine in the Oppiliyappan temple in Thanjavur district; the renovation of another eighth century temple at Terazhundur, near Mayiladuthurai;

Swamy's devotion to the Ahobila Math was total. He was actively involved in vedic education sponsored by the Math. Shown here - The Veda Pathasala of Sri Ahobila Math, Selaiyur.



He was widely read and knowledgeable, especially in the Hindu scriptures, from which he could quote at will.

setting right the utsava murti at the venerated Sarangapani temple at Kumbakonam; and his donation of a significant part of the investment in the renovation and consecration of the Sarangapani temple as Chairman of the Renovation Committee. These acts have earned him a place of reverence among followers of the faith.

His devotion to the Ahobila Math, the spiritual home of vaishnavites was extraordinary. That the hallowed centre of Ahobilam is today comfortably accessible and offers excellent facilities for visitors is largely due to Swamy 's munificence and missionary zeal in mobilizing support. He was the moving spirit behind the grand Sixth Centenary Celebrations of the Math in 1998, when the Ahobilam Complex in Andhra Pradesh was renovated.

The official publication of the Math, Sri Nrisimhapriya is a first rate journal today, high in production values and content. Swamy took over the management of the periodical back in the sixties and enhanced its quality, maintaining it over the decades. No stone has been left unturned in these worthy endeavours.

Swamy was the co-founder and President of Sri Visishtadvaita Research Centre, a voluntary organisation that supports Vedic and Sanskrit studies. He extended substantial organizational and financial support to an oriental school run by the Centre at Madhurantakam near Chennai.

Swamy built around him a dedicated band of friends and likeminded volunteers with

whose help he was able to make giant strides in all the activities he took up.

“Despite his deeply religious nature, Mr Swamy held a catholic and inclusive view of life. Vaishnavism did not preclude him from building relationships with people of other backgrounds and faiths. Some of his close and trusted friends were from other sects and R K SWAMY BBDO as an organisation has people of different beliefs from all parts of the country.” These are the words of a former corporate chief who shared an unusual bond with the considerably older Swamy in his last years, even acquiring a belief in the supernatural in the process.

Besides being religious, Swamy also had a strong faith in rituals and belief systems that some of us may dismiss as superstition. Auspicious and inauspicious times as prescribed in Hindu sastras played an important part in Swamy's scheme of things. He would never start any activity of significance during parts of the day demarcated as inauspicious periods. He believed in astrology, which he learnt to practise quite expertly, according to a close friend.

The practice of a soothsayer reading from palm leaf manuscripts, to aid in decision making, found great favour with him. He rarely took a major decision without consulting the sage who he believed advised him through these readings. This is probably

He was the moving spirit behind the grand Sixth Centenary Celebrations of the Math in 1998, when the Ahobilam complex in Andhra Pradesh was renovated.



Always happy to participate in the activities of the school he engineered, Swamy inaugurates the Annual Exhibition of Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya Senior Secondary School held in 1991.

the only aspect of Swamy 's life that did not entirely meet with approval from his family.

Deprived of college education by poverty and family responsibilities he had to shoulder at an early age, Swamy was a great believer in the power of formal education. He strongly advocated the cause of empowerment of women, and led the way by educating his own daughters to post graduate studies and more. "He made sure that he gave all of us every opportunity to pursue higher education," say his daughters. Both his sons and his four daughters are highly educated and each of them has postgraduate and professional qualifications.

His interest in women's education was

more abiding than that. Associated with the National Boys' and Girls' Education Society since 1964, and its President from 1987 to his death in 2003, he developed a new co-educational school, Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya to which he donated handsomely, besides closely monitoring its affairs. "The school represented his dream and vision for 21st century Indian education. In it he had made a huge emotional investment..." says a former principal of the school.

"Above all, he was a patriot, who believed that India would one day emerge as a super power", says another friend and former colleague. His patriotism directed all his activities, professional, social and religious,

“The school represented his dream and vision for 21st century Indian education. In it he had made a huge emotional investment...”

and yes, even his passion for cricket - he was the most enthusiastic supporter of the Indian cricket team no matter who the opposition might be.

It gave him the confidence to start his own agency after he quit India's biggest agency, which like leading agencies of the time, was foreign owned. It gave him pride in the mission that the better public sector undertakings were trying to accomplish: that of transforming an ancient civilisation into a modern, vibrant society. And when he brought these public sector undertakings one by one into the fold of the advertiser community, he was not merely acting as a businessman intent on furthering his own interests, but assiduously creating new perceptions about these mega enterprises in the national psyche.

His own offspring believe that to Swamy whatever he did was a cause he championed, not a job or task. According to them, 'He

gave the first 32 years of his advertising career to J Walter Thompson for whom he worked. This was one of his earliest causes. The next thirty years were devoted to the cause of R K SWAMY BBDO, the agency he founded and nurtured.'

Swamy reserved his most passionate devotion to the cause of his own industry. As one of the pioneers of Indian advertising, he was often the one tall figure his peers looked up to, to fight unreasonable, unfair, or unjust moves against the industry. Swamy was never found wanting in that role of opinion leader. Whether it was the Indian Newspaper Society attempting to reduce the credit period allowed to agencies or the Government of India disallowing advertising expenditure for tax purposes, it was he who spearheaded the opposition to such moves, building a strong case each time for the industry, based on solid facts and figures. Almost everyone who has been anyone in



Swamy teamed up with BBDO in 1985, twelve years after he started on his own. Geoffrey Wild (Chairman, Asatsu BBDO Clemenger Ltd) and Willi Schalk (President - BBDO International) came to India to formalise this.

Indian advertising has lauded the major role he played as the industry's voice.

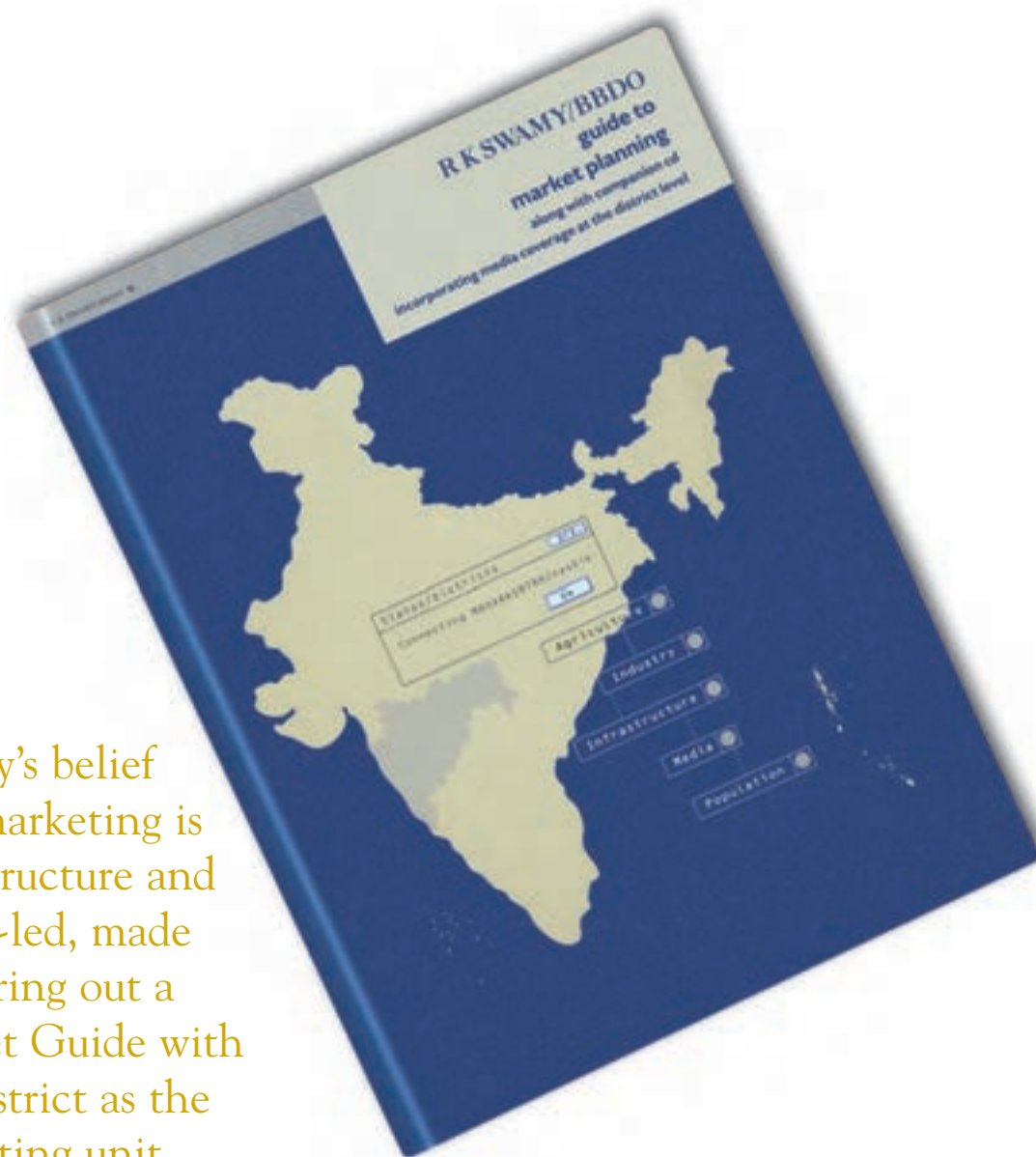
In 1972 the management of JWT (by then Hindustan Thompson Associates or HTA) decided to appoint an outsider with no advertising background to head the company, overlooking Swamy's obvious credentials. People who sympathized with him then and felt he was wronged, also admired him for his principled stand and the courage with which he quit Thompson and started a new agency bearing his name. They also respected him for not attempting to persuade HTA clients to move over to his agency, as that would be unethical. But a number of them did in fact switch over to R K Swamy Advertising Associates in time. In Swamy's own words, "We did not believe in cannibalizing or pinching accounts. My greatest contribution is that I have brought in a large number of first time advertisers both in JWT and in

R K Swamy Advertising Associates."

If bringing in first time advertisers was a worthy achievement, persuading public sector enterprises to advertise was a major accomplishment. Some derided him as a "public sector wallah", although there were no easy victories in winning PSUs over. A senior advertising heavyweight credits him with creating a value for advertising in the public sector, opening its eyes to the need for publicising the sector's contributions to the economy and society, the social security blanket it provided to tens of thousands of employees, the educational and medical facilities it extended to their families.

If Swamy was a pathbreaker when he founded a full fledged wholly Indian owned advertising agency at a time when multinationals were the norm, he broke fresh ground once again when, recognizing the need for India to integrate with the world

Swamy's belief that marketing is infrastructure and media-led, made him bring out a Market Guide with the district as the marketing unit.



economy, he sought and cemented an alliance with BBDO Worldwide in 1985. What began as a non-equity deal changed in 1989 and BBDO became an equity partner when the Government of India policies changed to allow equity transfer to overseas partners.

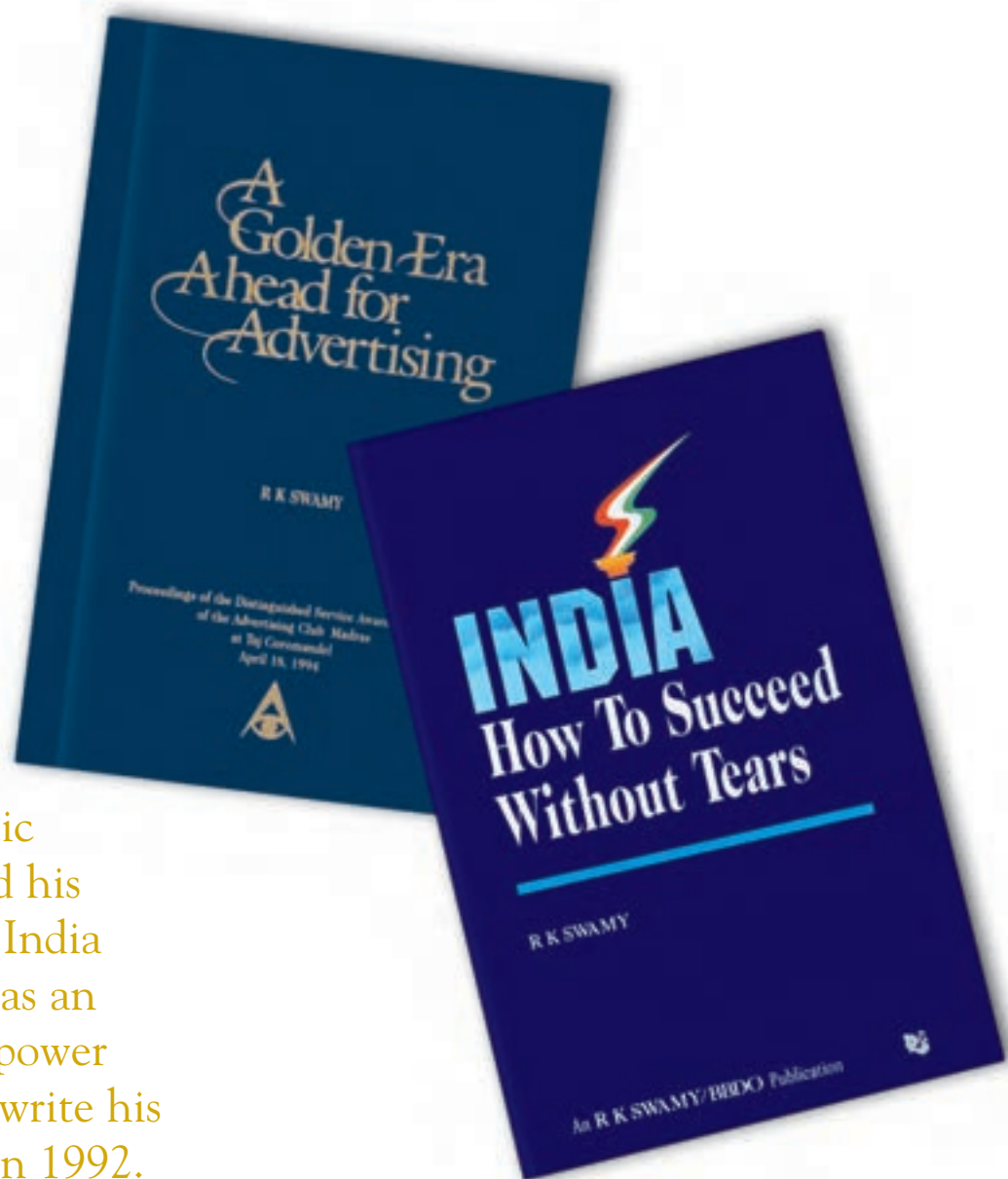
An equal share in the equity shareholdings was effected by his company when the Government allowed majority holdings by foreign advertising agencies and here again, Swamy was the first to apply this concept

in practice.

Swamy created Hansavision as an independent programme producer for TV channels and to sell advertising time to advertisers. Hansavision has produced over 6500 hours of high quality programming covering mythologicals, serials, sporting and musical events.

A firm believer in research as the foundation for good advertising, Swamy created the Hansa Research Group which

His patriotic fervour and his belief that India would rise as an economic power made him write his first book in 1992.



has developed over the years into a powerhouse of research. Besides providing the basis for excellent consumer insights for the industry at large, Hansa Research also provided the substance for a number of important publications.

Apart from achieving excellence in professional skills and business administration, Swamy bestowed his attention on the activities of public bodies and associations. They in turn recognized his meritorious

contribution and yeoman service by awarding him suitably. Important events with which Swamy was associated are highlighted below:

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Advertising Club Calcutta's Hall of Fame in 1985: Inducted for meritorious services rendered to the industry (citation at page no 17).

Distinguished Service Award of the

INTRODUCTION

Advertising Club, Madras in 1994: First recipient of the honour (citation at page no 18).

Advertising Agencies Association of India Award in 1998: For outstanding contribution to the growth and development of the industry (citation at page no 19).

Lifetime Achievement Award of the Madras Management Association in 2001: First and only recipient of the honour (citation at page no 21).

R K Swamy receiving the first Distinguished Service Award conferred by the Advertising Club, Madras, on April 14, 1994, from A M M Arunachalam, Murugappa Group. R V Rajan, President of the Club, looks on.





In recognition of
his signal contribution to the
development of advertising
in this country


Mr R K Swamy

has been elected to the
Advertising Club Calcutta

HALL OF FAME

DATE July 26, 1985

Sanku Debchoudhury
PRESIDENT



ADVERTISING CLUB MADRAS

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

CITATION

For the first time, in the history of Advertising Club Madras a Distinguished Service Award is being instituted. It is the proud privilege of the Club and its present Managing Committee to introduce this Award and confer it on an individual of great intellect whose meaningful contribution to the development of advertising in India and active involvement in several social, cultural and religious activities has been a beacon showing the way for succeeding generations:

Sri. R.K. SWAMY

A man whose professionalism, leadership qualities and unwavering commitment enabled him to rise to the highest echelons of Management, from very modest beginnings in a career spanning 32 years with JWT/HTA.

A man whose pioneering efforts helped develop the basic infrastructure for advertising agency business in Madras, and whose dynamism and business acumen developed and built an Advertising Agency network — R.K.Swamy/BBDO — which later went global with a view to realising the potential of international opportunities.

A man who has creatively utilised the medium of advertising in tackling social problems like Family Planning and Rural Development.

As the President of the Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI), he stoutly defended the cause of advertising agencies with his negotiating skills.

And won several laurels as the head of business related organisations like Audit Bureau of Circulation and Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) which he helped form as the Founder President and won recognition in the Hall of Fame in Calcutta along with other peers in advertising.

A man who has been the inspiring force that promoted the Advertising Club of Madras in its nascent stage.

A man who has also promoted advertising education through a presentation he made to the STACA Committee for establishing an Advertising Institute.

As the only advertising professional to have occupied the chair of the President of All India Management Association (AIMA), the apex body of management institutions, he earned the distinction of being named a lifelong Honorary Fellow of AIMA for his outstanding contributions to the Management movement through innovative ideas.

A man who as a leading Rotarian of his time and as the President of the Rotary Club of Madras contributed trend setting ideas of the time. Like the first ever Business Conference, a colloquium on the 'Place of English in our Educational System' and a seminar on 'Service through Self Reliance' he organised in Madras.

A man who as the President of the National Boys and Girls Education Society, developed a new school with CBSE curriculum in the Centenary Memorial Building of Sri. P.S. Subramania Aiyer.

And who as President of the Vishistadvaita Research Centre, runs a 50 years old Oriental Educational Institution at Madurantakam and has recently published a book titled 'A dialogue on Hinduism' intended for the younger generation.

A man of charitable disposition who has contributed to the consecration of the 9th tier of Srirangam Temple Tower and rebuilt a shrine devoted to Lord Narayana at Oppiliappan Koil and at the behest of HR & CE Board performed the reconsecration function, and who is currently the Chairman of the Renovation Committee of Lord Sarangapani Temple at Kumbakonam.

This then is Sri. R.K. SWAMY, the man the Advertising Club of Madras has chosen to confer its first Distinguished Service Award on. A multi-faceted personality, who though an Advertising Professional, has also excelled in other spheres such as Education and Religion. A man about whom a lot more can be said and yet, words would not suffice.

Presented on this day, the 18th of April, 1994 to a great leader and a living legend in the Art & Science of Advertising.



Advertising Agencies Association of India

*has pleasure in presenting the
Tenth AAAI - Premnarayan Award
for the year 1997
to*

Mr. R. K. Swamy

*For his outstanding contribution to the
Indian Advertising Industry.*

*For his inspiring leadership, and
his deep and direct involvement,
over the years
with issues pertaining to
raising standards, developing professionalism
as well as the
organised growth of
advertising, marketing and media.*

*For his pioneering spirit and
entrepreneurial vision
through which he has built
one of the foremost institutions
of advertising in India.*

*For his untiring efforts and
for his personal contribution
towards the development of
Public Awareness and Social Change
in the Country.*

INTRODUCTION

PUBLIC OFFICES



Madras Management Association
President, 1972-74



All India Management Association
President, 1977-78



Advertising Agencies Association of India
President 1982-83 and 1983-84



Audit Bureau of Circulation
Chairman 1983-84



Advertising Standards Council of India
Founder member and Chairman, 1988-89

Swamy was active till the age of 80. The accompanying pages narrate his life story from his early years, furnished by his relatives and friends.

On the suggestion of All India Management Association, Madras Management Association honoured Swamy with its first ever Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001. ►

LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

On the occasion of the 28th National Management Convention
MADRAS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Deem it a privilege to bestow upon

Mr R K Swamy

this

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

For

Meaningful Contribution to the Management Movement

Mr R K Swamy an inspiring leader and thorough professional is a self made man. He was actively involved in the formation of the Madras Management Association and served as its President from 1972 to 1974. He took the initiative to promote and organize the First Management Convention in Madras to coincide with the MMA Business Leadership Award given every alternate year which continues to date. The National Management Convention, now conducted by the All India Management Association every year from 1971, is following the model set by him.

As President of the All India Management Association between 1977-78, he promoted the concept of individual membership. It was during his year of office as President a code for practicing managers was formulated and adopted at the National Management Convention held at Madras in 1978. It was at this Convention that decisions were made to recognize practicing managers as Fellows, Members and Associate Members. His contribution to the management movement brought him the honour of being conferred "Fellow Member" and lifelong "Honorary Member" status of the All India Management Association. As leader of the management delegation to Singapore, his presentation on "India Today" at the Asian Association of World Management resulted in persuading a large number of foreigners to come to Delhi, for the World Management Congress in 1978.

As a Rotarian he was responsible for the First Business Relations Conference in Madras in 1964, which focussed attention on the "Social Responsibilities of Business". He took the initiative to organize a Seminar on the "Challenge of Self-Reliance in Industry" in 1966, immediately after the end of the Indo-Pakistan War. This seminar was attended by 27 CSIR Scientists, Union Ministers connected with Industry and Commerce and brought out a blue print on the gaps in our industrial pursuits, particularly related to defence and larger economic self-reliance.

His book "India How to succeed without tears" demonstrates his deep understanding and analysis of what India needs to do to emerge as a serious economic power.

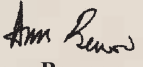
He is one of the prime movers of the advertising industry in India and his mentoring and encouragement provided countless opportunities for people to grow and mature under his guidance. His contributions to the advertising industry led him to be a co-founder of the Ad Club, Madras as President, the Advertising Standards Council of India as its Chairman, President of Advertising Agencies Association of India and as Chairman of the Audit Bureau of Circulations. The Advertising Clubs in Madras and Calcutta, and Advertising Agencies Association of India have recognized him for his lifelong service to the industry in their respective Awards. His speeches on those occasions are significant reference documents on the history of advertising.

His patriotic zeal and everyday spirituality is evident in his interest in Indian heritage, culture and Hindu philosophy. He has been actively involved in restoring old temples and ancient heritage monuments. He is the co-founder of Sri Vishishtadvaita Research Centre, to support Vedic and Sanskrit studies, and is a disciple of the Ahobila Mutt, whose monthly journal Sri Nrisimha Priya he has been running for over 35 years.

He believes in the power of education and is actively associated as President of the National Boys' and Girls' Education Society which runs the Lady Sivaswamy Aiyar Higher Secondary School and Sir Sivaswamy Kalalaya Senior and Higher Secondary Schools. He was responsible for conducting a Convention on the "Place of English in our education system" which was attended by over 3800 academicians and was taken serious note of by educationists and the Government of India.


Madras Management Association is proud to present this award to Mr R K Swamy, a visionary leader, a doyen in the advertising industry, a well rounded personality, who gave the much needed impetus to the management movement in the country.

Chennai
September 8, 2001


Arun Bewoor
Immediate Past President


S Mahalingam
Sr. Vice President


A Satish Kumar
Vice President


Srinivasan K Swamy
President



“We did not believe in cannibalizing or pinching accounts. My greatest contribution is that I have brought in a large number of first time advertisers both in JWT and in R K Swamy Advertising Associates.”



THE EARLY YEARS

Swamy was born to Vaishnavite parents, Rangaswamy Iyengar and Seshammal, on 11 December 1922 at Manganallur village, near the temple town of Kumbakonam, located in the heart of the Thanjavur agricultural belt, some 300 km from Chennai, in Tamil Nadu, India. Ramanujan was the eldest of the children. Besides Swamy, there were three other sons, Kasturi, Narayanan and Vasudevan, and two daughters, Vedavalli and Jayalakshmi. (Narayanan and Vedavalli are still with us).

Like many south Indian children of the time, Swamy had two names: his official name at school and a nickname at home. Named Krishnaswamy at birth, he was known as Mani at home. It was the name of a dear school friend, and Krishnaswamy wanted to be called that. The name stuck, even though it was not a Vaishnavite name, Mani being short for Subramanya, son of Siva. In his grown years, after he shortened his name to R K Swamy, he became just that, or 'RK' to

the outside world.

The early years of Swamy's life were of struggle and uncertainty. It was a period of general want and shortages, when the nation was still very much under British rule, and Gandhiji was leading the Indian National Congress in a movement of non-violent non-cooperation. There was already talk of purna swaraj or total freedom in the air, but independence was still 25 years away.

Life in many an Iyengar and Iyer household of the time was marked by honest poverty and a strong belief in the orthodox brahmin ways of observing religious rituals, learning the scriptures, strict vegetarianism and an austere lifestyle. The joint family system was the norm, and the patriarchal head of the family was invariably the unquestioned leader of the household. Many of these families lived in temple towns like Kumbakonam, and daily visits to the temple provided the spiritual anchor to most of these families.

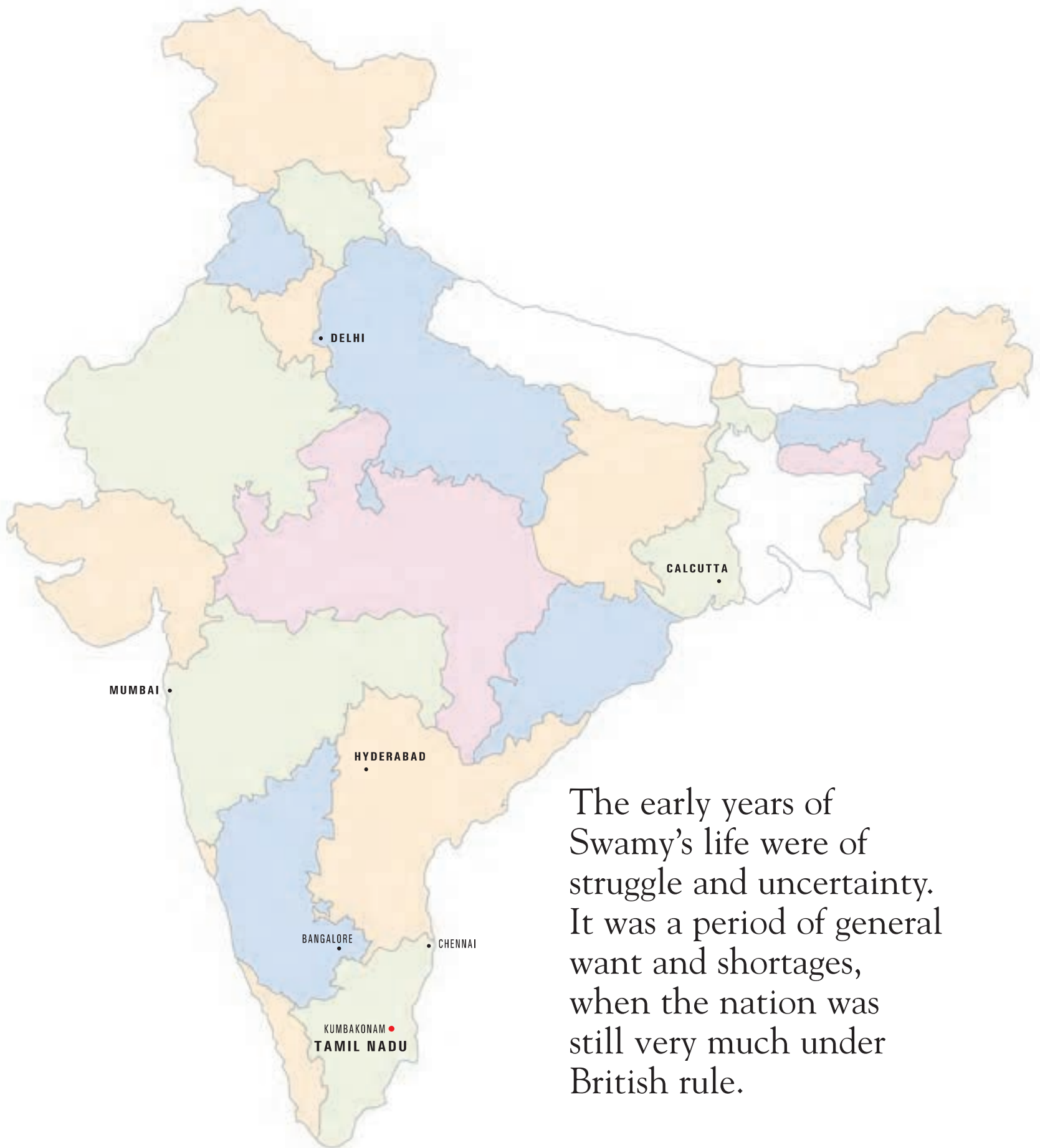


M V Rangaswamy Iyengar
1894 - 1948



Swamy's parents

R Ranganayaki (also known as) Seshammal
1900 - 1967



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The brothers got into a huddle and decided that Swamy should quickly learn stenography and offer to take Kasturi's place at N Powell & Co., while Kasturi made his tryst with the flying club.

Boys practised brahmacharya or a strict regimen of scholarship and religious rituals after undergoing the thread ceremony at an age between seven and eleven. A tonsured head relieved only by a chignon or tuft of hair tied in a knot at the back of the head was the norm for a brahmachari. Only increased contact with the British system of education and employment gradually led to many youngsters shedding their traditional hairstyle

in favour of 'cropped' hair of the 'European' style.

Though there was a strong emphasis on education, of the traditional Vedic kind as well as the formal British school and university education, only a small minority of the community was able to pursue higher studies and build careers. Some assumed priestly duties and some others became school teachers, often poorly paid but enjoying a

Humble beginnings in Bombay for Swamy and his family in the 30's



certain social status.

These were the circumstances Swamy was born into, as grandfather Vedantachari gradually faded away into poverty after inheriting a reasonable amount of wealth. An absentee landlord, who lost his wife at age 32, he spent all his time at the local branch of the Ahobila Math, the spiritual headquarters of vaishnavite Brahmins, a religious institution established more than 600 years ago at a place called Ahobilam, a pilgrimage centre set in thick, hard to reach jungles in Andhra Pradesh.

Grandfather is said to have frittered away a sizable inheritance of some 40 acres of farmland, while enjoying a certain status at the Math, selling his property away bit by bit whenever financial need arose. With his

wife's death, the family became a rudderless, shattered household. The children grew up without the care of a mother and amidst the kind of benign neglect that was common in joint family households of the time, with no one in particular accountable for their upbringing. Rangaswamy Iyengar, Swamy's father, was married in 1908 at the age of 14, to 8-year-old Ranganayaki (also known as) Seshammal. By the time she entered her teens, Seshammal began to do housework and care for her husband's little younger brothers.

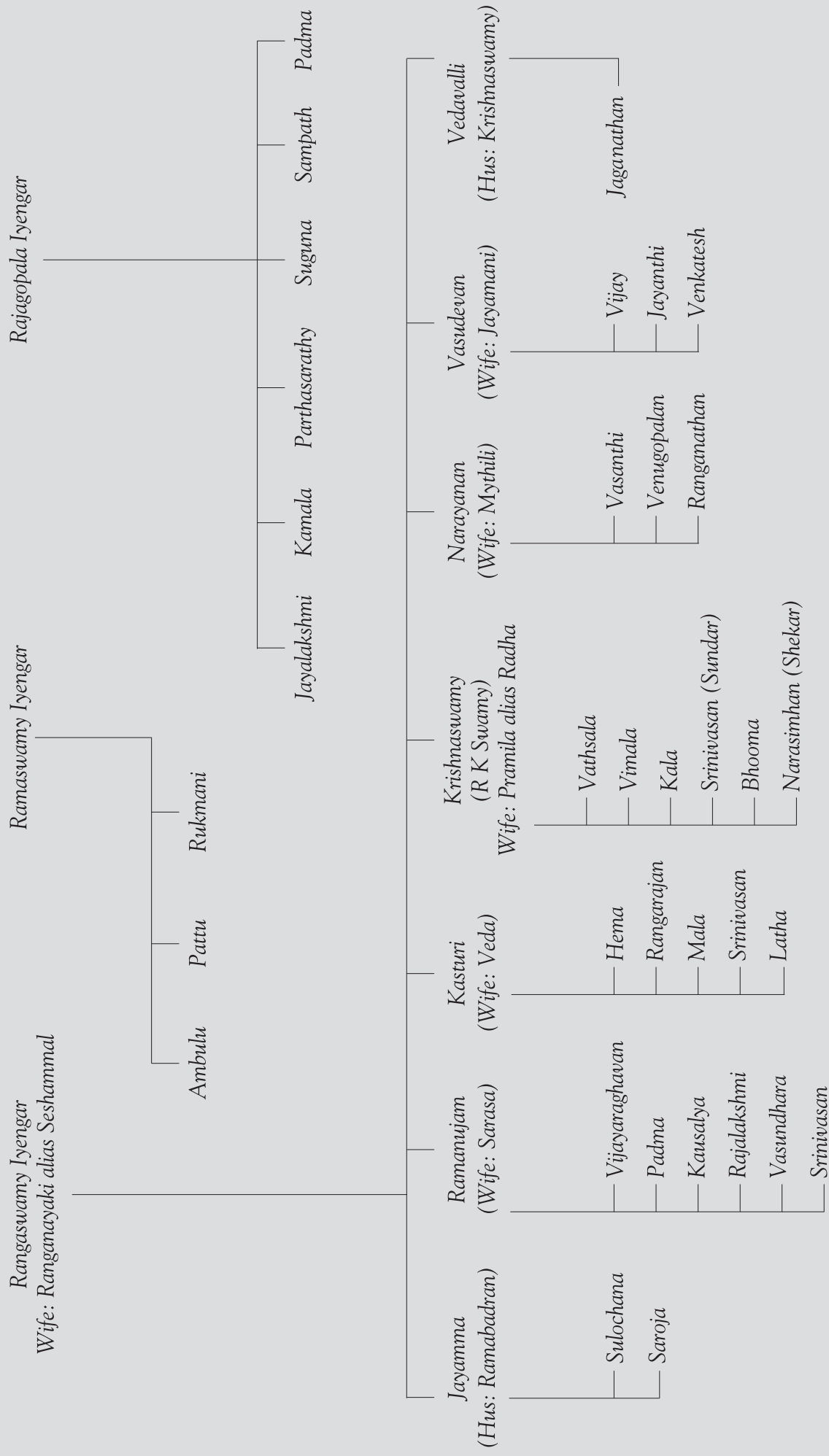
Rangaswamy Iyengar did not approve of his father's profligate ways and surrendered all rights to his property, or whatever might remain of it after the old man. He did odd jobs at a cloth shop owned by his landlord Mappillai Iyengar at Kumbakonam. It was at Mappillai Iyengar's house on Iyengar Street of Kumbakonam that both Swamy and Narayanan were brought up. (Chubby little baby Swamy became a great favourite of Mappillai Iyengar's daughter, who never lost an opportunity till her dying day, to remind Mr Swamy and his wife Radha how she used to carry him around when he was a child).

Rangaswamy Iyengar left that job and Kumbakonam over a misunderstanding at the shop, and spent three years at Mysore. The details of his employment at Mysore and the circumstances of his return to Kumbakonam are not known. Unable to find a decent livelihood, he and his wife left Mysore and tried their hand at raising a vegetable garden and coconut grove at nearby Komal village, thanks to help from Seshammal's family. Finding this an unprofitable venture, with the village offering little attraction for the produce that resulted from their hard work, the couple returned to Kumbakonam with their children. Life continued to be a struggle with Rangaswamy barely eking out a livelihood.

In the meantime, Rangaswamy's younger



Vedhanta Iyengar



brother Ramaswamy had moved to Bombay to take up a job as a salesman in Dunlop & Co. Successful in his career, Ramaswamy who had lost his first wife and remarried, bought a shop that he wanted his father-in-law to run. When the father-in-law refused to leave Kumbakonam, Ramaswamy asked his elder brother Rangaswamy to take charge of the shop. This is how Rangaswamy Iyengar came to take the train to Bombay one fine day in 1928, to take care of Murugan Stores, Bombay.

That was the year the Simon Commission visited India, with a view to judging Indian demands for constitutional reforms leading to swaraj, and was met everywhere with protests and boycotts. In Bombay, the protest was complete, as the commission went from city to city, state to state. The protest rallies were often greeted with police brutality. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Vallabh Pant became victims of police violence and Lala Lajpat Rai, beaten up at Lahore, was never to recover from the blows he received from the police.

These were stirring times, but to the majority of middle class and poor families, struggling to make a livelihood, the freedom movement was something outside the periphery of their daily existence. They had more immediate, important problems to wrestle with, those of feeding hungry mouths, educating children, caring for the old and infirm of their families. If the Rangaswamy Iyengar clan was in any way involved in the freedom movement, there is no record or recollection of it.

Life in Bombay began at a chawl on Grant Road for Rangaswamy's family which joined him a year later. The shop sold coffee, tea, groceries and sundry items such as appalam, vadam, vathal and condiments favoured by the Tamil community in the vicinity. This was before the suburbs of Dadar and Matunga

came into being, and became the favoured destination of middle class Tamils migrating to Bombay.

Rangaswamy's elder sons, Ramanujan and Kasturi, were admitted in a school called Robert Money High School, while Krishnaswamy and Narayanan joined Grant Road Proprietary High School on Lamington Road. The school was run by an elderly Parsi lady who was also a next-door neighbour, and a friendship across language barriers developed and flourished between her and Seshammal. As the study of one vernacular language, either Marathi or Gujarati, was compulsory under the school system in force in Bombay then, the children had to learn Gujarati, an accomplishment that was to prove crucial in Mr Swamy's career in later life. Within a year, Swamy earned two double promotions to the fourth standard.

All the siblings were brilliant students but Swamy was a particularly precocious child. He did not stop with earning double promotions at school. In his brother Narayanan's words, his thirst for learning was phenomenal. By the time he was nine, he had completed learning the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavatam from his grandfather, and "most of his actions in life were conditioned by this foundation. He was in the most modern profession and yet he depended mostly on age old intelligence handed down by our itihisas and puranas." All his life, he was able to delve deep into this rich store of knowledge and wisdom and relate stories to illustrate situations and resolve moral and other dilemmas, for himself and others who sought his advice.

Unfortunately, for all his thirst for knowledge, Swamy was unable to pursue studies at the college level because of the impoverished circumstances of his family. Murugan Stores fell on bad days, as the newly developed suburb Matunga drew a sizable

proportion of the Tamil population away from areas like Grant Road. Hard pressed to do the various roles of shopkeeper, delivery boy, business development, finance manager and so on, Rangaswamy inducted his eldest son Ramanujan who had just completed school into helping him as a delivery boy. He also ensured that the boy learned stenography, in order to keep his job prospects alive.

Soon, a Mysorean friend M L Bhat was to help Ramanujan get his first job, at Bombay Motors, sole selling agents for Chevrolet, Daimler and Dodge, a company owned by Sultan Chinai, an eminent personality of Bombay, who was among other things, the Chief Steward of the Bombay Race Club. Ramanujan impressed Chinai straightaway

His thirst for learning was phenomenal. By the time he was nine, he had completed learning the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavatam from his grandfather, and most of his actions in life were conditioned by this foundation.

with his stenographic skill and he became such a favourite in a very short while that he received increments almost every month. Such rapid progress was to prove his undoing, as it predictably created envy at the workplace. He resigned his job in a huff, but found better employment at Lloyds Bank, where he progressed steadily.

Second son Kasturi too found a job around this time, joining N Powell & Co, chemists. Kasturi was of a different mould, quite brilliant, but dazzled by Hindi cinema, and quite taken up with his own good looks. Swamy was in his final year of school, when Kasturi resigned the chemists' job to take up a position at the Bombay Flying Club, but his erstwhile employer would not let him go. The brothers got into a huddle and decided that Swamy should quickly learn stenography and offer to take Kasturi's place at N Powell & Co., while Kasturi made his tryst with the flying club. This would also ensure that the family finances were placed on a firmer footing.

The brothers were regular readers of the Times of India's editorials, and all of them had a good command over the English language. The elder brothers Ramanujan and Kasturi brainwashed Swamy into believing he could master shorthand in 15 days, provided he adopted the Sloan's method, and not the time-consuming, time-honoured Pitman method. Within 15 days, Swamy could learn enough shorthand to pass for a stenographer at N Powell & Co., enabling Kasturi to keep his promise to the flying club. Working day and night, in what was a strong pointer to both his capacity for industry and his enormous self confidence that later became evident in his highly successful advertising career, he was all set to start working from the day he reported for duty the first time. Swamy was just 17.



AN ADMAN IS BORN



Swamy joined JWT in 1939 as a Proof reader/Gujarati Translator. The office was situated in Lakshmi Building at Bombay Fort.

Swamy became an advertising man almost by accident. With no formal education beyond school, he had gained some experience in shorthand and typewriting in his early jobs, first at N Powell & Co. and after that at Ford Motors. When the car company wound up its operations in Bombay in 1940, World War II was raging, jobs were scarce, and Swamy, barely 18, desperately needed to contribute to the family coffers. When he was trudging from office to office in search of a job, Swamy met with 'no vacancy' signs everywhere. At

JWT too, he was told there was no job and was about to leave, when someone there realised one of the languages department staff was going on a long vacation. That is when Swamy's knowledge of Gujarati came in handy. The work was that of a proofreader who could also translate advertisements and other material from English to Gujarati and vice versa. A Tamil speaking lad fluent in English and Gujarati!

Once he joined Thompson, Swamy never looked back. In his own words, "I was just looking for a job but it turned me into a committed professional."

Appointed on a temporary basis, Swamy cleared a great deal of backlog, impressing everyone with his diligence. If given a week to finish a job, he would do it in a couple of days. His colleagues recommended his permanent appointment to Edward J Fielden, the man who headed JWT's Indian operations then. In due course, Fielden too came to be impressed by young Swamy.

Once he joined Thompson, Swamy never looked back. In his own words, "I was just looking for a job but it turned me into a committed professional."

Not satisfied with merely carrying out his translation duties, he took a keen interest in other aspects of work and lent a helping hand wherever possible in the office. He straightaway made his presence felt in the billing section where he did a neat job of arranging the voucher copies of

advertisements released, to be sent to the client for purposes of billing. He impressed his seniors with his capacity for hard work and thirst for knowledge and soon became very popular in the Bombay office. In 1942, when the Calcutta office wanted someone for the media department, his boss Edward Fielden recommended his transfer, with an increase in his monthly salary from Rs. 90 to Rs. 120. It was a huge jump, one that came in very useful to Swamy, given his family circumstances.

The journey to Calcutta turned out to be an adventure, albeit touched by divine blessings! It was a brave move, what with the freedom movement gaining momentum and sections of the Congress and other patriots turning violent, contrary to the avowed path of ahimsa that the nation had chosen. Volunteering for a transfer to Calcutta needed courage for yet another reason - the city was under evacuation as a precaution against Japanese bombing. To make things worse, Bengal was already heading for famine, though it was quite likely that it was not yet evident in Calcutta.

Swamy left for Howrah in August 1942, perfectly timed to coincide with Mahatma Gandhi's clarion call for the Quit India

movement. The whole nation was caught up in an upsurge of patriotism. Swamy's train was forced to make an extended stopover of nearly a week at Banaras or Kasi station, as extremists had blown up the tracks ahead of the holy city. Thus it was that the 20-year old took his first dip in the holy Ganga, quite fortuitously. After an anxious week when the family had no assurance of his safety, Swamy managed to report for work at the Calcutta office of JWT to Mr Warrier who was in charge of media planning there.

By this time, the three brothers, Ramanujan, Kasturi and Swamy were able to shoulder the financial burdens of the family, with all of them earning modest salaries. Their father's business had run into rough weather and accumulated debts. Rangaswamy Iyengar moved back to Kumbakonam after closing shop, heeding the advice of his sons, who felt it would be easier to support him there rather than in the big city with its much higher cost of living. The brothers not only sent remittances home but also made sure that the debts incurred by the business were fully repaid. It meant that the youngsters had to make a few sacrifices; Swamy for instance stopped drinking coffee, and either

Swamy attained professional recognition in Kolkata in 1950 based on his study of the tobacco market. He moved back to Bombay in 1951.





Swamy married Pramila, also known as Radha in 1948.

walked or took trams everywhere in Calcutta.

Swamy stayed at bachelor digs at the famous Komala Vilas in south Calcutta, sharing a room with two others. Unlike youngsters of the general run, Swamy was not only abstemious, he was also deeply interested in the scriptures and temple worship. He joined a group of devotees who learnt the Nalayira Divya Prabandham (a collection of passionate hymns by the 12 Alvars including one woman, Andal, sung in praise of Vishnu),

He was the baby of the team, as most of the other members of the prayer group were in their thirties and forties. Vedantachari was so impressed by Swamy's devotion and clear enunciation that he even waived the monthly five rupee subscription for him.

taught by Mr Vedantachari.

Swamy had a nice, sonorous voice with which he soon began to dominate the group recitations of the holy verses. He was the baby of the team, as most of the other members of the prayer group were in their thirties and forties. Vedantachari was so impressed by Swamy's devotion and clear enunciation that he even waived the monthly five-rupee fee for him.

It is at this prayer group that Swamy met a couple of men who were to have a distinct impact on both his lifestyle in Calcutta and the shaping of his intellect, knowledge of world affairs, and his belief system on the whole. The first was A Rangachari, a Dunlop executive who gave Swamy - and his youngest brother Vasudevan who had joined him by now - paying guest accommodation at his residence. Rangachari was no mere landlord. Besides providing them comfortable accommodation, he gave the youngsters loving care so that they hardly missed home. It was a close friendship that extended

beyond Swamy's Calcutta days (and years later, Rangachari's brother Srinivasan came to work at R K Swamy Advertising Associates). Voltas Narayana Iyengar and Narasimhan were among the other older men of the prayer group with whom Swamy spent his evenings learning Sanskrit slokas and Tamil bhakti poetry.

The man who had profound impact on Swamy's development as a thinker and man of action was C Jagannathachari. 'CJ' to the Swamy family, was an eccentric genius of a man whose interests and knowledge covered a wide span of subjects, from economics and world history and politics to spiritualism and mysticism. Jagannathachari, who was at the time the editor of a financial journal, later became a government official. CJ took the young Swamy under his wing, and this unusual duo

was regularly seen taking long walks around the famous lake in southern Calcutta. CJ would expound on all his favourite themes on politics, economics, history and philosophy, and his eager young sishya lapped it all up.

Swamy began to think for himself and became a voracious reader of books on all these subjects, sometimes deputing his brothers to read on his behalf and make notes, summarising the books he did not have the time to read! CJ also introduced Swamy to the esoteric practice of nadi sastras, believed to be a system of reading of individual life histories as told by an ancient sage, from a vast collection of palm leaf manuscripts. (It is this association that led to Swamy going to Vaideeswaran Koil in Thanjavur in 1956, along with CJ, to have a nadi reading done for his elder brother Ramanujan, who was still living in Bombay. The accuracy of the

Swamy was influenced greatly in his early years by C Jagannathachari. Their friendship was deep and special.



reading, of both the past and future, as Swamy found out later, made him a firm believer in the sastras. He then switched to the Sukar nadi and began a lifelong association with S J S Jayakanta Naidu, who held a collection of nadi scriptures. Close ties with the present guru S Kumaar marked Swamy's deep involvement with nadi till the very end. Nadi sastra played a huge part in Swamy's life, and after he came into contact with it, he took no major decision without consulting it.)

Swamy's marriage was arranged while he was in Calcutta. He married Pramila (alias Radha), belonging to the M D Brothers' family, wealthy timber merchants in Madras, on 27 May 1948 at the family's palatial residence on Eldams Road. The horoscopes matched and Swamy was by now a great believer in astrology. He was delighted that the girl was born under sravana nakshatra, the same star as his ishta devata or favourite deity, Lord Uppiliappan.

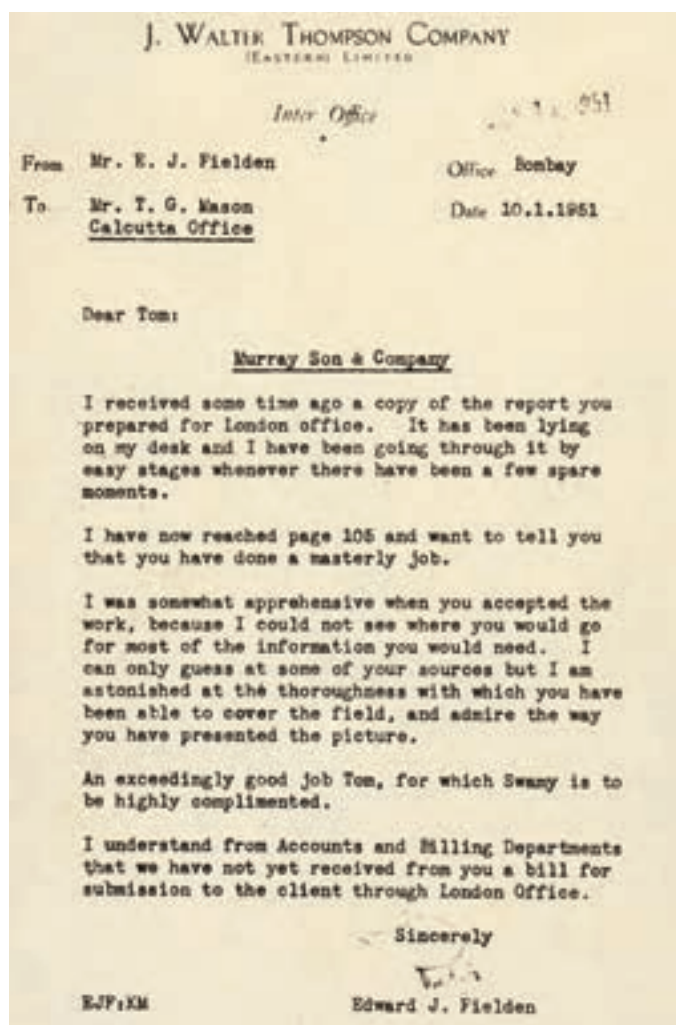
There was nothing very surprising about a young girl from such a wealthy background being given in marriage to a bright young man of good, clean habits and with a good

Swamy set the standard with a major report, which won him plaudits from the client and JWT London. He also won his spurs from his British bosses in India, in particular Edward Fielden, the man who was *Mr Indian Advertising* for decades.

job and a bright future. It was in fact not entirely uncommon for parents, even wealthy parents, especially in Swamy's community, to prefer academic qualifications, good job prospects and character to wealth and position in their sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. Mrs Kamala Seshadri Iyengar, Radha's grandmother shed tears at the Central Railway Station in Madras, while seeing off the young couple en route to Howrah. Having raised her grand daughter in luxury, she was

The National Library, Calcutta, where Swamy researched extensively for his report on tobacco. He frequently visited this place to expand his knowledge.





not sure of what the situation would be for the young couple in Calcutta.

Radha loved and respected her husband, and was a great source of support to him all his life, the difference in their social status never coming in the way of her total acceptance of him. Soon, the young couple started their life together in Calcutta, but their happiness received a setback when news of Swamy's father's death reached them on October 2, 1948.

Reluctant to project herself, Radha, a fit 77-year old today, still active in the kitchen and the rest of the household, is chary with words. When pushed to recollect the past, she says: 'Of the early days of our marriage, I only remember how busy he was at work.'

'While at Calcutta during the evacuation,

he learnt Sanskrit slokas and the Nalayira Divya Prabandham for about two years from Vedantachari. Voltas Narayana Iyengar and Narasimhan were some of the older friends whom he joined in these classes. He learnt economics from Mr Jagannathachari, a government official who became a lifelong friend and mentor. Self-taught in so many subjects, like history and international politics, he read the Ramayana and Mahabharata, from which he could quote chapter and verse.'

The turning point in Swamy's career with JWT came while he was in Calcutta. When Fielden received an inquiry from the UK, about a market research study commissioned by Murray Sons and Co., a client of JWT London on tobacco plantations, tobacco usage and the tobacco market in the subcontinent, he quietly passed it on to Swamy at Calcutta, little expecting any serious results. Swamy, however, took the task seriously as he did any task assigned to him. For a non smoker who abhorred paan chewing and cigarette smoking, never used deodorant or perfume because he could never afford them, he showed an unusual aptitude for research and plunged into the tobacco study.

Swamy set the standard with a major report, which won him plaudits from the client and JWT London. He also won his spurs from his British bosses in India, in particular Edward Fielden, the man who was Mr. Indian Advertising for decades. The tobacco report earned him a promotion to client servicing and a posting back in Bombay.

That is how Swamy ended up back at the Bombay office in 1951, when Fielden recalled him. Another of Fielden's boys, Subhas Ghosal, a great name in Indian advertising, and Swamy were to remain lifelong friends and colleagues with a healthy respect for each other's ability.

BACK IN BOMBAY

Swamy spent the next four years in Bombay, making an enormous success of his new role in client servicing. In that period, he built a tremendous network of clients, knowing each of them thoroughly, not merely as “accounts” to be serviced, but developing great sensitivity to their needs and problems. According to many of his clients with whom he struck lifelong friendships, most of them felt that he was synonymous with JWT. He soon earned a reputation as a good team leader and a sincere person who gave honest, well-meant advice to his clients.

J C Chopra had joined Hindustan Lever as a trainee in 1951. For a long time, Lever’s advertising had been handled by Lintas, the in-house agency. The first account to move to J Walter Thompson was the Lux account. That was when Chopra first met Swamy. According to him, ‘Swamy was the moving spirit of the JWT office, next to Mr Edward J Fielden, who headed the office.’

‘Normally, the client-agency relationship is quite a formal one, but I got to know Mr Swamy quite intimately. I used to take his advice on advertising as well as other matters. He had built an enormous base of clients, who basically felt he was JWT. They were wedded to him, not JWT. A great team leader, he built warm, close relationships. He was a very sincere person; his sincerity came through if you spent an evening with him. Whatever he told you, came straight from the heart.’

‘He was a dear friend, a very clearheaded man, an excellent team leader, who knew what he wanted and set out to achieve it. There was no messing around, no changing his mind, and he never played any games with anybody. You knew within ten minutes of meeting him that here was a very, very straight man. He was a wonderful man.’

It was during this stint at JWT Bombay that Swamy masterminded a memorable campaign

for the Western Suburban Railway. It was a public relations exercise to explain the problem of overcrowding during peak hours and pilferage in the trains to the commuter.

Single-handedly Swamy did extensive research work with the Railway authorities concerned and the travelling public. He also studied the conditions prevalent during peak hour traffic in the great metros of the world, to draw parallels. With information scarce and hard to come by, his effort was a major task. The suburban trains and local advertisements soon carried messages such as ‘The Railway is your property. Help us catch the thief’ and ‘Overcrowding is inevitable during peak hours, when we carry massive numbers of passengers. The conditions are the same in London and New York as well,’ or words to the effect. The campaign led to better understanding among the travelling public; it helped reduce pilferage in trains and criticism on overcrowding.

Veteran advertising professional and now educationist Walter Saldanha is an old colleague of Swamy who has clear recollections of the years he spent at JWT Bombay with Swamy.

According to Saldanha, who joined Thompsons in 1951 as a stenographer, he was a small man in the agency, and Swamy was senior to him in every way, in terms of age, seniority, and what he was doing. He was already attached to a group of people servicing major clients. Thompsons in those days was the leading advertising agency. ‘To get into the agency was regarded as a blessing, and you had achieved nirvana. You got a chance to work with senior executives who were one step ahead of the rest. Those days, we were paid our salary once a week. Therefore we were paid 52 weeks’ salary in a year, instead of 48 weeks’ salary!’ he reminisces.

Swamy’s group was headed by an

American called Ray Senior, a very dynamic person. Advertising was still in its infancy, and Indian advertising came imported along with the products imported. The advertising for a product came as a total package from abroad and the Indian agency only changed the name of the distributor or the selling agent. There were few clients who asked Indian agencies to create local advertising, and as it cost money, most clients used international advertising. Because of its international connections, Thompsons enjoyed tremendous strength in being able to leverage international accounts and therefore source international advertising material for their clients. 'Whether it was Champion spark plugs, Ponds or Kodak, JWT India always had advertising material coming from the international parent company.'

Geoffrey Manners was an Indian company that was introducing the toothpaste Kolynos, and Swamy was attached to the group handling that account. He was a very active member of that group. Swamy was like a little child, possessed by what he was doing on that account, because it involved a great deal of study. For once, the material was not presented on a platter. The agency had to do

some real work, and its personnel had to use their talent, their grey cells. Here was Swamy's opportunity.

The makers of Kolynos came out with this idea of advertising it as toothpaste with chlorophyll in it. It was the first toothpaste with chlorophyll, and 'made a song and dance about it.' A lot of research had to be done. Swamy had tremendous insight, he had the ability to understand the minds of readers, finding out why they would like to use a toothpaste that offered the benefit of chlorophyll. He would ask himself "What are they using today and why would they want to use a toothpaste with chlorophyll?" On the answer to the question would depend the theme of the advertisement.

That was a time an advertisement with a smart headline and a good looking girl in a good-looking layout, was considered a good ad, and advertising was sold on golf courses over lunch or dinner. Kolynos was a product whose advertising needed consumer insight based on research; it required analysis of figures. Swamy was extremely good at understanding such figures and translating them into real ideas. With his logical mind, he was interested in producing advertising

The headquarters of the Western Railway, one of Swamy's earliest clients



that was result-oriented, not flippant. It had to bear relevance to the objective to be achieved. That was creative advertising for him.

Saldanha remembers Swamy's 'tremendous strength in selling such advertising to clients. His approach to advertising was a hard sell approach, a reason why approach'. He was able to convince the client that a pretty face was not necessary to sell his product. The inherent features of the product would sell it. He was good with figures and his creative ideas were based on hard facts. He had the ability to argue, debate, and word got around about these traits of his. Research was Swamy's strength, it was the basis of his thinking, and helped him arrive at good concepts, and argue with his clients. There were no hollow ideas, no shallow thinking.

On reflection, Saldanha is convinced that Swamy was driven by the passion that one day he might run his own agency, though he never expressed it. Saldanha could see as they were climbing up the ladder, that he was gathering speed with every promotion he got. Increasingly, he came to handle a variety of accounts, as one by one, the foreign bosses left India. Everything he did bore his stamp. He believed in documentation; that nothing short of facts and insights could lead to good advertising. He had a very good mind for media. He could argue with people within the agency. He never accepted anything lying down, within the agency or with the client, arguing up to the point he had perforce to give in to the client.

“When you are spending the client's money, you are the custodian of his money, therefore spend it wisely.”

Swamy was also dealing with a paint account, Jenson & Nicholson, which allowed the use of colour. The foreign clients appreciated good work and the importance of advertising, unlike Indian clients, who felt you did not need advertising in a controlled economy with an assured market. He was constantly busy and worked very hard, long hours, not merely on weekdays, but also on Sundays and holidays. He never let his clients down, and met every deadline. These are some of the qualities that made him what he was, according to Saldanha.

Swamy sometimes reported directly to Edward J Fielden, the MD, a stickler for delivery on time, ensuring client satisfaction. You had to do a good job, the best job possible everytime; there was no compromise on quality. Fielden was a man of details. You had to explain everything to him, long copy, short copy, visuals. He insisted that you show the client a complete layout. 'Don't give a client a layout which doesn't look like the final product; it's like showing your father a rough sketch of the girl you were going to marry,' he would say.

'From Fielden, Swamy and all of us learnt the finer points of good management of advertising. He taught us discipline. This is what Swamy inherited from Fielden and Thompsons. The discipline extended to finance. You couldn't travel by taxi if there was a bus available, just because the client was footing the bill. Mr Fielden would question every rupee you spent on taxi fare. "If it was your money, would you spend it?" he would ask. "When you are spending the client's money, you are the custodian of his money, therefore spend it wisely," Fielden would say. He was giving you a lesson in economics and planning. This is what Swamy gained in that process,' says Saldanha.

In the mid-fifties, Swamy got his chance. He had reached a point when he couldn't

progress any further in the agency, at least in Bombay. This was the time JWT opened its Madras office and Fielden posted Swamy to take charge of it. The South was the smallest advertising market in the country. The businessmen there were very careful with their money, but Swamy's confidence had reached such a level that he could say to Fielden, 'Give me a chance to go to the South, and I will make it happen.'

Once in Madras, Swamy proved his mettle and brought in the accounts of Ashok Leyland, Parrys and TI Cycles. The Binny account was already there. By and by, he began to build the strengths of his office locally. Displaying tremendous drive and energy, Swamy delivered, doing what most people thought he could not. He made a success of his mission. 'He succeeded in an industry whose trappings were wining and dining, long hair, coloured clothes, and what have you.'

'Swamy was a man of many parts. He could at a pinch write copy if needed! That is how we grew in Thompsons. We were driven

to do certain things by circumstances, and the training stood us in good stead'.

Saldanha saw Swamy as a man of great conviction, in the midst of shallow men who dot the industry. He saw advertising as a serious business. In his own solemn way, despite his lack of formal education, he brought common sense, ability, confidence, dedication, determination and foresight to his work. Ultimately, these values made him a legend in his own lifetime. 'He was one of those trained to run with their feet on the ground, not in the air. He lived by those tenets.'

'Swamy created an aura around him. He fired people who worked around him with the spirit of challenge, of defiance. There are no shortcuts to reaching the top, was his message. He proved that you could reach there without doing any of the conventional things.'

'He had the personality to head the agency. He developed Thompsons South from nothing. He had the mettle to perform and deliver.'



Fielden was very fond of Swamy and engaged him in all important aspects of the agency and industry.

THE MOVE TO MADRAS

When Swamy moved to Madras to expand JWT's operations there, it was not the best of times for the advertising business, nor was Madras a marketing or advertising savvy city. 'Conservative' was an understatement when it came to describing the attitude of most Madras-based enterprises towards any expenditure on marketing in general, and advertising in particular. The city's first skyscraper housing the LIC office on Mount Road was in the future, its tram service was slowly grinding to a halt, Chevrolets, Plymouths and Dodges were still a gracious presence on its streets, and colour advertisements were not even a gleam in the eye of the inveterate optimist among account executives. Madras was no more than an overgrown village or at best a conglomeration of several hamlets, where temple bells and church bells and muezzin calls ushered the day in before dawn, men were barely beginning to discard the solar topees that their British masters had introduced, and the only night life available was in the form of the 'second show' at its cinema halls.

It was in such an atmosphere that Swamy opened shop for JWT, with the barest minimum of furniture, a lean staff of four, and the daunting prospect of converting hardcore Madrasis into advertisers substantial enough to justify his move from the safety of the Bombay headquarters.

The late K S Krishnamoorthy's association with Swamy began when JWT began its operations at Madras in October 1955, although he had met Swamy earlier in 1950 at a dinner at a friend's house in Calcutta. (KSK was one of several old Swamy associates to be interviewed during the writing of this book). He was perhaps Swamy's first recruit in Madras, beginning his life in JWT as a steno typist. All creative work was done at Bombay, the head office. That was the time

Union Minister Rafi Ahmed Kidwai introduced the Night Airmail Service and JWT South was able to service its clients thanks to that.

'With his relentless pursuit and talent,' Swamy added so many new accounts in a period of one year that JWT felt that it could no longer service the Madras clients efficiently from a distance. So the office was made into a full-fledged branch, with all the departments functioning under Swamy's supervision. This was the time Umesh Rao, an art director of repute, moved to Madras from Bombay to head the art department.

Within a decade of existence, JWT South moved into a spacious building at Fagun Mansion, on Commander in Chief Road, with a staff strength of nearly 75 persons, fulfilling a long-felt need of business and industry in Madras. 'The client roster read like a who's who of Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Cochin,' recalled KSK. KSK listed the reasons for this progress: 'This stupendous performance was not a little due to the dynamism, entrepreneurial and management capabilities of Mr Swamy. The factors behind this success he achieved in advertising agency management were: that he delegated responsibility, he had and gave full freedom of action, he practised prudent financial management, he groomed a strong professional team, he was obsessed with quality and thoroughness, he developed a personal relationship with the clients, and above all maintained high standards of business ethics. This approach gave him time to develop business contacts, improve client relations and participate in social activities in the fields of education and health.'

KSK narrated a couple of instances 'to demonstrate Mr Swamy's professionalism and his human side'. 'In 1961, we had an important but non-advertising assignment on

our hands, when Queen Elizabeth of England, came to Madras. We were asked to put up two decorative welcome arches on Mount Road, near the airport. The job was tough because the span of the arches was very wide. We had to do the job without digging the road for supporting the pillars, filling tar drums with sand on either side of the road for that purpose. As the traffic was very heavy, we had to carry out the erection only the night before the queen's visit. In the end, we managed to bring it off, with our staff controlling the speed of the vehicles on the road, literally acting as traffic policemen. Swamy and some of his colleagues, including me, were on our feet all night. It was a cool February night and we completed the job around 6.00 a.m. Mr A M M Arunachalam, the Chief Executive of the TI Group was the client with

British connections and he visited us around four in the morning. He was satisfied with the job we had done and remembered it for a long time afterwards. Mr Swamy dropped me home after that. The door was locked and my neighbours informed us my wife had been admitted to Isabel Hospital for delivery. When we reached the hospital, we learnt that she had delivered a baby boy. Mr Swamy insisted on buying sweets - a substantial quantity of Parry's Lacto Bon Bon, his favourite toffees.'

Two months of preparation preceded a major presentation JWT made soon afterwards to TI Cycles. Swamy deputed KSK and other colleagues to travel extensively in the country to gather insights into the competition faced by the brand in question. They used all means of transport - air, train, bus, boat and so on -

Swamy with his colleagues, K Rangarajan, K S Krishnamoorthy and T S Nagarajan.







*A M M Arunachalam in conversation with
Edward J Fielden while Swamy looks on.*

and met a vast number of people, vendors, factory workers, students, and many others. Swamy had the ability to assemble the right people and get the best out of them. Money was no constraint when it came to giving the client the best deal possible. The sky was the limit, and Swamy spent a fortune on the TI campaign. The income from that campaign was hardly commensurate with the expenditure. It however had a long-term impact, as the account stayed with JWT for many, many years. Out of that nationwide research project came the slogan, 'Hercules: A Lifetime Companion', based on what one of the respondents told the researchers.

The presentation of the proposed advertising and marketing campaign lasted four hours. All the top executives of the company sat glued to their seats. It was a four-pronged presentation of slides, 16 mm film, and recorded cassettes with video and computers still in the future. 'Mr Swamy skilfully presented the final proposition, a masterly presentation of high calibre, meticulously planned and professionally executed. We had no facilities those days, and we carried a carload of equipment and material', KSK recalled.

The client applauded Swamy for the presentation, appreciated his efforts and profusely thanked him, going on to confirm the continued awarding of the advertising

“Swamy had the ability to assemble the right people and get the best out of them. Money was no constraint when it came to giving the client the best deal possible.”

contract to JWT. 'Significantly, he ordered that all the material available in the presentation be transferred to the company's archives for later study and assimilation, and also safekeeping from competitors' eyes!' The JWT team took only the hardware from the

“He possessed a horizon outlook, with a grassroots approach to problems. The fragrance of his saga of success from humble beginnings to his pre-eminent stature will surely endure for posterity.”

room when they left. The collation of information over the last two months and the actual presentation had indeed been a Herculean task. Appropriately, the product was the Hercules bicycle launched by TI. The resultant campaign, which featured Test cricketer Venkataraghavan among others, ran for several years.

KSK was firmly convinced that it was Swamy who put Madras on the advertising map of India. Swamy was guided in all his endeavours by the Gita principle: 'Your right is to work only, but never to the fruits thereof.'

Swamy groomed many advertising professionals in the country. 'To sum up, he possessed a horizon outlook, with a grassroots approach to problems. The fragrance of his saga of success from humble beginnings to his preeminent stature will surely endure for posterity.'

Another old JWT hand, Ram Sehgal, (former Managing Director, Contract Advertising, a JWT subsidiary) came into close contact with Swamy in the early 60s. 'Mr Swamy features in Ad people I can't

**" I want
to make certain
I have locked up
my Hercules"**

*The Hercules is his most
precious possession*

TO BUY A CYCLE, you and your family will probably deny yourselves in many ways - saving on bus fares and luncheon expenses, on sarees and jewellery...

Naturally you'd like to buy the very best. Buy a HERCULES. It's the most wanted cycle in over 134 countries around the world. Its streamlined beauty, smooth effortless drive, make it the finest cycle you can buy.

Every component in the HERCULES cycle is manufactured to exacting standards at the largest, best-equipped factory in India. It is rust-proofed by a special "Spra-Garnodizing" process and enameled thrice to give the sparkling finish that lasts.

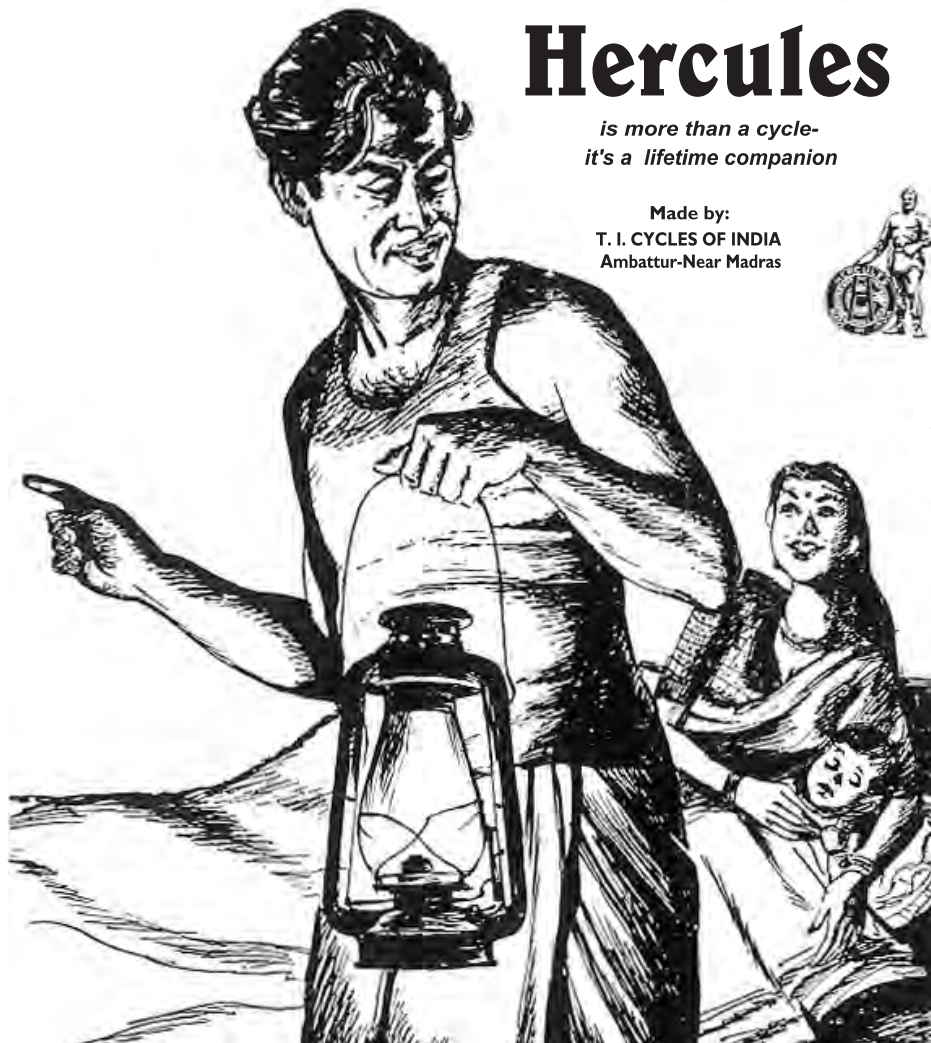
Your cycle is an investment - Hercules is the best value for your money.



Hercules

*is more than a cycle-
it's a lifetime companion*

Made by:
T. I. CYCLES OF INDIA
Ambattur-Near Madras



JWT-TIC-1146

*Chief Minister
K Kamaraj and
Governor Bishnuram
Medhi inspect the
Republic Day float
made by JWT for the
Parry Group on
26th January 1960.*



forget, one of the chapters of my book in the making, Mixed Feelings. When I joined Thompson 32 years ago, Mr Swamy was running its Madras operation. He was already a legend in advertising. Everyone respected him. As a Director, he would come down to Bombay to attend the quarterly board meetings. My secretary would tell me, ‘Mr Swamy’s here,’ and I’d stand in the corridor hoping to catch a glimpse of the man. I never got to shake his hand or talk to him. To me at that stage he was a giant.’

Sehgal made contact with Swamy when the Calcutta office under Subhas Ghosal was handling Nestle Delhi, as JWT’s Delhi office was a small one with no business development. Ghosal did the creative thinking. When the Nescafe account came up for review, the client put it up for a competitive pitch. ‘John Gaynor was hopping mad, and Ghosal said, “Let’s not pitch for it. When we the incumbent agency are being asked to pitch for the account, it means they don’t want us.”’

Nevertheless, Gaynor wanted JWT to pitch

for the account, and he asked Swamy from Madras to handle that task. ‘He was pitting one legend against another’ as Sehgal put it.

Swamy told headquarters that he needed an account manager to assist him for ten days. Sehgal was deputed for the job, and he went to Madras with some trepidation, ‘as there was this myth that the man was demanding, uncompromising, so on and so forth. I was really scared.’

In Madras, when Sehgal ‘walked into the lion’s den,’ the myth was destroyed in a few moments, when Swamy got up and walked over to Sehgal, making him feel comfortable. He said, ‘You have come about a coffee account, so you’d better have coffee first.’

Without further ado, Swamy straightaway came to the task at hand. “Have you got a writing pad?” he asked, and rattled off details of the work to be done. “These are the things you need to do. One, two, three.” Sehgal was taking notes. “First research - I want Nag to arrange these groups. I want to see the guide questionnaire.” ‘He reeled off ten things I needed to do in a day and a half. I said to

myself, “Does this man need help?! He has it all worked out.”

When Sehgal sat down in his room to study it, the plan made complete sense. Swamy had done the whole thing for him and he only had to follow up.

During those ten days, Swamy kept himself completely hands-on on the project despite running a large office. He knew hour to hour what was happening in the agency on that pitch. ‘I’d never seen a man with so much overview and detailing at the same time. People who have the big picture are often not good with details and vice versa. Mr Swamy was going into every detail: “This bromide won’t come on time. So do this logo”, etc.’ Sehgal was hugely impressed. ‘Those ten days were my education. Mr Swamy showed me how the

big picture could be drawn and he gave me meticulous details.’ “After planning everything, sit down and think what can go wrong, and plan for it. Plan for failures. You may think everything is under control, but when things go wrong, don’t get unnerved, have ready solutions to likely problems,’ he advised his young colleague.

According to Sehgal, in those ten days, an enormous amount of work was done for the pitch. ‘We carried a whole suitcase of material. Research, writing a brief, pre-testing ads, storyboards, the works. Slides had to be made mechanically those days. His room was like the VT station platform.’ The Delhi presentation was made but the account went to McCann as predetermined, we learnt later. The gain for Sehgal was what he learnt from his brief association with Swamy. “His

Colleagues for three decades and friends for life, Subhas Ghosal and R K Swamy had a deep mutual affection and admiration for each other.



“They received me like family. I was just 21 and it mattered so much to me.”

insistence that ‘God lives in the details’ made a great impact on me.”

After that Sehgal had no personal contact for years with Mr Swamy, though the relationship remained cordial at chance meetings at airports etc. ‘He was very warm and caring though formidable.’

V Narayanan, one of the outstanding marketing professionals in India, who now heads a management education institution, ACME, came to Madras in 1967, after joining Ponds India in Bombay. He had been with Hindustan Lever and Unilever in the UK for ten years. He took over as Marketing Director of Ponds, and the company moved from Bombay to Madras.

‘JWT was our advertising agency in Bombay, and the JWT branch had opened in Madras with Mr Swamy in charge,’ recalls Narayanan. ‘When we arrived here, we became their No.1 account. By Bombay standards, we were not a very large account, but in Madras, we were by far the largest account he had. Apart from that both our offices were housed in the same building. My previous boss, Mr Mani, and Mr Swamy were personal friends, having lived in the same neighbourhood. As a consequence, we got to know each other very well.’

Art director Chuni Lal Dutta Gupta



C L D Gupta and R K Swamy

(Retired Group Creative Director, JWT) came on transfer from JWT Calcutta to Madras and met Swamy on 18 Feb 1957, though he had seen him at Calcutta in 1954. It was a memorable day. Gupta landed in Madras early morning by the Howrah Mail. As his boss Subhas Ghosal had asked him to meet Swamy the day he arrived, Gupta went straight to his house. Swamy and Umesh Rao were then staying in the same building, upstairs and downstairs. ‘They received me like family. I was just 21 and it mattered so much to me,’ recalls Gupta.

Swamy then lived off Sir C P Ramaswami Iyer Road, in Abhiramapuram, a residential locality in the southern part of Madras. It was not even a tarred road then, and had many

vacant plots. Gupta later went to the office, which was then located on the Speedway building on Mount Road.

It was a very small office, with just two chairs, two tables joined together, a telephone, typist Ramasethu, KSK, Swamy, artist Rangarajan, and a handful of others. Swamy and Umesh Rao made a great pair. The Madras office was so much smaller than the huge Calcutta office. 'Moorhouse had been our manager and Mr Fielden used to drop in. Mr Ghosal came from a big family, had been born into wealth. We all worked day and night, just as we did in the Calcutta office. All the creatives for the Madras office were earlier done at Bombay and Calcutta. Clients like Binny and Parrys sweets were handled from there. To Mr Swamy, work was worship, and all of us followed his example.'

Gupta did not go to Calcutta for two years after moving to Madras. In fact, he did not even see the girl he married till the day of the wedding. He was so busy he couldn't make an earlier trip. Heavily involved in getting an exhibition ready in Delhi, Gupta asked his parents, "Why should I see her when you have selected her as my bride?"

In the first two months in Madras, Gupta feels he learnt what he had learnt in two years in Calcutta. 'I learnt what advertising was all about. Mr Swamy never treated me like a junior. Above me in Calcutta, there had been Account Directors, Creative Directors, Managers, a whole lot of them. Here I was reporting direct to the Manager, though it was hard to tell who the manager was, Mr Swamy or Mr Umesh Rao! Mr Umesh Rao was senior in age, and Mr Swamy gave him so much respect.'

Swamy and Umesh Rao were so close to the client. "Any problem of the client is a problem of the agency" was their philosophy. "They have placed their trust in us, and we are spending their money for them. We

should produce results for them," Mr Swamy used to say. When TI Cycles launched new products, JWT successfully tackled their problem in marketing them. The result was that the campaigns were well received and led to increases in their advertising budget year after year. That was Swamy's real success.

Swamy's ability of getting under the client's skin had led to the successful handling of the TVS accounts - Southern Roadways, SI (Sundaram Industries) Rubber, SI Retreading and others. S M Ramaswami, the advertising manager in TVS then, had a great command over the advertising needs of the group. He and Swamy enjoyed a great rapport. Swamy and Umesh Rao would discuss the advertising needs of each unit with him and do a thorough job of it. T S Nagarajan joined the office then and he was a very good research man, very thorough. He would travel extensively to every nook and corner of the areas TVS served and based on his findings the agency would make a detailed creative presentation with visuals, two alternatives each and so on.

'Mr Swamy wanted me to think and act like an adman not an artist,' Gupta acknowledges. 'He took part in all the

Swamy's modest house in Abhiramapuram, Chennai, 1955 to 1966.





The JWT office at Mohan Mansion - 1958 to 1968. Swamy and Umesh Rao found their team had to expand to keep up with the rapid expansion of business.

creative meetings. As the clientele grew, there were different creative teams for different clients. Almost every week, new clients came in, making the competition nervous. Ghosal and Fielden would send us congratulatory messages and Mr Swamy would share these with us. “Your achievements have been recognized,” he would tell us. For us youngsters, the campaigns, like the new TI Cycle ads - Hercules, Philips, BSA - were exciting. We had no facilities like now. We had no in-house photographer, no dark room. Even to make prints, we had to go to a lane near where the Anna Statue stands now on Mount Road. Typesetting was done at another place. As 90 % of our clients were new clients, Mr Swamy and Mr Umesh Rao made it clear that our presentations had to be top class. We’d do illustrations, get the typesetting done, and make neat artpulls for the presentation. Mr Swamy was a great believer in research and market analysis. He was sure that the client should see a complete advertising product. Mr Umesh Rao was a very good creative person, who had a feel for

the pulse of the people for whom the campaign was meant. The campaign must touch their hearts, they felt, and make them want to buy the product or accept the service being advertised. None of our campaigns were rejected. Never. Because they were tested before they were presented.’

Within six months of Gupta’s joining the Madras office, the office had to move because the business had expanded, and JWT Madras had more and more people. They first moved to Mohan Mansion and then to Fagun Mansion. One after another, three floors were occupied as more and more creative and client-servicing executives were hired.

Those days, agencies did not use photography much in advertisements because the quality of reproduction in the newspapers was a problem, especially in the vernacular newspapers. The ads of products like bicycles and Amrutanjan, the pain balm, were often directed at rural readership and the quality of the newsprint in the language newspapers was not quite up to the mark. Only quartertones were to be used. Illustrations were extensively used and illustrators were in great demand. Production manager Padmanabhan, in time, became a good photographer. He would shoot pictures and Gupta would use them as references. He didn’t have to draw from memory or sketch on the spot. ‘In a Hercules cycle campaign, we made Mr Swamy and Shekar model as father and son, which they were!’ recalls Gupta. The headline for that ad was ‘A lifetime companion.’ ‘Mr Swamy had a very good rapport with Mr Iyer of TI Cycles when the Philips cycle brand was launched. We sent the ads for publication and display at Commercial Artist Guild (CAG), Bombay. Those days, that was the only ad club in India and agencies from all over India, Madras, Calcutta, Delhi, sent their entries there.’

‘Mr Swamy made a great contribution to



Fagun Mansion, Chennai. The Ponds account, Swamy's biggest catch, had followed him from Bombay to Madras. It was but natural that JWT South and Ponds should be located in the same building. The move to Fagun Mansion took place in 1968.

advertising. His impact was all India; I don't think it was confined to the South. He developed so many people he recruited. He worked along with his team, very often late into the night. I remember his working at the office till two a.m, then going home and leaving for another city early morning. Sometimes he would work all night and then drive to Trichy in the morning. Whatever time it was, Mrs Swamy would still be sitting up for him. We youngsters were welcome at his home, we could knock on the door at any time of day or night if the work demanded it. Mrs Swamy would offer us coffee every time. Mr Swamy's mother too was very kind to us. We could freely walk in and out of the house.'

After 1965, a new generation of executives came in to advertising. Slowly, Umesh Rao moved out of the mainstream activity and began to look after a handful of clients like TVS. The new people had ideas different from Umesh Rao's and Swamy's. S N Nair who had come from Bombay did fashion advertising like the campaigns of Bombay Dyeing or Mafatlal. Binny was a big advertiser and the Binny client knew what he was getting when

he saw the JWT campaigns for Cotswol or Binny drill. They had an understated elegance about them. Nair's new campaign used fashion models and was altogether more glamorous. Swamy and Umesh Rao thought this was not appropriate. "This is not the market we are addressing," they said. 'But the client accepted the new campaign and the ads were released, but Mr Swamy was 100% correct, and it bombed. The new generation may believe in hype, but according to Mr Swamy the truth must be told. That's where Mr Swamy and Mr Umesh Rao scored. They felt the pulse of the target audience. This is where Nagarajan too was good. They knew that if you are selling a product or service, you must decide first who the target audience is.'

Another successful campaign was the Ashok Leyland campaign. The objective was for their trucks to gain greater acceptance than Tatas' and the JWT campaign accomplished that. In this, the agency benefited from its association with its clients TVS, who were the distributors. Swamy's boys were able to gain firsthand knowledge of the target audience with their help.

The first BHEL campaign, probably the last one Swamy masterminded while still with JWT, gave Gupta the most creative satisfaction of all. BHEL had many problems at the time. Their image was poor and a lot of noise was

"None of our campaigns were rejected. Never. Because they were tested before they were presented."

“He developed so many people he recruited. He worked along with his team, very often late into the night.”



Swamy with Umesh Rao, his first creative partner in Chennai.

being made in Parliament about it.

V Krishnamurthy (VK) was at the helm in BHEL, Trichy and he had seen JWT's work for Best & Crompton in the form of leaflets and booklets. VK was impressed by the quality of the work and asked who had done that work for Best & Crompton. He had particularly wanted to know who did the illustrations. This eventually led Swamy to meet V Krishnamurthy.

After Mr Swamy met VK, he deputed TSN to visit the remote places where BHEL Trichy's boilers were installed. TSN did an extensive

survey and submitted a report on each plant: How much power was generated? Who were the beneficiaries? Agriculture? SSI? Townships? Common people? Copywriter Ramaswami whom Swamy had groomed was a brilliant, sensitive person, a fantastic writer, who unfortunately died young. 'Ramaswami and I together came up with a campaign idea,' Gupta relates. 'Ramachandran, an assistant of photographer Harry Miller, joined us then. We wanted to feature the power generated by the Ennore power station where BHEL equipment was installed. In our scribble, we

showed transmission lines, paddy fields, water pump sets. We scouted around in Porur, then full of paddy fields. At Porur, we found an irrigation water pump and children playing in the gushing water. There were transmission lines and paddy fields in the background and we had all the elements we needed to show in one single frame. We used photographs of the children playing in the water, Ramaswami wrote the line, 'Power to the People.' The photographs had to be taken very carefully to reproduce well. Light and shade had to be contrasted sharply and strong sunlight was needed. We waited for proper sunlight, asked the kids to go on playing, and then shot the pictures. We made a complete layout and Mr Swamy with the help of our media

manager Warriar made a media plan presentation as well as creative presentation. By his salesmanship, Swamy turned what might have remained a catalogue design account into a large account.'

'After the presentation, Swamy came into our room and said that VK had not changed a single layout, a single word. 'Swamy was a bit worried about the short time available and asked Gupta how long it would take to get the final artwork ready. 'I had everything ready for the release of ads and told him I was only waiting for release instructions based on the media plan. That's how we worked together.'

Gupta stayed on in JWT until his retirement, and though he did not join Swamy's agency, his respect and admiration for his former boss have never left him. 'When my book of illustrations on old Madras was brought out by city historian S Muthiah, I told him I wanted Mr Swamy to be the first recipient of the book. I went to Mr Swamy's office to give him a personal copy and invite him to the function to receive the first official copy. He said, "You can't ask me to come, you must order me." Such was his loyalty and affection for people who worked with or under him.'

At an election meeting in Calcutta, Indira Gandhi referred to the slogan 'Power to the people' which made the BHEL campaign so successful. The client liked it so much that the campaign carried on from 1968 to the 1980s.

'When I think of Mr Swamy, I think of the words, "honest", "committed", and "great achiever," asserts K Rangarajan, a long time employee of J Walter Thompson, until his voluntary retirement a few years ago. 'Self-belief was his dominant attribute. An incident in the Thompson Madras office - where I worked from 1968 to 1994 - comes to mind. A major client, a very big name in

Planting prosperity through power...1



New power from Ennore will turn a tale of woe into a song of joy!

In Tamil Nadu, when the monsoons fail, its paddy fields and plantations are not the only sufferers. Rivers dry up and hydroelectric power, whipped up by swift waters to vitalise industries and light the homes, dwindles to a dribble. Every year it is a tale of woe told in pavements, layoffs and industrial stagnation.

Power for prosperity

The 450 MW thermal plant at Ennore in North Madras commissioned by the Tamil Nadu State Electricity Board will spell a happy change.

It will create the power to launch 50,000 new pumpsets for wells every year and transform parched lands into bounteous harvests... to shake the deepening thirst of an expanding industrial belt... to eliminate voltage drops that plague the city.

New power to help Tamil Nadu minimise its dependence on monsoons and achieve self-reliance in power.

The plant and its potential

The Ennore Thermal Plant in its first stage consists of two 110 MW boilers and two 60 MW boilers. BHEL High Pressure Boiler Plant has supplied the 60 MW boilers

designed and built in its factory at Tiruchi. The foreign exchange saved will be around Rs. 60 million excluding the Rs. 28 million worth turbines supplied by the BHEL Hyderabad factory.

The two 110 MW boilers have been supplied by Czechoslovakia. Even here BHEL Tiruchi's contribution is worth Rs. 25 million. The fifth boiler of 110 MW, estimated to cost about Rs. 55 million, will be designed and built by BHEL.

In all, the Ennore Project Stage I is worth Rs. 450 million, in which BHEL shares nearly Rs. 150 million in boilers, turbines and auxiliary equipment.

Tremendous engineering skills and ceaseless labour have gone in to make BHEL's participation an exemplary success.

A huge achievement in quick time

30,000 drawings translated into components of iron and steel, 400,000 hours of labour, 2000 tonnes of finished components in the form of pressure parts, structures, fans, valve fittings, etc. for each 60 MW boiler. And just 15 months to assemble the gigantic components at site!



Each BHEL 60 MW boiler will utilise 1000 tonnes of coal every day to convert 260,000 litres of stored water into power every hour.

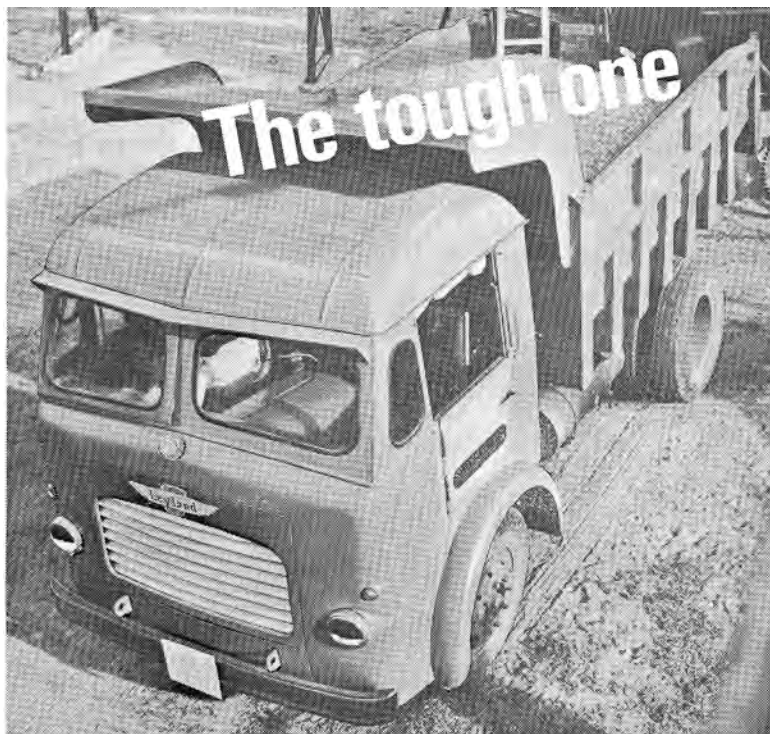
An investment that pays

Other thermal power stations that will equip with BHEL high pressure boilers amounting to a value of over Rs. 600 million: Haridwar, Delhi, Badarpur, Kothagudem, Orissa, Patrasa, Namrup, Bhadrak.

When these projects go on steam by 1971, the High Pressure Boiler Plant at Tiruchi will have more than repaid the initial investment in it. More, it will contribute enormously to the national exchequer and earn foreign exchange by planting power projects in International Markets.

creating the power to prosper

BHEL
BHARAT HEAVY ELECTRICALS LIMITED
High Pressure Boiler Plant, Tiruchirappalli-14



Ashok Leyland Comet thrives on hard work

It's a heavy-duty truck. One of a race of giants. A sturdy 7/1.2-tonner that can effortlessly carry more (where local rules permit). Economical to maintain. Easy on replacements. Amazing in fuel economy.

A great truck. And a popular truck, too! Why not make a decision today? Buy it. Make a fleet with it. You'll never regret it!



ASHOK LEYLAND LIMITED
Ennore, Madras-57

Strike a partnership for profit with

ASHOK LEYLAND COMET
ROBUST... RELIABLE... ECONOMICAL

industry had come to our office, and everyone was raving about him. Mr Swamy said to us all: "Why are you so awestruck by him? True, he is a great figure in his own field, but here, he has come to us to seek our help, our advice. He doesn't know anything about advertising, we have to teach him, advise him." Such was his confidence.'

'Mr Swamy never finished school, but his reading and learning were phenomenal,' says Rangarajan. An Economics honours graduate, Rangarajan was amazed at the depth of his mentor's knowledge of economics after he spoke to him on the subject one day, freely mentioning such topics as consumer surplus and indifference curves. In explanation of how he acquired all that knowledge, he said, "You had a youth, you went from school and college to a playground. I went to work at age 17, and after office, went to the library, I missed out on playing games."

Swamy was thorough in any subject he learnt. Another secret of his astonishing reading was his insomnia, according to Rangarajan. He read himself to sleep late at night, well after midnight. At the office, he would study the Reserve Bank's periodic economic surveys, mark the thrust areas identified by the Bank and send them on to the research department. In Calcutta, he had disregarded his English boss's pessimism (when he showed him an article on media he had written for publication) and surprised the boss by getting his writing published in a magazine. He was pretty good at writing media reports, and his famous report on the tobacco industry is by now part of advertising history.

'When he came to Madras, Swamy knew no one here; he did not even own a car. His in-laws gave him some business leads, and he borrowed a car belonging to one of them, M S Pattabhiraman, and went round meeting prospective clients like T S Santhanam of

TVS, 'Swadesamitran' C R Srinivasan of EID Parry, and M V Arunachalam of TI Cycles.'

V Vaidyanathan, a director of the Tamil weekly 'Kalki', and brother of V Krishnamurthy of BHEL fame, who remembers the close friendship between Fielden and the Sadasivams, corroborates the catalytic role Sadasivam played in Swamy's career. Fielden would stay as a guest of Sadasivam and M S Subbulakshmi at Kalki Gardens at Kilpauk whenever he was in Madras. It was at Fielden's instance that Sadasivam decided to take Swamy under his wing.

In fact, says Vaidyanathan, Swamy, in his early thirties then, was quite daunted by the prospect of calling on the industrialists and businessmen of Madras none of whom he knew on a social level. Sadasivam and Swamy's in-laws, however, believed he could impress the elite of Madras with his thorough knowledge and sincerity of purpose. Armed with that kind of moral support, Swamy's natural abilities soon came to the fore, and he was in his element before long.

Soon after JWT South opened at the Speedway building, T S Santhanam of TVS visited Swamy at his office one day. There were only two chairs and a table, where Santhanam might have expected a posh office (as JWT was an international agency), but in the next couple of hours Swamy captivated him with a detailed exposition of JWT worldwide, JWT India, and the advertising and marketing strategy he was proposing for TVS. At the end of that inspired lecture, he won the TVS account for his company.

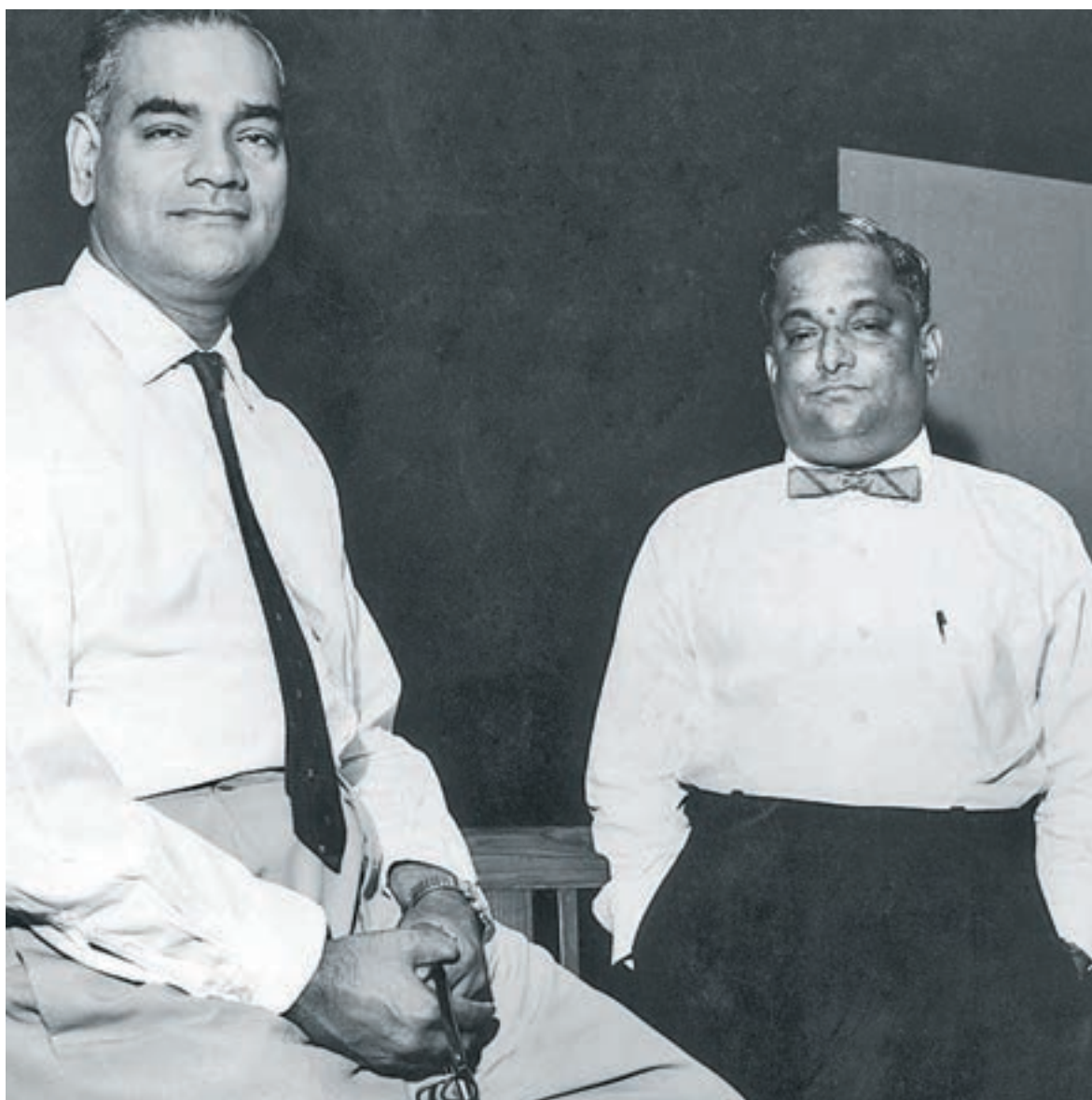
'Mr Swamy and my late brother M V Arunachalam were contemporaries, interacting with each other in the Rotary and all other activities, though Mr Swamy's first contact with my family was when he met my uncle Mr A M M Arunachalam in the



Swamy and Rangarajan shared a good relationship in JWT. Rangarajan however did not join Swamy when he started his own agency.



Swamy in conversation with M V Arunachalam and D P Rangaswamy.



With S H S Mani, former Managing Director, Pond's India Limited. They were friends for life.

fifties, to persuade him to move the TI group's advertising business to J Walter Thompson', reminisces M V Subbiah, now an elder statesman of the TI/ Murugappa group, recently retired from active business. 'Mr Swamy succeeded in his mission and the result was the memorable campaign JWT developed for Hercules bicycles, which had the slogan, 'Lifetime companion', and represented a villager and his family, all users of Hercules cycles. This was a fantastic campaign that went on for ten years. By the time I came into the business, Hercules was a well-established name in this part of the country.

According to Subbiah, Swamy was very proud of the campaign as TI was the first account he secured for JWT South, but he was equally proud that he managed to convince Mr Arunachalam that he must advertise his products even if he had no difficulty in selling them under the license-permit-quota raj, in which demand far exceeded supply. It was his view that it was important to build your brand, for the time would come when the industry would open to competition and there would be a glut in the market. 'He proved so prophetic, as indeed the Hercules brand was firmly established by the time the government controls were eased and competition began.'

Subbiah's other memory of Swamy's accomplishments is of the successful conduct of the Business Leadership Conference by 'him, Mr M K Raju and my brother Arunachalam at Abbotsbury in the late sixties. They did an excellent job, when the concept of business leadership was very new, and they had the younger business people all charged and motivated'.

According to Rangarajan, Swamy built his career in Madras based on his public speaking ability. He was a popular draw at Rotary and other meetings, and that is how he became known in advertising circles.

But for a peculiar circumstance, Rangarajan would have never joined JWT as he is related to Swamy. The latter held the view that no relative could apply for a job in his agency. 'I was applying for jobs elsewhere, and invariably gave Mr Swamy's name as reference because by that time, he was a director in JWT. I naturally had to keep him informed. When the agency desperately needed someone to go to Cochin as resident representative - a stipulation by a new prospect, Coir Board - Swamy asked me to appear before his colleague Umesh Rao for an interview. There was no commitment, but if Umesh Rao found me fit, Swamy would not "interfere!"'

Umesh Rao interviewed Rangarajan for more than two hours, and at the end of it he found him the most suitable among the candidates he had interviewed. Though he "was completely satisfied" with Rangarajan's credentials, Umesh Rao advised him: "Think twice before joining advertising. After one year in advertising, you will be fit for nothing." When Rangarajan mentioned this to Swamy, he said he was right. "In other industries, you are learning a trade. This is an ideas business."

Umesh Rao was Swamy's right hand man, but Swamy believed in checks and balances. The agency had four art directors, with Niku Nair the chief. Bilimoria, C L D Gupta and T N Rajagopal were the others. Each of them had a different style, skill set, and temperament. It was a great team.

The year Rangarajan joined was a good year for the agency, and a number of new accounts were acquired. The excellent creative team was backed by solid research. T S Nagarajan would turn out solid work, but Swamy would irritate him by tweaking his work in the last minute and telling him he was like the head cook at a wedding who, after the cook had done fantastic work, would

add a little spice here, salt there and declare the finished product was good. TSN would get really worked up at times like this. It was all in fun.

‘I remember the BHEL campaign, when we were all working day and night,’ recalls Rangarajan. Swamy would not approve the campaign after the copy team had done their job. “Some link is missing, even though the ads are good,” he kept saying, until Ramaswami, came up with the line, “Power to the People.” This was the payoff line Swamy had demanded, and he literally jumped up, shouting: “That’s it, all of you can go home now. This is what I wanted.”

JWT Madras had a great relationship with its major client, Pond’s. Swamy and S H S Mani of Ponds were great friends, as were Chandru (V S Chandrasekhar, Client Servicing) and Nair with Nari (V Narayanan). It worked out very well. TVS,

N Krishnan of Yenkey Instruments, Bangalore, M V Arunachalam of the TI group, and C R Srinivasan of EID Parry were some of the clients who stood by Swamy and JWT, whatever happened.

The public sector accounts came later to the agency - when it was Indianised and known as Hindustan Thompson Associates or HTA - largely thanks to Swamy’s efforts. In fact, the Indianisation was an outcome of JWT securing PSU accounts, as questions were raised in Parliament about public sector advertising being done by foreign agencies. In the political conditions prevailing then, you had to be a 100% Indian company to serve PSUs. Other agencies in their place would have left India for good under those circumstances, but JWT continued to lend their name to HTA.

When there was a major pitch, the office would wear a festive look. The team would

Swamy introducing Ramasethu to Tom Sutton.



“For Swamy, work came before everything else. He was a doting parent and very fond of his son Sundar, the first boy born after three girls. Once, when frantic calls came from home to inform him that the boy had sustained a fracture while playing, he calmly sent Gopal of Accounts with money and instructions to ensure Sundar received the best medical attention. He could not leave the office until the next morning, as he was working on a most important presentation. Such was his dedication.”

work all night, four or five cars would be hired, ready to go out on errands. Food would be brought from outside, and the whole place would resemble the venue of a wedding! Swamy would leave for home after midnight and when he came back in the morning everyone would be there, freshly bathed and dressed for work, and the office would be spick and span.

For Swamy, work came before everything else. He was a doting parent and very fond of his son Sundar, the first boy born after three girls. Once, when frantic calls came from home to inform him that the boy had sustained a fracture while playing, he calmly sent Gopal of Accounts with money and instructions to ensure Sundar received the best medical attention. He could not leave the office until the next morning, as he was working on a most important presentation. Such was his dedication.

His devotion to client service was complete. When Dr S M Patil of HMT Bangalore was admitted in Willingdon Hospital, Madras, for surgery, he made sure that he had a copy of the Bangalore newspaper Deccan Herald delivered at his hospital room. "He should not miss home," Swamy would tell people.

Two other qualities made him the larger than life figure he became. One was that he never gave up, and the other that he never sacked anyone. 'In all my years at Thompsons, I never saw any of his pitches for new business end in failure,' says Rangarajan. 'Even if at first, the client rejected us, Swamy analysed what went wrong, went back and made a fresh presentation, until he convinced the client to do business with us. He always tried to redeploy an employee found wanting in one department, and it almost always paid off.'

These are the qualities that made Mr Swamy such an all round personality, a human being worthy of respect and affection.'

STANDING TALL

When JWT overlooked Swamy's unimpeachable credentials for the top position in JWT India, it was time for him to recast his life. He decided to start his own advertising agency. His friend and long time associate KSK summed up the situation thus: 'A time comes in every man's life when he has to make difficult decisions. In Mr Swamy's life, he had to decide on enlarging the scope of his entrepreneurial strength, guided by his inner vision. At age 50, in 1973 he ventured out on his own, to start the agency, R K Swamy Advertising Associates (now R K SWAMY BBDO), with a capital of Rs. 100,000, a sum perhaps greater than his life savings. In this, he took a calculated risk, but since his faith in his intuition and trust in colleagues were beyond doubt, the agency grew from strength to strength and today it is among the top agencies in the country.'

According to his son Srinivasan, known to one and all as Sundar, Swamy's greatest life challenge came when he had to face the reality of leaving JWT, an organisation he had served for 33 years. Swamy had been sent to the US in 1960 for training at the JWT headquarters. He was then the Madras manager, the newest office in India. Going to JWT USA at that time was a rare honour. He went to many US and UK offices, and had an excellent three-month tour. In 1970, he was again sent for an Advanced Management Programme to Columbia University. Everyone in the company felt he was being groomed for the top spot. He went to Europe and returned via the Far East, visiting numerous JWT offices. His training for nine weeks was fully paid for by the New York office. After all this,

he was denied the top spot. He was told the bad news in September 1972.

The extended Swamy family was holidaying at Ooty at the time. Swamy's elder brother R Ramanujan (RR), his children, Swamy's wife Radha and all her children were there. Swamy joined them here a day or two later from Bombay. He was very disappointed but RR promised him any help he needed to start his own agency.

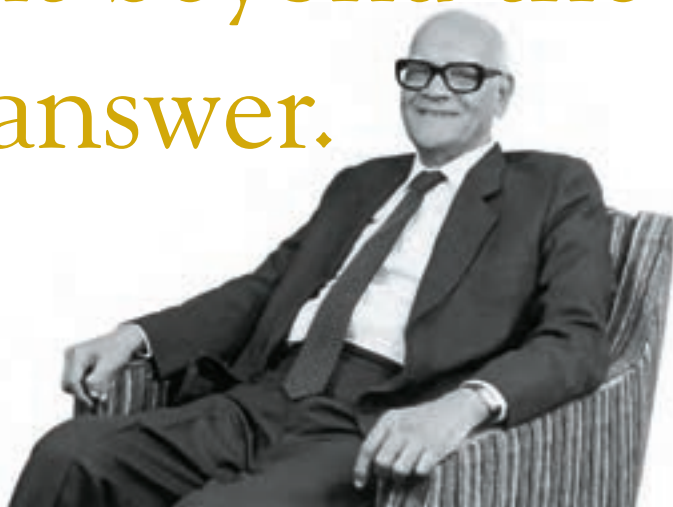
'Imagine a person from Chennai being asked to go to Bombay to write a memorandum on why foreign agencies should be allowed to work for government accounts, when there were so many senior people already there!' says Sundar. Again, when the government planned to impose a 20% tax on advertising, Swamy was invited by the JWT bosses in Bombay to explain why the tax was wrong. This was an ability his foreign bosses found in him, starting with the tobacco report, early in his career. Whatever work came to him, he took it seriously and excelled in it.'

'That the company decided he was not fit to lead it, after leading him on to believe he was to be the next MD, was a shock. It seemed unfair, because his Madras office was contributing 58% of the agency's profits all India, when only 28% of the revenue came from his office. In his last letter to HTA, he pointed out that it was wrong to appoint a rank outsider as the CEO, that it should have been Subhas Ghosal or he. He even suggested the position be offered to Ghosal first and to Swamy only if he declined the offer. Later he came to know that Ghosal had indeed been offered the post and had not taken it, stating he wanted to remain in Calcutta. The same offer was not made to Swamy, apparently because he lacked western sophistication and he did not have a formal college education.'

Coincidentally, this was one of the lowest periods in Indian history, politically,

Swamy saw a door where others saw only a wall.

At creative meetings, he could make ordinary work look better with little touches here and there. He could present the logic of an idea in meetings in such a way that he inspired those present beyond the first right answer.



Yes... Power to activate tens of thousands of pumpsets to irrigate parched fields ...power to turn the wheels of industry ... power to light-up the faces of our people even in the remotest villages.

Power to the people ... the Power of Freedom. Freedom from dependence on erratic rains for agriculture. The freedom of self-sufficiency in food. The freedom of confidence to compete in international markets, and match international standards of sophistication and technical know-how. The freedom of security.

Providing India's much needed heavy electrical equipment to promote self-reliance in the vital area of electric power are Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited and Heavy Electricals (India) Limited.

BHEL has its manufacturing units at Hyderabad, Tiruchirapalli and Hardwar set up in collaboration with

Skoda Export and First Brno Engineering Works of Czechoslovakia, Nuovo Pignone of Italy, ASEA of Sweden, Leningrad Metal Works and Electrosila of USSR and Combustion Engineering of USA.

HEIL operates from Bhopal working in collaboration with the AEI-EE of Great Britain.

Twenty-five years ago, India's total generation of electric power was two million kilowatts. Today, India's generation and distribution capacity has enlarged tenfold and yet the prevailing power shortage is halting progress.

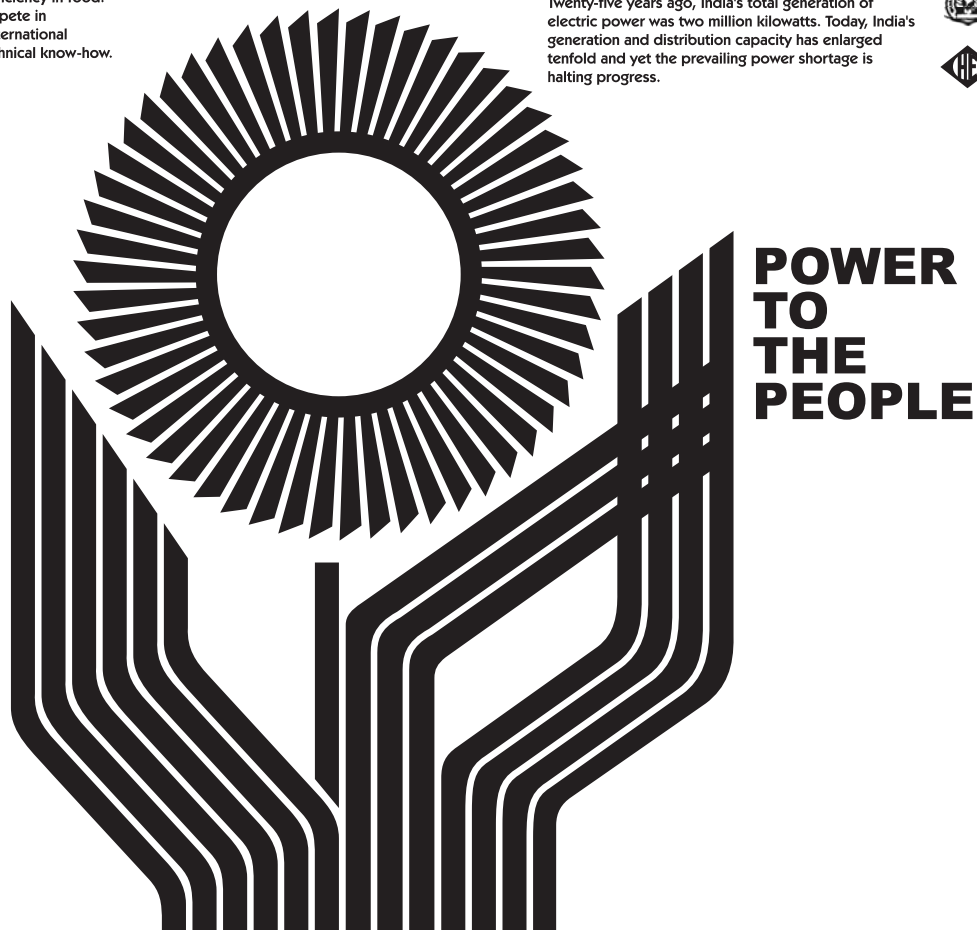
BHEL and HEIL will help double the current capacity in the decade of the seventies. That is some measure of self-reliance BHEL. HEIL power-complex is poised to achieve in bringing power to the people.



BHARAT HEAVY ELECTRICALS LIMITED
Hydrabad, Tiruchirapalli and Hardwar
Registered Office
5, Parliement Street, New Delhi, India



HEAVY ELECTRICALS (India) LIMITED
Bhopal
Government of India Enterprises



The first ad from R K Swamy Advertising Associates, 1973. R K Swamy wrote the copy himself. K R Bilimoria was the Art Director.

economically, socially. After nationalizing 14 of the leading banks and the general insurance companies, the Indian government was plunging headlong into a path of continued licensing and controls, strengthening Nehruvian socialism and its mixed economy model. It was a time of strikes, power cuts, coal shortages, bottlenecks of every kind in the infrastructure sector, and very little incentive for growth and increased productivity.

Concentration of power in the hands of the ruling party and catchy slogans became the order of the day, and a restless youth was beginning to unify under the inspiring leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan. The opposition was becoming vocal and several questions were being raised in Parliament about the government's populist schemes, especially the functioning of the public sector. It was not known then, but the Emergency was barely two years away. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) under the Chairmanship of Dr V Krishnamurthy was a performing PSU, but it was equally under attack on the floor of the House. Its image needed sprucing up, as the public remained hugely ignorant of its accomplishments.

As widely quoted in the media, Swamy saw a door where others saw only a wall. Even while at JWT, he had seen an opportunity in PSU advertising, and with the help of 'Kalki' Vaidyanathan, approached V Krishnamurthy and unfurled his plans for improved communication by the power sector giant.

Sundar continues: 'All the so-called deficiencies identified in Swamy by JWT did not matter to BHEL, who awarded their account to R K Swamy Advertising Associates, based on his marvellous presentation. R K Swamy never looked back after that.'

In KSK's words, 'One of the significant contributions of Mr Swamy to the industry



Swamy always regarded K R Bilimoria as 'his man'. Here he was at Bili's family function with his own family members.



was to identify radically new business potential. He was a pioneer of advertising by public sector enterprises, most of which were engaged in infrastructure activities. This sphere alone contributes highly now to the advertising business.'

His approach to the PSUs (public sector undertakings) was simple. He emphasised that advertising is an expression of the economic system and that performance has to be consistently presented in the right light to counter unfounded criticism. Advertising also helps to establish and maintain a distinct personality of the corporation. All of these were radical concepts for the time.

The work done for BHEL by the fledgling agency was outstanding. It was bold, different and set a whole new trend. BHEL was an important case study of a successful

"His approach to the PSUs was simple. He emphasised that advertising is an expression of the economic system and that performance has to be consistently presented in the right light to counter unfounded criticism."

organisation in the 1980s in the Advanced Management Programme of AIMA and Mr Swamy's contribution to the institution was acknowledged and appreciated.

'Mr Swamy started his agency on my assurance that I would join him,' says K R Bilimoria, the agency's first creative chief. 'I was 34 when I left JWT and joined his agency. It was a very big step. My wife Pervin was scared. She was pregnant then. The astrologer whom Mr Swamy introduced to us said that I would leave the job when our child was born. My wife was not willing to believe it, until I came home one day and told her. After I left the job, Mr Swamy paid me a salary of Rs. 2,000 p.m. from his personal funds for three months until his agency started operating.'

'While I was still in JWT, the new CEO Morris Mathias threw a party, at which he cornered me, and tried to convince me that I was making a mistake in going over to Swamy's agency, even if it was but natural for me to do so. "This is an international company," he told me, but I had made up my mind.'

Swamy being overlooked for the top job at JWT was the only reason why Bilimoria was quitting. He remembered with some emotion that his appointment letter as an artist in JWT in 1961 had been signed by Swamy, and the tremendous camaraderie Swamy had fostered in JWT South in all the years Bilimoria worked there. He was totally on Swamy's side on the JWT leadership issue, because he firmly believed he was the best man for the job.

When Bilimoria first landed from Bombay to join JWT Madras, Swamy had arranged for him to stay at the Parsi Dharmashala in North Madras. He took care of every little detail so that 'Bili' was very much at home in a new city.

Bilimoria believes that the early days at R K Swamy Advertising Associates were



The MICO account was won based on a competitive pitch in 1974.

heady, full of challenges. 'It was all most enjoyable, as we had a very good team. The office was in Mr Ramanujan's (Swamy's brother) house on Habibullah Road. The MICO account was won in competition with Thompson. It was an advertisement for MICO spark plugs for motorcycles. The visual was of a football, and the headline said: 'All it needs is a kick.' We thought our ad gave a kick to Thompson. There were some great ideas in the BHEL campaign. One of the ads had a visual of a complete power plant inside an egg and the copy said: 'High protein diet for industry.' Another ad showed a hydro power station encased in a bowl, and the copy said: 'All it needs is water.'

During that period, Swamy attended most of the creative meetings. He was the motivator behind most of the campaigns, and he was a workaholic. He often worked through the night, coming back with his family to the office at 11.30 p.m. after dinner at home. He liked to show his wife the work his team was doing. They would all be excited by the work and he loved it.

All the tension and hard work caught up with Swamy and he suffered a massive heart attack in 1979. When he was admitted in HM Hospital, Dr Pratap Reddy, who later founded Apollo Hospitals, treated him. When he was a little better, and Bilimoria visited him at the hospital, he was already discussing

“Swamy attended most of the creative meetings. He was the motivator behind most of the campaigns, and he was a workaholic.”

STANDING TALL



Swamy at Borobudur Temple, Indonesia, during his visit to PT Texmaco Jaya, a client he served in the early 1980s.

office work. He was on the job all the time. Years later, Swamy helped write a business plan for Apollo Hospitals, and that led to government approval of the project. He used to sit at Dr Pratap Reddy's house and do the report, with Sumit Chatterjee (the Agency's Copy Chief) and Bili joining him there. 'The first draft of the drawings was made then. Mr Govind Rao was the architect. Dr Reddy would talk of his vision by telling us how the senior people of the agency could get the best of treatment from the best doctors in the world.'

It was a sad moment when Bilimoria left Swamy's agency over a difference of opinion. 'I can never forget this paragraph of a letter Mr Swamy wrote to me when I left his agency,' says Bilimoria:

"Despite such abiding relationships, there does come a time in the evening years of Rama, when the brothers get separated. Through the machinations of God, sage Durvasa enters the scene and makes it obligatory for Rama to banish Lakshmana. This is one of the saddest chapters in that great epic. What is relevant to us in the present context is it is Lakshmana who is banishing Rama. Since it is your will to seek voluntary retirement, you leave me with no choice but to accept the inevitable. The play of time is inexorable. I accept it with all humility. In light of the last paragraph in your letter, I shall continue to hope that our reunion is not far off."

R Raman, who now runs the advertising agency Aspirations Communications in Chennai, was among the first people to join Swamy when he left HTA to start his own agency. He remembers that Swamy always contributed ideas to every campaign.

'A full-fledged presentation would be made to him before it was taken to the client. Those were the days of carousel slide presentations. There would be anything from two to several projectors, with synchronizing units. I remember that for the Lucas Indian



Raman enjoyed a personal relationship with Swamy till his last days.

Service golden jubilee in 1976, celebrated on Independence Day, we collected old advertisements from the Madras Mail's archives and put them into an audiovisual, which we exhibited at the newly constructed Rani Seethai Hall on Mount Road,' Raman recalls. 'Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar was the chief guest that day. The AV covered 50 years of advertising.'

K S Krishnamoorthy, K R Bilimoria, N S Rajagopalan, N Padmanabhan and Sumit Chatterjee were some of the colleagues to join in the early days of the agency. All the TVS accounts had moved over from HTA - Lucas TVS, Brakes India, Sundaram Clayton, Wheels India, Sundaram Industries, TVS & Sons, Madras Auto Service, IMPAL and so on. TT (Private) Ltd., the makers of Prestige pressure cookers, and Hindustan Photo Film were among the earliest accounts. Soon BHEL and HMT became the new agency's clients.

Most senior professionals in the advertising industry in Chennai today would have worked in JWT or R K SWAMY at one time or other. "Trained in R K SWAMY" was a popular brand! Raman's advertising friends had the gall to telephone him and ask him to "give them good client servicing executives". Raman would respond with, "Udambu nalla irukka (Are you feeling well)?" hinting that he would gladly change that state of affairs if

they persisted in their line of enquiry!

The major campaigns in which Swamy was involved, starting from his JWT days and continuing into the years of his own agency, carried powerful messages, based on hard-nosed research and a deep understanding of the consumer's mind, and were creative trend setters. Even when photography was not yet a popular tool in Indian press advertising for technical reasons, the visual appeal of most of these illustration-based advertisements was compelling and the copy was telling and to the point. 'I want to make certain I have locked up my Hercules' ran the headline of a bicycle ad, accompanied by the picture of a humble family man clad in simple house clothes, and a smiling, happy family in the background. Another ad for the same product has another happy householder, returning home from work, vegetable bag in hand. His wife tells her friend, 'With his bonus, my husband wanted to buy me a pair of gold bangles, but, I insisted on his buying himself a bicycle. Naturally, we bought the very best - Hercules.' The Hindustan Photo Films campaign was equally well conceived and neatly executed.

What is of vital importance is that the advertisements did the job expected of them. They created product awareness where none existed earlier, combining brand building and corporate image building, something hitherto unheard of in the realm of the public sector.

In the early days, Madras had few models for advertisements. Raman modelled for quite a few ads. Those were the days of illustrations and photographs were used only as references for the artist.

One such improvisation was the use of an employee, Srinivasan, as a model for an Amrutnanjan campaign of five or six advertisements. 'The first ad was about to be released, and you can imagine the amount of work that entailed in pre-computer days.

Twelve different art works and blocks had to be made. Srinivasan suddenly developed cold feet and told us the ad could not be released, as according to local superstition, he would not get married if his photograph appeared in the newspapers!' Swamy had to persuade Srinivasan's father to prevail upon his son to let the campaign go ahead as planned, as cancelling it was out of the question, involving huge loss of face and business. Luckily, he succeeded in his efforts, and the campaign was a success. On the lighter side, 'Srinivasan has come a long way since. He married an American, goes by the name of Sam Namakkal and his children naturally speak English with an American accent!' Raman regales.

Swamy was a simple man, and used an Ambassador car for a long time. He never thought twice about travelling in Raman's old Austin of England. He would even accept parcels to hand over to other offices when he was flying on official work.

His clients treated Swamy with great respect bordering on reverence. Whenever he visited TVS Madurai, he would be picked up in Mr T S Krishna's Cadillac and taken to their guesthouse, an exclusive privilege. The grandsons of T V Sundaram Iyengar treated him with the same respect as their parents. One particular episode is fresh in Raman's memory: 'Once Mr Mahesh of Sundaram Abex called Mr Swamy for discussions at his office and then took him home. He never discussed any business, confining the conversation to general topics. At the end of it, he said to Mr Swamy, "Thank you, I am very happy and light at heart now. Talking to you for a couple of hours cleared my head. I did not have any business to discuss with you."

When the BBDO partnership came about, the agency could no longer devote quality time to small accounts. TVS, for all their size

and diversity, were small in terms of billing. Raman describes his departure thus: 'TVS wanted the personal attention to continue and they were comfortable with me. So, with their support, I started Aspirations. When I left R K SWAMY BBDO, I came out with Mr Swamy's blessings. He had tears in his eyes when he let me go. Mr Mahesh of the TVS group called Mr Swamy while I was sitting in his room and took his consent for the move. My relationship with Mr Swamy continued till the end.'

According to V Ramasethu, who joined JWT in 1956 as a stenographer, one of the business strategies adopted by Swamy in the early days of his new agency was to run an independent creative studio under the name of Collage, which could do design work for other agencies as well. In organisations like the Rotary, he would ensure that his agency rendered excellent service in the area of publicity and display material. His commitment to his clients was so complete that he would even order coffee for his office guests from India Coffee House, which belonged to a client, the Coffee Board! The result was that R K SWAMY was always top of the memory when people looked for advertising services.

Swamy received tremendous support when he started his own agency, which formally opened its doors on 2nd April 1973 and the Prestige pressure cooker advertisement appeared in The Hindu that very day. The honour for the agency's first advertisement must, however, go to a release on behalf of BHEL that appeared on 26th January 1973, even before the agency was incorporated. The Prestige pressure cooker account of Bangalore was one of the first accounts of the new agency. The TVS accounts came one after the other. Ramasethu remembers a half page ad on behalf of MMA in memory of S Anantaramakrishnan of Amalgamations,

which was released by the new agency even before it had opened an office. Hindustan Photo Films became a client of R K SWAMY in 1974. When HPF vacated the Film Chamber building in 1976, R K SWAMY moved in there and continues to function there even today.

Surojoy Banerjee, at present an Executive Vice President of R K SWAMY BBDO, met Swamy first at a seminar organised by JWT in Bombay, bringing together all the bright sparks of the agency. It was a ten-day in-house workshop, the first time in JWT. Growing up in Calcutta and working in JWT there, 22-year old Banerjee had come to Bombay to attend the seminar.

One of the sessions, on agency finance, was by Swamy. Banerjee was deeply impressed by him and spent time chatting with him after the workshop. Getting to know him, the youngster developed tremendous respect and fascination for him.

Back in Calcutta, Banerjee learnt a year later that Swamy had started his own agency. When he saw the first ad of the new agency for BHEL, he felt he wanted to be in that agency, even though he was doing well in JWT. He wrote to Swamy to congratulate him and wish him well. Promptly came a reply, inviting him to join the new agency. While Banerjee was thinking it over, Sumit Chatterjee, a director of R K SWAMY, rang him and asked, 'Why don't you come over?'

Banerjee flew to Madras and spent a day there with Swamy and Co. The entire Board of Directors was there, to interview this young copywriter. He met the directors individually as well. After Mr Swamy, he met Sumit and the creative chief, K R Bilimoria. They all took the youngster out to lunch at the Madras Club.

I was overwhelmed that so many senior people spent so much of their time with a youngster. Mr Swamy sat down at the end of the day and called me Joy, the first person to

They created product awareness where none existed earlier, combining brand building and corporate image building, something hitherto unheard of in the realm of the public sector.

do so. The name stuck. When he said, 'Welcome to the organisation,' I felt honoured and overwhelmed. I said to him, 'Please stand,' wanting to do what we normally do in Bengal to elders. I touched his feet and he hugged me. We never discussed terms, but it was clear I would go back, put in my papers and come over to SAA.' Banerjee is overcome with emotion even now, as he recalls that moment from the distant past.

When Banerjee submitted his resignation at JWT Kolkata, he faced a lot of problems. 'They didn't want to let me go. Mr Ghosal was Chief of JWT and I had worked personally with him for two years. He said, "What are you doing? Why are you joining this fledgling agency? You have a great future ahead of you at JWT." Deepak Sen, the manager of the Calcutta office was a man of remarkable leadership qualities. He took me out and bought me a drink. He too advised me against the step I was taking. My parents were worried too.'

Banerjee had made up his mind, and in a month and a half, he wound up and went to Madras, where from day one, he worked very, very closely with Swamy. 'He was that kind of boss. He'd delegate but also sit down and spend a long time discussing the work with you. I was only a junior copywriter, and I responded to the confidence he placed in me. It became my organisation very fast and it has been that way ever since I left the comfort of

family, Kolkata and JWT. I didn't think too much ahead but just believed that wherever Mr Swamy was, there'd be a great future. I wanted to be part of the excitement of the new venture.'

Every new project was exciting. There was no one driving the team but they would work through the night to finish creative work.

If Banerjee hero-worshipped Swamy, Swamy reciprocated with affection. The duo went out to meetings together in the same car and they would discuss a variety of subjects. The young man would ask all kinds of questions on life, philosophy, and Indian mythology and he loved listening to the older man. According to him,

'Mr Swamy had this enormous treasurehouse of stories. There was no situation in life for which he could not draw a parallel from the Vedas, Mahabharata, or Ramayana. At presentations, I would always look at him expectantly waiting for him to say something, so apt for the particular situation. I became so emotionally attached to him, he was like my father to me and he called me his third son.'

'All of us became a bunch of friends, doing many things together, while Sundar and Shekar were away studying,' recalls Banerjee.

'We were pitching for the ONGC account in 1974-75,' Banerjee speaks of one of the most exciting projects in his early days with the agency. 'Those days, PSUs were very different from today. They did not believe in advertising and communication, other than statutory stuff. Most agencies were therefore not interested in them. They were not glamorous. Much mining work was involved in converting a customer into a business. R K SWAMY did all of that. Clients who have grown today into large advertising accounts were at one time accounts other agencies would not even look at.'

Swamy had met the Chairman and

members of ONGC and suggested to them that though ONGC was doing so much basic work for the country's economy, there was lack of understanding among the people of what ONGC was doing. There were questions in Parliament about the money spent on exploration not resulting in oil finds. He met senior people and prevailed upon them to agree to look at their communication as a



Surojoy Banerjee and R K Swamy worked together for 28 years.

serious problem, at creating the right understanding of what ONGC stood for, among not only people in the oil industry, but also people who moulded public opinion in the country - certainly the bureaucracy, government departments around ONGC and to some extent, the people at large. 'When ONGC asked us to offer our suggestions, the ball was in our court,' Banerjee says.

Swamy told him: 'Joy, we're doing this project, and we need to understand the entire oil industry in India, see what ONGC is doing, how it compares with the big players in the world.' He dedicated Banerjee to the project and made him spend three months of company time and money on the study. First Swamy and he went to Dehra Dun and spent three days there to understand the whole

process, have discussions with the officials and make notes. Banerjee visited some of their oil fields in Gujarat, at Ankleshwar, Kallol and southern Gujarat, accompanied by a staff photographer. They shot extensively, understood how oil was drilled, met scientists, geologists, and engineers and walked around the oilrigs. It was thrilling to land by helicopter at Bombay High, the new oil field. Banerjee read up on the international oil industry and based on his extensive notes, wrote a huge document. He then went through these notes for a week with Swamy and put together a brief for the agency. An advertising campaign to be presented to ONGC was soon ready.

The whole process took three months. Not a single rupee of the expenditure was funded by ONGC, nor was there any commitment on their part to work with R K SWAMY.

Swamy was determined to project ONGC as a corporation, which could play a serious role in the Indian economy, hounded by misinformation as it was.

A four-hour presentation covering the global and Indian oil scenarios and ONGC's stage of development in oil exploration was prepared. Swamy then sought a meeting with the ONGC Chairman and Directors.

The duo went to Delhi soon and at the presentation, there was an audience of 10-15 people. After Swamy made his introductory speech, Banerjee started making his presentation. Within ten minutes seven or eight of the audience, including the Chairman, had left, answering phone calls or messages brought by their staff.

Swamy stopped the presentation and told the officials present that he and Banerjee needed their undivided attention after spending three months and putting in a great deal of effort into their presentation. He said, 'We believe you need this. If you don't have

time, we can wait till you are ready. We can sit here until midnight or tomorrow. We believe we have something important to communicate, and it is important for you to listen.’ There was stunned silence. Someone rushed out and soon, the Chairman walked in. ‘When Mr Swamy explained the situation, the Chairman apologised and promised to reassemble a few hours later and really listen to us this time.’

Swamy and Banerjee did make the presentation the same evening and the agency won the ONGC account. ‘This kind of commitment made Mr Swamy so different. We made this approach our way of life. Every job is approached in the same manner; no superficial or frivolous work is ever done. Personally, I learnt plenty of lessons from this experience,’ recounts Banerjee.

In Banerjee’s own words, ‘Mr Swamy believed that only a deep and complete understanding of the Indian marketplace and consumer could form the basis for meaningful marketing communications. To this end, he invested substantial sums of his own money in undertaking research projects to understand and assess the market potential for various products and services in rural and urban India.’

‘This information became a spring from which our agency drew repeatedly, to add value to our client’s businesses. It was many years later that this research activity of R K SWAMY became a formalised company, Hansa Research Group. The landmark documents in the series titled R K Swamy Guide to Market Planning have today become ready reckoners for hundreds of business houses across the country.’

Banerjee reveals another facet of Swamy the professional - his cool temperament in a crisis, while describing a presentation the agency made on behalf of BHEL, when the PSU was looking to raise a loan from the World

“I became so emotionally attached to him, he was like my father to me and he called me his third son.”

Bank. The bank’s high profile President Robert McNamara, was to visit BHEL’s Hyderabad unit where a multi-projector, multi-screen presentation was to provide him with a quick yet comprehensive overview of BHEL’s activities and achievements. It was critical that this presentation made an impact on the World Bank chief. ‘I was privileged to work on this presentation under the close guidance of Mr Swamy,’ recalls Banerjee.

After almost three weeks of non-stop working, the team was ready for the great day. But on the night before the presentation, things went topsy-turvy, literally. The carefully arranged slides, some 750 of them, spilled out of the slide trays during the final rehearsal, just three hours before McNamara was due to walk into the auditorium.

‘Mr Swamy, confident and composed as always, sat with me through those next agonising hours helping me re-arrange the slides and getting the presentation together again. I believe Mr McNamara was impressed. And to the best of our recollection, BHEL got the finance they were seeking. That was typical R K Swamy: never backing out when a job had to be done and never leaving you alone to do it.’

Surojoy Banerjee was the manager of the Kolkata office when it ran a campaign for Regent Cigarettes in the early eighties. To announce the price reduction of the Regent Cigarettes Special Filter series, some teaser ads were developed, involving the gradual

baring of the back of a woman's body, with the zipper coming down in a series. The ads were noticed well and did their job effectively. This campaign met with Swamy's disapproval, even though the point was effectively made for the advertiser.

Swamy was quite disturbed at the approach. He felt that women should not be used in such a manner with no relevance to the product to gain attention. He also felt that the ad was against the culture of the organization. Banerjee and the entire agency were told not to use such means to gain the

future from the past,' says Sundar. 'He was an excellent student of history related to business. He would actually go back centuries to how industrialisation took place and draw its relevance to why things are the way they are today and how they will be different tomorrow. He could explain it in an interesting, logical manner. In his articles and speeches, you will see how he relates the past, present and future. This is a quality I have not seen in many people.'

Virtually unmatched was his ability to come up with stories most appropriate to



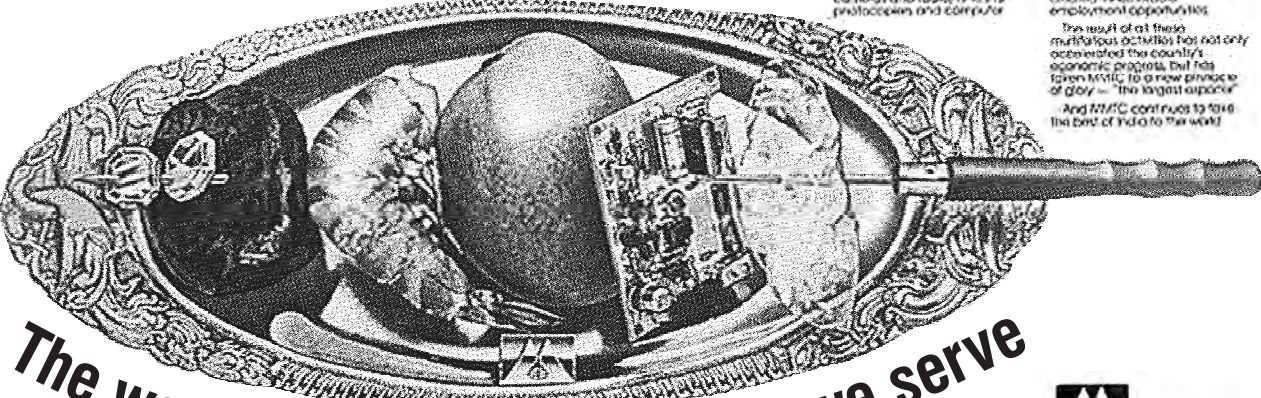
attention of the consumer.

Sundar, who joined the agency in 1978, was perhaps the only one of the Swamy siblings to work directly under his father. He observed him at work and is able to throw light on some aspects of his work style. According to him, the only hero Swamy ever had was Edward J Fielden, his boss in JWT. On his part, Fielden was Swamy's great supporter in the organisation.

'R K Swamy had this ability to predict the

causes he was propounding, or the logic he was building up. For any situation, he would have a story rooted in our mythology or puranas, and he would come up with parallels and reasons why.

'While analysing a report presented to him, Swamy would come up with a logical new direction on every page, only possible for someone with insight into and behind the lines. Your preparation would not help, because he would come up with a new angle.



In 1986-87, MMTC's turnover stood at Rs. 2763 crore with a pre-tax profit of Rs. 44.18 crore. Export earnings touched an all-time high at Rs. 700 crore. And MMTC emerged as India's largest exporter, financing nearly half its free foreign exchange needs for imports.

MMTC today is a new anchor of stability for the country's exports and for the small entrepreneurs producing a wide range of products that are finding ready markets overseas.

Yes, as a catalyst of the country's economic growth, MMTC today helps export a Rajasthan mastercraftsman's intricate jewelry to USA, a Cochin fisherman's tempting catches of shrimps to Japan, introducing new entrepreneurs and products to the export market.

And MMTC is doing it continually identifying more and more products for exports from business and traction to earthmoving equipment, cameras and radio/TV sets to photocopies and computer software, diamonds and minerals to shoddy gold jewelry, sonar scopes and cashew to tobacco, garments and sewing machines.

And not just non-traditional products, MMTC "diversifies" projects too. Like the recent Road Construction assignment in Jordan, Or MMTC's Mechanical Training Centre Project in Malaysia.


At home, MMTC has been initiating a number of developmental projects — building up infrastructure to facilitate exports from the source. Like the Sharada port. And development of mining in the backward districts of Bihar and Orissa. Activities that have created innumerable employment opportunities.

The result of all these multifarious activities has not only accelerated the country's economic progress, but has taken MMTC to a new pinnacle of glory — "the largest exporter".

And MMTC continues to take the best of India to the world.

The world loves everything that we serve

SAA/MMTC/1202


The Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Limited
Export Building
Bhamburda Lane, New Delhi 110 002

Of course, this ability is common among many business leaders.

He used to give Sundar meaty assignments. 'Neither did he say it nor did I ask, but it must have been an attempt to make me a better professional sooner rather than later,' guesses Sundar.

Observing his letters, Sundar styled himself after his way of letter writing. Swamy would never sign a letter with pen corrections, and his son too follows that. Since he had no direct boss, Swamy, the big boss, was Sundar's boss when he joined the agency. 'I would give crazy ideas, and he would mellow it down, nurture me, and encourage me,' remembers Sundar.

Initially, Sundar analysed the company's expenses based on revenue and other criteria. He benchmarked these with other agencies and tried to find out why a particular expense was more or less. He would study the balance

sheets of others, and see where the agency was spending more. He would irritate the managers by asking questions, confident he knew how to drive the company and make a point in a particular manner. He would try to see it all objectively, go into numbers and ask

“While analysing a report you presented to him, he would come up with a logical new direction on every page, only possible for someone with insight into and behind the lines.”

why 14% and not 8%. In response, Swamy would try to explain to him, taking it all very seriously. 'That continues today. His mentoring of me was informal. I took him on as mentor like Ekalavya did Dronacharya.'

Whenever the agency made audiovisual presentations, Sundar would make the slides, write the text and Swamy would correct his work. There would be a research component, logic, creative design; a lot of work went into it. 'Up until the mid-1980s, a campaign presentation was all canned, not as we do it today, when people stand up and talk. We

“He invested substantial sums of his own personal money in undertaking research projects to understand and assess the market potential for various products and services in rural and urban India.”

had to put Kodak slides in order, record the sound and pulse. We had to synchronise auto slide movement. We used a professional voice, recorded music, graphics, and colour slides. There would be a minimum of 2 projectors, but there could be 6, 8 or 12 projectors. As one projector projected, the next one took over; there would be no gap. The quality of projection was world class. We did rehearsals with the full complement of equipment. The whole thing was a nightmare.'

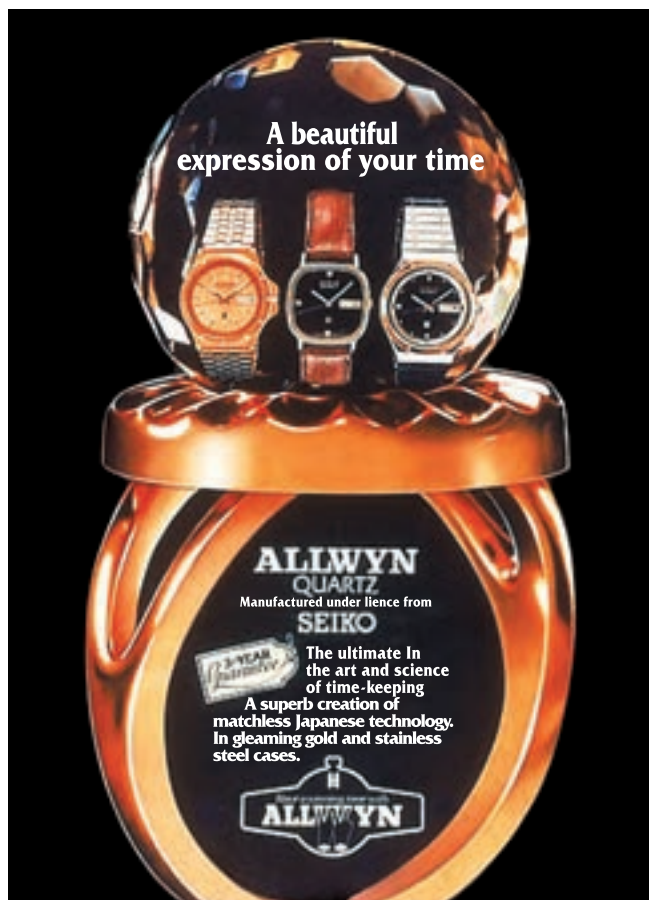
There was a time when Sundar did presentations himself. He would number the slides, carry the heavy equipment, and set up the presentation. 'I did all that heavy stuff. Today they don't know how to connect the equipment.'

Ricory instant coffee from the Nestle stable was a major account that Sundar serviced. Another was Texmaco Jaya, Indonesia. The agency did work in India to service the client in Indonesia. Bilimoria and Sundar handled that account.

In 1980-81, the agency made its first major campaign pitch for the Hyderabad Allwyn account. It was the Seiko watch launch. Ajit Singh was chairman of Allwyn, and Swamy led the pitch. Ajit Singh was very impressed, but decided to give the business to the No.1 agency, HTA. At the same time, he gave R K SWAMY the business of other products like water coolers, air conditioners, and furniture, 'because he did not want to not give us work'. It was a consolation prize of sorts.

Swamy felt insulted, but on second thought accepted the accounts, as he felt it was better to be inside and fight rather than outside. Within six months to a year, HTA was removed and agency got the Seiko account. It was a very important lesson. Swamy felt, 'Never lose heart and walk away from business. We can outlive our rival. Someone else may come into a decision making position and decide in our favour.'

Sundar states that 'as a company, we still believe that, and bide our time, build bridges and try to get a bigger, legitimate share of business. I was a key member in building relationships in Hyderabad Allwyn. I worked with all the GMs and managers and convinced the next Chairman Jayabharat Reddy, that they should give us the account. Their launch had failed because of factors like the wrong choice of range of products, or the client approving inappropriate work by the



agency. We always knew we had a great relationship going and our work was good.'

Approvals of campaigns are usually joint decisions by the client and the agency. The client invariably gives the agency an opportunity to argue a point. They do not dictate. If they insisted on going ahead with an approach he did not like, Swamy would say, 'If you must waste money, waste it through me.' Sometimes clients blindly accepted his advice. He commanded that kind of respect. Once he convinced the client about the approach, it was difficult for others to change it.

At creative meetings, Swamy could make ordinary work look better with little touches here and there. He could present the logic of an idea in meetings in such a way that he inspired those present beyond the first right answer. He always drove a consensus at meetings, even on issues others would imagine it would be difficult to reach agreement on. He would slowly, gradually build the consensus. All decisions were unanimous and nothing went to vote.

'I always write extra words of comfort to someone who has suffered a bereavement,' says Sundar, who traces this habit to something he learnt from his father. 'The person at the receiving end should feel that you have made an extra effort to empathise with him, in drafting the communication. Every communication, whether congratulatory or condolence, especially if it's a condolence message, has to be personal. It is once again something I learnt from father. When I do not know the person so well, I try to connect with my own grief and share that feeling I experienced with the person I am now addressing.'

Swamy never sent back anyone who came to him for help, financial or otherwise. People who approached him knew they'd get something from him, though not how much.

N V Ramanan, Swamy's son-in-law, who heads his own creative boutique today, met Swamy and Sumit Chatterjee in Bombay in 1973 through common friends in Readers Digest. He joined R K Swamy Advertising Associates then. 'Bilimoria, Sumit, Suri and I used to sit in a hall at the Habibullah Road office,' Ramanan remembers. 'It was a small team, and the atmosphere was exciting. There were no computers, and we used to

“But he understood that copywriting was more than good English and gave a lot of freedom to his creative staff. He had ways of getting alternatives out of his people. He had an eye for detail.”

work late into the night, on accounts like BHEL, MICO, TVS, HPF.'

‘From the time he started the agency in 1973, it only grew, on all parameters, never looking back. It is the only south-based agency consistently in the top ten in India. His success can be ascribed to his perseverance and clarity of goals. He had no short-term goals. He was never fully satisfied

[illegible]



With the extended agency family in 1994 at Hyderabad.

with the growth achieved. There was always a higher place to go to. He was a pioneer of the industry, played out a broad-based industry role. For example, he pioneered PSU advertising. Before him, no one touched them. He made them very appealing. Under his leadership, the agency showed the advertising world that corporate communication could be very exciting. Then everyone fell in line. BHEL, HMT, HPF, ONGC, MMTC... there were memorable campaigns for each.'

'You must however redefine your old goals and objectives as time passes by. In today's circumstances, the need came to go multinational, and the agency did, with its partnership with BBDO. The need came again to ensure a good mix of more and different accounts. Personal style plays a great role in all this, and you see a bit of the individual who runs an organisation in its evolution. In Mr Swamy's case, it may be possible to equal his contribution in any one aspect of his life.

In advertising, you may find a few people like him. In a management association, you may find others like him, and yet others doing work similar to what he did for the Ahobila Math, publishing a periodical like Sri Nrisimhapriya, but in all of them put together Mr Swamy would be a hard act to follow.'

'He was a good judge of creativity. He knew what would work, and is said to have written copy in his very early years in advertising. Though I haven't seen samples of that, he was creative in making the appropriate propositions. His English was excellent. But he understood that copywriting was more than good English and gave a lot of freedom to his creative staff. He had ways of getting alternatives out of his people. He had an eye for detail.'

'He believed in himself and the causes he pursued so completely that he was not put off by negative criticism or temporary setbacks. He had great clarity in his mind. Creativity does not only mean writing copy or designing

a brochure. Creativity is in thought. He was very appreciative of ideas, very sharp. He caught on to ideas at the draft stage, and he spent time on his campaigns. Some creative people might find painful the thoroughness behind the competitive presentations he insisted the agency made: 12 press ads, 2 brochures, 4 catalogues. Everything must be comprehensive. It was almost as if it was print ready, the client would approve and run the campaign. He was demanding and there's nothing wrong with that.'

'He would apply his mind to any task and that applied to matters legal or financial that affected the company. He had the competence to do it and he gave it the time needed. He was a generalist who was a specialist in each area.'

'His personal lifestyle did not ever come in the way of his performing his role as an advertising man. He once produced a curtain raiser so impressive on prawns that the client said, "I am sure you love prawns." Swamy said he never touched the stuff. He could equally have delivered excellent ads for Scotch whisky, I am sure.'

Ramanan travelled on a few occasions with Swamy on campaigns. He would get very involved with the work, highly participative, staying up nights with the team if necessary. He would bounce ideas off them, but never put undue pressure on the team. Instead he would try to help. He made people very comfortable.

What distinguished Swamy from other great men was the completeness of his personality. Ramanan explains: 'I don't know of many people who rose to be leaders in so many facets of life. Professional, social or religious. Take any aspect, he was a complete individual - very well read in Vedic philosophy, totally devoted to the Ahobila Math, and we all know his eminence in

advertising. Whatever he did, in any field he entered, and he ventured into quite a few areas, he had to be No.1. He'd pursue it with a very clear goal and passion. He achieved almost every goal of his. This is somewhat unusual. Not many advertising men can claim to be scholars in philosophy or religious matters, or were such well-rounded personalities. All other qualities like vision, perseverance, hard work, etc., would I suppose be true of most successful people. He had the ability to trust people and delegate authority. He excelled in championing causes. He never saw himself as an individual in an Agency, or a Math or Management Institution. He saw himself as a representative of an industry. This is the role he took upon himself.'

'In The Roll Call of Honour, a book of biographies by Arthur Quiller-Couch, the author lists a set of parameters that make for greatness in a man. One of the qualities he stresses is that of self-devotion to an idea, a cause. If success was delayed, he'd always say he knew it was coming. He had the courage of his conviction, as when he took on huge organisations like the INS.'

'According to Mr Swamy, the whole purpose of most of our epics is to help us resolve dilemmas that life throws up by following the precedents in these stories; they are something to fall back on; they have morals you can follow in your everyday life.'

This faith is perhaps what gave Swamy clarity of thought. From a very early age, he studied the scriptures and became a good astrologer. Even while he was working on the BJP campaign, he impressed the party leadership with his erudition. He used a quote from the Ramayana to develop the BJP concept of freedom from fear, from discrimination. He was very aware of his duties and had immense faith in God. He had both knowledge of our scriptures and the wisdom to apply them judiciously. 'That is



Swamy in conversation with Chris Jaques at the 1998 Silver Jubilee celebrations of the agency at New Delhi. Sundar is slicing the cake.

why I call him a complete human being,’ Ramanan sums up.

According to his younger son Shekar, Swamy started the agency, not as a one-man show, but as a full-fledged team, because he did not know any other way. He never played the small professional game. He could only operate on a reasonably large platform; he did not know whether he was creating a large or small canvas. He knew that he needed all these people to do his work.

‘My father created something on the basis of what he knew, starting a relatively large operation. It was either a stroke of genius, or sheer bravado. It could have gone the other way. Knowing what we know now about how the game works, it’s certain he was playing blind man’s bluff. May be that’s why he was an entrepreneur, though true entrepreneurs assess their risk, and he did not do any

assessment.’

From Day One, he had 30 people and started with high overheads. His chief motivation was to cover those overheads. The strong goodwill he enjoyed from customers reduced his risk. He must have had many anxious moments and lived a hand-to-mouth existence for a long time. Starting in 1973, he opened offices all over the place - Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore - even before streamlining the first office. ‘Was that smart? I don’t know,’ wonders Shekar. ‘I don’t think he sat around wondering if he was right or wrong. He knew he needed to be an agency with an all-India operation, with four or five offices. His energy carried him through. He would go to a new location and go get the business. BHEL wanted him to be present in Delhi, so he went there and then started looking for more business. His costs were

Swamy never put undue pressure on the team. Instead he would get involved and try to help. He made people very comfortable.

already running ahead of him, and he somehow had to cover costs. That's the way the business grew. His thinking was simple: "How can you be an agency and not have an office in Bombay? So open an office there."

Swamy formed strong bonds and encouraged strong bonds among employees. He hated to see people leave the company. He wanted to hire Bilimoria back when the latter had to leave Kamerad News, the agency he had started. However this could not happen as R K SWAMY BBDO had changed considerably in the ten to twelve years Bili had been away. The youngsters of Bili's time were now senior people and running the operations. How could he come in now and report to his erstwhile juniors?

Swamy never carried grudges. Instead, he felt an obligation towards people who had once come on board. "They helped me when I was starting out." He never saw that they too had seen an opportunity when they joined him.

In less than a decade from commencement, the agency had achieved a turnover of Rs. 100 million and was established as one of the leading advertising agencies within the top ten in India. This was a remarkable achievement.

He always attached a premium to development of advertising based on consumer insights. He therefore had a Research Department from the early days of the agency. He persuaded a senior Researcher from Hindustan Lever in the mid seventies, Dr A K Vasumathi to join the agency with whom he would engage in serious intellectual debates. This Research department was launched as a separate company Hansa Research in 1987, at the time when Dr Vasumathi retired. His daughter Vathsala Ravindran, a professional researcher who was the deputy to Dr Vasumathi till then, ran this company and it made steady

progress till 2001. To further accelerate the progress, Hansa Research invited Ashok Das, who had stepped down from ORG Marg as President, to join the company as a Managing Director and equity partner. Hansa Research has since leap-frogged to the position of India's largest Indian-owned market research company.

Swamy created HansaVision as a subsidiary company of the main agency in 1987. HansaVision initially was in the business of TV programme syndication - i.e selling TV commercial time on TV programmes and events to advertisers and other advertising agencies. A few years later HansaVision set up facilities to produce their own programme with state-of-the-art production and post production equipment.

Under his guidance Hansavision took many pioneering strides and made significant contributions to the television industry as detailed below:

- a) In 1991, HansaVision for the first time in the country bought TV rights for the Benson & Hedges World Series Cricket played between India, Australia and New Zealand. These 11 one-day international matches played in Australia and New Zealand were telecast live on Doordarshan as sponsored programmes.
- b) Telecast the boxing event of Mike Tyson live on Doordarshan in 1995
- c) International Music event - Yanni Live at Agra was aired on Doordarshan in 1997
- d) Produced and telecast the first Tamil 5-day a week serial "Vizhudugal" for Chennai Doordarshan in 1995.
- e) Significant role played in marketing various Doordarshan, Sun TV and Gemini TV programmes.

Between 1986 and 2003, the year Swamy passed away, HansaVision had put on air 5400 hours of programming and events in six languages (Tamil, Telugu, Kannada,

Malayalam, Hindi and English) and sold in the process 800 hours of commercial time to various advertisers. The company was dealing with virtually every serious advertiser and agency in this business segment.

To take advantage of other opportunities in the market place, HansaVision (trade name HANSA) today has moved into the area of marketing services. It is now a specialist group offering unique solutions in the Out-of-home media space, Events and Activation, Retail ID, Consulting, Continuing Medical Education, India Market Information and copy-protection of digital media.

Swamy created bonds of friendship and loyalty in the organisation that went beyond the employer-employee relationship. To most employees, he was a father figure, and many took pride in that special bond.

A driver working at R K SWAMY BBDO S Paul Raj, remembers that 'Mr Swamy was so punctual. Once, when he wanted to be dropped at Bombay Gymkhana at 6.00 p.m., we reached there at 5.55. He got down from the car, walked around the club and came back exactly at 6.00 p.m., to keep his appointment. When I went back to pick him up at the appointed hour of 7.00 p.m., he walked out, on the dot!'

'Whenever I think of Mr Swamy, I am reminded of Big Ben, the London clock tower,' is the unexpected way Paul Raj remembers him, in a possible reference to his giant stature, both literally and figuratively.

R K Swamy's beliefs

R K Swamy internalized
his own set of guidelines. Here are
some of the principles he followed
in building his business.



ON CLIENTS

"Advertising can deliver results disproportionate to investments. Attempt to deliver this to Clients, every time."

"Reciprocate the Clients' trust. Never skimp on resources for what you need to do for Clients."

"Business has its cycles. Support Clients in times of their troubles. Do not be a fair weather Agency."

"Never use the Client's money to pursue the Agency's agenda."

"Clients are people. Stand by them, particularly when they are out of favour."

"We are in a service business, not a servile business."

ON PEOPLE

"Never forget it is always the Team."

"In the long run, prima donnas disrupt the work more than they contribute."

"Empower your People. Unleash their energy. Work consciously at it."

"Work with people, shoulder to shoulder. Don't be an absentee manager or colleague."

"Everybody has something to offer. Always first try to reassign and resurrect people, in case they are unable to perform in an assigned task."

"Be there for your people when they need you, particularly in times of their personal difficulties."

"People work best in stable environments."

"Avoid politics internally.
Cancer is best treated early."

"Be loyal to people.
They usually return the sentiment
many times over."

ON CREATIVE & AWARDS

"Creative is what the Clients come
to us for."

"We have to excel in all aspects
of Creative-ideas, craft and execution."

"What's the point of the message?
Make sure you have one."

"R & D - Relevance and Difference-
should drive all work."

"Execution can be strategic."

"Tone of voice sets one apart from the other."

"It is important to win awards. Go for them. But never at the Client's cost."

"Respect the consumer. Think of it always as one to one communication."

"Respect the competition. They are part of our ecosystem."

"We can be unique, but we should not be uniquely ugly."

ON RUNNING THE BUSINESS

"Customers come first. Then the People. Then Associates. Then the Shareholders."

"Profit is important, but it is not the be all and end all of business."

"Profitability is important. But it should not deter us from making short term investments to secure that long term."

"Reinvest as much as possible. Capital is scarce and expensive. Follow a frugal dividend policy."

ON BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

"Look for a big tamarind tree and stand next to it. Enough tamarind will fall down in the breeze that you can pick up easily."

"There is no point hunting where others are also hunting. Look for unusual pastures. Develop altogether new businesses and segments. You will have a run of such opportunities for some time, till competition catches up."

"Try to maximise what the current Clients can give us. Chances are we have not exploited this potential."

"When you go for a new business pitch, prepare carefully and thoroughly. Even if you do not win, it will pay off in some manner."

ON MEDIA & VENDOR RELATIONS

"Be respectful always. You can't run your business without them."

"Be fair and open in your dealings."

"It is OK not to do business with someone. It is not OK not to tell them why."

"The Media are our partners. Pay their dues on time. Respect their business needs, and they will respect yours."

ON THE INDUSTRY

"We carry a responsibility to the Industry. No amount of time or money is an excess in serving the Industry. It is the hand that feeds us."

IN GENERAL

"Integrity is not only about being good and moral. It is a sound business strategy."

"Time changes everything. The most difficult situations will change, often for the better".

"You can never work too hard. Enjoy it. It will be light."

"Flashes of brilliance are good. But consistency will always win in the long term."

"It is not failure, but low aim that is a crime

Showcase

Right from its inception, R K SWAMY BBDO has worked with the singular goal that its clients must derive genuine value from its services.

The company has worked with the firm belief that its work can be a force multiplier in the marketplace.

In category after category, market after market, time after time, and across media and customer contact points, R K SWAMY BBDO's work has delivered disproportionate results for its clients.

Presented in the following pages is a small selection of such work done over the years. What is noteworthy is that many of these examples have really had only modest investments behind them. No wonder then that such work has endeared the agency to its clients, many of whom have remained with the agency for years and years.

Client
Bharat Heavy
Electricals Limited

Brand
BHEL

Year
1973 - 80



Our biggest competitor works only 12 hours a day

Power generation equipment from BHEL-Hyderabad delivers nearly 800 MW round-the-clock energizing industries, electrifying villages.

The sun. A boundless source of energy but available only for twelve hours a day. And twelve hours of energy is just not enough for India's industries and rural areas.

That's where BHEL-Hyderabad steps in. To provide power twenty-four hours a day. To keep the wheels of industry moving with its power generation equipment.

BHEL-Hyderabad's main line is manufacturing 110 MW and 60 MW turbo-sets. This power generation equipment has been supplied to various thermal stations: Ennore, Kothagudem, Indraprastha, Guru Nanak and Harduaganj.

And right now, more turbo-sets are being manufactured for supply to Faridabad, Barauni, Panipat, Patratu and Panki thermal stations.

In addition, industrial turbo-sets manufactured by BHEL, Hyderabad are a powerful package deal at work in giant paper mills, steel plants, refineries, chemical factories and sugar mills, serving their power and process requirements. These turbo-sets, manufactured in collaboration with SKODA of Czechoslovakia, range in capacity from 1.5 to 25 MW.

BHEL-Hyderabad putting on the pressure. A wide range of Centrifugal Compressors from BHEL-Hyderabad find wide application in fertilizer and chemical complexes, steel and oxygen generating plants and many more.

Putting on the pressure, they deliver gas up to 350 kgs per square centimeter.

BHEL-Hyderabad's role in industry doesn't end here: It also manufactures Minimum Oil Circuit Breakers for voltages from 25 KV, and Air Blast Circuit Breakers for voltages from 132 KV. Plus Boiler Feed Pumps.

Today, BHEL Hyderabad's annual capacity is 9,00,000 KW of power generation equipment. It provides employment to over 8,000 people, who are involved with various trades, skills, and disciplines, people who are part of BHEL's growing family.

**Power to the people**
BHARAT HEAVY ELECTRICALS LIMITED
(A Government of India Undertaking)
Heavy Power Equipment Plant, Ramachandrapuram, Hyderabad 500032.
Registered Office 18-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi - 110 001.

BHEL announces a Rs.22-crore error- with some pride

BHEL climaxed 1973-74 with a turnover of Rs 228 crores that's Rs 22 crores more than the forecast. Keeping pace, profits before taxes doubled to Rs. 27 crores.

It wasn't just a good year for BHEL. It was a great year.

A highlight of 1973-74 an over 60% increase in BHEL's turnover:

1973-74 was BHEL's best year yet. Turnover and profitability both exceeded expectations; productivity increased significantly and power generation equipment manufacture reached an all-time high.

The turnover increased to Rs. 228 crores from Rs. 141 crores of the previous year, an increase of over 60%. Profits in the current year were Rs. 27 crores, as against Rs. 13.2 crores in 1972-73.

And for products like switchgear, transformers and boilers, BHEL has been able to secure orders against stiff international and national competition by quoting competitive prices.

In addition, BHEL has not availed of the 10% extra margin in pricing, which is available to all Public Sector Undertakings. In spite of this, profits have gone up and prices have remained competitive.


Not only have prices remained competitive, but so has quality. That's why BHEL exports electrical equipment, to Malaysia, Singapore, Ghana, Iraq, Malawi, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Kenya, UAR and UK. BHEL has also sent its technical consultancy experts abroad.


1973-74 a year of Plints from BHEL:

During 1973-74, the first 100 MW generator and turbine were manufactured. Plus, the first 100 MW station and the first 120 MW station have all been commissioned.

As a policy, BHEL has sought to acquire the most highly sophisticated technical expertise available. This has led to collaboration agreements with reputed companies in USA, Sweden, West Germany etc., for manufacturing air pre-heaters, electrostatic precipitators and axial and radial fans.

As you can see, it wasn't just a good year for BHEL. It was a great year.

**Power to the people**
Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
(A Government of India Undertaking)
Heavy Power Equipment Plant, Ramachandrapuram, Hyderabad 500032.
Registered Office 18-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi - 110 001.



BHEL strikes a blow for economic freedom at Jhansi

BHEL: Ready to serve with over 15 MKW of power.

BHEL and HEIL: The marriage that electrified the country

BHEL: Geared to move India up in the Power Club

SANBHEL 1987

Power to the people.

An advertising baseline or a rallying call for an entire corporation? The 'Total Communication System' propagated and implemented by R K SWAMY for BHEL was a stunning example of how communication can help achieve corporate goals. The work put the fledgling Agency on the map.

BHEL's 12-point Corporate Plan is a clear demonstration of its total commitment to our nation to achieve its goals through well-defined objectives. Yes, the Corporate Plan proves BHEL's commitment to deliver more and more power to the people - power for progress and prosperity.

Our life is an open book



**Power to the people**

1. To achieve a dominant position in the engineering, development and manufacture of electrical and mechanical equipment for generation, transmission and utilization of energy and electric power.
2. To carry on a growing and profitable world-wide business in electrical/mechanical equipment for the generation, transmission and utilization of energy and its related products, systems and services for power stations, industry, agriculture and transport.
3. To become a leader in research and development in different fields of engineering and technology in the areas of work relating to the business and to ensure a steady flow of new products, processes, services, methods, organizational patterns and relationships.
4. To ensure sound commercial policies, customer acceptance and satisfaction for the Company's products and services.
5. To design, manufacture and market all Company's products and services at good quality and fair prices.
6. To build public confidence for products and services bearing the Company's name and brands through sound competition, advertising, promotion, selling and services.
7. To evolve a participative style of management which will ensure good working conditions and job satisfaction to all employees, wages commensurate with their performance, career advancement and goodwill amongst all employees, and respect for the human individual.
8. To ensure continuous development of competent managerial personnel and make best use of both the human and material resources of the business.
9. To design an organizational structure with clearly enunciated objectives and policies where freedom to function and flexibility to perform will be ensured for all in accordance with their abilities, capacities resourcefulness and initiative.
10. To provide a reasonable and adequate return on the invested capital and generate adequate internal resources to finance growth of the Company and fulfill national objectives.
11. To fulfil, as an instrument of social change, by adapting Company policies, products, services, facilities, plants and schedules, the social, civic and economic responsibilities, commensurate with the opportunities afforded by the size, success and nature of the business and of public confidence in it as a corporate enterprise.
12. To give full consideration to the environmental impact of all products and processes developed, designed and built by BHEL.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
18-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg
New Delhi 110 001

High-protein diet for in dustry!



Industrial turbo-sets from BHEL. Hyderabad are a powerful package deal at work in giant paper mills, steel plants, refineries, chemical factories and sugar mills, serving their power and process requirements.

BHEL Hyderabad offers turbo-sets that enable you to have power to serve your industry whenever you want it.

These turbo-sets come in capacities from 1.5 MW and upwards and are manufactured in collaboration with SKODA of Czechoslovakia.

BHEL-Hyderabad's main line, however, is manufacture of 110 MW and 60 MW turbo-sets. These power generating machines have already been supplied to the Ennore, Kothagudem, Indraprastha, Guru Nanak and Harduaganj thermal stations.

Right now, more turbo-sets are being built for supply to Barauni, Panipat, Faridabad, Patratu and Panki thermal stations.

BHEL Hyderabad's annual capacity is 9,00,000 KW of power generation equipment.

And, BHEL, Hyderabad provides employment to over 8,000 people who are involved with various trades, skills and disciplines; people who are part of BHEL's growing family.

BHEL-Hyderabad - more than turbo-sets

BHEL-Hyderabad's role in industry doesn't end with turbo-sets. It also manufactures Minimum Oil Circuit Breakers for voltages from 25KV, Air-Blast Circuit Breakers for voltages from 132 KV. Plus, there is a wide range of Centrifugal Compressors and also Boiler Feed Pumps.

**Power to the people**

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
(A Government of India Undertaking)
Heavy Power Equipment Plant
Ramachandrapuram
Hyderabad 500032
Registered Office:
18-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg
New Delhi - 110001

Ready to serve: Over 15 million kilowatts of power



BHEL: Ready to serve with over 15 MKW of power.

BHEL and HEIL: The marriage that electrified the country

BHEL: Geared to move India up in the Power Club

SANBHEL 1987

Client
TVS Group

Brand
TVS

Year
1973 onwards

TVS Service:

Not just more kms per litre

But more years per vehicle

That, in general, sums up the service philosophy of TVS.

The statement a vehicle owner in TVS, a thoughtful but a casual one, diagnoses made and tested, applied.

Severely "exaggerated?"

Ah anyone who has had his vehicle serviced by TVS knows.

And there are many. Who have been customers of TVS for over 20 years now.

Obviously, they have been getting their money's worth.

For, "competitiveness" is not the word that fully describes TVS' service.

It goes much beyond.

Service that takes care of the present, fitting of a suit to perfect engine overhauling in spacious workshops, fully equipped with modern tools and equipment. And moreover by qualified, well-trained technicians and technicians.

Using upons of proven quality for replacement, where needed.

The result? Optimum performance. Which means more kilns per line.

And once you have your subline regularly maintained by TVS, you can be sure that your vehicle will always be lighting it. And fit it will be for many years to come.

With a wide network of branches spread throughout South India, TVS is a leading firm in an organization that promotes the most important industry, encourages indigenous manufacture of auto-components and placed at the service of the public all its technology, manpower and skill. Today, continue to serve you in the tradition of over seven decades.

TVS You can trust **TVS**
T V Sundram Iyengar & Sons Ltd
Madurai & Branches
Sundaram Motors
Madras & Branches.

SAA/TVS/2837

Trust was the basis.

The TVS Group of companies was an early supporter of R K SWAMY, and placed their trust with the Agency. The Agency reciprocated with enthusiasm and commitment to meet their needs across all media – print, exhibition, audio visuals, road shows, dealer conferences, et al.

Client
Oil & Natural Gas
Corporation

Brand
ONGC

Year
1977-82

Oil and natural gas - the prime nourishers of industry. As sources of energy and fuel for power, transport, process, metallurgical and several other priority industries; as feed-stock for fertiliser, chemical, plastic and textile industries industries upon whose progress depends India's economic advancement. And, with world oil prices becoming prohibitive, ONGC has taken up the challenge ...

Our ceaseless quest

In its ceaseless quest for oil ONGC's emphasis has always been on self-sufficiency. In the aspect of oil exploration, drilling and production—including equipment, expertise and technology—ONGC has been a gear bearing structures on shore as well as off shore. Located so far, 124 have been built and 100 are in the process of being built. Till the end of 1975, ONGC had recovered 59.67 million tonnes of crude oil and 1.15 million tonnes of natural gas, cumbrics of gas. Now, to fully meet the nation's needs ONGC has moved in new directions.

Striking it rich off-shore...

The oil strike of Bombay High has proved a very encouraging start to India's offshore program. It is expected to establish a production potential of 2 million tonnes per year, by the end of 1976. The offshore program is expected to produce 10 million tonnes per year in about four years, an exciting prospect. Indeed, This also opens up a new horizon for India, for mastering off-shore technology; developing indigenous capabilities for building offshore structures, drilling equipment, and for preparing young engineers to meet the new challenges ahead.

ONGC: at home abroad

In its quest for self-sufficiency, ONGC is looking for sources of crude in foreign countries too. It has been exploring for oil in the Persian Gulf along with three international oil companies. This joint venture with Indian and foreign firms has 200 tonnes of crude oil every year. ONGC is now drilling in the deserts of Iraq, under a service contract with the Iraq National Oil Co. That isn't all. ONGC is even working with the Indian government under a contract for carrying out seismic survey in Southern Iraq. Also, ONGC will soon be drilling for gas on the tropical island of Songo-Songo for Tanzania.

All these efforts are going to oil the wheels of the Indian economy. When you walk on, the vehicle you drive, the clothes you wear, the food you eat ... they are all linked with oil. As you can see, ONGC is closer to you than you'd imagine, forming an integral part of your life.

Oil & Natural Gas Commission,
Dehra Dun

Oil flows
-the nation grows

ONGC

 ONGC



**Presenting
the complete food
for all-round
growth:**

Black is the colour of the most precious gold in the world today: Oil the Black Gold. The gold on which depends India's future economic independence and prosperity. Against a total requirement of 23 million tonnes in 1975, India produced only 8.30 million tonnes. World oil prices and our national security now make it imperative that India finds her own oil and ONGC has taken up the challenge.

Over the years, oil has emerged as the prime mover of regional, economic, and political development especially in the petroleum-producing states. India is no exception and she is blessed with oil-rich land in the basin of the Godavari. The Godavari basin is one of the largest oil basins in the country. The Godavari basin is one of the largest oil basins in the country. The Godavari basin is one of the largest oil basins in the country.

The oil gap is 14.70 million tonnes wide!

However, India does not at present produce all the oil she needs. The indigenous production of 0.32 million tonnes in 1975, consumption of crude oil and petroleum products was 16.02 million tonnes. The deficit of 15.70 million tonnes was imported.

By the end of the 5th Plan period a new form of oil policy was adopted. It was decided that a minimum of 100,000 bbl of oil should be produced annually and the rest of the balance 14.70 million tonnes should be imported.

It was a good move to prevent heavy oil bills. Reports by several foreign banks have also indicated that the oil price will continue to increase and the product production.

The world oil crisis costs India Rs.1,150 crores

an immense oil and gas province for oil, both onshore and offshore. Based on its measurements, estimating indigenous hydrocarbon that India may be self-sufficient in oil. And despite the results are promising in both Gold and OILCO is working to oil the wheels of India's progress.

Oil & Natural Gas Commission.
Dehra Dun

**Oil flows
-the nation grows**

ONGC



**All that's gold,
doesn't always glitter**

**ONGC accepts the challenge-
to build the nation with
Black Gold.**

Rising to 1.2% at present is needed for 1.5% in OPEC's 2006 Budget. The Commission, the national agency for oil regulation and development, says OPEC has overreacted.

THE GRIP YOU CAN TRUST

Retreading done in 24 hours. With exclusive TVS-made 'camelback' rubber - your guarantee of a real, sure grip on the toughest roads! For passenger cars, commercial vehicles, two-wheelers and tractors.

**YOU CAN
TRUST TVS**

**SUNDARAM INDUSTRIES
PRIVATE LIMITED**
Bangalore, Coimbatore, Kalamassery,
Madras, Madurai Mangalore, Pudukottai,
Salem, Secunderabad, Tirunelveli,
Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam.

**GET A FIRM GRIP ON
SAFETY AND ECONOMY.
GET YOUR OLD
WORN-OUT TYRES.
RETRADED BY TVS.**

Client
Hindustan Photo Films

Brand
INDU

Year
1975-77

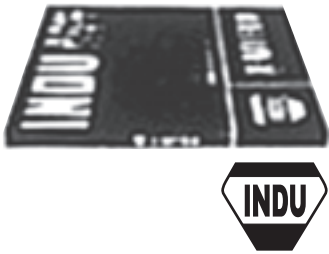
The difference between life and death was 2cms

The three pins Janakiraman swallowed got lodged in his lungs. He started battling for breath and his life.

Indu X-Ray came to the rescue. The clear X-Ray showed where the pins were lodged and an operation was performed immediately.

Janakiraman's case meant yet another life served by Indu.

Last year, the number of cases diagnosed on Indu X-Ray totalled around seven million. An impressive figure when you consider that Indu's the only totally indigenous film!

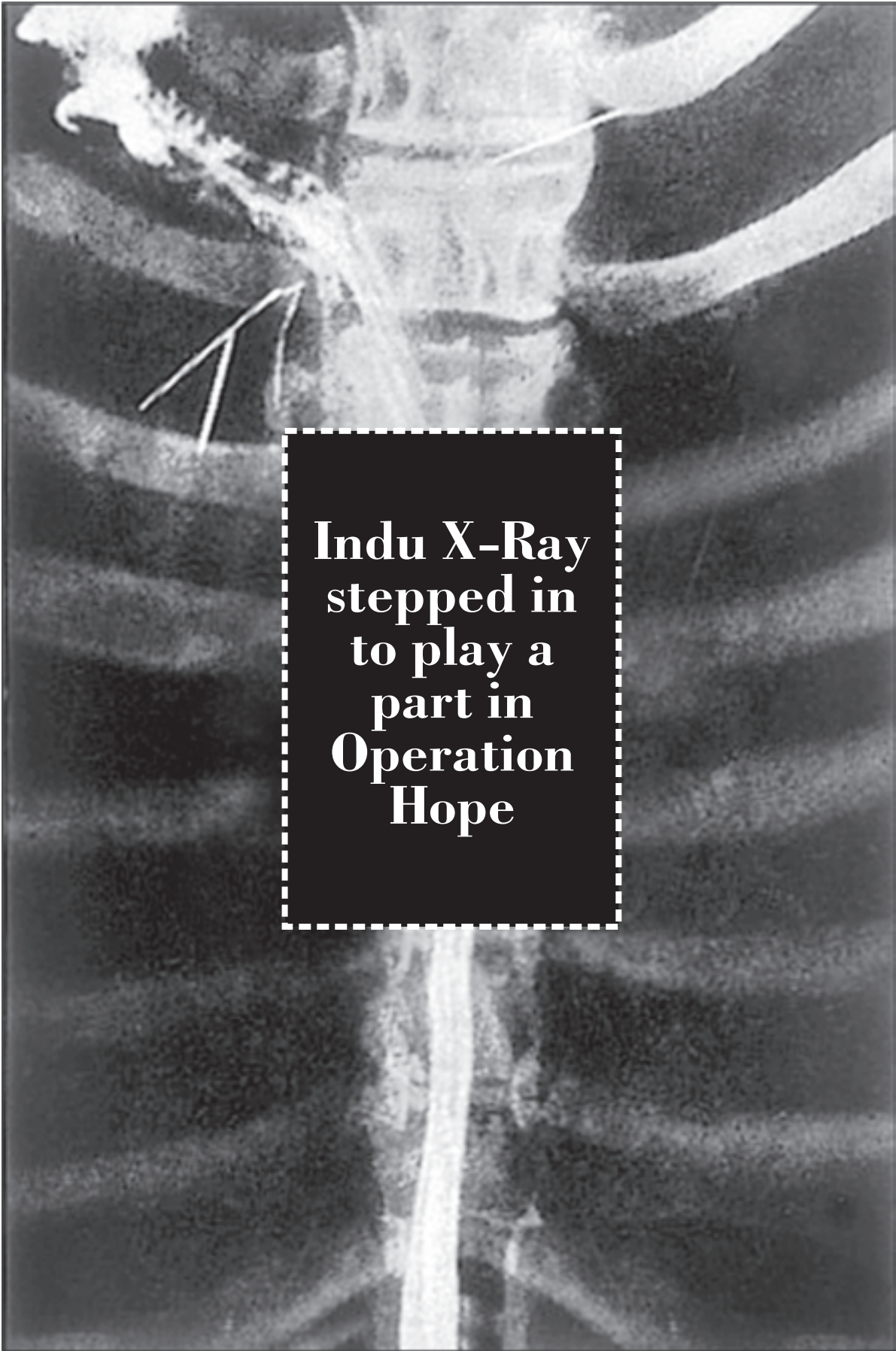


The Indu Range – playing a vital role in India's drive towards self-reliance.

Indu X-Ray Film, Indu Cine positive, Indu Cine Sound Negative, Indu Roll Film, Indu photographic papers, Indu Medium contrast Graphic Arts Film, Indu diepositive, Indu Document Copying Paper.

INDU
gives you proof
of quality.
In black and white.

Hindustan Photo Film Mfg. Co. Ltd
Indu Nagar Ootacamund - 643008
(A Government of India Enterprise)



Indu X-Ray
stepped in
to play a
part in
Operation
Hope

Capture the inherent drama.

In some cases, what companies do makes a huge difference in the lives of people. Communication works best when it captures this drama. Which is exactly what R K SWAMY did for Hindustan Photo Films, to show case that company's performance. A resounding success, in black and white.

Harjit Singh was prepared to give up his life in the Chhamb sector

Indu helped him to face it once again.

Indu gives you proof of quality. In black and white.

INDU

HINDUSTAN PHOTO FILMS MANUFACTURING CO. LTD. (A Government of India Enterprise) Ootacamund-643008.

Remember "Khamoshi", "Dastak", "Anokhi Raat"?

Indu brought them into your life. As it did every black-and-white award-winning film.

The Indu Range, playing a vital role in India's drive towards self-reliance.

Indu gives you proof of quality. In black and white.

INDU

Hindustan Photo Film Mfg. Co. Ltd., Indu Nagar Ootacamund - 643008, (A Government of India Enterprise)

Client
Nestle India Ltd

Brand
Cerelac

Title
Mother and child

Duration
30 Secs

Year
1985



Mother: Tum chaar mahine ke ho gaye...



Mother: Doctor aunty kehati hai ki ma ke doodh ke saath...



Mother: ab tumhe tos aahar bhi chahiye.



Mother: Iski shuruuat tum Cerelac se karo.



Baby: Heeee



Mother: Haan isme doodh aur cheeni pehle se hi maujoot hai...



Mother: Tum abhi badon ka khana nahin kha sakte...



Mother: Lekin Cerelac ka har ahaar tumhaara har vishesh zarooraton ke liye paushtikta se bharpoor hai...



Baby: Heeee



Mother: Tum isse pasand karoge... Cerelac ka swaad bacchon koh bahut accha lagta hai



MVO: Tos aahar ke pehle swaad se hi apne shishu ko dijiye Cerelac ka anupam uphaar.

Helping build Cerelac to No. 1.

R K SWAMY worked on Cerelac for over 10 years, from 1979 to 1989. During this period, the brand raced ahead to be the leader in the weaning foods category. The line "Give your baby the Cerelac advantage" is still being used.

Give your baby the Cerelac advantage!



At about 4 months, your baby needs solids in addition to milk feeds. This is the time to give him the Cerelac advantage.

Nutrition advantage: Each Cerelac feed provides all the nutrition your baby needs proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals. All balanced correctly for your baby's very special needs.

Timing advantage: When your baby wants it, Cerelac is ready in seconds. It already has milk and sugar. You just mix Cerelac with pre boiled water.

Taste advantage: The first solid feed is a strange new experience. Babies love the

Cerelac taste. That's the best start! Please follow the instructions on the tin carefully to ensure hygiene in preparation and balanced nutrition for your baby.

Free Growth Chart:
Send for your baby's very own growth booklet write to CERELAC Post Box 3 New Delhi 110008.



Cerelac care: nutritionally complete—and delicious

Client
Campco Ltd.
Brand
Campco
Title
Line up
Duration
30 Secs
Year
1987



C is a chocolate called CAMPCO



A - Means it's No. 1



M - is for milk to give you strength



P - is for protein full of fun



C - is creamy rich taste



Laaa... la la la ala

A fun line up.
When India's largest cooperative of cocoa growers wanted to launch their own brand of chocolate, they turned to R K SWAMY to help support the launch. With children as the focus, R K SWAMY lined them up to make the brand endearing and most memorable.



Oh what fun to have CAMPCO



MVO: Creamy Milk Chocolate from India's largest most modern plant.

Client
New India Assurance
Co Ltd
Brand
New India cattle
insurance
Title
Farmer
Duration
30 Secs
Year
1988



Farmer 1: Arre Sukhiya, yeh pichle hapte hi toh tere dono bail be mauth mare gaye thei...



Farmer 1: ... aur tunne naya bail kharid bhi liya... Kahan se mila paisa?



Farmer 2: Arre maine New India Assurance ka Pashudhan Bima joh kara liya tha...



Farmer 2:Bailon ki poori keemat de di unhone



Farmer 1: Pashudhan Bima? Kaise karathe hai ?



Leading in Rural Communication.
R K SWAMY has been a pioneer in Rural Communication. This award winning TVC promoted cattle insurance for New India Assurance. The Agency has produced the gamut of rural work for various clients over the years.



Farmer 2: Arre uskeliye janwar ki keemat ki...



Farmer 2: ...har sau rupye par saal bharme zyaada se zyaada chaar rupye dene honge... bus



MVO: New India Assurance Nuksaan mein aapka sahara.



Client
Hyderabad Allwyn Ltd.

Brand
Allwyn Trendy

Title
The way to be

Duration
30 Secs

Year
1988



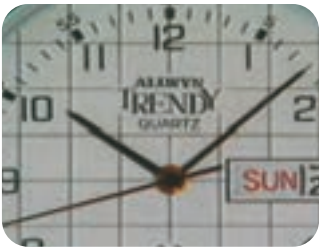
When you are young...



...And you're free



...Trendy is the way to be



...The time has come

The power of Youth.
Over the years, R K SWAMY has helped launch scores of new products in the market, targeting all sorts of consumers. In this example, Allwyn Trendy was among the first to target the Young, recognising this emerging demographic segment as a powerful consuming force.



Allwyn Trendy



Tough 'N' light



Water tight



The new Allwyn Trendy Quartz.


Client
LIC Mutual fund

Brand
LIC Mutual fund

Year
1989


Is there one way of getting the benefits of safety, a **higher return, growth** on investment –linked to **family security**?

Look out for a unique investment opportunity. Coming your way-soon.



I Like the **high return** on a Company deposit. Is there a way to get **growth** on investment, also?

Look out for a unique investment opportunity. Coming your way-soon.



From the hands that protect



The promise of prosperity



अभयं सर्वदा

LIC Mutual Fund

Now! Get a high return on your investment. And security for your family.

Today, you are faced with numerous investment options. Bank deposits that are safe but don't give a high return on investment. Company deposits that give a higher return but don't really allow for much growth on investment. Shares that give growth on investment but require indepth knowledge of the stock market to avoid risks. Or, you could opt for the one investment option so unique, it gives you the benefits of all three. LIC Mutual Fund. The investment option that gives maximum benefits. How's that possible? Quite simple, really. As one of a large group of investors, you will entrust your savings, to the LIC Mutual Fund.

This substantial amount will then be managed by a team of investment specialists drawn from LIC... an organisation with a track record of managing a fund of the magnitude of Rs. 19,000 crores. Naturally, given this high level of expertise, the LIC Mutual Fund will develop a portfolio of growth oriented investments that will yield maximum returns without sacrificing liquidity or safety. **LIC Mutual Fund The dimension of security.** The LIC Mutual Fund plans to offer a variety of investment schemes... each one an attractive blend of high return, growth on investment and safety.

Some of these schemes will offer a fourth dimension: **life cover for the investor.** Under the life cover schemes, the investor can set a target amount for savings in a certain time frame. Should the unforeseen happen, and the investor dies, the LIC Mutual Fund will pay the target amount to the investor's nominee. The LIC Mutual Fund is committed to serving the investor in more ways than one. For a balance of high return, growth on investment, safety and life cover, look to the LIC Mutual Fund for the right investment option for you.

*For further details and conditions, please contact the LIC Mutual Fund, Yogakshema, Jeevan Bima Marg, Bombay - 400021



LIC Mutual Fund
We'll help you meet your goals



Education, to establish the new player.
When India's most trusted financial services brand decided to step into new territory, it was time to break out all stops. From designing the new logo to audio visuals, from product literature to a multi media launch, everything was created overnight (or so it felt). A rousing start!

Client
Hindustan Latex Ltd.

Brand
Moods condoms

Title
Chemist

Duration
30 Secs

Year
1990



Customer-1 (shyly): Excuse me... Umm,



Can I have some... Ummm...



A pack of...



Customer-2 (confidently): Moods condoms

First, the consumer insight. Then, the communication. Research clearly showed that men hesitated to ask the shopkeeper for condoms by brand. The result was a piece of communication that addressed this head-on. Asking for Moods was no longer something to ... er ... hesitate about.



MVO: Act with confidence.

Client
Rashtriya Ispat
Nigam Ltd.

Brand
Vizag Steel

Year
1991-94



The draw of aesthetics. The company was born with the handicap of huge cost overruns. It needed to establish its brand quickly, on a quality platform. Perhaps the most beautiful presentation that the steel industry has ever seen accomplished the task.

Client
Indian Shaving
Products Ltd.

Brand
Oral B toothbrushes

Title
Upside down dentist

Duration
30 Secs

Year
1995



Dentist: Daton ki safai par dyan nahin hai



Patient: Main toh accha toothpaste istemaal karta hun



Dentist: Sirf accha toothpaste istemaal karne se bath nahin banthi



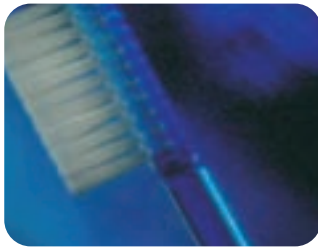
Patient (Mumbling): Kya kaha?



Dentist: Asal mein danton koh chahiye ek accha brush... Joh danton ke saath saaath kitanuon ka bhi safaya kar sake



Patient (Mumbling): Kya kaha ?



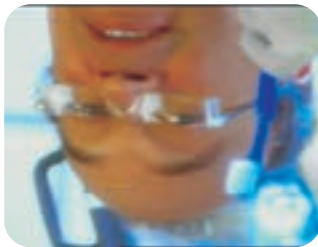
Dentist: Oral - B istemaal karke dekho, joh mein istemaal kartaa hun. Duniya bhar mein...



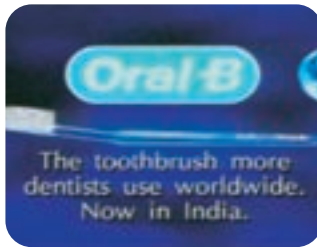
Dentist: ...zyaada dentist yahi brush istemaal karte hain



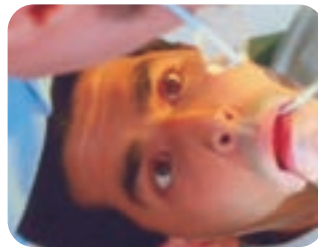
Patient (Mumbling): Oral-B



Dentist: Sahi Kaha...



MVO: Duniya bhar mein zyaada dentist yahi istemaal karte hain.... Ab Bharat mein



Patient (Mumbling): Aap vakhi Oral - B istemaal karte hain ?



Dentist: Sahi kaha. Mein Oral - B he istemaal karta hun.

Turning things upside down.
A category dominated by MNCs. An unknown name. A premium price. A limited budget. Against the odds R K SWAMY BBDO helped launch Oral B with the upside down dentist endorsing the toothbrush 'more dentists use'. The sales went only one way - straight up.

Client
TTK Sara Lee Ltd.

Brand
Brylcreem

Title
Snap Test

Duration
30 Secs

Year
1996



FVO: Looking for today's man?



Do the snap test and snap



He's using...



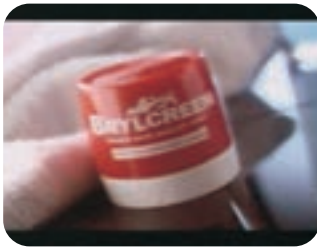
... that greasy old fashioned stuff



Do the same with his hair and...



...snap your fingers
Right... he's your Brylcreem man



MVO: New Protien enriched Brylcreem, keeps your hair healthy, well groomed and yet non-greasy



FVO: For today's hair in a snap



A grandfather's brand. For the grandson.
Brylcreem was a brand from the 1950s. When R K SWAMY BBDO was charged with the responsibility of relaunching it in the 1990s, it came up with a snappy idea. The snap test on television demonstrated the non-greasy feature. The brand started appealing to the young virtually overnight.



New Brylcreem-



for today's hair in a snap.

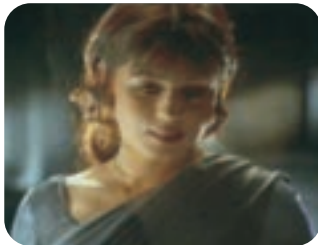
Client
Hawkins Cookers Ltd.
Brand
Futura pressure cooker
Title
Chandan
Duration
30 Secs
Year
1995



Music...



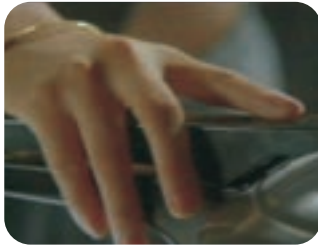
Jingle: Chandan sa badhan...



Jingle: Chanchal chitvan...



Jingle: Dhire se tera ye muskana...



Jingle: Mujhe dosh na dena jag walon...



An ode to a beauty.
Futura pressure cooker from Hawkins is a product of stunning design. It deserved communication that would extol its beauty and its virtues.This "Chandan" TVC did that and more. It doubled sales in one year and the brand never looked back.



Jingle: Ho jaaon agar mein diwaana

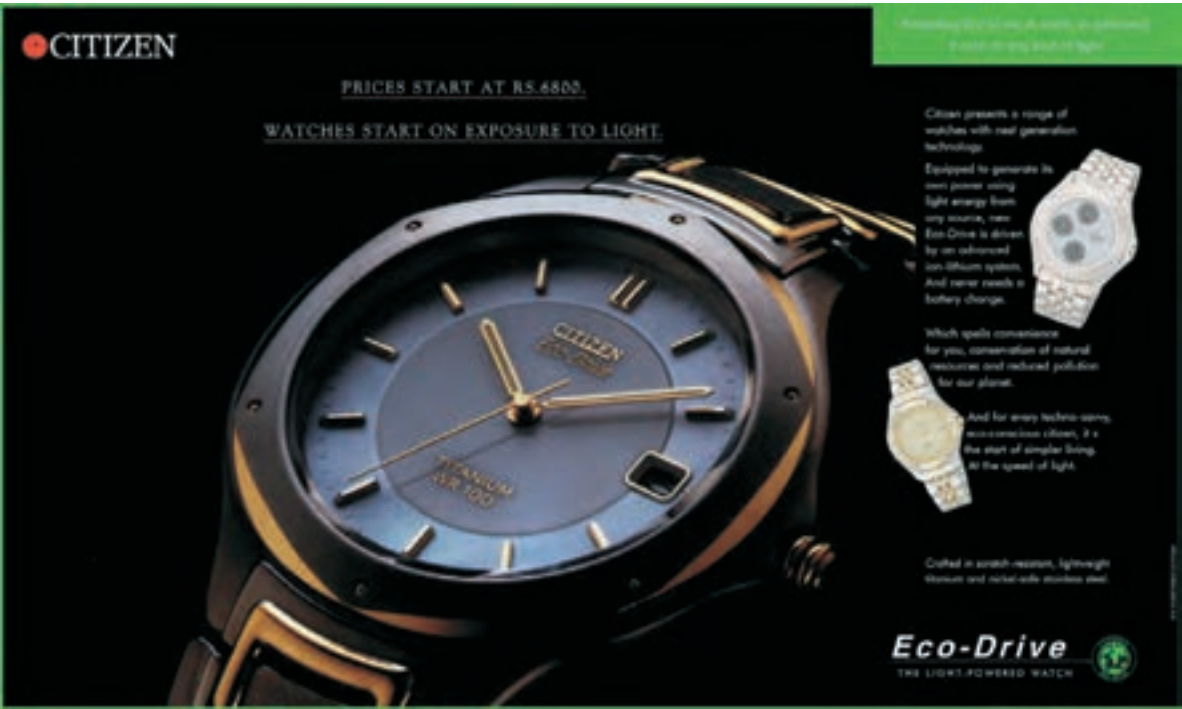


Music continues...



MVO: Futura Pressure Cookers from Hawkins.

Client
Citizen
Brand
Eco-Drive
Year
1998-99



Shed light on the one powered by light.
Look clean. Exude premiumness. Stay product focused. Introduce the new. Showcase the technology. Create the aura. Be serious. Differentiate. Surprise. Kindle desire. No wonder the Eco Drive flew off the shelves.

Client
TTK Sara Lee Ltd.

Brand
Kiwi Shoe Polish

Title
Whiteboard

Duration
20 secs

Year
1996



New KIWI Classic



has more rich



natural wax



than any other



liquid shoe polish



So KIWI Classic is richer and thicker, giving you a better shine



New KIWI Classic. More wax. More Shine.



Now also in 40 ML pack.

The simpler the better.

What better way than to spell out the communication on a white board! The demonstration was so powerful that the market share of Kiwi moved up smartly and oh so quickly. Seldom has so little investment yielded such high returns.

Client
VISA International

Brand
Visa credit cards

Title
Locker room

Duration
30 Secs

Year
1996



Player -1 : Our holiday Tickets nahin mile. Didn't go with enough cash ...



Sachin: VISA Power... Go Get It



Player -2 : And the special saree, woh bi nahi mile.



Sachin: VISA Power... Go Get It



Player -3 : Pata hai. At the restaurant, we had to skip lunch



Sachin: VISA Power... Go Get It



Player -4: Teek hai, teek hai... Can your power fix this too?



Sachin: La...



Get Visa power.

The power to do not only what one has to, but also what one wants to, that's Visa power. With this simple insight, R K SWAMY BBDO has helped Visa to become the undisputed leader in the payment systems business in all dimensions.



Sachin: VISA Power... Go Get It.



Client
Living Media India
Ltd..
Brand
Cosmopolitan
magazine
Title
Smart six
Duration
6 x 10 Secs
Year
1997

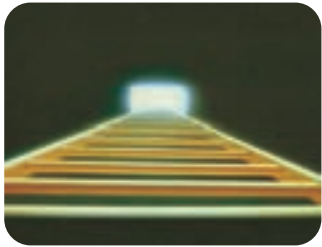
Title: Wine Glass



Music...



Title: Ladder



Have you ever felt...



that your career could do...

Title: Board room

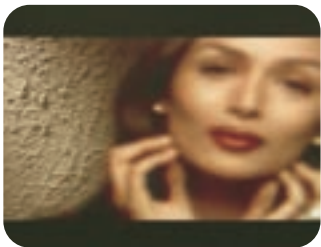


The women's magazine that shows...

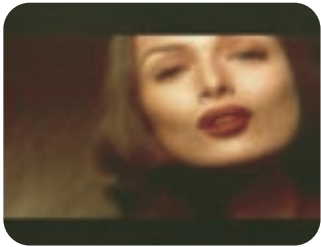


how to succeed here...

Title: Feel Good

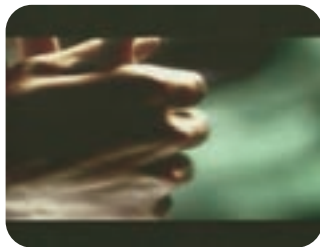


You have never seen a woman...



who makes you feel...

Title: Hands



Here's a women's magazine that
believes...



that the battle of the sexes...

Title: Learning



Where did you...



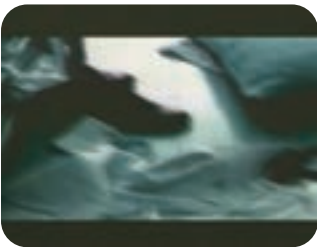
Dressing for success at work



with a little help



...and here



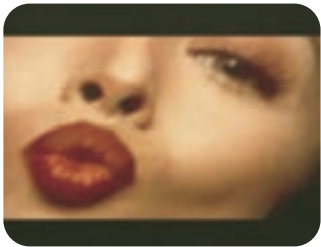
... and at play



Cosmopolitan. Are you up to it?



Cosmopolitan. Are you up to it?



so good...



should end in a draw...



learn that



about yourself.



Cosmopolitan. Are you up to it?



Cosmopolitan. Are you up to it?



Cosmopolitan. Are you up to it?



Cosmopolitan. Are you up to it?

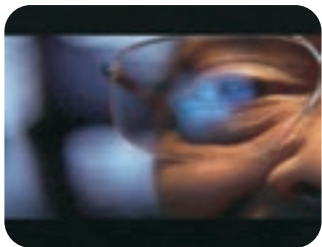
Communication to reflect the audience.

Honest. Sexy. Smart. That in a nutshell describes the TV campaign created to launch the Indian edition of Cosmopolitan magazine for the India Today Group. Backed by an innovative TV plan that called for concentration in a single channel, the launch was a resounding success.

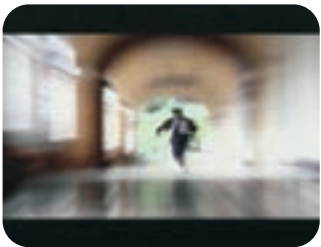
Client
adidas India Ltd.
Brand
adidas
Title
Full Tension
Duration
60 Secs
Year
1997



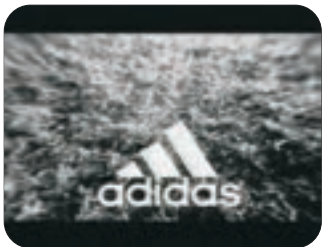
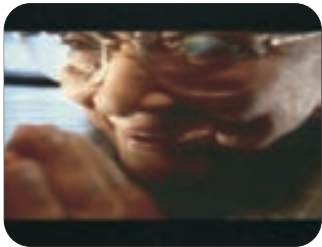
Music...



Music continues...



Music continues...



Capturing the drama by pausing it.
The world stands still while the master is at the crease. This was captured in a special camera technique called the dramatic pause. With this most recalled TVC for adidas, R K SWAMY BBDO ensured the most dramatic of results on a most modest budget.

Client
Daimler Chrysler

Brand
Mercedes Benz

Year
1999 onwards



Hold a mirror. Success will follow.
The Mercedes Benz is like, well, no other. The work for Mercedes Benz has to be like, well, no other.
R K SWAMY BBDO has produced hundreds of pieces of work for this brand, perhaps the most consistent body of work in the automotive category.



R K SWAMY BBDO's work has won industry recognition and numerous awards, both domestic and international, over the years.

Client
Piaggio Vehicles .
Brand
Ape
Year
2000 onwards



The proof is in the performance.

An intra-city low volume cargo carrier on three wheels? The prevailing view said there was no such viable category. R K SWAMY BBDO has helped Piaggio create exactly such a new category working on all aspects of the communication, from the ground up.



Client
ICI India Ltd.
Brand
Dulux paints
Title
Football
Duration
30 Secs
Year
2000



Music...



Dulux 3-in-1 paint.



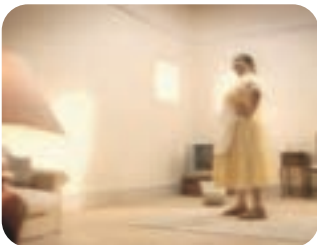
Jis par se aap doh sakte hain...



har tarah ka daag...



Bina koi...



...nishaan chode, har baar.



Dulux 3-in-1 paint.

The power of demonstration.

When ICI Dulux delivered a unique product, it needed a unique television presentation. The stage was set to create a mess that could then be wiped clean. The character of the cleaning lady added that extra something. A clean wipe, some would say!

Client
Government of India

Brand
Women & Child
Development

Year
2002/03

No, it wasn't an accident.
The marriage was arranged.

Her husband beats her if his dinner isn't served hot, if his clothes aren't ironed, sometimes, even if he's had a difficult day at work. Deep down, she knows it isn't accidental, because accidents don't happen



Towards a new dawn

every day. To all those men who use physical violence against their wives, we have this to say: **think about your mother, your sister, your daughter before you raise your hand on your wife.**

What a sweet, innocent child.
Perfect for carrying bricks.

When he was one year old, he started walking around. By two, he had learnt how to speak. By the time he reaches seven or eight, he'll be working



as a construction labourer. To all those who make children work for them, our only request is this: **Think of your child before you do so.**

Her husband is happy with his scooter and TV.
She's happy just to be alive.

Her marriage was not made in heaven. It was arranged in a shop. For several thousands of rupees, her husband sold himself. And her parents thought they had



bought happiness. May we remind all those who demand or offer dowry, whether in kind or in cash: one day your daughter or sister could be living this nightmare.

What is she going to get?
A cuddle? A kiss? Or a quick burial?

There are a few among us who won't give a second thought before murdering their own newborn. And that too, just because she is a girl. Even a jail term doesn't deter



them. Before they kill again, we would like them to consider: **Would you have been alive today had your mother met with the same fate?**

Powerful campaigns. For fundamental causes.

As a recognized leader in the field, R K SWAMY BBDO's Social^Rural Marketing Group has developed numerous campaigns for worthy causes over the years. This series on Women and Child development created quite a flutter. An unexpected result – the logo was adopted by the Ministry as its own.

Client
Raymond Ltd.
Brand
Raymond
Title
Baby
Duration
30 Secs
Year
2002



Music...



Managing a leader, carefully.
When R K SWAMY BBDO started work with Raymond, it knew it was dealing with a legacy brand with a strong following. This 'Baby' commercial preserved the brand's sensitivity even as it showcased the superior fabric and looks. Feels like heaven indeed.



Music...



Music...



Music...



Music...



Music...



Music...



Music...



Raymond - The Complete Man



Music.



The house that Swamy built

R K Swamy founded R K Swamy Advertising Associates Pvt Ltd, in 1973 with all the money he had at that time - a capital of Rs 100,000 (the equivalent of USD 12,000).

He opened as a large format agency, with 30 employees on day one. His clients sometimes bailed him out in the early days, paying for services in advance. He honoured every commitment, to clients, people and vendors alike.

The foundation that he laid has led to the creation of one of India's leading multi-disciplined, multi-location, marketing communications and services groups, operating under two brands - R K SWAMY BBDO and HANSA.

The Group employs over 700 full-time people, across 17 distinct offerings, located in 14 offices in six cities, plus a field network spanning an additional 12 cities.



General Advertising

Founded on the philosophy that work must produce disproportionate results for the client. Vast experience across products and categories. Substantial value addition through focus on the work, sheer consistency, and depth of understanding.

mediadirection

Delivers efficiencies (i.e. cost savings), and effectiveness (i.e. impact), by placing the target Customer at the center of all thinking. Emphasis on creative solutions in a highly fragmented media landscape. Digital Direction is another specialist team under this ambit.



Customer Relationship Management group handles special projects for Clients with a practical approach. In addition to direct marketing activities, the Group manages Institutional Selling, and complex Customer Loyalty and Channel Incentive programmes.

social^ruraldirection

A recognized leader in this most challenging space dealing with attitude and behaviour change. Services span the spectrum - from developing communication strategies and programmes to on-ground implementation support and tracking.

pharmadirection

Focuses on developing attention-getting 'Direct to Doctors' communication, across pharma specialities. Recognized for its innovative work, fresh strategies and creative communication even for mature pharma brands.

hrdirection

A marketing and communication service with HR as the focus. A clear leader in the space. Promotes Employer Branding with a unique set of services ranging from campus recruitment and internal referral programmes to mass media.



collage consulting
branding • creative • design

Originally an art services studio, and more recently a specialized design, creative and branding service. Operates on the belief that design can be strategic. Team handles new Brand creation, Packaging, Merchandising and even mainstream advertising.



HANSA Events & Exhibitions

Product launches, One-to-one meets, Experiential marketing, Trade shows, Rural caravans, Shopping festivals. Experienced team does all this and more with field capability across the country.

HANSA Research

A top ranking, largest Indian-owned market research operation. Leader in Media Research. Conducts more than 600,000 field interviews across 400+ projects a year. Services cover Customised, Media and Syndicated Research.

HANSA Consulting

Offers four types of services: Brand Consulting, Marketing Strategies, Market Mapping and Media Consulting (to Media owners). Strategic services provided by senior personnel, with emphasis on guiding the projects through to execution.

HANSA Television

Leading TV programme producer in south India. Produced over 6,000 hours of television content including many block busters. Recognised as an original thinker and developer of special programming to capture the audience's imagination.

HANSA MedCell

Serves the Pharma industry with Continuing Medical Education, scientific monographs and science based brand strategy development. Employs full time medical professionals and senior medical practitioners to develop Content.

HANSA OutSell

A leading buyer and manager of out-of-home Media, delivering outstanding value. Capacity to go from concept to in-market execution across the country in just days. Experienced talent handles complex Outdoor needs with unique tools.

HANSA InfoSource

Specializes in collecting, collating and analysing information that is crucial for the marketing, advertising and media industry. Offerings include crisp overviews, reports and updates for more than 350 categories.



HANSA Research

A top ranking, largest Indian-owned market research operation. Leader in Media Research. Conducts more than 600,000 field interviews across 400+ projects a year. Services cover Customised, Media and Syndicated Research.

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With Allen Rosenshine, Chairman and CEO, BBDO Worldwide

Swamy was one of the earliest business leaders in India to realise the inevitability of India's integration with the world economy. He started believing in globalisation before it became a buzzword, and once again he did something pioneering in advertising. He sought out a large multinational corporation as a joint venture partner when it was considered 'not feasible'.

Thus it came about that Swamy, who dared to start a wholly Indian agency with an all-India network to rival those of MNC agencies in 1973, decided to look for a tie-up with an international agency in the eighties in order to offer reach to global clients in the emerging liberalised scenario. Here, too, he proved to be prophetic. Soon after he finalised an agreement with BBDO Worldwide, one of the biggest players in the business, other Indian agencies started joining hands with multinational



Directors of R K Swamy Advertising Associates with visiting BBDO personnel in 1985

agencies one after another.

In this mission, Swamy was helped by the presence of Shekar in the US. Shekar was already working in the advertising and marketing field, at J Walter Thompson Chicago, his advertising pedigree unknown to his employer. Father and son knocked on a few doors, but it was at BBDO that their approach met with success. Shekar believes that R K SWAMY's hype-free, transparent approach that eschewed tall claims and glib promises must have impressed BBDO. Swamy and Shekar were equally impressed with the down-to-earth, non-condescending attitude of Allen Rosenshine, the CEO of BBDO.

When R K SWAMY and BBDO signed an MOU in 1985 to work together, it was a non-equity deal, as government policy at the time did not permit equity transfer to overseas partners in the advertising industry. The policy changed in 1989, and R K SWAMY was the first agency in India to sell a minority stake to a foreign

partner and R K SWAMY BBDO was launched. Today, every large Indian agency has a foreign equity partner. By 2000, even as BBDO acquired 50.1 % in the joint venture, the management control was firmly vested with the Indian partner. The partnership has only grown from strength to strength. It is an equal partnership, with the Indian arm succeeding on its merit and not automatically benefiting from the foreign partner's existing business. It has consistently fought and won in open competition from its rivals on Indian turf.

In the globalised environment post-1991, the customer profile of the agency had to undergo vast changes to stay competitive. It could no longer afford to bask in its past glory. Swamy, encouraged by Sundar and Shekar, made some hard calls. The trio determined a new course of action and recast the business, and the way the company was working, quite dramatically. In today's language, this would be called 're-engineering', but this was

When R K SWAMY and BBDO signed an MOU in 1985 to work together, it was a non-equity deal, as government policy at the time did not permit equity transfer to overseas partners in the advertising industry. The policy changed in 1989, and R K SWAMY was the first agency in India to sell a minority stake to a foreign partner and R K SWAMY BBDO was launched.

accomplished quietly without any fanfare.

As the company morphed, changed and transformed itself, it became very different from what it had been in Swamy's heyday - in its client base and its approach. The entire business complexion, particularly in the client base became very different.

New management teams at the office level were fully empowered. Critical competency in Television creative was developed. Media management became sharper. New business focus was on advertising-dependent private sector brands. The transformation was dramatic. Over a span of five years, the contribution from the private sector jumped to 80% of total business. Multinational clients share of business was well over one third of

the total. (Today's client list reads like a who's who of almost every field of business, from banking and insurance to every type of consumer durables and FMCGs - Apollo Hospitals, Birla Group, Canara Bank, Corporation Bank, Dr Reddy's Labs, Hawkins, Hindustan Latex, ICI, Margadarsi, Indian Airlines, Karur Vysya Bank, LIC, Mercedes-Benz, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Health, ONGC, Orient, Piaggio, Procter & Gamble, Raymond, Sara Lee, Shriram, Wipro, State Bank of India, Visa etc).

Swamy, in his seventies now, saw this transformation as moving the company he had founded to the next level. While he was not involved in new business development directly, his interest was as keen as ever. He would personally congratulate the winning teams and ask to see the presentations, often criticizing them and offering suggestions for improvement. It was satisfying for him to see the Agency he had founded with many marquee clients, and gain grudging admiration from its peers.

As Shekar puts it, 'Our (mine or Sundar's) relevance comes from the need to preserve a certain culture. We don't have to be at the operational level. We can provide overall direction, strategic drive, but we don't have to provide operational energy. The game needs to be played at a higher level. It's not about owning something and therefore trying to manage it. The skill sets needed to drive for overall leadership are multifaceted. Some measure of energy and leadership can be provided, but the rest has to be created.'

'As we grow', Shekar continues, 'it's as a professional services company, not a physical asset-based, capital-intensive business. Some measure of capital is needed but that is not the discriminator. The ability to attract professionals and mould them to a way of thinking and driving them towards delivering

a certain standard of quality are the organisational areas that we should work on. Handling a client, doing the work is not necessarily the focus. We don't shy away from that but progressively we should do less and less of that, and more and more of creating capacity. We are partners to a professional services firm; it comes not by equity ownership, but by mutual professional respect. That is the test.'

Today Mumbai is the largest operation,

Shekar continues, "33 years after we started, we are restarting operations, as it were. We feel we can be among the top few in the country. For a company, which has grown out of Chennai, the opportunity today is exciting."

Going beyond, Swamy had taken the view that the competitive flavour was clearly not even in India. It is beyond. Seen from this perspective, the Group management feels that it has hardly started. 'Right now, we are



Swamy, family members and leading lights of advertising with Allen Rosenshine when he visited India in 1999.

accounting for 50% of the business, while Chennai contributes 15%. The R K SWAMY + HANSA Group is now a multi-divisional, multi-locational marketing communications and services entity with leadership in many segments. It is clearly in the Top 5 in India in this area of marketing services with over 700 people. That position is indisputable.

working to see how we can scale the operation up significantly and with impact. We are going towards leadership in marketing communications and services, with clear competitive offerings. We have redefined our purpose in a manner that is quite interesting; we are very bullish'.

One of Shekar's regrets is that Swamy is

not around to enjoy the changes in the agency. 'As we recast our business, my father would have been the man most kicked about the whole thing'. Swamy would get excited whenever new plans came up.

According to Sundar, 'Some other things have changed too since his days. 'In his time, profit was what was left after expenses, not what you plan to work towards achieving. Profit was not the reason for the business, though you did earn it at the end of the day.'

'In the first five years of his agency, hiring quality people was not a problem. Both his reputation and the attraction of a career in advertising were strong factors in drawing good talent to the agency. Today, advertising is less glamorous than say IT or Financial Services. It is a greater challenge to hire bright people.'

'Whenever the industry was in any kind of trouble, my father took on the responsibility to protect the industry's collective interests', remembers Sundar.

In that entire struggle, he was not always mindful of media interests, and he strongly opposed moves by INS to curtail agencies. It was one cartel pitted against another and the industry often used him as its mouthpiece.

Today there is no room for the kind of adversarial positions that sometimes existed between INS and ad agencies, the kind of situations in which Swamy had perforce to take positions to protect the interests of the agencies. With multinationals entering Indian agencies, their sheer size leaves no room for the old problems of creditworthiness, size etc. The media's money is safe. Many of the agencies are larger than the media or even their own clients. The better agencies are perhaps better, more professionally managed than some of these media houses or clients. Today, agencies have no inferiority complex vis a vis INS.



Swamy introducing his friend T T Vasu to Allen Rosenshine

Swamy built a reputation for holding top positions in industry and management bodies. He also took care internally to prepare his company to withstand competition from outside. He further ensured a human touch with all the members of his staff who, in turn, gave their best to make him satisfied with their work. In fact one of the reasons for his company to be flourishing was the extreme loyalty his staff bestowed on him. As he grew older he treated them softly and kindly and they in turn looked at him with awe and admiration.

Gautam Rakshit (Managing Director, Advertising Avenues, and past president of AAAI) knew Swamy first as a legend. He was a rookie in advertising and marketing and Swamy was one generation ahead. Rakshit had heard of him much before meeting him.

‘Interestingly, Mr Swamy’s legendary reputation - my perceptions of him before I met him - and the reality when I met and interacted with him, seemed to be in perfect synchrony,’ Rakshit states, with a dramatic flourish. ‘To understand this, consider the gap between perception and reality when you come face to face with a movie star of your fantasies. In this particular case, the strength of the person was that whatever he thought, he expressed, he did it strongly and clearly. There was no dichotomy between the real man and the mythical man.’

‘He remained in the AAAI until 1997, during which period I was its President three times. That is when I interacted regularly with him. He never talked down to me, and often showed a peculiar sense of humour that challenged your intellect.’

‘In the early nineties, he was almost ready to start preparing the next generation, when I became President of AAAI. I was based in Mumbai and he in Madras. I was a teenager in his eyes, walking into a position I knew

“He was invariably the master of any subject he touched.”

nothing about. That is when he took on the role of allowing me to walk and ensuring that I did not fall flat on my face - and he did that without my having to interact with him face to face.’

‘He had a view on every topic. I found in him a level of intellectual capacity that allowed you to differ with him and still gain respect for your opinion. One such area of divergence of opinion was his stance on the media, whom he saw as adversaries of agency bodies, though he later softened that view. He was not alone in his view in that period, and was possibly seen to be a flagbearer of that school of thought.’

‘However, we shared together an anxiety to get the government to change its view of the industry. We both served in several committees formed by the government and I would make detailed presentations, and Mr Swamy would speak. Rarely did I actually have to pull out the acetate sheets in vogue those days to support Mr Swamy’s talk, as he would have thought the problem through in his mind. Most certainly, his charisma - his towering personality - was far greater than mine. I played the able assistant whose assistance was not always required!’

‘When P V Narasimha Rao was Health Minister in Rajiv Gandhi’s cabinet, the government was keen to give Family Planning a new, human face. Swamy must have spent a whole year of his time in a condensed fashion, and I one or two months of mine.’

‘Over this period of time Mr Swamy saw me as a slightly wayward godson. Somehow,



Gautam Rakshit and Swamy at an Advertising Agencies Association of India meeting in 1992.

Ram Tarneja delivering an address with (L - R): V A Adya, R K Swamy, Ram Tarneja, S R Ayer, C S Karnik and J C Chopra at the 35th Annual General Meeting of the Audit Bureau of Circulations in 1983.



he was willing to give me space even against his best intellectual judgement, which was a facet of the man not generally seen by the professional world at large.'

'This was demonstrated a few years ago, when my son married a Tamil girl, and the wedding took place at Chennai. Mr Swamy was very ill, but he took the trouble of being wheeled into the wedding, just to say, 'You are in my heart.'

'He saw me quite often as a 'westerner'; while I thought I was unconventional, he might have considered me immature, but that seemed to make no difference to his affection for me. In his more expansive moments, he would sit down and recite slokas to me and say: 'Not followed?' and then go on to explain the significance of the sloka. He was a great raconteur and many of his stories were about the bureaucracy, with whom he had worked quite closely. For a hard core private sector professional like me, his stories of BHEL, HMT and other PSUs were from a different world

altogether. The bureaucrats and media people respected him a great deal, but they were also scared of him. To meet him was like going to an examination.'

'Mr Swamy was one of the first Indians to believe he could take on foreign multinational agencies, and build an institution that would make Indians proud. I held it against him, however, that finally R K Swamy Advertising Associates did become R K SWAMY BBDO, though I knew I was being harsh, as by that time he was no longer at the helm of affairs. It was perhaps his way of saying that it was a practical consequence of globalisation's inexorable march. He must have resisted for a long time before giving in. Still, the name of the agency has R K SWAMY first and BBDO second.'

'I used to dread receiving letters from Mr Swamy. They were never less than four pages long. He would go through every minute detail of the subject under discussion and put down everything. This is something

“He had a view on every topic. I found in him a level of intellectual capacity that allowed you to differ with him and still gain respect for your opinion.”



I have not seen in any other person in the advertising industry. He was invariably the master of any subject he touched.'

'The all-time advertising legends of India in my book are Subhas Ghosal, R K Swamy and Subroto Sengupta who brought me from a marketing job in Cadbury's to advertising. Each was a giant in a different way. Subroto was the perfect academician, Ghosal was a great leader with ethics and integrity - yet to see a greater one - and Swamy was ever willing to court unpopularity in defence of his convictions. If you were to look for such examples in the industry today, you may not find them. Today, ethics and corporate governance are so easily worn like a flag. My all-time legends actually practised them.'

In 1976-77, Ram Sehgal was posted to Delhi as HTA manager. The R K SWAMY agency had come into being by then. The Janata government was about to impose an advertisement tax. Subhas Ghosal asked Sehgal to coordinate a meeting with the Finance Minister H M Patel, to be attended by Ghosal, Mani Ayer, Gerson da Cunha and R K Swamy. His job was to take the delegates

to Parliament House to meet the Minister.

Swamy arrived a day in advance, equipped with great documentation. Two secretaries were given to him, and he stayed busy drafting and redrafting. 'They had to type documents and put them on charts. He had the complete hard facts needed to back us - GDP, India's, worldwide. He didn't need any reference material, because he had all these figures in his head. The entire presentation was crafted by Mr Swamy. What harm the tax would do, what role advertising plays in the economy, was all explained clearly.'

The unfortunate part was that Mr Patel was an early riser, up at 4.00 a.m., and the presentation was at 5.00 p.m. Sehgal recalls that 'it went for a toss, with the Minister snoring away through it. Mr Swamy being Mr Swamy, was quite ready for just such an eventuality, and produced a booklet out of his briefcase for H M Patel to read. The presentation lasted all of 15 minutes. The tax stayed.'

'Who in the world can build an empire at age 50 and reach the top 10 in 5 years? Ghosal used to say. "That man is grossly underestimated by the industry." He had great



L - R: R K Swamy, Avinash Jain, Reyaz Ahmed, P V Gadgil, Vijay S Padukone, R N Joshi, Ajit K Sachdeva and Baggu A Ochane at the 3rd Annual General Meeting of the Advertising Agencies Association of India on 30.4.1984. Swamy was the President then.

Chairman P K Lahiri welcomes new council member R K Swamy at the AGM of the Audit Bureau of Circulations on 27th September 1984 at Mumbai.



regard for him.'

When Ram Sehgal was president of AAAI, the body decided to give Swamy the AAAI Premnarayen award. Sehgal called him at his home and asked him if he would accept the award. "What sin have I committed to deserve this award?" he asked. "We've decided to overlook your sins and remember only good things," the younger man assured him.

Sehgal was delighted when at his request, Swamy brought his wife with him for the awards ceremony. The moment they met, Swamy said, "I told her you'd be very annoyed if she didn't come." He was unwell, he had a problem with his limbs and had to be helped to climb on to the dais.

Swamy was struggling when he walked in, to a standing ovation. He was a sick man, but once on the podium, he made a 45-minute slide presentation of his view of

advertising. Sehgal thought he was back to being 'old Tiger Swamy' once on stage. 'No sign of pain or sickness!'

For that occasion, Mani Ayer (former Managing Director of O & M and a close friend of Swamy) who could not make it, sent this David Ogilvy story:

"In 1982, when David Ogilvy visited Madras, I requested Swamy to host a dinner. Swamy readily obliged. After interacting with Swamy for sometime, the following conversation ensued between me and David. "Mani, tell me seriously, is this man in advertising?"

I said "Yes".

"Really? Or is it a hobby?" asked David Ogilvy.

I said, "No, he is a very serious practitioner. Why do you ask?"

David said "Well, quite frankly, what a waste of talent in advertising!"

Bobby Sista who headed Sistas until its acquisition by Saatchi & Saatchi, and now devotes his time to Population First, a mission close to his heart, always had high respect for Swamy. 'He was a few years my senior. I met him first in the 1960s when I was working for Readers Digest. He was in Madras, where he

**"Well, quite frankly,
what a waste of
talent in advertising!"**

Both Ghosal and Sista were full of admiration for the way R K would pull out a sheaf of documents and rattle off facts and figures, when any point came up and people refuted his arguments.

did a fantastic job for J Walter Thompson. I remember that the succession issue came up after Gaynor left JWT India. I also remember how unceremoniously Fielden was asked to clear the way for Greg Bathon. Fielden was literally thrown out overnight. No one would have thought that was possible.'

Sista is unequivocal about the injustice done to Swamy when the time came for the appointment of the first Indian CEO of JWT. 'Swamy should have rightly been given the

MD's post, when an outsider was brought in. I was at Readers Digest and it did not concern me directly, but I felt it was the wrong choice. I mean you can't have heading an agency, an eminent person whom clients feel bound to get up and greet when he walks into their office. You don't expect him to last in the service business. I don't suggest agencies constantly kowtow to clients, but they need to have a relationship with them'.

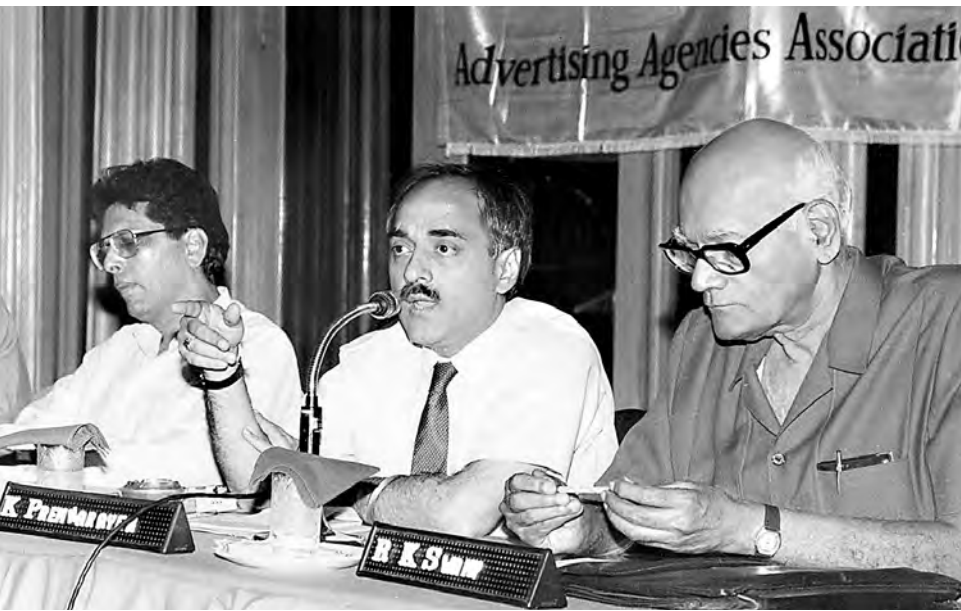
Swamy was a man of considerable erudition. Nobody among clients or peers would have read as much on subjects that he spoke on. He had the most resourceful library on advertising subjects from cuttings of articles to books. He had statistics, facts and figures at his fingertips. His peers came to know this when the industry had a strong confrontation with IENS on the credit period allowed to agencies, the accreditation process etc. When IENS tried to reduce the credit period from 60 days to 30 days, Swamy fought very hard. Sista was then VP, Subhas Ghosal President of the AAAI, and Swamy a key member of the committee that interacted with IENS. Both Ghosal and Sista were full of



Swamy, as President of AAAI was invited to inaugurate Madurai Advertising Club in 1984. Dr Sivanthi Adityan applauds Swamy unveiling the plaque.



Receiving the AAAI-Premnarayen award from Ram Sehgal, President, AAAI in 1998.



Swamy as past President of AAI participating in a AAI meeting in 1992. His interest in industry matters was total till his last days.

admiration ‘for the way RK would pull out a sheaf of documents and rattle off facts and figures, when any point came up and people refuted his arguments. He used to silence most people, and there was no need to argue any further. That’s the kind of mind he had, the kind of preparation he made.’

He was a committed professional. When he was tongue-in-cheek called ‘public sector wallah’, it did not bother him. In whatever manner he managed it, he was able to gain the confidence of public sector clients, ‘even if we were all jealous’. It meant to a large extent that he was able to create in the public sector a value for the role of advertising. He was able to bring a semblance of professionalism to public sector perceptions. Sistas too had public sector clients. For instance, the agency handled every division of HMT, while BHEL was one of Swamy’s big clients. Very few advertising people commanded respect like that.

Personally, he was a thoughtful friend, and caring host, remembers Sista. ‘Once on a visit to Madras, I had dinner with him at the Madras Club. Prohibition was then in force in Madras. He made sure I wore shoes in honour of club rules. When we sat down on

the lawn, he pulled out a briefcase, which had contained documents in the morning. Now it held a bottle of whiskey. We chatted away for three or four hours. He was a fund of knowledge and it was a pleasure talking to him.’

To illustrate Swamy’s commitment to causes and his team spirit, Sista tells this story: ‘When Karan Singh was Minister for Family Welfare, the Government gave AAI the entire Family Planning exercise for the first time. Bal Mundkur (founder of Ulka Advertising) coordinated the work zonally: Thompson in West Bengal, Interpublicity for the West and so on. RK was put in charge of the South, where the focus was on Andhra Pradesh. Subroto Sengupta of Clarion did a campaign on Nirodh. For the first time the advertising profession did an exercise together as a unified whole without any problems of ego. It was the most fantastic professional exercise in public service communication I have ever seen. I happened to be associated, not because Sistas was directly given any advertising assignment, but because Swamy invited me to be a consultant for the AP campaign as the only advertising person who could speak Telugu! I was privy to all the work RK did - music, films, messages, posters. They were all different for different states. Each state was given full freedom, and there was no common strategy. Right from

“I regard Swamy’s contribution to advertising as no less than anyone else’s, perhaps more important than that of any other advertising giant.”

burrakatha to you name any folk medium, was used. We were all very proud of the exercise.'

Sista regards Swamy's contribution to advertising as no less than anyone else's, perhaps more important than that of any other advertising giant. 'You could not ignore RK's views, even if you did not agree with them. He ran a fine agency, a good research agency, a film unit, he built up a partnership with BBDO. He was given due honours by the industry and everyone had high regard for him. The only disappointment could be that his contribution to the advertising profession could probably have been highlighted more.

Prem Pandhi succeeded Swamy as President of AIMA. He found him to be 'a man of great integrity and humility.' According to him, 'if ever there was a man with expertise in his field, running an outfit as good as the best in the market, yet benign, helpful, simple, not showy, and with whom everybody would like to be associated, it was Mr. Swamy.'

Pandhi relates an episode in AIMA that underlined Swamy's scruples. 'We had a problem with a chief executive in AIMA. We both felt strongly that he had to be removed as he lacked integrity. Everyone had his own opinion on the issue but Mr. Swamy was of the firm opinion that integrity was paramount, especially in an organisation like AIMA, even at the cost of monetary benefits. He stood like JRD Tata for these values.'

At business lunches, both Swamy and Pandhi would end up having just a soup and a sandwich. 'We would finish our lunch in 15 minutes and chat for two hours. He was a rare individual whose nature and personality grew on you.'

Krishan Premnarayan who runs the agency Prem Associates knew Swamy as an advertising icon, AAAI President and winner of the AAAI award he instituted in his father's memory. 'My father, the late Inder Premnarayan, started this agency in 1971 and he passed away in 1979. Having worked from

L - R: Dr Bharat Ram, President CIOS, George Fernandes, Union Minister for Industries, R K Swamy, M R R Punja, President, Madras Management Association and R Viswanathan, Honorary Treasurer, at the Sixth National Management Convention on 9th April 1978.



the beginning for the agency, I took over its running on his death, and became its representative in AAAI.'

Premnarayan met Swamy first in 1985 in the executive committee of AAAI. He then became AAAI President and Premnarayan was in the executive committee. Premnarayan has very fond memories of the way Swamy conducted the meetings. 'He had an iron hand with a velvet heart' is the way he describes Swamy. Once at a Calcutta meeting, Swamy and Premnarayan were the only two members out of 16 to attend, and there was no quorum to conduct the meeting, yet Swamy did not lose heart. He still gave the East Zone members an opportunity to interact with the committee.

'Those couple of days we spent together in Calcutta were rewarding. Mr Swamy shared his rich life experiences, told me stories from our mythology, quoted from the Vedas and Upanishads,' says Premnarayan. 'It was all very fascinating. His knowledge of temples was impressive. I treated him like a parent, as he was older to my father. He commanded respect with his behaviour. The only liberty I took with him was to tell him his sixth finger brought him luck all his life!'

'Swamy was no dictator as president of AAAI. He always invited the views of all members and tried to achieve consensus, though he would overrule the others when he was convinced he was right.'

'He was dedicated to the industry. He had

*Receiving the Madras Management Association's Lifetime Achievement Award from J J Irani. Others seen in the picture are:
L - R: T T Thomas, President, All India Management Association and Srinivasan K Swamy, President, Madras Management Association at the function at Chennai in 2001.*



“If ever there was a man with expertise in his field, running an outfit as good as the best in the market, yet benign, helpful, simple, not showy, and with whom everybody would like to be associated, it was Mr. Swamy.”

the guts to leave JWT, start his own agency, fought his way up the ladder and won multinational accounts without any tie-up. The BBDO connection came about later.’

Premnarayan recounts an experience he shared with Swamy, to demonstrate that he was a man of principles, who when he believed in a cause, went all out to defend it. ‘Mr Swamy and I, along with some others, went to Delhi to meet the Finance Minister, to take up the issue of the proposed advertisement tax. Mr Swamy made a forceful presentation on why the tax should be withdrawn, how it would harm the economy.

Mr H M Patel, the Finance Minister, did not relent, but the subsequent Minister did, and the tax was withdrawn in the late 80s. H M Patel’s son-in-law Sylvester D’Cunha was also in the advertising business, but Mr Patel had an iron hand and an iron heart! ‘Swamy took the AAAI to court and won the case, when that body wanted each member agency to furnish a copy of their Profit & Loss account and Balance Sheet. ‘He held the strong view that we had no business to ask agencies to furnish their balance sheets. When we asked him why he objected when he had no qualms about giving such fiscal information to bodies like the INS, he

explained that AAAI members competed with one another and therefore might not want to part with such information. He fought hard for a principle but there was no enmity or ill will between him and AAAI. In fact, we gave him the Premnarayan Award after the court case. I still feel that he was wrong on that issue, as reading the Balance Sheet was the only way we could ascertain whether agencies were collecting the full 15% agency commission or not. That is the only way we could check unethical client-agency relationships. But the law is above everyone, and he won.’

The association of Atma Saraogi (formerly Advisor Corporate, the Times of India Group) with Swamy had been through the council of the All India Management Association, in which he had been involved as the representative of Eastern India since the late 1960s.

In Saraogi’s view, two things were uppermost in Swamy: his dynamism and his affectionate nature. He was always deeply emotionally involved with his tasks and the people he came into contact with in accomplishing those tasks. He was a nice man, decent, wedded to his task, and an able administrator. ‘As president of AIMA, he got things done within the discipline and parameters of that body, with the agreement of all of us.’

When he became the President of AIMA, a position he held in 1977-78, he undertook

“He was very upbeat about India and spoke proudly of the PSUs as having some of the best human resources.”

the revamping of the image of the organisation, designing its logo and stationery. Saraogi says the documentation of that exercise by him is still vivid in his mind. 'We again revamped the AIMA's corporate identity, and by coincidence, Swamy's son, Srinivasan Swamy was the MMA President then.'

Saraogi recalls a few major issues actively pursued in AIMA. One of them was the question of managerial remuneration. The Government of India had fixed a ceiling of Rs.5,000 pm for the salary of the Managing Director of a company, and half that towards perquisites. AIMA had made itself party to an individual petition in the Supreme Court when the government refused to listen to industry's pleas against this artificial ceiling. Swamy took an active interest in the matter and made sure that our voice was heard. He was committed to AIMA's various programmes.

S Narendra (Retired Principal Information Officer to the Prime Minister and former Executive Director, R K SWAMY BBDO) knew

Swamy as a person who strongly believed in the power of professional Public Relations. It was 1991. A new government in Delhi was unveiling one economic liberalization package after another. Swamy was excited and spoke to Narendra several times, asking him to send him copies of all the press releases from the government and the speeches of the Prime Minister.

When Swamy met Narendra at Delhi on a brief visit, he kept asking questions about the way the government was going about projecting the new policies, especially abroad. He was very upbeat about India and spoke proudly of the Indian steel industry, the petroleum sector, particularly ONGC and its contribution and, of course Bharat Heavy Electricals, as having some of the best human resources. If only these companies were allowed to venture out, these could be some of the best brands to launch India into the MNC league. He expressed regret that India was not riding on brands which were market

“Mr Swamy shared his rich life experiences, told me stories from our mythology, quoted from the Vedas and Upanishads.”

leaders in the government sector as well as the private sector.

Narendra points out that Swamy 'agreed with my own assessment that in PR, the public sector had done a better job and were pioneers in recognizing PR as the fulcrum of any image building strategy. We parted with the conclusion that the new initiatives on the Indian economic front would throw up a lot of opportunities for PR for brand building and projecting India's image abroad.'

Swamy went to Delhi to seek meetings with the powers that be. He met the principal secretary to the PM and several others. He was convinced as never before that the advertising and PR industry had a unique opportunity to take the reforms to the people - for building a consensus and explaining its benefits in terms of jobs, incomes and other development outcomes. He wanted to do something about it on his own, but was disappointed with the official PR steps being taken by the External Affairs Ministry on this

front. He felt that the Indian PR industry was missing out on a huge opening.

After a few months, Swamy returned to Delhi from a tour abroad. He had collected feedback from NRIs and potential investors, particularly from the USA and had discussed with a well-known American PR firm a proposal for undertaking public relations for India as a destination for foreign investment. Swamy spoke to Narendra about a detailed plan for a PR campaign focused on the USA, UK and Germany to promote India as an investment destination. Narendra 'was both happy and surprised that someone from the private sector advertising industry was ready to bat for India's economic reforms, without any commitment of support from the government.'

Swamy persisted with the project for one or two years. Narendra describes his efforts colourfully: 'The Government is like the large intestine of an elephant. Whatever goes through the mouth of such a large system often comes out in an ill digested form. In most cases what is consumed does not get converted into body energy. Swamy's passionate solo efforts for promoting India's image abroad through PR travelled through this system with predictable outcome.' He passionately believed that India's moment had arrived and as one in the business of communication he must play his role.

Swamy meticulously gathered information on the Indian economic development and at every forum he highlighted the positive trends in the system, especially the abundance of our human resources, which could be the differentiator in the competitive world of tomorrow. His fervent optimism was captured in his monograph titled "India - How to Succeed Without Tears in 1992".

According to Narendra, he would 'always remember Swamy as a very young man in a deceptively old, sagely frame.'

DEVOTED EDUCATIONIST

The two-storey building that houses the Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School is a fixture on the east side of the Mylapore Mada streets quadrilateral surrounding the famous Kapaleeswarar temple in south Chennai. To generations of Mylaporeans, this school has often been the first and automatic choice for their girl children. R K Swamy was a member of the Managing Committee of the National Boys' and Girls' Education Society that runs the Lady Sivaswami schools for four decades, its President for 16 years.

The School was founded in 1869 by His Highness Maharajah Sri Sri Sri Vijayarama Gajapathi Maharaj III, Manne Sultan Bahadur, K.C.S.I., Maharaja of Vizianagram. It was then 'The Vizianagram Maharaja's Hindu Girls School'. With only three classes in the beginning, the school remained a primary

School till 1919.

The Maharajah passed away in 1879, and in 1897, his son, Sri Ananda Gajapathi Maharaj died, leaving a minor son. The management of the school passed over to the National Indian Association. A financial crisis in 1904 forced NIA to withdraw from the management of the school. The fate of the school was in jeopardy.

Mylapore stalwarts V Krishnaswami Aiyar and Bashyam Aiyangar, legal luminaries of the time, came forward to fill the void. Together with other advocates of women's education, they formed the V Krishnaswami Aiyar - Sir V Bashyam Aiyangar Committee to run the school, and continued their devoted service till 1918. The school was renamed the Mylapore Girls' School.

The school lurched from one financial crisis to another. V Krishnaswami Aiyar



donated his apprentices' fee to keep it going. In 1908, Sir V Bashyam Aiyangar raised a donation of Rs 15,000 from the founder Maharaja's daughter, who was at the time Her Highness Maharani Appalakondayamba, Maharani of Rewa. The school had a new building and was renamed The Vizianagram Rani's Girls' School.

The school encountered its next crisis when both Krishnaswami Aiyar and Bashyam Aiyangar passed away in quick succession. Dr Annie Besant and the Theosophical Education Trust took over the running of the school, renaming it the National Girls' High School. In 1919, it became a middle school, and in 1924 a high school.

In 1930, Annie Besant handed over the management of the school to a committee

Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School. It is managed by the National Boys' and Girls' Education Society of which Swamy was the President.



Students at the classroom at Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' HSS

of august personalities headed by Sir P S Sivaswami Ayyar, another legal luminary of Mylapore. Leading lights of Madras like Sister Subbulakshmi Ammal, Sir C P Ramaswami Ayyar, T R Venkatrama Sastriar, Dewan Bahadur K V Sesha Iyengar, Mrs Hilda Wood and Sir S Varadachariar became advisors and members of the Governing Body. So committed was Sir P S Sivaswami Ayyar to the school that he sold his palatial residence in south Madras and donated the entire proceeds to it, and went on to live in a small rented house. When Sivaswami Ayyar passed away in 1946, the school was renamed Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' High School.

Three notable personalities formed a formidable troika to lead the school to a position of eminence. Sir S Varadachariar, another stalwart advocate of the time, took over as President of the School Society. S Chellammal had already been appointed the first Indian Head Mistress by Sir Sivaswami Ayyar in 1940. A leading educationist, retired Head Master of the Hindu Theological High School and a member of the managing committee, Mahakulapati K Rangaswami Aiyangar took on the reins as Secretary. This team ran the school successfully till 1970.

R K Swamy was introduced to the school management in the mid-1960s by his uncle, fondly known in family circles as Desikan Mama. Desikan had studied under Rangaswami Aiyangar and held his former

Head Master in high regard. When the latter wanted some help in raising resources for the School, Desikan introduced his nephew R K Swamy as someone who can do the job.

Varadachariar is reported to have looked askance at Swamy and said: “What does an advertising man know about an educational institution and how can he possibly help?” Unaware of the skepticism with which his name had been received, R K Swamy who was in his early forties then, and whose daughters were all studying in the School, assured Desikan mama that he would help in every manner possible.

Swamy's first initiatives were advertisements he collected for the school's souvenir. His moment of recognition came during the School's centenary year in 1969. Setting himself a target and applying himself

with vigour, he collected Rs 50,000 in ads for the centenary volume souvenir. This was a substantial amount beyond the imagination of most of the school's management. Even Varadachariar changed his opinion of the young man, who then became a fixture on the management committee.

Sir Varadachariar passed away in 1970, and the reigns passed in succession to Senior Advocate T V Viswanatha Ayyar (till 1981) and Justice V Sethuraman (1981-87), both serving as Presidents of the Society. It was following in the footsteps of this line up of the legal lights of Mylapore R K Swamy was elected President of the School Society in 1987, when the school had 1,851 students on its rolls.

The School had then already become state-funded private institution, operating

This school, Sivaswami Kalalaya with CBSE curriculum was started under Swamy's initiative in July 1989





Mr Swamy with committee members of National Boys' and Girls' Education Society.

under the State Board. The State government was paying for the teachers' salaries, and the quid pro quo was that the school was essentially providing free education. There was no question of charging fees or encouraging parents to contribute to the school's development in any manner. This was a major constraint that the school laboured under.

The State Board school, faced another major issue. The students of the school were not easily mobile, in case the parents relocated to a different state, as the curriculum would be different elsewhere. This

also acted as a constraint in attracting the best of students, as the parents preferred a school affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

Swamy was convinced that these constraints were hindering the progress of the school. In his mind, the school would be better off if it was not held back by the 'aid' received from the State. Not one to accept the status quo, Swamy mooted the idea that the present Higher Secondary School should be converted to the CBSE curriculum and affiliation, free of State-level constraints. When this was felt to be too radical a move (as it meant giving up the regular State contributions to the School and moving away from free education to the girls), Swamy mooted the idea of a separate CBSE School in an adjacent building that already existed.

The idea gathered momentum among the managing committee members. Swamy believed that it was the best way to provide excellence in education, an objective stressed over and over again. For a school with a 125-year old heritage that placed a





This school is also managed by National Boys' and Girls' Education Society with State Board curriculum. Swamy was the President of the Society from 1987 to 2003.

huge premium on tradition, this was a radical move.

Naturally, some of the members were worried that this would hamper the existing Higher Secondary School, as comparisons between the new and the old would be natural. For Swamy, who had seen the competitive forces of a marketplace and the benefits of competition in his professional life, a dual offering was a natural way to enhance the quality of both the schools.

He proceeded with vigour and opened the Sivaswami Kalalaya Senior Secondary School under the CBSE format and curriculum, with a new complement of staff. The first batch of students who enrolled in 1989, were ready to sit for the CBSE exams in 1994. Trouble came in the guise of some dissenting members who represented to the CBSE Board that the provisional accreditation given to the school should be withdrawn. (The dissenters were of the view that the poorer children Sivaswami Ayyar School served would suffer in

comparison.) The future of the children about to sit for the CBSE exams was threatened.

Swamy would countenance none of it. Calmly and with a great sense of purpose, he mobilized his resources. He made a convincing representation to the Secretary for Education of the Central Government who ruled that the differences between adults could not come in the way of the future of the children. The CBSE accreditation was restored and the students took their exams successfully.

The story does not end here. When the key dissenting member passed away, Swamy came to the fore and organized a fitting farewell to 'the great soul' who had performed a lifetime of service to the school. Swamy saw the issue in perspective and did not hold it against the person, and was able to see how a different view of the situation was indeed possible.

Even as Swamy was the prime mover behind the creation of the second School

under CBSE format, he did not lose sight of his obligations towards the 'main school'. The Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School received a great fillip from his stewardship. He contributed towards the schools' developmental activities, and ensured that the 125th anniversary of the school was celebrated in a grand manner at the Madras University Senate Hall on December 12 1994, with Chief Minister J Jayalalitha as the chief guest.

According to Hemalata Ramamani, Member, National Boys' and Girls' Education Society: 'R K Swamy was determined to start Sivaswami Kalalaya as a CBSE school. To achieve that, he had to overcome several obstacles. He spared no expense or effort to achieve the task. He even had to face allegations and accusations along the way but he continued to spend his money and time nevertheless. Eager to contribute to society in every way possible, he handpicked the right personnel and created an enabling atmosphere that brought out the best in them.'

Swamy saw himself essentially as a trustee of the School. His concern for the long term welfare of the schools was in full view when a proposal was put up for the commencement of the Sivaswami Kalalaya Higher Secondary School in the late nineties, to offer the 11th and 12th standard classes to students. The proposal was spearheaded by Dr. Vasanthi Vasudev, Principal of Sivaswami Kalalaya, and called for bank borrowings to the tune of Rs one crore. The money was needed for a

new building and other facilities.

Swamy was a worried man and did not agree immediately. The man who had taken big risks in his personal life was worried that the school could get into a debt trap. He mulled over it long and hard, and went over the financial assumptions over and over again. In the end, he relented and agreed to the borrowings, as he saw the need for the higher classes, and this was the only way the facilities could be set up.

The Sivaswami Kalalaya Higher Secondary School came up in 1999 at Mandaiveli, not far from the main school complex. Another branch of the School had been added to complete the offering to the students. Happily, the loan was repaid as scheduled and Swamy and the Managing Committee heaved a sigh of relief.

Members of the Managing Committee are uniform in their view that in his role as President, Swamy was democratic. He was a good listener and worked towards achieving a consensus in all vital matters. His analysis of problems was invariably clear and uncluttered. He understood people well, and was able to quickly assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Did Swamy make a difference to the Sivaswami Schools? Absolutely, say the members of the society. He did so with a largeness of vision, a sense of 'pursuing excellence' for the students, and unwavering support. "He was there, no matter what the problem or issue," is the way one member describes Swamy's presence. He lent an aura



of confidence, and the school authorities could focus on the students without worries. All this was reflected in the growth of the Schools to nearly 3500 students.

Another striking aspect of Swamy's stewardship was that he was always conscious of his responsibilities, never his rights'. Swamy made it clear to the principals and other management members that a child can be refused admission, even if he had put up the name himself. Nor was there ever any question of employing somebody he had recommended. This attitude set the tone for the entire committee, and the management of the schools felt empowered to do their jobs

Quite apart from providing the leadership to tackle issues, Swamy made sure he actively participated in the functions of the school. It gave him great pleasure to be with the children on Founder's Day, Annual Day and so on. As in other matters, there was no half

measure in his approach to school affairs; he had all the time in the world when it came to his schools, and he was in the front row cheering the performance of the girls on stage during school functions.

Towards the end, Swamy was anxious about the fact that he had "not left anything" for the school. He told his family many times in his final days that "something substantial should be done for the school". Instead of just a financial contribution, Swamy and his family decided that the creation of a revenue yielding asset for the school would be a good way to express his enduring affection for the institution. Accordingly, with the cooperation of the school management, a big hall in Sivaswami Kalalaya was converted into a modern auditorium by the R K Swamy family after he passed away. Every time the children perform on this stage, Swamy is no doubt there in spirit to cheer them on.

With a group of students at Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya.





Swamy giving a memento to a student of Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School.

DOING GOD'S WORK

A devoted lieutenant of Swamy in his various spiritual pursuits, V R Rajamani was 36 and Swamy 42, when they met at an Ahobila Math meeting at its Triplicane, Chennai branch in 1964. Leading it were giants like R Kesava Iyengar (father of K Parasaran), D Ramaswami Iyengar, D P Parthasarathy of Indian Bank (father of D P Rangaswamy), M C Sundararajan, steel merchant, V K Narasimhan of the Indian Express and youngsters R K Swamy and R Dorairajan of The Hindu.

Swamy was a new personality in Madras. The meeting had been convened to protest against certain observations made by the then Chief Minister of Madras, M Bhaktavatsalam, on the head of the Ahobila Math. The remarks had been engineered by a dissident group of the Math. Mr Rajam of Murray & Co., offended by the Chief Minister's remarks, organised the meeting. The Chief Minister had said that the HR & CE department had reports that some actions of the Jeer of the Math had not been in consonance with the HR & CE Act. Swamy spoke vehemently on the matter, a memorandum signed by all present was submitted to the Chief Minister and the affair was given a quiet burial.

Swamy began to take an interest in the affairs of the Math and decided to take over the running of Sri Nrisimhapriya, the

“His total surrender to God enabled Swamy to believe no one could come in the way of his missions.”

journal of the Math, when the Math found it difficult to run it. On Tamil New Year's Day, 1966, the first issue brought out by Swamy was released with a new improved look. He spent a lot of his time and energy in running the publication, making substantial personal investments.

Rajamani was working at International Shipping Agency then. After Swamy took over the running of the journal, he introduced a message from the Jeer of the Math, which became de rigueur to every issue. Eventually, two special books containing a compendium of these articles were brought out. The present Jeer continues the practice.

Dorairajan and Rajamani were charged with the responsibility of the Triplicane branch of the Math, earlier held by agents of the Jeer, who were usually from the upper crust of society. Swamy and Rajamani became friends around that time. With his humble middle class background, Rajamani was hesitant to take up the responsibility but Swamy & Co. gave him the confidence he needed.

Later, after Dorairajan's death, his brother Rajan and Rajamani worked together for the Math. Rajamani who continued to take care of the Triplicane branch, became an unofficial member of the Swamy family as a result of his increasing interactions with him. He looked after the religious affairs of every function in the R K Swamy home, and his other temple activities, including his interest in the

Swamy with his long time associate A Srinivasan. Srinivasan's daughter & Radha K Swamy are also seen in this picture





L - R: V R Rajamani, S V S Raghavan, R K Swamy, Raja Govindarajan and R Narayanan during the samprokshanam ceremony of the Sarangapani Swamy temple, Kumbakonam on 30th June 1999

Uppiliappan Koil and later Lord Sarangapani temple at Kumbakonam. A major contribution Swamy made was the building of Lord Maniappan Sannidhi at Uppiliappan Koil in 1984.

In 1986, the Jeer asked Swamy to take charge of the running of the Madhurantakam Sanskrit College, which he gladly did. He would meet any shortfall in the finances of the college from his own funds. In 1989, when Rajamani retired from his job, Swamy requested him to go to Madhurantakam to manage the affairs of the college there and Rajamani became its Correspondent.

Swamy brought together a group of Math adherents and constituted Sri Visishtadvaita Research Centre in 1994. He also helped fund the Centre along with his friends, until it had its own corpus funds, thanks to the efforts of S V S Raghavan, who mobilised

substantial sums of money through donations. Eventually, the Research Centre took over the running of the Ahobila Math institutions at Madhurantakam.

The Sixth Centenary celebrations of the Ahobila Math in 1999 were a grand success, largely owing to Swamy's efforts and a major role played by the D P Parthasarathy family. Sundar along with D P Padmanabhan and D P Devnath (his wife's brothers), visited Ahobilam many times prior to the celebrations, and were responsible for the excellent facilities now available there, including modern lodging for pilgrims and the new roads, which have made access to Ahobilam much more comfortable than before.

Rajamani expressed his gratitude to Swamy thus: 'It was my privilege to assist Mr Swamy in many of these holy tasks,



Swamy with 'his boys'
D P Padmanabhan and
D P Devnath, who helped him
improve the infrastructure at
Ahobila

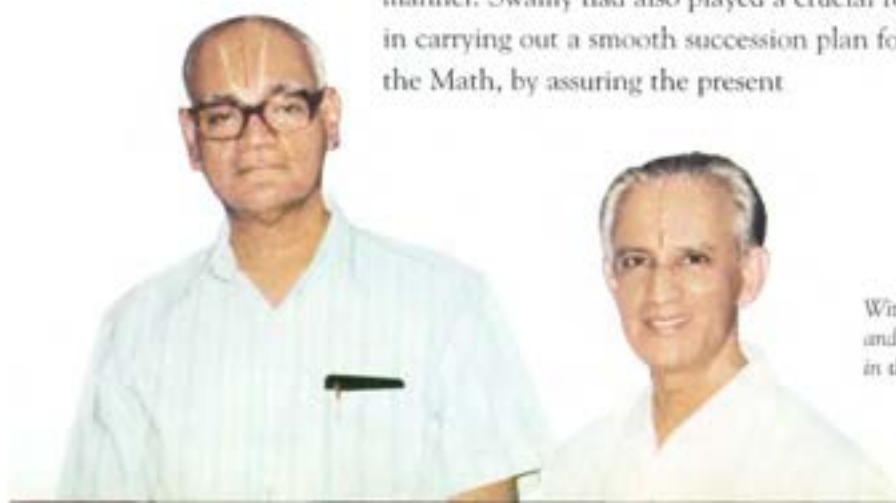
including homams and samprokshanams at Uppiliappan Koil and Kanchipuram during the Uttara nakshatra in the month of Panguni. The samprokshanam at Lord Sarangapani temple, Kumbakonam in 1999 was celebrated on an unprecedented scale. The temple was everything to Mr Swamy.'

In 1992, when the Azhagiasingar took ill, Rajamani already in Srirangam, having moved there a little earlier, informed Swamy that he must be prepared for the worst. When the end came, Swamy supported by his wife, raised substantial funds in record time to conduct the final obsequies in a fitting manner. Swamy had also played a crucial role in carrying out a smooth succession plan for the Math, by assuring the present

Azhagiasingar and his family financial security and enabling him to give up his earnings to take up the highest responsibility at the Math.

Swamy had a few unfulfilled desires in relation to his involvement with the Ahobila Math. He wanted to bring out a commemorative volume on the Math in 2001, for which he had designed a beautiful appeal. He was keen to construct a big building at Uppiliappan Koil, where annually, Veda and Divya Prabandham recitations could be held. He also wanted to streamline the education system at the Ahobila Math, revamping the traditional Siromani course to meet MBA standards. He wanted to introduce the CBSE syllabus to the Oriental School at Madhurantakam.

Like Rajamani, R Rajan, (Dorairajan's younger brother) an officer of Standard



With D P Rangaswamy during Swamy's 60th birthday in 1982. Swamy and D P Rangaswamy were more than sammandhis: they worked together in the activities of the Ahobila Math

The lower Ahobilam temple gopuram. It was during Swamy's chairmanship of the Sixth Centenary Celebrations Committee of Sri Ahobila Math, that basic infrastructure was provided at this place



Chartered Bank, came into contact with Swamy through his association with the Triplicane branch of the Ahobila Math. Like many others who knew Swamy, Rajan admired his thorough grasp and detailed study of any subject that engaged his attention. Swamy's interest in the Math and its journal, Sri Nrisimhapriya went hand in hand. He systematically went about the task of funds mobilisation for the journal, developing promotional literature, and improving the aesthetics of the journal, lending a helpful hand to Rajan on all these aspects.

Every meeting, every discussion was properly recorded and minuted. By this time, less involved in the day-to-day business of his agency, Swamy kept his door open to Rajan & Co., who could walk into his room to discuss matters concerning the Math or Sri Nrisimhapriya. The discussions were frank and forthright. 'Even quarrels on basic issues were forgotten afterwards.' Through it all, Swamy remained a loyal friend. Rajan is quick to point out that Swamy was

totally against communalism, for all his staunch Vaishnavism.

Rajan describes Swamy as a skilled negotiator. He saw evidence of Swamy's ability in this regard in his dealings with representatives of the Math at the time of the establishment of Sri Visishtadvaita Research Centre, when he kept the position of Chairman of the centre away from the Math representatives.

According to Rajan, Swamy was passionate about the Selaiyur Veda Pathasala and the Sanskrit College at Madhurantakam, which it was his dream to elevate to university status, but that was not to be, even after his elder brother Ramanujan constructed a building for the purpose. (Ramanujan had also fully financed the construction of the Chembur Temple of the Ahobila Math in Bombay in the early seventies).

Getting students to enrol was a problem, as most youngsters prefer to pursue conventional western college education. Only poor students were interested in joining these



The Rajagopuram of the Sarangapani temple, Kumbakonam. Susamy was Chairman of the Renovation Committee

“Swamy Mama was a man of absolute faith and discipline. As an advertising man, he dressed and behaved as a professional, western style suits and all, but he didn’t give up his tradition. He believed in using modern ideas and technology to develop our country without giving up our roots.”

courses, and so, in time, the choice of candidates had to be expanded to include all subjects of Iyengars and Iyers. ‘Why don’t our youngsters qualify in our sastras and earn much more than they can as engineering graduates?’ he would lament, referring to the paucity of qualified priests in the community and the great demand for their services.

Like Rajamani, Rajan too praises Swamy’s tremendous support of the renovation of Lord Sarangapani temple in Kumbakonam. ‘Even now the temple is able to perform daily puja, thanks to his efforts which laid the foundation.’

According to his brother R Narayanan, ‘Swamy felt totally glorified in the samprokshanam of the Lord Sarangapani temple but later events pulled him down. Here is a glorious temple, the third most sanctified Vaishnavite temple, next only to Srirangam and Tirupati. This temple, spread over 120,000 square feet, was spending a meagre amount of Rs.8,000 a month on wages, with most of the wage earners of the



Lord Varadaraja Swamy with His Consorts at Kanchipuram. Swamy performed the samprokshanam at this temple in 1995

temple drawing barely Rs.900 per month, even as recently as 2004. Swamy offered funding to the extent of Rs. 50,000 a month, to be spent in the temple. He suggested doubling the wage level of the staff members, so that they could have at least one square meal a day. The temple authorities after availing themselves of the offer for two months, declined it thereafter. They wanted the money to be handed over to them for disbursement as they liked and Swamy would not agree to that. This experience pained him till he breathed his last. He fought to set right the system but the system proved too strong for him to tackle in one lifespan!”

Narayanan says that Swamy passed on ‘a few cardinal thoughts, which I value very much and have in turn told my children’:

- Always listen attentively and carefully.
- Opening your mouth to either agree or disagree is not important.
- The solution to any problem is within and not outside of it.



- *Never give place to anger. With anger in you, you can never be clear in your thoughts and dispassionate in finding a solution to a problem.*
- *Don't rush to conclusions on feeble or unverified reports. Take reasonable time, sort out the chaff from the grain and always be dispassionate in arriving at a decision no matter how much it hurts you or your loved ones.*
- *Life is all about giving. Give willingly and as much as you can afford.*

- *Selfish thoughts are very alluring and do bring in short term gains but time will turn around and bring every wrong or evil intent to naught. This is the lesson the itihisas, puranas and above all time, teach us.*

'Kalki' Vaidyanathan lauds Swamy's celebrated generosity and philanthropy. He also admired Swamy's devotion to the temples to which he owed allegiance, like Lord Sarangapani Temple, Lord Oppiliappan Temple and Lord Ranganatha Temple in Srirangam as well as the Ahobila Math.



During the samprokshanam ceremony of the Lord Anantavijayappa temple at Therizhandur, near Mayiladuthurai

When Vaidyanathan was renovating a temple in his own village, he was pleasantly surprised by Swamy's offer of help towards rebuilding that temple - for it was a Saivite temple! But Swamy's offer was instant and generous. To arrange for Swamy to visit that temple was Vaidyanathan's dream, but that was not to be.

Renowned educationist Mrs YGP, remembers Swamy from his JWT days when he first came to Madras. She used to meet him in connection with sponsorships and other matters concerning her school. Mrs YGP, who

refers to Swamy as Swamy Mama used to know him also in her capacity as a journalist. 'His son Shekar studied with us, and was part of the school trip to Sri Lanka. He is very close to the school. Sundar married Sudha, a close friend of ours.'

Mrs YGP sees a close link between the values practised by her school and Swamy's belief system. 'A staunch Vaishnavite, deeply attached to temples, Mama took an active interest in our school and followed its progress closely, because we had survived as a

“Swamy created bonds of friendship and loyalty in the organisation that went beyond the employer-employee relationship. To most employees, he was a father figure, and many took pride in that special bond.”

school rooted in Indian philosophy, because we gave a lot of importance to slokas, celebrated all our festivals at our school. All our anniversaries are based on mythology, Ramayana and Mahabharata and so on. I believe that PSBB inspired him to start Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya as a CBSE school. He was already involved in Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School. I was his consultant and we often discussed matters relating to the schools.'

Mrs YGP is involved in the Mangalasarana Divyadesa Samrakshan Trust, which takes care of 108 holy places. Swamy and she would discuss how to popularise temples. The meetings were held at his office. He had many ideas. He wanted the Temple Worshippers' Forum he started to be a hub of activity.

Mrs YGP explains the philosophy behind Swamy's venture in propagating Vaishnavism. 'In Visishtadvaita, we have the concept of Sagunabrahmam, which means that we believe in experiencing God through the five senses also, not only through heart and mind. The temple is for us a place for music, slokas, alankaram, sweet smelling flowers, sandal etc., and delicious food. Our temples always provide prasadam to eat. All five senses are satisfied and sublimated. Swamy Mama wanted all these traditions and temple festivals to be revived. He wanted to make temples worthy prarthana sthalams or places of worship and bring people to the temple. He enrolled many members from the areas



R K Swamy with
Mrs YGP at the
VIII Annual Day of
Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya in
August, 1997

adjacent to temples. He saw to it that all the festivals prescribed by the sastras were performed, and like Ramanuja, he brought God out of the temple. He revived the practice of utsavas. When he started, temples had become godowns, as they had no income. They were merely places rented out for family functions. Very few devotees knew the various temple festivals. Most of the children of local residents had gone abroad. Swamy Mama contacted these youngsters from abroad, asked them to contribute to temples in their place of birth or ancestry, telling them it was their duty to sustain them. He sought out postmasters and old residents of villages and traced NRIs through them. He formed local committees in those villages. He would collect donations towards temple maintenance to coincide with their birth stars, or to temples whose deities the NRIs had been named after. He started what became a successful campaign of funds mobilisation. He would say, "My birth will have no meaning if I don't do my bit for our religion and culture."

'He was keen to propagate the viseshams or rituals and festivities of each temple to popularise them. He was particular that music



He grew fond of this Lord towards his later days. Lord Sarangapuri at Kumbakonam

and fine arts were developed by concerts at the temple mandapams. He met with considerable success in his efforts, especially at remote temples. He arranged upanyasam or discourses, and the celebration of the tirunakshatram or birth stars of the Alvars, the Vaishnavite saint-composers. We at the Mangalasasana Divyadesa Samrakshana Trust, got involved, adopting 40 to 50 temples. We released grants of Rs. 1,000 per month per temple to pay the salaries of the adhyapakas or (teacher) priests reciting mantras, paricharakas or cooks, and watchmen to protect temples from theft. We collaborated with Swamy Mama and carried out the good work without a hitch.'

Mrs YGP sees in Swamy the perfect blend of tradition and modernism. 'Swamy Mama was a man of absolute faith and discipline. He had a commanding presence. As an advertising man, he dressed and behaved as a professional, western style suits and all, but he didn't give up his tradition. He believed in using modern ideas and technology to develop our country without giving up our roots.'



A FAMILY MAN

Swamy's sister Vedavalli is one of his two surviving siblings as we write these lines. Brother Narayanan is the other. Born in 1935 in the family's Grant Road, Bombay home, she is some 13 years younger than her beloved 'Mani Anna', the very mention of whose name evokes an emotional response in the septuagenarian.

'Those were hard times for the family, and when we moved to Kumbakonam during the war time evacuation of 1942, RR and Mani Anna (Swamy) took the brunt of the family responsibility, staying back in Bombay,' Vedavalli recalls. 'Mani went on transfer to Calcutta, and Narayanan too went there to join military service, with Vasu joining them there too. Life was tough, their place of work was close to an air raid shelter and they rushed there every time the siren went off.'

Vedavalli had to discontinue her schooling when her father, a diabetic, died soon after Swamy was married and left for Calcutta. Soon, she too was married, 'My brothers, especially Mani Anna, made huge sacrifices for the family, says Vedavalli, choking with emotion. 'By the time I was married, I had all the work experience needed by a homemaker - human relations, social skills, how to manage guests, manage a family all alone. I was trained in all aspects of running a home.'

In later life, Vedavalli became a double MA, with encouragement from her husband, and a successful teacher in the Central School in Madras. She attributes all that to her solid foundation, thanks to her loving brothers' care and attention. She makes special mention of Swamy and his wife, though all the brothers and their wives were united in their concern for the extended family's welfare.

Ramanujan (RR), Swamy's elder brother and Sarasa were married in 1938. Swamy, his mother, and his youngest sister, only four

then, came to see the prospective bride, while the man who was to marry her was conspicuous by his absence. Mrs Sarasa Ramanujan, who until her recent demise lived in Baroda with her daughter-in-law Prema, made it a point to inform us that her husband saw her for the first time at the wedding.

The brothers, RR, Kasturi, Swamy, Narayanan and Vasu were very united. They went everywhere together. Even if someone gave them free tickets to a movie, they would accept only if all of them had tickets.

RR founded and ran an engineering company Vijay Tanks and Vessels, with manufacturing units at Bombay and Baroda. When Datta Samant's union gave trouble, the business suffered. 'Of my two sons, the elder one is no more, and the second is mentally retarded. When one of my two grandsons died in Bombay, we decided to move to Baroda. This is where my elder son, Vijayaraghavan, died. We lived in Bombay for 55 years, and have been in Baroda for ten years now,' Mrs Ramanujan told us, overcome by emotion even as she recounted the major tragedies of her life. 'RKS was very fond of us. He would come running whenever we needed him. He was a year younger than I. When my husband died, RKS cried a lot. I never expected him to break down like that. The other brother Kasturi had died much earlier of tetanus.'

The early years in Bombay while trying, were also a happy period. The family lived as a joint family on the fourth floor of a chawl on Grant Road. The building had no lift, 'but we had no problem climbing stairs. Now, we have all the comforts, but no physical fitness.'

Sarasa regarded her husband's appointment in Lloyds Bank as the first turning point in the joint family's fortunes. 'After the initial struggle by my in-laws, my husband found a job in Lloyds Bank. My father-in-law's shop, which catered mainly to south Indians, was



Family portrait, 1960. L - R: Bhooma, Kala, Swamy, Vimala, Shekar, Radha, Vathsala and Sundar.

no longer profitable as many of the local residents moved to Matunga. We too moved to Matunga in 1940. We were all happy despite the hardships we suffered. My father-in-law and mother-in-law went to Kumbakonam during the evacuation and came back after a while. For some time, the sons stayed back in Bombay and cooked and looked after the house. Vasu and RKS stayed with us and studied.' When Swamy went to Calcutta on transfer, Vasu too joined him to study there.

In May 1948, the Ramanujan family went by train from Bombay to Madras through a circuitous rail route to attend Swamy's wedding at Madras, because there was trouble in the Deccan in the form of the Razakar agitation. 'We travelled via Mangalore and Bangalore, with three children in tow in unreserved compartments.' In 1955, RR left his job and started Vijay Tanks, with a capital of Rs. 2,000. The business flourished for many decades.

Sarasa recalled pleasant memories of the holiday trips that the families undertook together. 'We often went on holiday trips as a joint family. We went to Rameswaram together in 1962. Kolhapur, Sholapur, Belgaum and Bangalore are some of the other cities we visited as a group. Whenever we went to Madras, we stayed with the Swamys.



Swamy introducing Prema Raghavan to Arthur Sturgess, former Chairman, BBDO Asia Pacific, in 1989

When our four daughters and RKS' four daughters got together, along with the boys as well, the result was a riot. '

'It was during one of these trips, at Ooty, that my husband informed Radha that Swamy was quitting JWT and starting his own agency. I was quite worried and told him, "Why are you making RKS also start a business, not content with doing so yourself? He has four daughters to marry off." But it all went off well. My husband gave his Habibullah house to RKS for his office.'

Prema Raghavan, daughter-in-law of Ramanujan and Sarasa related a story she heard from the horse's mouth. When Swamy was in school, he once vowed to put Rs. 2 in a temple collection box, but did not have the money to fulfil his vow. After many, many years, he put Rs. 1,000 in the hundi at the Babulnath temple, evidently to make up for the earlier lapse.

Prema tried to explain some of Swamy's personal philosophy and lifestyle choices. Though never one for leading a life of luxury, he led a fairly comfortable lifestyle. 'He had this theory about hiring servants: that it was a way of generating employment, so that you had the leisure to do important things. Simple living does not mean doing everything yourself. All his servants have done well in life. The driver Tirumalai, we all know, even received the gift of a house. Having a servant does not necessarily mean raising your standard of living but that you are taking care of an additional family. It starts a chain of employment and well-being. He extended the same belief to the renovation of temples that these activities led to employment.'

Prema continued to say that he also focused on the aspect of education in advertising, as in educating the housewife on the choices before her, for instance. She still remembers how he prepared for a presentation while visiting her home in



Swamy was very much the patriarch, seen here with his wife and the entire family, 1998.

Bombay one night during his HTA days. He sat up all night developing and rehearsing the presentation, hardly slept for an hour and made a successful presentation in the morning.

Prema, like many others who came into contact with Swamy, found him to be a rock of support, when adversity struck her. 'When I lost my son, Swamy Chittia sat with me and explained some stories from our mythology - how Draupadi lost five children and coped with her loss. He did not speak of the eternal soul and all that but told me stories which softened the blow.'

'He took responsibility for the whole extended family, on occasions like marriages. He worried about everyone in the family, but still had time for other people. He never let the family down, never spoke ill of any member. If he had an issue with anyone, his style was to confront him direct. He always protected the dignity and integrity of the family.'

Unlike Vasu Chittia, (Vasudevan, RKS's younger brother), who was great fun, even frivolous at times, Prema said Swamy was a

sober companion, though he got on well with younger people. 'If we questioned tradition, he would patiently explain the rationale, but you could not argue with him beyond a point.' Prema's father-in-law Ramanujan was an open, simple, honest man who did not believe in hierarchies in the family or outside. 'I have seen him seat a welder next to him at the office to discuss some problem he had brought to him. He was very affectionate towards his brothers. In fact, all of them were very close to one another. They might fight and argue but were always very united.'

Prema told us that Swamy enjoyed James Bond movies. For all his involvement in Visishtadvaita and all that, he enjoyed thrillers and action movies! He always relished food of all kinds, as long as it was vegetarian. He could appreciate different cuisines, try out new foods, unlike his wife Radha.

He took good care of his health and was very regular with his medicines. He observed no hierarchy and his driver Tirumalai was free to admonish him if he ever exceeded his self-imposed quota. He observed no social distinctions in such matters.

Grand daughter Shalini, the daughter of Swamy's daughter Vimala and Ramanan, had a 'very precious relationship with my grandfather.' She was very interested in his professional field, and when she came home from school, she regularly went to him to talk about advertising, to seek his advice on a career in advertising.

Swamy told his grandchildren stories from the Vedas, mythology, and the Divya Prabandham 'and this gave us tremendous exposure', says Shalini. 'During the summer holidays, he and grandmother took us to temples, packing a whole bunch of grandkids into a couple of cars. The story telling sessions would go on throughout the journey.'

Shalini went on to do her MBA. She often

Mr & Mrs Swamy with granddaughters Sruti and Shalini.





Swamy turns 60 - shasthathapoorthi celebrations.

discussed advertising and other subjects with her grandfather, share his work, ideas and thoughts. 'That interaction was valuable. He was very attentive and expected you to be equally so. He wanted you to give attention to detail as he did. When you had a conversation with him, he'd listen to you patiently, and he wanted you to listen, very carefully too. You could not cut in while he was talking. You must understand the subject and then respond. He could be short-tempered if you didn't do that.'

Like other grandchildren, Shalini took problems to her grandfather. 'If you wanted a solution to a problem, he would not react emotionally, but think deeply, reflect on it, and communicate in a way you sensed his concern. He was very keen that my generation did not miss out on our heritage, our values. Once, when he was involved in a movement to restore our temples, he called us youngsters to his office and made a

presentation on the movement, and bought us all pizza afterwards!'

Shalini found a change come over Swamy in his role of grandparent with the passing years. 'When I was a baby, he was immersed in day-to-day work. Later when some of my cousins were born, he liked to hold the baby. He changed with age, and actually started helping grandma in the kitchen late in his life.'

To Vathsala Ravindran, Swamy's eldest daughter who works at Hansa Research, 'My father was always a big model, not reachable. He was always very high in everyone's esteem. We were afraid of him as we grew up, and he was extremely busy building his career. We literally avoided contact with him, as he did not want to be disturbed. All of us always worried about disturbing him and getting into his bad books, worried whether he would shout at us. In the initial years, he was short tempered especially when it came to children.

“He was always very high in everyone’s esteem. We were afraid of him as we grew up, and he was extremely busy building his career.”

We saw a different R K Swamy when we came to college.’

To Swamy, education was the most important thing for his children. As a result of Swamy’s strong desire to educate his children well, ‘all of us are double graduates. Kala, Bhooma and I are all MAs, Sundar is a B. Tech- MBA, Vimala is an M Sc. And Shekar did an MBA and MS, after his B.Com. My father and his brothers were the first in the family to pursue professional careers. They all did well, though they came from a very poor family, and could not afford college education. All of them barely finished school, but learnt typing and shorthand. My father’s first job was as a steno typist. He grew up in an environment which made him worldly-wise.’

According to Vathsala, her father had some very good friends, different sets of friends and mentors who helped him in his preparation for life. ‘One set of friends initiated him into religion, slokas and so on. Thus he was exposed to both spiritual and worldly knowledge. He also had good bosses at the office, bosses who saw his potential and allowed him to grow. Everytime he did something of note, they rewarded him.’

When Vathsala was born, the Swamys were in Calcutta. When the family moved to Bombay in 1951, Vimala was born there. When Swamy was transferred to Madras, to develop JWT South, it was a big challenge for him and the children, because it was a

different language altogether.

Swamy’s was an extended family constantly playing host to some relative or other. ‘Uncles, aunts and cousins were always living with us and my parents took on the responsibility of looking after them. They invariably took care of relatives, those temporarily or permanently without income, even when father was earning only Rs. 300 per month. People would land up from the village in search of jobs in the city, and they would stay with us until father found them employment through his network of friends. Anyone coming home seeking help, monetary or relating to school or college admission, would receive help, never turned away. Father would invariably see some positive aspect in the person seeking assistance, and immediately write a letter of recommendation or phone his friends on the spot. There was no question of leaving it for another day. He was always transparent and straightforward.’

If Swamy was busy when the children were at school, he was busier when they entered college, by this time active in the Rotary Club and the Madras Management Association. He felt these social encounters were important. He sought to increase his awareness through these, though wining and dining was also a part of the deal. He would nurse a single drink through most of these parties, just to please others, says Vathsala.

Vathsala confirms what so many others have said about Swamy: that whenever he took up a cause, whether in the advertising industry, Rotary or the general economy, he would go all out to achieve his ends. He simply had to get involved. If there was money to be contributed, he would be the first to contribute. ‘It was not just the money he contributed, he would be the first to abide by the demands of any cause, so that he could inspire others.’

‘We grew up in awe of him. My mother

*Mr & Mrs Swamy
and Mr & Mrs
D P Rangaswamy
during Sudha-Sundar's
wedding reception
in 1979.*



was a great support: how hard she worked at home, with the constant guests plus six children. My friends, Vimala's friends and Sundar's were constantly in and out of our home, even staying with us for weeks, months at a stretch, and she always managed. People could drop in at midnight and there would be food for them. My mother sometimes wondered how we managed to take care of so many people, without ever thinking of ourselves. "May be that's why we have received all the good things in life," she would muse.'

Swamy enjoyed his grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was very proud of them, and the great believer in nadi josyam that he was, he had the nadi read for all his grandchildren. 'The only thing Amma did not see eye to eye with him on was nadi josyam. Nadi expenses invariably ran to several thousands of rupees, and she did not like it if he initiated his friends into nadi'.

'He loved cricket and films. He took the whole family to the movies - he liked Sivaji Ganesan's acting. He'd buy tickets for every cricket match in Madras.'

Vathsala's parting shot is a question about what brought Swamy and Radha together in wedlock! 'I think my father married my mother because her horoscope was very good,' she says, 'but I always wondered how my mother, who was from a rich family, married my father who was a pauper!'

In a more serious vein, Sundar says, 'He was always a man of principle. When he married my mother who was from a wealthy family, it was a struggle to meet the expenses that the bridegroom's family traditionally spends on a wedding, but my father did not demand dowry, as was the custom then. He somehow found the money to meet those expenses.'

Swamy did not like to own a big car or lead a conspicuous lifestyle. 'When we got the

“He taught by example that there are no shortcuts to success, no miracles. God can only give you opportunities. He practised what he preached.”

Mercedes Benz account, he refused to drive a Mercedes car, even though they requested him. In his mind, he had never made it big,’ says Sundar.

When someone helped him in however small a way, he’d still want to repay that debt 20 years later. On a US visit a friend might have taken him out to lunch, been an excellent host. He would be given a free run of the Swamy house in Madras, a car for his use, whatever he needs here. Mr Swamy would go overboard in repaying his debt of gratitude.

How to comfort someone in distress is something Swamy naturally knew to do, and this trait has rubbed off on his offspring.

Youngest son Shekar’s childhood memories too are dominated by the number of guests who found a home with the Swamys. ‘My parents never thought twice about taking care of any member of the larger, extended family. When one of my cousins came to Madras to study engineering, it was perfectly natural for him to stay with us, for nearly two years. My paternal cousins stayed with us. My mother’s nephew stayed with us for two to three years. This was a routine, unquestioningly accepted. Whenever anyone in the family needed looking after, it was absolutely natural for the RKS family to step in.’

Swamy’s mother came to live with the family in 1948 and was with them for the next 19 years, until her death. She taught the children chess. Radha’s mother, a widow, had no place to go to, when the latter’s parents died. She lived with the Swamys for ten years. Shekar tells us that ‘Dad’s eldest sister, ‘Akka’, who had no children, always stayed with us, from the 1940s to the 1990s. Whenever we moved house, we had to accommodate Akka and Patti, as well as whoever else was staying with us at the time. Various branches of the family received such support from my parents.’

Shekar cannot help marvelling at the

tremendous spirit of responsibility his parents felt for the whole extended family. 'Just look at the richness of it. No one sat around saying we are doing all these wonderful things, it was all done naturally. All this sat very lightly on my parents. Their attitude had a lasting impact on all of us. Open Home is a continuing legacy, though none of us thinks about it in such big words.'

Shekar reflects on the kind of parent Swamy was, always there for the children, yet not constantly watching or fussing over them, mainly because he was so busy all the time. 'You can say that my father did not spend 'quality time' with us. My parents didn't believe in paying lip service to any such concept, but rather lived it. We were not told that he was a big man in advertising; his success did not translate into trappings. We grew up as middle class kids. The budget was usually tight, we did not have lots of pocket money, but we didn't think about it.'

Swamy was 32 when youngest daughter Bhooma was born. She affirms what Vathsala said about the effect Swamy had on his children. 'As kids, we were all petrified of him, but as we grew up the equation changed, and he struck an equal relationship with us. During our childhood he had no time, he was so busy with his career. He perhaps didn't know which of us was in which class at school. That was Mother's job! My one clear memory from childhood is that of his always doing puja at home. No, I didn't take after him in that respect.'

Bhooma once met with an accident at Kolar and was hospitalized in Bangalore. Vathsala, Sundar, his wife Sudha and Mrs Swamy went over immediately, but Swamy could not go straightaway, as he was busy with an anniversary celebration of the agency. When he visited her after a couple of days, he said, "You'll be fine. I prayed to Lord Lakshminarasimhan at the temple and

He assured me the lung puncture has turned into a flower. It is all a passing phase."

'He was on the one hand totally rational, articulate, but on the other, he had these strong beliefs that perhaps bordered on the irrational. None of us could experience what he did.'

Swamy was a staunch supporter of education, and believed in women's

"I ask how he'd react in a similar situation. And I feel he's guiding me. In fact, he's guiding me more after his death than during his lifetime."

education. Before his daughter Bhooma started a school at Ranipet, he sent her to Mrs YGP for guidance. Bhooma's school, Vedavalli Vidyalaya, is today one of the top schools in Ranipet, and expanding rapidly.

Bhooma stresses that her father's religiosity did not mean he left everything to God. On the contrary, he laboured hard at everything he did, and always attributed any success he achieved to God. 'Perumal is with me but I have to do my duty, put in my efforts. If I fail, it is His will.' He taught by example that there are no shortcuts to success, no miracles. God can only give you opportunities. He practised what he preached.

Shekar went to Delhi for his MBA and it was then, in April 1979, that he was injured in an accident. Driving a car, he was hit by a truck, and got badly hurt, dislocating his right hip. It was a life-threatening accident, but Shekar had great help from his friends and

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With grandson Siddharth.

the Dean of his institute.

Shekar remembers the incident vividly for a reason. 'When my parents came to see me at Moolchand Hospital in New Delhi, Father never once asked me how the accident occurred, how I had landed in this mess. He never did ask till his dying day, nor did I volunteer the information. He made sure everything medically needed was done.'

Bhooma believes, 'As kids, we never realized Father's greatness. Now I feel he visits me everyday. When I'm faced with any difficult situation, I ask how he'd react in a similar situation. And I feel he's guiding me. In fact, he's guiding me more after his death than during his lifetime. I didn't seek his help because he had a nadi solution for all problems and I didn't like it, though he sort of exempted me from the nadi regime!'

To second daughter Vimala Ramanan, the first description of her father that comes to mind is that of a dutiful son. He had a wonderful relationship with his mother, whom he cherished and protected all her life. He was equally a caring, devoted husband and dutiful father, she says, echoing her siblings' views.

'He always had a soft corner for Amma, and whenever, wherever we needed him, he was there for us, doing his duty by us in his undemonstrative way,' Vimala remembers. Whether it was a school admission or a college seat, he would do what was expected of a father, without fuss, going about the job systematically. His immense faith in God meant that he did dedicated prayers as the occasion and person concerned demanded. 'The kind of prayers father made left God with no option but to come down in answer.' He took no phone calls, allowed no distractions, once he entered the puja room.

Swamy was always encouraging of his children's efforts in their work. Vimala's last serious conversation of a professional nature

with her father involved her concerns about HansaVision, the Television venture she still manages. HansaVision was Swamy's brainchild, the result of his foresight regarding the emerging medium of television and sponsored programmes.

Vimala shared her disappointment at not securing a time slot for a serial HansaVision had produced, and Swamy's response was : "You can only do your duty. One day you'll succeed. Everybody cannot be a genius. If you do sincere work, you'll succeed. Read, research, learn."

'If you went to my father with a problem, and sought his advice on how to solve it,' Vimala continues, 'he'd first ask a number of questions in order to understand the problem, before attempting to find solutions. He did not believe in instant fixes.'

In his evening years, he took his role as philosopher and guide very seriously. As Vimala remembers, 'Because, he still went to the office everyday, he could not watch our soaps live, and I gave him the recorded tapes to watch at his convenience, and offer his feedback to me. Unlike most of us, he would watch every one of them with total attention and make detailed observations. If I gave him 100 cassettes to watch, he would watch each of them, with the same intense concentration. Because he enjoyed watching the Ramayana and Mahabharata or listening to

"He never did anything casually. The same rule applied to the pujas he performed. He was totally focused."

A FAMILY MAN

Krishnapremi's religious discourses, I gave him four mythological cassettes in Tamil to listen to. He took the trouble of sitting through them and told me, "They have no depth, but because you gave them to me, I listened". There were no short-cuts in his book. Similarly, if an author gave him his book to read, Swamy would go to work pencil in hand, and give a detailed review, going over the book page wise with the author. He never did anything casually. He was totally focused.'

Swamy's concern for people was never skin-deep. Vimala remembers occasions when her father insisted on wearing clothes gifted to him on ceremonial occasions, while visiting the friends or relatives who gifted them. "When they have taken the trouble of buying this for me, should I not try to make

them happy?" he would ask.

Vimala defends Swamy's involvement with nadi josyam. 'Christians have the institution of confession to fall back on for their spiritual needs,' she says. 'My father found solace in a personal God. His prayers were direct conversations with God.' It was the same with nadi josyam. It was Swamy's way of seeking advice from God when he could not decide which was the best course of action open to him in a particular situation. "All of you can come to me and ask for advice. I have no one to whom I can go for advice. Only God can answer my queries. I think I see God when I go to nadi josyam," he would say.

Vimala's sister Kala Santhanaraman feels a deep sense of gratitude for all she received from her father. 'One fantastic thing about him was his memory,' she echoes what other

Mr & Mrs R K Swamy and Mr & Mrs S V S Raghavan. Swamy and Raghavan were friends for nearly four decades.



“I have never heard them complain about these elders. They always felt that they were only doing their duty and in fact my father used to say, ‘These people are my assets and I have to take care of them.’”

close associates have said about him. ‘Things that he learnt from his grandfather as a young boy came in handy for him to illustrate his speeches on any subject. He was a great orator; every one of his associates knew how good he was in that department.’

‘Like him, my mother is a great human being. They are role models to me as a person,’ Kala continues. ‘My father took care of his mother and his sister until they died. He also took care of my mother’s mother as long as she lived. Both my mother and father were great in supporting each other in any manner that was required. I have never heard them complain about these elders. They always felt that they were only doing their duty and in fact my father used to say, ‘These people are my assets and I have to take care of them’.

Swamy might have had his own likes and dislikes, but Kala never heard him speak ill of any one. Like her siblings, Kala is greatly impressed by Swamy’s immense faith in God

‘We had immense faith in him, sure that he would not suggest anything that would do us harm. We owe our faith in God to his faith.’

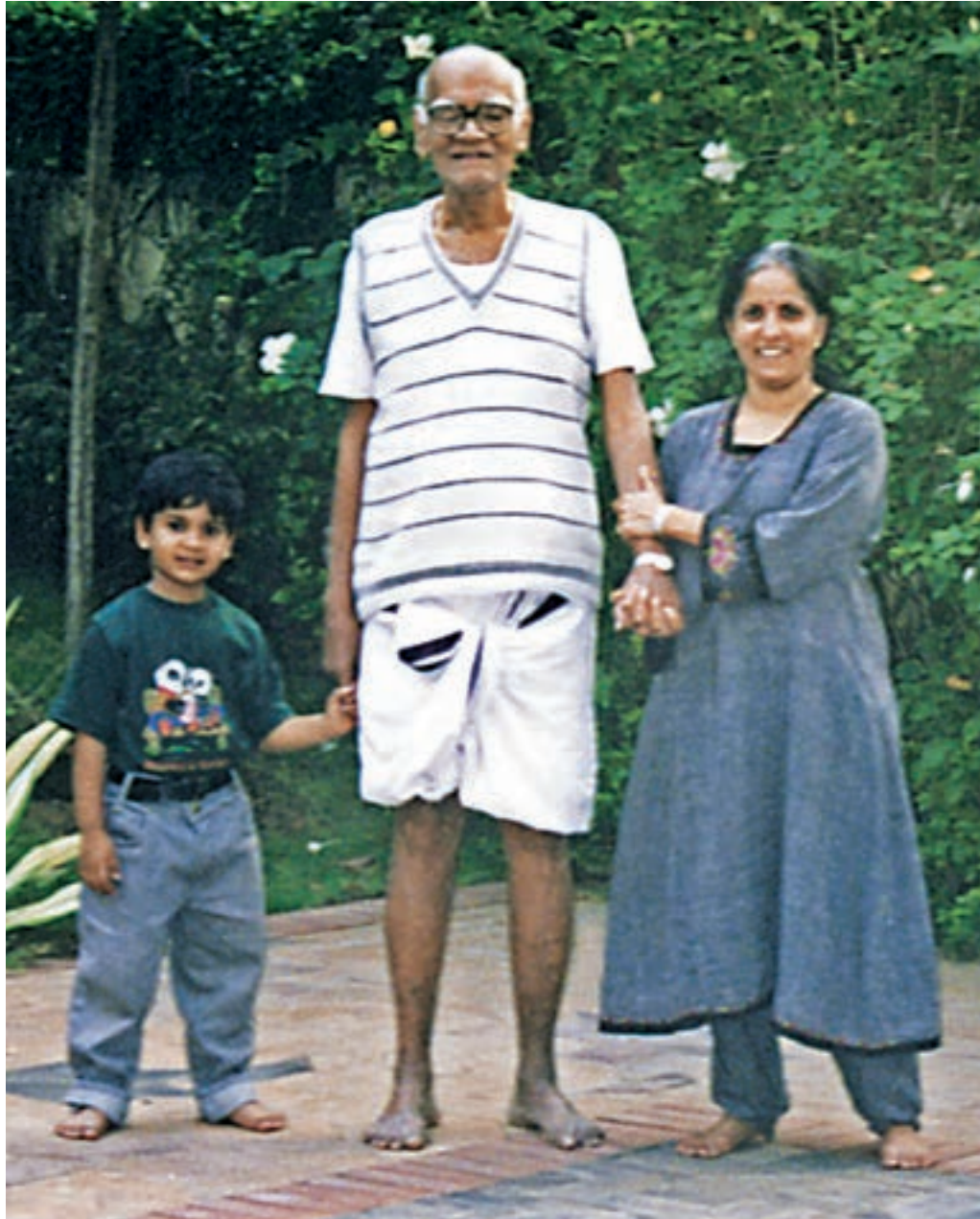
Though Swamy’s childhood had never been a bed of roses, he never allowed the children to feel the need for money. ‘He provided us with everything we needed,’ Kala recalls. ‘He was fond of saying, “Knowledge is power”. I can never forget that, for any amount of wealth we leave behind for our children will not be sufficient. What a person learns in school and college and from life’s experiences cannot be taken away by anybody.’

Daughter-in-law Sudha encountered what was perhaps the most traumatic experience of her life a week after she and Swamy’s eldest son Sundar were married. Swamy suffered a massive heart attack! ‘I never left him after that,’ Sudha says, recalling the 27 years she spent in the Swamy household after her marriage in 1979.

Sudha came from a family background in which she enjoyed an easy, open relationship with her father, D P Rangaswamy. ‘In his company, I could be myself, I could play with him. I sat around when he had friends over,’ Sudha reflects, comparing that with the awe Swamy inspired in his offspring. ‘It would not occur to me to take the baby away if she started crying in my father-in-law’s presence, as the others tended to do. I’d probably ask him to hold her for me!’ Sudha, who says she enjoyed a vibrant relationship with her father-in-law tended to argue with him on matters of disagreement, but Swamy was not used to that and did not like it. ‘All that changed in the later years of his life, when he became totally egoless. There was no trace of the ‘I’ in him by then.’

Sudha admires the great courage and loyalty to friends, especially when they were in distress, that Swamy demonstrated time and time again. She mentions the examples of

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With daughter-in-law Sudha and grandson Siddharth.

S Gurumurthy and L Vasudev, two people Swamy stood by when they faced crises in their personal or professional lives. 'He would befriend them when they were black sheep in other people's eyes, so long as he believed in their genuineness,' according to Sudha, 'When you were out of power, he'd be the first person to call you.'

Gurumurthy was harassed by the Indian government for his daring Bofors expose. When he was arrested on trumped up charges as a suspected spy, Sudha flew to Delhi with his wife. 'When he was being interrogated by the CBI, I visited him, recalls Sudha, 'They allowed me thinking I was his sister.' Later, Sudha learnt that the government was investigating her! Someone in the know of things warned her that she would soon be hounded if she continued being friends with Gurumurthy. 'Your father and father-in-law could lose business,' the friend told her.

Sudha was at the time a guest of Ramnath Goenka, the publisher of the Indian Express, the newspaper that carried Gurumurthy's Bofors articles. When she asked Swamy, whether she could go ahead and join the Goenka family in a pilgrimage trip, his response was typical of the man. He said, 'My Chairman is not in Delhi. He is up there in heaven. Go ahead and don't worry about all these threats.' Sudha was moved by his fearlessness.

Swamy talked at length to Sudha about his youth. His sons did not know what it was to struggle against the odds, he would muse. They believed in their youthful exuberance that hard work would lead to success. He knew that that was not true. 'Effort alone is not good enough. You need the grace of God. You need to take a few knocks on your head for you to realize that,' he would tell her.

To illustrate Swamy's complete faith in God, Sudha tells the story of Bhooma's accident. 'When we received the news by

"My Chairman is up there. Go ahead and don't worry about all these threats."

phone, my mother-in-law was visibly shattered and very, very worried. My father-in-law just went into the puja room, prayed for a while and came out looking normal. "My Lord will take care of her," he pronounced, with total conviction. There was not a crease of anxiety lining his face,' Sudha reminisces.

Another illustration of Swamy's total faith was provided by his assurance to Sudha that she would be blessed with a son, more than a decade after her daughter had been born. "Krishna will be born in this house," he told her, when she was expecting, after expressing his desire for a grandson to the Jeer of the Ahobila Math. The Jeer had blessed her after he made her do a small puja and he prayed for her. Swamy had no doubt that the pontiff's blessings would bear fruit.

Swamy's steadfast loyalty to his God was demonstrated time and again. Though he was a model patient and implicitly followed the doctor's instructions, took his medicine regularly, exercised even if it hurt him and stuck to his diet at all times, the rule he broke regularly was the one that forbade him from travelling frequently to Kumbakonam to complete his Sarangapani temple mission. "You either go to your God and stay there with him, or call him here", 'Dr Cherian, his good friend would advise him, but Swamy never obeyed him.

Sudha's admiration and respect for Swamy's selflessness knew no bounds, when,

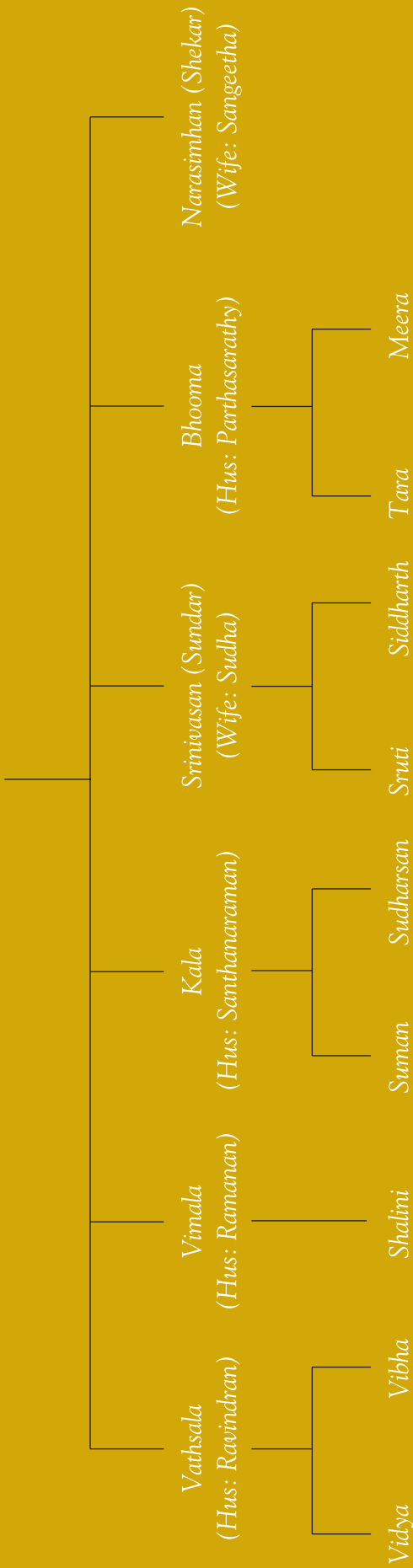
“Effort alone is not good enough. You need the grace of God. You need to take a few knocks on your head for you to realize that,’ he would tell her.”

coming out of the ICU of Devaki Hospital, the first thing he did was to call his secretary and dictated his will, which consisted entirely of his provisions for various religious and educational causes he was supporting. There was not a word about how he was going to provide for his family.

Another person who was emotionally attached to Swamy was S V S Raghavan. Related through a circuitous route, they shared fraternal affection for each other. Swamy met Raghavan in the late 60’s, when Raghavan was FA & CAO of BHEL, Trichy and convinced him about the need for BHEL to start an advertising campaign.

The close association between the two extended to serving the Sri Ahobila Math through managing its journal Sri Nrisimha Priya and organizing functions of the Math. The duo operated as a team in all the major projects of Sri Ahobila Math, contributing both managerially and financially, be it Sri Ahobila Math decennial celebrations, the construction of the Ahobila Math complex in Selaiyur, the Sixth Centenary celebrations of the Math organised at Ahobilam, or the improvement of the Vedapathasala in Madhurantakam. For nearly forty years, Swamy and Raghavan combined their efforts and achieved what others could not achieve in a century.

R K Swamy
(R. Krishnaswamy)
(11th Dec 1922 - 5th June 2003)
Wife: Pramila alias Radha
(5th Dec 1929)



“He was a professional who believed in thoroughness of approach and in management science rooted in logic.”

Information Resources Centre head Lata Ramaseshan joined R K SWAMY BBDO in 1988 as an executive in the research department under Dr Vasumathi. Swamy had a head for research. Every pitch or presentation had to have a component of research in it. He always insisted on the importance of information. And he kept the research team extremely busy by constantly asking for information - not general, but specific information. To him, information was the vital element that conceptualized his critical and incisive thinking. Research provided the cutting edge advantage in advertising. And he created and nurtured in the organization a culture of knowledge creation based on information and research.

He was a professional who believed in thoroughness of approach and in management science rooted in logic. He hated motherhood statements. “They are fine,” he would say, “but give me numbers to substantiate them”. And this was reflected in all his work and philosophy.

In one such instance, he asked the team to prepare a monograph on the tourism industry in India. The process went through countless

drafts and iterations. ‘We would go to him with a draft; he would look at it and ask for further information,’ Lata recalls. ‘We pored over every bit of available information on the tourism industry, trying to salvage our fragile, bruised egos after every meeting. When we showed him what we hoped was a “final” draft, he looked at it, smiled at us and remarked, “This is perfect”.

‘Coming from a person who did not mince words, this praise gave us a sense of achievement. We returned to our cubbyholes and shared his compliment with the rest of the department and celebrated in style.’

Lata’s real interactions with him were in his later years. He had a passion for information and asked questions everyday. Though Swamy was gradually withdrawing from the business, he was busy with larger issues affecting the industry, the economy, religion and education. He had an eye for detail. He would look through reams of paper and pinpoint something he wanted. “This is not what I want, give me what I want” he’d say, and the hard work began all over again. ‘He had his own ideas, he was a taskmaster, but he was very patient with me,’ recalls Lata.

The research department helped him with data for two books he wrote. He read a great deal of backup material. No short cuts for him. He’d read every piece of paper the team produced, never pass it off to others.

Swamy was an intellectual. He could discuss anything under the sun from current day politics to esoteric philosophy to scientific studies, economics and of course advertising. He had his own views but would not impose his ideas on others.

Swamy did not normally lose his temper, but would display his annoyance in a curt, firm voice and tone if he were not happy with something. In one such instance, after a particularly gruelling meeting during the preparation of one of the documents, he was



With the staff at an office party.

exasperated with the team for not giving him the data he wanted. He asked Lata to take the day off and ‘spend time at any library of my choice, read whatever I wanted and come back refreshed the next day’. According to Lata, ‘his mild sarcasm made the point that I was not paying attention and delivering what he wanted.’

Swamy was an idealist. For him, life had its ups and downs but there was a silver lining to everything in this world. In one of her interactions with him, Lata despaired over the political situation in the country. He countered her with his philosophical approach, stating that everything was transient; this too would pass.

Even in his hospital bed, with the end near, he asked each visitor from the office relevant questions. Long time associate and Chief Executive of a group company A Srinivasan had died. Swamy did not know and would ask Kamala about his health. To Lata, he’d say, “Last week Shekar read me something about the Iraq war and the oil crisis. Have you read that?”

He was a great optimist. His sense of

optimism was his most remarkable quality. He’d discuss national issues with the team. There was much uncertainty in 1991 after Manmohan Singh’s tenure as Finance Minister. He’d say, “Things will take care of themselves. No way they can go down.”

He had a wide breadth of knowledge. His experience came through in his campaigns. Though he was not involved in the nitty gritty, he had to be on top of everything he did. He’d remind the team he used to type 100 words a minute when young.

When Lata first met him, he was about 60, already a figure of reverence. He was a traditionalist with a modern outlook. He never gave up his value system. His concept of Visishtadvaita was his basis of work. He

“He believed that one seventh of your earnings should be given away to good causes, and he practised it all his life.”

related anecdotes relevant to issues at hand, from the Gita and Krishnavatara. He tied it all in.

He smiled a lot, laughed a lot. He was not very subtle, his criticism was direct. “This is not on” was a favourite statement. He appreciated good work whole-heartedly, sent you notes of appreciation.

‘Mr Swamy influenced and changed my ideas and views on a large number of issues,’ Lata concludes.

Kamala Joseph who recently retired, worked in the agency for more than 25 years. There was a time when she used to take all of Swamy’s phone calls. He would say, “Your responses on the phone are very important to the way customers think about the company.” He was very meticulous, whether the task at hand was big or small. He would answer all calls to him, even if it were a client asking for some reference, or a complaint by a supplier. He would return every call, and no matter or client was too small for him. He was never too busy for that.

While dictating letters, he could correct shorthand across the table, as he had been a stenographer early in his career. He was always punctual and hated late coming in employees. He did not approve of people taking leave either. Kamala remembers how

annoyed he was the day after Avani Avittam, the annual thread renewal ceremony observed by brahmins, when many employees reported late for work. ‘He entered the office at 9 o’ clock on the dot and asked for me and some other people. I had taken permission that morning to do some personal work. He was very annoyed, when he found many of us still absent. When I reached the office at 10.30, he was very upset’.

“Swamy was very patient with junior people, and tried to put them at ease. He was a simple man who did not discriminate on the basis of seniority.”

‘It puts me off if you are not there,’ he said, ‘How do I talk to people if you aren’t there? We have only so many hours of work, why do we need leave?’ he asked. He would sometimes use Kamala to convey messages to employees on punctuality, discipline etc. They were really home truths he wanted told.

Swamy took an interest in employees’ personal lives. Kamala is an artist in her spare time and once invited him for an exhibition of her paintings. He spent an hour at the exhibition and asked questions. At office parties and get-togethers, he made time to talk to employees individually. He frequently held meetings in which he addressed small groups of employees, on business and other topics.

He was very kind to the people he knew, including employees, when they had problems. There was one unforgettable act of kindness in Kamala’s life. ‘He was so good to

*At the Advertising Club Future Shock Convention at Madras in 2002.
Next to him is N Murali, Managing Director, The Hindu.*



me when I lost my 35-year-old brother one Christmas vacation 18 years ago. His genuine sympathy helped me in my hour of grief.'

'Very proud of his family, he always spoke highly of Mrs Swamy. He strongly believed in women's education, that women should work. All his daughters are highly educated and professionals.'

K L Venkatasubramanian, CFO worked directly under Mr Swamy for most of his 30 years in the agency. Venkat revered him for his courage, conviction and tenacity. According to him, Swamy's work was distinguished by his knowledge and preparedness. He was very good at brand building and corporate image building. He was the father of public sector advertising and a very good finance man. Whenever Venkat presented figures to him, he made a thorough study and picked holes in them. The finance department had to double check and triple check them. His knowledge of advertising accounts was remarkable. He respected finance people. 'Whenever I was in town, he'd ask me for figures, and he was always on the ball. He knew the pulse of the organisation. He'd call us finance people, 'anukula shatrus', people who should not hesitate to fight everyone to protect the organisation.' 'He was also a very good lawyer! He was excellent at drafting agreements, including tough clauses and convincing the other party of the need for them. Give him any act and section and he would be able to interpret it to our advantage.'

'He was a man of great detail, preparing in

minute detail for every speech he made, verifying all the facts and figures.'

'He had abundant energy even in old age. At 80, he wanted to learn to operate his laptop. He used it for his religious work. He would ask for copies of official correspondence by email, so that he could keep abreast of developments in the business.'

'A patriot, Swamy had great respect for India. He would support anyone who supported India. He was a passionate follower of cricket, would argue about it for hours, usually with a joke or two thrown in, but even in that he was patriotic!'

Politically, from being a Congressman in youth, he became a follower of BJP in the evening of his life. He never followed any political party blindly.

Venkat continues: 'I said he was a very good finance man. He was also a good astrologer, philosopher and philanthropist. He was a rare person.'

Swamy had the courage to fight against the personal guarantee system introduced by INS in their contract, and he was perhaps the only start-up entrepreneur who was able to convince INS on this score and obtain accreditation without submitting any guarantee when he started the business in 1973. 'Such was his conviction, courage and super salesmanship.' Dr Ram Tarneja who was at the time Chairman of INS corroborates.

In 2000, an industry association of satellite TV channels titled the Indian Broadcasters Federation was formed. The association immediately wanted to subject all advertising agencies to an accreditation regime on the lines of INS. The Swamys immediately perceived this as not in the interest of advertising agencies. A detailed memorandum was prepared by R K SWAMY BBDO and circulated to all agencies. The Swamys systematically built the logic behind the move and garnered support from a wide spectrum of

“He was a traditionalist with a modern outlook. He never gave up his value system.”

“At office parties and get-togethers, he made time to talk to employees individually. He frequently held meetings in which he addressed small groups of employees, on business and other topics.”

advertising agencies. The result was equitable to all. The IBF and AAAI entered into an industry level agreement between two bodies. Individual agencies were protected, and spared the potential trouble of facing another media cartel on their own. ‘Here was a man who stood by his principles and fought when there was need to uphold the principles of equality, justice and fairness in doing business.’

In all such exercises, Venkat was closely involved with Swamy. It was ‘a great learning experience’ and Venkat considers himself fortunate that he watched an expert at work from close quarters.

K Paarthasarathy, General Manager (Finance) has been with R K SWAMY BBDO for 25 years. In his rare interactions with Swamy, he was struck by the thoroughness and meticulousness with which he went through the accounts before affixing his signature to the financial statements of the company.

On more than one occasion, Paarthasarathy and V S Chakrapani, Director, asked Swamy to sign first and then go through the figures which had been properly vetted and authenticated, because the auditors had to travel out of town and would not be available for the next few days. Swamy

would have none of it and insisted on going through the figures with a fine toothcomb before signing the papers. He would compare the current figures with the previous year’s and ask for explanations for any unusual variances.

On one occasion, Swamy embarrassed Paarthasarathy by asking him to evaluate the contents of a letter he had drafted. It was an appeal to young vaishnavites from priestly backgrounds to take to their family occupation as a full time vocation, and Swamy wanted a finance man’s approval of the line of reasoning he had adopted. Swamy had claimed in the letter that a young vaishnavite without high academic qualification in the formal university system, could earn a better income as a full time priest than if he tried to find a nine-to-five job. The embarrassment came from the fact of Paarthasarathy’s inexperience compared to Swamy’s vast experience, but Swamy assured him he was consulting him because of his particular domain knowledge!

Introduced to Swamy by the late A Srinivasan, K Ramasami joined the agency in 1980 as an accounts assistant and eventually rose to the position of Finance Manager, Chennai. Ramasami’s major interaction with Swamy was when the agency filed a suit against NEPC, a defaulting client. ‘Mr Swamy’s drafting of letters to the NEPC Chairman was great. His expert knowledge of finance was reflected in this masterly correspondence, which eventually resulted in an out of court settlement.’

Former PR Manager D Vijayalakshmi, a comparative newcomer at R K SWAMY BBDO, had cause to remember a particular year’s Ayuda Puja (a simple ceremony through which workers consecrate their tools and equipment) at the office. Ayuda Puja is a big affair at the office. During his lifetime, it was performed in Mr Swamy’s room and

**10 reasons-why
the proposed accreditation process
envisaged by IBF
and the role of
AAAI as intended now
are not in the interest of agencies**
*(with some suggested steps that could augur well for both
AAAI and IBF members)*

August 9, 2000

An Agency of the BBDO Worldwide Network

R K SWAMY BBDO Advertising Limited • Bangalore • Chennai • Coimbatore • Hyderabad • Mumbai • New Delhi

“Here was a man who stood by his principles and fought when there was need to uphold the principles of equality, justice and fairness in doing business.”

sumptuous prasadam (an offering made to God first and then distributed among people present) of sarkarai pongal (a sweet dish made of rice and jaggery) would be distributed amidst the staff.

‘I remember this incident when I was brooding at the office, disturbed by something I had heard, or rather something I had read. One of the Dravidian party leaders had said something nasty about brahmins, and I had read a newspaper report of those remarks. I am not a brahmin, but worked for a company owned by brahmins, as did my father, who worked for the Seshasayee group.’

Vijayalakshmi was fuming, because she felt the leader’s remarks were a bad representation of good things. Swamy looked at her and said, “Why are you disturbed, Viji?” The young lady was stunned that he had noticed. She said she wanted to talk to him, and he agreed to see her. She met him that afternoon, and told him that this was bad PR for the brahmin community. ‘You must stand up and say this sort of thing can’t be done. My dad would have been a goldsmith if he hadn’t joined Seshasayee, where he flourished. Here, I see no discrimination whatever, even though some people wear caste marks and so on. We don’t know how many brahmins there are, and how many non-brahmins.’ “Did you ever feel you were working in a brahmin company? Did it ever affect your environment?” he asked, and when Vijayalakshmi said no, he said, “Then why worry? All this is bound to happen at a certain period. There have been cases of oppression in the past. Don’t feel rattled. You must rise above all this,” and then he recited a couple of slokas. ‘My indignation cooled down,’ Vijayalakshmi recalls.

‘When he passed away, the phone never stopped ringing. There were calls from all over India, requests for photographs, condolence messages.’

‘I regret not getting to know him better. He looked forward to interactions with younger minds. At client interactions, he would ask questions. He was an amazing speaker, with perfect command over language. His letters were most well crafted,’ is Vijayalakshmi’s tribute to Swamy.

According to R Guruvayurappan, his secretary in his final years in the agency, Swamy’s contributions to various causes were outstanding examples of his selflessness.

Guruvayurappan continues: ‘In every step that he took forward, he always felt that he was guided by the Almighty. His total surrender to God enabled him to believe that no one could come in his way. The renovation and samprokshanam ceremony of the Sarangapani temple at Kumbakonam was an example of his faith and generosity. He started the project in 1992 and the ceremony was performed in 1999. Sri Swamy had to overcome enormous obstacles during those seven years. He not only contributed financially towards the project, but also travelled to Kumbakonam on numerous occasions to oversee the work and attend meetings.’

‘Sri Swamy received plenty of appeals for help to various causes. He would respond to every appeal and contribute a minimum of Rs. 500 towards it. He would always say, “When you donate the money is more important than how much you donate”. ‘Even a couple of days before he passed away on 3rd June 2003, he donated a sum of Rs. 10,000 for the samprokshanam ceremony of a Perumal temple at Thirukkandiyur, near Thanjavur. According to him, “One lamp will light several lamps”. The lamp that he lit on April 2, 1973 by starting R K SWAMY Advertising Associates, has in turn lit several lamps, one at each employee’s home.’

Public Relations executive K S Srinivasaraghavan, who was Swamy’s

“His expert knowledge of finance was reflected in this masterly correspondence, which eventually resulted in an out of court settlement.”

secretary during 1998, describes Swamy’s letter drafting as perfect. He did a number of drafts for every letter until he was satisfied. ‘His letter to the Information & Broadcasting Minister Sushma Swaraj, regarding the release of a postage stamp to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the Ahobila Math was a masterpiece.’ According to Srinivasaraghavan, a view shared by many of his colleagues, Swamy in his last years at work was like a family friend to most of them. ‘He always called me by my full name, and never lost his temper if I made English mistakes or interrupted him at dictation to clarify my doubts.’

Senior Art Director Sanat Walchale, who has been working at R K SWAMY BBDO for 18 years, recalls his experience as a junior artist under Swamy. ‘There was this half page BHEL advertisement I was working on, to present to Mr Swamy. I finished my work around 4.00 p.m., I had four finished scribbles to show, besides some thumbnails I had done for my own satisfaction. “What’s that in your hand?” he asked, and picked out one of the thumbnails. He made me develop it. I was shocked because the sketch he chose was the one I really liked. He understood the advertising language and was a good visualiser. His briefs were crystal clear; there was no confusion.’

‘The day he gave me my job, I entered his room with a sketch I had done. I was too shy

to sit down. He insisted I sit down, asking me, “Do you want me to get up?” He gave artists and visualisers complete freedom.’

S Ranganathan, who handles the commercial function at Mumbai, joined the agency when the Bombay office was a small operation, with only 15 employees there. His interactions with Swamy began soon afterwards, and took place whenever he visited the Bombay office. ‘He liked to keep the finance people involved in every decision. He gave me tremendous confidence, not once acting like a Managing Director. He gave us confidence and empowered us. Even someone as shy as I am, gained in confidence, and felt comfortable in his company. He would draw us out and extract information from us.’

‘I did not have much professional interaction with him, but on the few occasions I worked with him, I remember his punctuality, and his ability to get the best out of people. His friendly approach made you want to do his bidding.’

‘Before a pitch, he would patiently run through the slide presentation with us, even if it meant sitting up late. His vibrant personality shone through his extempore speeches. He towered above all, even in the company of BBDO personnel. His storytelling ability is well known. How well he could connect the stories to real life!’

‘Because he knew of my family background, with close ties with the Kumbakonam Sarangapani temple, he would ask me to look after the arrangements for any puja performed at the office. He paid attention to the smallest details. He would tell us even how to light an agarbatti! “Perumale pathundaya?” (Have you been looking after the Lord?) he would ask me, referring to the idol in the office to which we offered puja.’

‘I escorted him to the Sarangapani temple in 2001. He had solid feeling for the temple,

but even though he knew my family’s connections, he never asked me to intervene when he had problems with the temple authorities in the matter of its renovation, despite his generous contributions to the effort.’

Though he was deeply religious, he was not so concerned about displaying his devotion. “Vesham is not important for vaishnavas”, he would say.

Back in June 1984, media professional D Raghunathan had just joined the Bombay office when he met Swamy for the first time. ‘An economics graduate from Pollachi in Tamil Nadu, I did not know the ABC of advertising, and when he asked me about the prevailing per square foot rates of advertising hoardings in the city, I literally blinked,’ Raghunathan confesses. ‘He explained the whole thing patiently when he discovered how raw I was. Another time soon afterwards, I was caught once again when he asked me to call PTI to obtain some information. He had to explain what PTI meant!’

Swamy was very patient with junior people, and tried to put them at ease. ‘Whenever he came to the Bombay office, he made it a point to enter each cabin and talk to the occupants there. He was a simple man who did not discriminate on the basis of seniority. I remember how he introduced even the most junior employees to his wife when she came to our office to attend a big puja to mark our shifting to the present premises from the earlier place in the French Bank building. His speeches on such occasions were very interesting, full of quotations from the Bhagavad Gita and our epics. He had a great relationship with our clients. They too treat us as part of their family. An example is Mr Brahm Vasudeva, Chairman of Hawkins, whom I have been servicing for the last 15 years.’

Former Account Director Vijaya Sriram’s

“To him, Hinduism was a way of life, and he had it in him to become another Swami Chinmayananda and tell you how to live life.”

interactions with Swamy were during the last seven or eight months of his life. She worked closely with him on a Powerpoint presentation on the Ahobila Math. ‘He wanted to make a formal presentation to the Jeer on how to run the institution professionally,’ Vijaya remembers. ‘He gave me a very clear outline of what he wanted to say in the presentation. He was crystal clear in his thought processes and had a razor sharp memory. As the presentation went through a few iterations, he would remember the changes he had asked for the previous time we had met, ensuring these changes had been carried out. Sometimes he would recite the slide copy verbatim. He had this unusual ability to provide a management touch to something spiritual.’

Vijaya says she ‘did not know that you could handle a spiritual movement with so much panache.’ He had an organisation structure in mind for the Ahobila Math, and while outlining it, he had taken the personal quirks of various people into reckoning. Knowing that the Jeer was more comfortable with Tamil than English, he had a Tamil version of the presentation made. By the time the Tamil version was ready, he had passed away, though he had seen the English original. I was amazed by his lucidity and clarity about the key point of each slide. He knew the 125 slides of the presentation backwards, by the time we finished

developing it.’

‘I found his several anecdotes on every aspect of the work we were doing absorbing. He would give the underlying reason for all our rituals. He could speak ex tempore for hours, and never bore you. It was all substance and never repetitive. To him, Hinduism was a way of life, and he had it in him to become another Swami Chinmayananda and tell you how to live life.’

According to Vijaya, Swamy had both substance and style, but in him, the substance was overwhelming. Much of what he said was borne of his own experience, it was wisdom distilled out of his own life and career.

V S Chakrapani, Director, and oldest member of the R K SWAMY BBDO family, paints a vivid word picture of the Swamy he knew.

According to Chakrapani, Swamy bestowed his full attention on advertising in India till he reached 75, won laurels for every effort, led the way in research and market intelligence, leaving a glorious institution behind.

Clients came before all else. His firm advice to advertising professionals was: ‘Do not recommend increase in media expenditure because it increases your commission. Ensure that media expenditure is well spent. Any agency commission over and above the 15% will have to be refunded to the clients. Never scrimp and save when it comes to expenditure related to client servicing. Mop up later after a successful campaign brings the client results!’

Swamy believed in compensating and motivating staff to bring out the best in them and paying them their dues promptly. Staff can be made to improve the quality of their work provided we educate, train and guide them properly, he would say. ‘Treat them well and they will turn out wonderful work ahead of time’ was his view of employee relations. He himself set a fantastic example in

“Though he was deeply religious, he was not so concerned about displaying his devotion. ‘Vesham is not important for vaishnavas’, he would say.”



R K Swamy, Shekar Swamy and V S Chakrapani during the AAAI-Premnarayan Award ceremony of the Advertising Agencies Association of India in September 1998.

“Do not recommend increase in media expenditure because it increases your commision.”

punctuality and hard, long hours of work, believing that leadership was best practised by example.

‘Suppliers must be paid on time, every time. Pay all eligible parties their dues on time and they will come to your aid if and when needed.’

‘Charity was a way of life with Swamy. He believed that one seventh of your earnings should be given away to good causes, and he practised it all his life.’

‘If visiting local temples and listening to discourses in the company of his family were his hobbies, his idea of a holiday was going on a pilgrimage tour, again with his family, to holy places like Tirupati or his favourite Oppiliappan Koil.’

‘Swamy believed in leading a simple, austere life, without getting overjoyed or

“Swamy always fought for causes he believed in, but treated the party on the other side as friends and had malice towards none.”

disappointed, during good or bad times. Be humble and self-effacing was his motto.’

‘Swamy was fond of sweets, and ate plenty of them in his youth, only for him to give them up as a diabetic in his later years.’

‘Swamy always fought for causes he believed in, but treated the party on the other side as friends and had malice towards none.’

‘Education for girls was to Swamy next to godliness.’

‘He loved cricket but his attitude to Carnatic music was that of Ghulam Khader to Gokulashtami!’

‘He knew Tamil and Sanskrit slokas, epics and literary classics by heart and used them skilfully whenever he needed to score an ace.’

One of the earliest recruits Tirumalai, first joined the Swamy household as a cook in 1958, who after six-years, was sent to Trichy to work for Swamy’s brother Narayanan. He joined as Swamy’s driver in 1969 and was his driver till the end.

Tirumalai ascribes some of the confidence with which Swamy started his own agency to his great belief in astrology. ‘He knew that his good period would start in 1973. His ‘Perumal’ was dear to him and he sincerely wished everyone well,’ Tirumalai says.

‘To me personally, Mr Swamy was very kind’, Tirumalai continues. He gave me a house, and helped me educate my three children. One of them is a B.Com and earns a handsome salary. I have no complaints, no problems. We are all happy. Like mine, he has helped a thousand families of the employees of R K SWAMY.’

‘Mr Swamy enjoyed good food. He was fond of snacks like omappodi, and peanut candy. He loved vatha kuzhambu with appalams, not fried in oil, but toasted over a fire. Sometimes, he and his brother would sit and chat late into the night. On such occasions, the brothers could be seen eating as late as 2.30 a.m.’

K A R M A Y O G I

In trying to paint a holistic picture of Swamy, the advertising and marketing professional, management expert, family man, educationist, spiritual crusader, and industry leader, we can do no better than repeat the expert summing up of one of his older clients, V Narayanan, the former chief of Ponds India.

“He was willing to sacrifice business if it meant compromising his value system.”

In Narayanan’s evaluation, Swamy was an extremely competent advertising professional; not a specialist-copywriter, visualiser, or media man. He was complete, and what he had was not superficial but in-depth knowledge of advertising as a profession. He understood advertising very well.

‘Mr Swamy was a very clear thinker and analyst. I have known all the doyens of Indian advertising: Subhas Ghosal, Gerson da Cunha, Mani Iyer, and so on. I would put him right there at the top.

‘Most advertising agency heads tend to be very good advertising professionals but very few are good business leaders. Mr Swamy was an outstanding business leader, who had a very clear vision of what he wanted to be, and where he wanted to go. His vision was to be world class.’

‘Most visionaries are dreamers, but Swamy was brilliant at execution as well. His business was always profitable. After all, at the end of the day, he was not running a charity.’

‘One of the ultimate tests of leadership is that any institution you build must survive long after you have gone. He proved that in JWT and he proved it in R K SWAMY BBDO.’

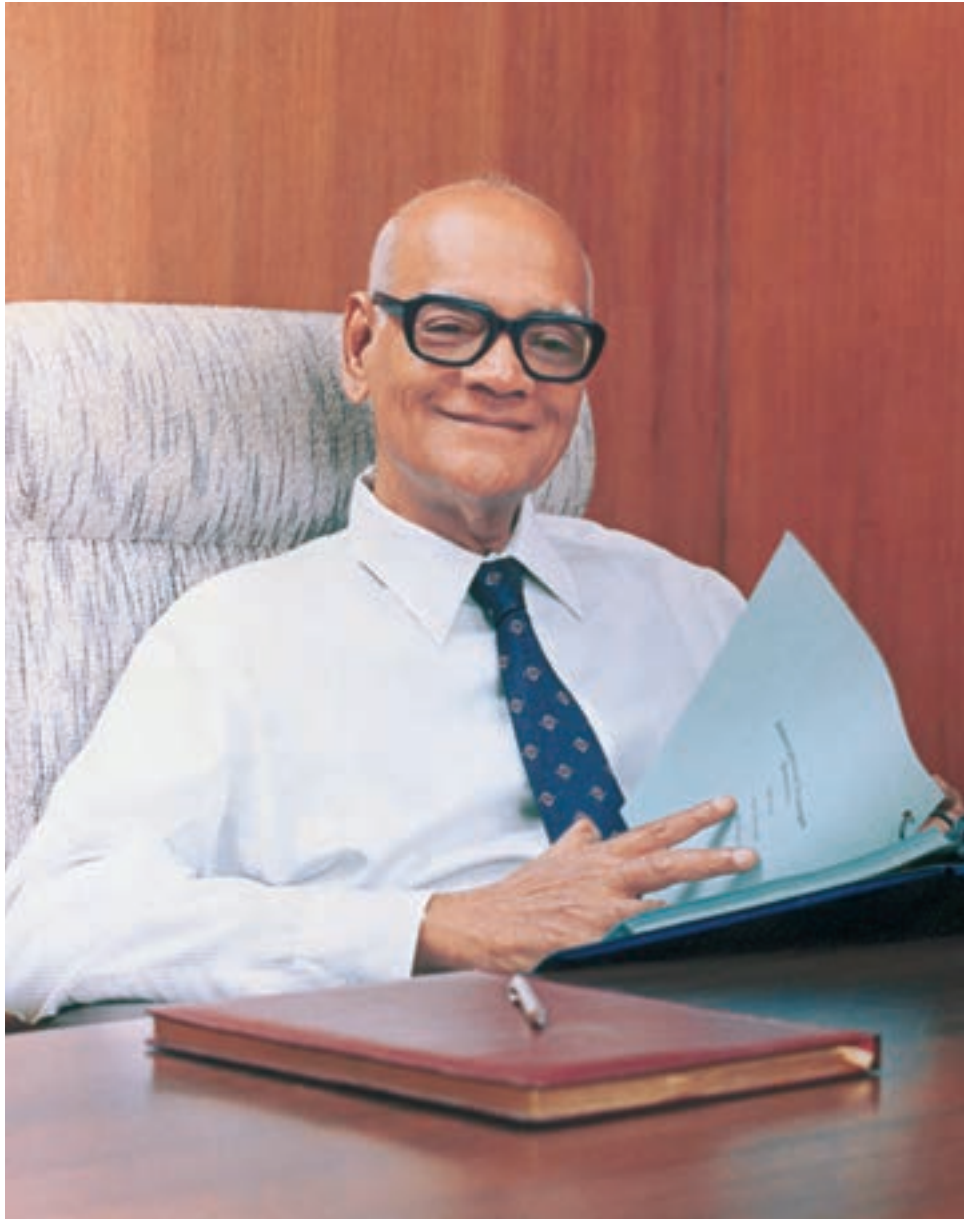
‘Organisations have no control over the external environment comprising the consumer, the government, and competition. Your advertising agency, like your suppliers, is part of the internal environment. Many agencies operate as if they are part of the external environment. Mr Swamy was one of the first to foster the concept of client-agency partnership.’

Known for his strong views on ethical business practices, Swamy’s example in this regard was praiseworthy. ‘It’s important to be a leader, but it’s also important to have character.’

Mr Swamy was a man of unquestionable integrity, unquestionable honesty, extremely principled, disciplined, ethical, and most important, value-led. He was willing to sacrifice business if it meant compromising his value system. The other dimension is trust. ‘You can’t earn trust unless you have character. Throughout his life, he had the trust of people, in every walk of life.’

‘Today everyone talks about empowerment being the management style, giving power to the people and not following the command-control model. He was like that 40 years ago when he could easily have been a dictator. People flowered under his leadership because he allowed them independence of thought. He was a leader all right, but one who empowered teams to deliver the best.’

“The other dimension is trust. You can’t earn trust unless you have character. Throughout his life, he had the trust of people, in every walk of life.”







Swamy was an exceptional communicator, who came well prepared for any speech or talk he gave. He spoke sense and his delivery style was fantastic. He carried that quality to the boardroom, always to the point, precise, unambiguous in his presentations. He had total clarity.

Swamy was respected for his erudition and the wide range of his interests. 'Widely read and knowledgeable, he was equally at home in cricket and the Vedas. Communication was total because he believed in the knowledge area rather than the personality area.'

Speaking of the last months of Swamy's life, his son Shekar recalls the sense of disbelief with which he and his family accepted the end. 'Though I live in Bombay, I spent long hours with my father in the last six months of his life. He was lucid till the end, but the energy was going out of him and he was more and more vulnerable. His body was going away. You never see your father as old, and I never thought he would go away.'

'He was a fighter in a medical sense too as he was in life's other aspects. I was a facilitator in his first bypass surgery, as

"One continuous image of him is that he was relentless, like a bulldog. You may or may not agree with him, but even if he was wrong, his personal conviction was very high. Absolute persistence was the gist of him."



I happened to be living in the US then, and people went there for such operations. It was 1981, and when he arrived, the doctor touched him and said that he should not be walking, and placed him in a wheel chair straightaway. Coronary bypass surgery was not common then, and he battled through it. He was a disciplined patient, capable of nursing himself back.'

'If that was a big crisis, then throat surgery in the 90s for a cyst or growth, which could have choked him if it grew any bigger, was the next one. They had to make an incision in his neck and take it out. Later, a couple of years before his death, he had pneumonia. That was horrible. We thought we were going to lose him then, but 20 years after his bypass, he came out of that. Even in the last phase, when he was put on a ventilator, he came out

of that, and survived for a further six to eight weeks. Finally it was the heart that packed up. We even considered another bypass, but every medical opinion was against it.'

'He had a good innings, all things considered. One continuous image of him is that he was relentless, like a bulldog. You may or may not agree with him, but even if he was wrong, his personal conviction was very high. Absolute persistence was the gist of him.'

'He gave time to everything, he was not a short-term guy. He was involved in each thing he did, for 20, 30, 40 years. If you keep pushing yourself on the same subject for that many years, something will happen. Most people meander off, give up, he never did that. To me that's the lesson: you need to put in time for everything, however small. Peripheral interest for two or three years won't get you anywhere. If you take up something, it should be for the rest of your life. If you can't do that, then don't do it. That was his legacy.'

'The essence of Swamy the man can be captured thus. He had many acquaintances and a few good friends. "Are you available when the other guy needs you most? Can we resume the conversation where we left it the last time you met? That is the sign of good friendship." That was the Swamy guide to friendship in a nutshell.

'He was a great family man. A study of the 100 great leaders published two decades ago listed 10 or 15 traits among them. The most important characteristic was that they all had a good family background. Mr Swamy's strength was that he was very strongly supported by his family.'

'He was very patriotic. Everything he did had to be for the good of the country and the people. He had an exceptional feeling for the poor, for the downtrodden.'

'He was a very spiritual person, a karmayogi.'

TRIBUTES



Bombay has no monopoly on ideas



S R AYER

Former Managing Director,
O & M Ltd., Past President,
Advertising Agencies Association
of India and a close industry
associate of Swamy

'Bombay has no monopoly on ideas': In a nutshell this was R K Swamy!

In December 1960, S H Benson, (which is now Ogilvy & Mather) decided to send me to Madras. All my colleagues and peers in Bombay felt sorry for me. They were of the view that "The Outpost" (that's how they referred to Madras then) would set my career back by five years, though I was to be in Madras for two years only. Were they right or just prejudiced?

The advertising business in Madras in the early 1960s was limited. There were no large FMCG manufacturers, nor many OTC products. Its industrial development was based on light engineering goods, automobile ancillaries and textiles.

It is against this background that the achievements of Mr Swamy should be viewed. He came in the late 1950s to start an office for JWT who were already handling a few Madras clients from Bombay. Until then most Bombay and Calcutta based agencies had a skeleton office in Madras, which was nothing more than a liaison unit. With his energy, enthusiasm, optimism and professional competence, Swamy made JWT the largest agency in the South in a very short time.

I met Swamy for the first time in 1961. Thereafter I had many occasions to interact with him and that gave me an opportunity to observe him at close quarters. One was The Advertising Club Madras, when he was the President and I was a member of the Executive Committee. During his tenure, he organized the first Advertising Convention in Madras with All India participation. It was an outstanding event, much hailed by the industry in Bombay and Calcutta.

What I recall was his uncanny ability to take a holistic view on any subject and see it in its entirety.

“My dear fellow, even important people in very big jobs are actually very ordinary human beings. Let’s not be intimidated by them, they are not gods”.

I also discreetly picked the brains of some of his clients to know more about him. What I recall was his uncanny ability to take a holistic view on any subject and see it in its entirety. His grasp of issues related to the economy of the country, the policies being pursued, where his client’s business stood in that context and the role advertising could play in that situation, was superb. Thus he created many new clients, who on the face of it did not need advertising to further their business interests. The public sector as an advertiser is an example. It was virtually created by Swamy. His contention was that PSUs were accountable to the taxpayer who really was the owner, and it was important that he knew what the PSUs did with his money - long before the term accountability became common currency.

The late David Ogilvy after meeting Swamy mentioned to me, that advertising must be too small a canvas for a man of his talents. But of course Swamy worked on more than one canvas.

He appreciated the value of time, and did something about it. He used his time and other people’s time more efficiently than anyone else I have ever known. As a result, he accomplished more in his lifetime than most of us will ever accomplish even over a longer lifespan.

I was fortunate to work with Swamy again in the 70s and 80s. I had then moved to Bombay via Calcutta and Melbourne, Australia, to head Ogilvy & Mather India.

He had just started his own advertising

agency, yet he found time to be involved with industry bodies like the AAAI, ABC, and the ASCI. He took over from me as the President of the AAAI in 1982. We had worked together from 1978 on a new set of Accreditation Rules with the Indian Newspaper Society, which was finalised during his tenure as President. Whilst discussing the draft rules he always said, “We need to see things from other people’s point of view too”. Hence his emphasis on a new approach to the relationship between media and agencies. ‘Equality’ and ‘mutual interest’, he felt should be the basis.

On one occasion he and I were to meet the Finance Minister on the disallowance of advertising expenses for tax purposes. I was speculating on the kind of person the Finance Minister was likely to be. He was very calm and collected and said to me, “My dear fellow, even important people in very big jobs are actually very ordinary human beings. Let’s not be intimidated by them, they are not gods”.

Swamy was a man of vision. He always knew where he wanted to be, where he wanted his agency to be or where the AAAI should be either tomorrow or a decade later and how one can get there. He was a shrewd judge of people and often came up with the most unusual suggestions about whom to assign to what. And often his judgement was correct.

Apart from being a man of vision and organising abilities, he had some traits which sometimes people found irritating. For example: Once he took a position, he was more tenacious an advocate of it than many of us are capable of being. Some people found this irritating, and even more when they felt he was wrong and it turned out later that he was right!

Swamy has departed, his day’s work complete, but his contributions will continue to live and flourish as indeed the agency he built and the contributions the professionals he groomed are making and will continue to do so in the years to come. ■

Leadership through example



SUROJOY BANERJEE

A longtime associate of Swamy
and Executive Vice President,
R K SWAMY BBDO

*"Where the mind is without fear and the head
is held high*

Where knowledge is free

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

By narrow domestic walls

*Where words come out from the depth
of truth*

*Where tireless striving stretches its arms
towards perfection"*

To my mind, these words of Rabindranath Tagore could well have been written to describe Mr R K Swamy. A man who was not just a legend in his own lifetime, but a man of rare integrity and vision driven by an indomitable will to leave his mark in the fields of communication, media, education and religion.

In an active career spanning nearly 60 years, Mr R K Swamy fathered the birth and growth of two major institutions in the advertising industry - first the southern operations of J Walter Thompson and thereafter his own advertising agency, R K SWAMY BBDO Pvt. Ltd. But Mr Swamy has left behind more than institutions.

A vast reservoir of knowledge, intelligence, skills, talent, commitment and energy is Mr Swamy's legacy to the world of advertising and marketing in India.

Unlike several other leaders in the advertising industry who conformed to a typical "advertising" look and feel, Mr Swamy always stood out as a distinctly different "brand", combining a rare knowledge of Indian religion and philosophy with an incisive understanding of the Indian consumer and the complexities of distribution and marketing. Remarkable was the way in which he effortlessly moved back and forth between his knowledge of ancient Indian texts and the principles of brand management, enriching the latter with the knowledge and experience born out of the rich heritage and traditions of this country.

I have known Mr Swamy to stand up at

A vast reservoir of knowledge, intelligence, skills, talent, commitment and energy is Mr Swamy's legacy to the world of advertising and marketing in India.

many a presentation to jet-setting corporate executives and illustrate his point through an anecdote or stanza from the Vedas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. The allusions and the reference to the context were always amazingly accurate. And the effect on the audience? Surprise, then spell-bound admiration.

It was this charismatic personality of Mr Swamy that mesmerised me when, as a young trainee in the advertising industry, I first heard him deliver a lecture at a workshop I was attending in Mumbai. A couple of years later, when Mr Swamy opened the doors of his own agency in Chennai, I succumbed to my admiration of this man and found my way to R K SWAMY Advertising Associates in Chennai, way back in 1974.

The years since then have been an amazing journey of learning and growth under the guidance and inspiration of Mr Swamy.

Freedom was perhaps the first gift that I received from him: the freedom to think, the freedom to speak, the freedom to take decisions, the freedom to operate. This was the very special way in which Mr Swamy built his team.

He placed complete trust in every member of his organisation and then left it to the individual to live up to that trust. And, inevitably, people responded. You can't let down somebody who has such implicit confidence in you. It becomes almost a sacred duty to reciprocate that confidence.

Perhaps one of the greatest lessons I have learnt from Mr Swamy is that of leadership through example. Mr Swamy never expected anybody to undertake a task that he himself was not willing to do.

There are innumerable memories that flood my mind as I look back over these years. Too many instances, too many anecdotes. Which do I pick out, which do I talk about? As I was telling somebody, these 28 years with Mr R K Swamy were like an ocean of knowledge and experience. It is very difficult to isolate a few drops from this mass of water.

Life is full of people who are quick to pontificate about championing various causes and standing by their convictions. In fact, it is fashionable in cocktail circuits to talk about value systems and resolve in ones' convictions. But how many really put their money where their mouth is?

Where Mr Swamy was concerned, convictions and causes were very real for him. He believed strongly in the religious heritage of our country and he actually invested a significant amount of his time and money in helping to rebuild a number of temples in remote parts of South India.

As I walk along this path with the memory of Mr Swamy, I feel a sense of deep fulfillment and pride that I have had as my mentor, my guide and my friend, a personality as inspiring as Mr Swamy. But enough of reminiscences, there is work to be done and many goals to be achieved. As Mr Swamy would say, "Chal chal re naujawan". We have much to do. ■

Freedom was perhaps the first gift that I received from him: the freedom to think, the freedom to speak, the freedom to take decisions, the freedom to operate.

He kickstarted my career



K R BILIMORIA
Co-founder & Director (Retd)
R K SWAMY BDO Private Limited

My friendship with R K Swamy continued for 42 years.

It was never an employer-employee relationship from the day we first met. To me he was an elder brother and an old friend who shared his success and sorrows with me.

Yes, differences do come up in life, and we were no exception; still we continued as good friends.

In November of 1961, after a very brief interview at the JWT Bombay office, I received an appointment order from Mr. Swamy to join the JWT Madras office as a junior visualiser. I took the offer without the slightest clue about Swamy or Madras. All I knew was that I was joining an internationally reputed advertising agency.

My journey from Bombay to Madras was filled with doubts and apprehensions about this unfamiliar location: Where will I be put up, what will I eat, and what kind of people will I meet? All because I had never stepped out of Bombay in my 21 years.

At the other end, the man I was going to meet, Mr Swamy, instinctively read my mind and made all arrangements in great detail.

On my arrival at the Madras Central station, I was received by Mr Umesh Rao, the man who had interviewed me at Bombay, and was next in command to Mr Swamy.

I was taken straight to the JWT office to meet Mr Swamy whose tall and gentle personality completely disarmed me. He had already arranged for my stay at a Parsee guesthouse, where I could have Parsee food and Parsee folks around me. Meeting Mr Swamy was like coming home to work.

The days that followed were busy with me learning the ropes. Somehow Mr Swamy and I took an instant liking towards each other. He was the most approachable boss - a teacher and friend rolled into one.

I watched him working late everyday. On many occasions I disturbed him in the evening, to discuss my personal problems. On one such evening I asked him for an increase

Swamy was not an academician, but his knowledge and wisdom were far beyond the comprehension of academic limits.

in my stipend of Rupees One Seventy Five. What I received instead was an inspiring talk on my bright future! If I worked hard the fruits of labour would follow naturally. This was his philosophy: *karmanyeva adhikarastè maa phalèshu kadachana!!!*

Well, the fruits of my labour followed late but surely and abundantly.

Swamy was not an academician, but his knowledge and wisdom were far beyond the comprehension of academic limits. I truly admired this virtue. The Vedas and Puranas were at his finger-tips. It was as if he knew the past, present and future of management and life itself.

On several occasions he narrated incidents from these great scriptures and drew parallels with incidents in his day-to-day life and how he tackled them, whether it was selling an idea or solving a Human Resource problem. Many of his contemporaries considered him old fashioned but Swamy was a man of great conviction. He never changed his views. Today in the 21st century, we read about business gurus using ancient wisdom in modern management!

Swamy always sympathized with and encouraged young minds with humble beginnings. I was one such person who was inspired and deeply influenced by his qualities. After several years of hard work when I reached the senior position of Art Director, Swamy used to share with me the stories of his humble beginnings and his vision for the future.

He often spoke in typical Parsee Gujarati

with me. I was quite surprised when he told me that he grew amidst the Parsee community on Grant Road, Bombay, because that's where I was born and brought up. Swamy studied in a Gujarati medium school with Parsee teachers who had been amazed by his Vedic knowledge at such a young age.

More surprising was that he landed his first job at JWT Bombay because of his fluency in Gujarati. He was engaged as a proofreader of Gujarati adaptations of English advertisements.

In 1964, JWT celebrated its 100th year in service. Swamy must have been 42 at that time, a young pioneer on the Indian advertising scene.

Yet another success story of Swamy that comes to mind is his landmark document on the Indian tea industry, which he prepared for Brooke Bond, London. He was then a media assistant surfing newspapers and organizing clippings for clients. To many it could have been a boring, mechanical job but Swamy saw in it a goldmine of data on the Indian tea market.

Swamy was a walking super computer and a visionary. I don't quite remember where he stored his vast database but surely he used it time and again.

He had the facts and figures of every industry at his fingertips. At presentations I have seen clients floored with facts and figures of their own industry that they were not even aware of.

It was his well-researched document for Murray Sons & Co., London that made the top bosses in the JWT London office take notice of Swamy's talent and recommend promotions.

Mr Edward J Fielden, chief of JWT India, was Swamy's mentor. He was a strict disciplinarian. Those days client service people were expected to wear formal clothes at the office. But Swamy always had a soft corner for creative staff and we were excused from this regimental rule. But the days when

Mr. Fielden was in town, we were compelled to wear a formal shirt and tie.

In the late 1960s I was promoted to Senior Art Director and enjoyed a lot more creative freedom directly under Swamy. I was a workaholic like Swamy and the office was my second home. He was my inspiration and brought out the best in me.

After Mr Fielden's retirement, Greg Bathon took over as the chief of JWT India. Our Madras office under Swamy's leadership was really flourishing. I had the opportunity to work on almost every account. Some majors among them were Binny Mills, TI Cycles, the TVS Group, Ashok Leyland, Pond's India, Indian Overseas Bank and Amrutanjan. It was Mr Niku Nair, my Creative Director who fine-tuned my creative skills and Swamy nurtured my talent with encouragement and freedom to think differently.

Swamy had a nice way of even rejecting an idea. He would say, "Bili, are you sure this is the best you can do? It's good, but I am sure you can come up with something much better." And there I was, back to the drawing board. This helped me a lot in giving of my best, and to think differently every time.

One of the tricks of the trade I picked up from Swamy is not to get defensive when a client tries to impose his idea on you.

Just listen to him with a good smile as if you are in agreement with him. This will disarm him once he pours out his thoughts. Now he will be more receptive to listen to your point of view and more to accept your idea. I used this method several times with great success, at times even on Mr Swamy!

To Swamy, the success of any project depended on the time, place and circumstances. He strongly believed in Rahu Kalam, the inauspicious time. He would never plan a meeting during this time. But at times it was not possible.

Here is a classic example of turning our disbelief into belief. Once we were ready to present an advertising campaign to MICO

Bosch. The time and day given to us unfortunately coincided with Rahu Kalam. Swamy tried his best to change the time but to the client it didn't make any difference. Mr Umesh Rao laughed at his superstition. Much to our dislike, the campaign was rejected. Swamy was unperturbed. Later he told me that it was "wrong timing". He would present the same work again.

After a few weeks, Swamy managed to get the right time for a revised approach. Nothing much was changed except the presentation approach but this time, the same creatives were accepted. I started believing in Rahu Kalam.

The Indianisation of JWT was in the air. Some of the top executives in JWT International were considering Swamy for the top post in HTA. He was sent by the JWT New York headquarters to Columbia University for a management orientation course, presumably, preparatory to appointing him as the CEO of HTA.

Some of us who knew about this, including some close client friends were happy about this development. I really didn't know exactly what went wrong. Politics or the envy of the North-South divide, or whatever, Swamy was denied this prestigious position on his return. I was equally hurt when Swamy explained the situation to me.

When the news of this denial spread in business circles, a couple of agencies offered Swamy the Managing Director's post, but Swamy declined the offers. In the true manner of a leader, he decided to form his own agency. His peers in JWT International's offices blessed his move.

One evening he called me and asked, "Bili, will you join me as a partner if I start an ad agency?" I could not give him an instant reply.

I told him, "I am an art person and not an administrator, how can I take such great responsibility? To which he said, "You will take care of the creative side and I will do the

rest. Take your time; I don't need your answer today. Only if you agree to join, will I start this project. Otherwise, I have an option of heading my brother's industry, Vijay Tanks. He wants me to organise it in a professional way."

Three months passed by. I was quite confused. I had nearly completed twelve years at JWT/HTA. On the other hand, here was a new opportunity to be a partner in an ad agency. My loyalty to Swamy tilted the scale in favour of my accepting Swamy's offer and time started moving fast.

In December 1972, I went on leave and tendered my resignation to Swamy. I started working on the logo and the name for the new agency about to be born. From January to March 1973, the time I was without a job, Swamy paid me Rs. 2000/- a month from his personal funds.

For all his success, Swamy's heart was deeply rooted in Sanskrit culture.

My wife Pervin was in hospital to deliver our second child. I was busy designing the new Hansa logo by her bedside. On 19th January 1973 both our daughter Huzaan and the Hansa logo with SAA (Swamy Advertising Associates), came into this world. They were both Swamy's favourites.

The next couple of months were spent on formatting the Articles of Association and finally on 2nd April 1973 the new company, R K SWAMY Advertising Associates was registered.

Swamy Advertising Associates had a real good kickstart from the beginning. Our campaign for MICO spark plugs "All it needs is a kick" was won in competition with HTA. For Swamy, there was no looking back. At the age of 51, he was in full form, leading us from one victory to another. Billings were on the

increase and so also was the list of clients.

Swamy was the first one to see the advertising potential in public sector industries. He pioneered the idea of image building campaigns and helped change their negative image in the public mind. A series of corporate campaigns for BHEL, Heavy Engineering Corporation, ONGC, MMTC, HPF and Mecon became well-known case studies and created new avenues for the advertising industry in general.

Yet another dream child of Swamy was to publish a Guide to Market Planning. Not many in our office were enthusiastic about his idea but Swamy never gave up. He knew it was a marathon task involving hours of data processing and compiling in a ready reference style he had in mind. In order not to disturb the routine office schedule, Swamy created a special cell.

Dr. Vasumathi, ex Lever's Research Director, was pulled in to compile the data. I was called to design the guide and Swamy headed the project. As I had worked closely with Swamy for over a quarter century, I guess he knew I could deliver the goods. After months of hard work R K SWAMY GUIDE TO MARKET PLANNING was published and launched at a special function organised for its release. Swamy honoured me for this effort. I can say with pride that his dream was fulfilled.

For all his success, Swamy's heart was deeply rooted in Sanskrit culture. There were some issues he could not discuss openly with colleagues. One was his desire to spend a small part of the company's profits on religious charities. He believed that the Lord was behind our success and he would like to spend some funds from our profits towards keeping our culture alive. I believed in his faith and always agreed. He used to go ahead with these expenses after checking with me.

There comes a time in everyone's life to part ways. The inevitable happened and the rest is history. ■

*An ode to
Sri R K Swamy
in 108 lines*



V S CHAKRAPANI
Director, R K SWAMY BHAO

To begin Krishnaswamy's life story of
eighty years,

With the beginning of his life, as done by
Charles Dickens,

While commencing the novel of David
Copperfield,

Swamy was not born with a silver spoon in
his mouth in 1922,

It was not a rags to riches story either,

He was born very near the pilgrimage
town of Kumbakonam,

In the centre of the rice bowl of the
famous Tanjore District,

Where Srinivasa Ramanujan studied and
evolved his concepts,

In theory of numbers written before three
score years and ten,

Now only getting unravelled step by step
with difficulty,

Also nearby where another Srinivasa
(Sastry) made a mark in history,

By teaching English lessons to Englishmen
with clarity and diction,

Also known as the silver tongued orator,
speaking extempore with aplomb,

Where the legendary College Professor by
name K S Patrachari,

Taught Geometry without looking back at
the figures drawn on the black board,

With a streak voice described by his
students as Geometrical Poetry Class,

In that glorious place Swamy spent his
childhood years till seven,

Whereafter he and his family moved to
Bombay to improve their earnings,

And where Swamy learnt Gujarati which
secured his first job,

Where his elders taught him Ithihasa and
Nalayiram at the age of ten,

Where he deserted his classmates once in
three months to gain double promotions

Because his teachers found his hunger for
knowledge like Bhagaswaran

He served as a substitute at the age of
seventeen for his brother to move out,

At the age of eighteen, he started his

advertising job as a translator in JWT,

Whereafter he translated his jet action
with excitement and wonder,

Moving among the metros with ease,
finally settling at Madras,

Which cornered him at one place for
nearly fifty years for reasons more
than one,

During which time he, though not a
Research Executive,

Prepared a masterly report on Tobacco,
cigarettes etc.

Though not a smoker or user of any
tobacco product,

Unlike Adhi Sankara, to answer question
tabled by

Lady Bharati on Grahasthashramam,
married in disguise,

And had an experience and won the
debate with ease.

This Tobacco Report was the first
milestone in his official career,

Which showed the world Swamy could
complete successfully,

A difficult task in time by seeking for
knowledge from everywhere,

With a view to ensure what was assigned
was well executed.

This singular objective became the
forerunner for his future endeavours,

He faced squarely all industry related
issues likewise,

Volunteering work for his Guru, Ahobila
Math Jeer, in any form, at any age,

Or performing temple renovation work of
any type, including improvement,

Whether at Ahobilam, the Lord's
residence or at Kumbakonam, his birthplace.

He extended his lengthy hands for support,
financial and physical

Nor did he forget the less blessed people
around him

For help small or big, cash or kind, service
or job,

All requests be it from old or young were
readily complied with,

While at Madras, Swamy conquered
Everest and took the difficult route,

With ease by adding on clients, each time
excelling in his presentation,

Whether it is Pond's, TI Cycles, TVS,
Binny's or MICO,

Swamy waved his magic wand and
assimilated them into his fold.

Finding he has almost covered all the
private entities,

To boost their products' sale when he did
advertise in a telling way,

What next was his question since Swamy
achieved his goal partially,

His was the highest profit making centre
in JWT India, every one agreed,

But Bombay continued to rule as the
biggest billing centre.

He therefore decided to tap the public
sector giants of those days;

It was easier said than done, felt Swamy
while brooding,

Came a flash in his mind why not use
advertising as communication

To the Government and its top officers,
the general public and public sector staff.

Yes, he hit the bull's eye firmly
and squarely,

No public sector chief disagreed with
his approach,

But who will bell the cat first was the
usual tricky question,

Boldness enabled boldness and so BHEL
became the first one,

Its service to the nation was not known
nor well understood,

Tit bits of bad news depicted BHEL in a
dim light,

Employees were not motivated that they
are serving a national cause,

But came the ad highlighting BHEL's supply
of power to the people,

When Ennore, Kothagudem and Bhatinda,
Power Stations were commissioned,

It electrified the whole of India, everybody
including the Government.

When things were moving in JWT in a
planned and phased manner,

When Swamy was sent to attend a course
on Advanced Programme abroad,

On his return, all hoped Swamy would be
given a lift to head HTA (India).

But the bolt came from the blue that the
post be filled by a rank outsider,

Who was a good Commercial Manager but
not handled advertising at all,

Swamy was deeply hurt and registered his
protest by resigning,

But opened his own company with a group
of his friends,

Who specialised in creative work, copying,
account servicing etc.

In no time, the Company shed the word
'new' and joined the big ten,

Within five years from the opening date of
2nd April 1973,

Its billings exceeded the ten crore mark, a
record performance indeed,

Its logo, the bird 'Hamsa' was developed
by Bilimoria,

Much to the delight of Swamy who
regarded this as an auspicious sign,

Swamy, therefore, never looked back and
made his company a model,

To be emulated by others for its leadership,
clarity, teamwork and honesty

He associated himself with the relevant
professional bodies,

In due course and by active participation
elected as their Chairman,

He organised conferences, convention and
seminars in plenty.

On each occasion he did not fail to make
a remarkable lecture,

In fact, to hear his meaningful speech,
delegates came from near and far,

His speech in 1994 about 'A Golden Era
Ahead for Advertising' was indeed gold,

At the age of 70, he researched on India's
Trade & Commerce on his own,

And published an 82 page book 'India
How to Succeed without tears' with a

telling effect,

On economists and politicians alike; on
certain issues, it reflects the current position!

Girls' education was another work he
never hesitated to participate,

He was associated with it for more than
thirty five years,

He built Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya which
turned out bright students year after year,

The magazine 'Sri Nrisimhapriya' issued
by Sri Ahobila Math was another work,

He carried on his broad shoulders for
thirty-five years and more.

'Oppiliappan Koil', a sacred place of
pilgrimage near Kumbakonam,

Was always near to his heart for him to
visit monthly once,

He did not forget his family either in his
busy days, both official and otherwise,

He ensured all his six children get
graduate education and get married,

And every one of them was good in his or
her studies.

Behind the successful Swamy, was his
competent wife who managed,

The home efficiently, though guests and
relatives poured in plenty daily.

His sons became professionals in no time,
to enable him,

To boldly hand over the four institutions,
around 1995, much time ahead,

And his sons proved his action right;
Swamy was always right till the end. ■

Enormous contributions to Rotary



S. L. CHITALE
A renowned architect and Rotarian

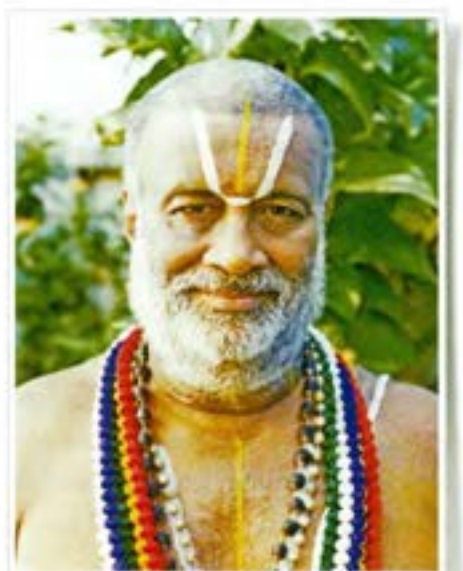
My acquaintance with Mr R K Swamy goes back to as early as 1965 when he was a Rotarian of the Rotary Club of Madras. Subsequently my contact with him was intensified when I was President of the Rotary Club of Madras in 1982-83 and later on when we became his architects. It is then that our contact became frequent and we developed enormous admiration and friendship. We worked together on so many projects in Rotary and his contributions to Rotary were enormous. To mention but one, he was instrumental in conducting the "Business Relations Conference" held at Abbotsbury, Chennai, one of the finest conferences I have seen. He belonged to a rare species of human being and was endowed with a perfect combination of a cultured, good hearted gentleman.

He played a crucial role in the field of advertising and was a doyen in his field until his death. His contributions were many and he was a recipient of various awards.

Both our families have become very close over the years and honestly, I can't find words to express our relationship.

He was always helpful. He was a perfect example of a cultured, good-hearted gentleman. In short he belonged to a rare species of human being. ■

My elder brother



V N GOPALA DESIKACHARIAR

(Retd. Chief Commercial Manager, Railways & Retd. Member, Railway Claims Tribunal)

Intimate bonds of love and affection between my family and Sri R K Swamy's have spanned nearly a century and more. Both the families belong to Oppiliappan Koil, a famous pilgrim centre, one of the 108 Vaishnavite divya desas, situated near Kumbakonam. The magnificent deity there, Lord Srinivasa, is the family deity of thousands. My father and acharya, Sriramadesikachariar Swamy told us that Swamy's mother used to play in our house as a small girl. She received the affection and love of all the elders. My father and Swamy's mother were about the same age and playmates in childhood, teasing and joking with each other. Swamy's mother brought him up with love and care and at the same time enforced strict discipline. His mother's teachings and guidance made Swamy the great achiever he was in later years. Years later, Father used to cite Swamy as an example for industry.

Father always called him by his full name, Krishnaswamy. As both of us belonged to the Bharadvaja Gotram, my father used to regard Swamy as his elder son. Swamy considered it a privilege, and sought my father's advice every now and then, not only on religious matters but also personal matters.

When he was chosen to start J Walter Thompson's first office in the South at Madras in 1955, at the young age of 33, in recognition of his meritorious work, Father's joy knew no bounds. He blessed him to reach greater heights. The same was the case when Swamy left Hindustan Thompson Associates Limited and set up R K SWAMY Advertising Associates. I was present on some of these occasions when Swamy met Father and had long discussions on the eve of taking crucial decisions.

Swamy regarded Father as his godfather and strictly went by his advice on all religious and spiritual matters. He took charge of the journal Sri Nrisimhapriya in 1965 and decided to bring it out in a new format, to enlarge its readership, keen that the common



Lord Oppiliappan, the ishta devata of R K Swamy's family.

man should be able to read, understand and appreciate the magazine. The new and enlarged edition of Sri Nrisimhapriya received a spontaneous welcome from the Sri Vaishnavite public and the readership rose to several thousands.

Swamy's family deity being Lord Oppiliappan, he was already rendering several services to the temple and the Lord. But he wanted to undertake some permanent service that would continue year after year. After due deliberations, Father advised Swamy to undertake the full burden of conducting the Pavitrotsavam for the Lord every year in the month of Avani for five days, culminating on Avani Sravanam. RKS took Father's words as gospel and commenced financing the Pavitrotsavam at Oppiliappan Koil from 1974 onwards. Swamy requested that while he would fund the festival, it should be organised and conducted under the personal supervision of Father, who agreed gladly. For as long as Father was alive, i.e., till 1981, he personally supervised the conduct of the festival.

Afterwards, that burden fell on Swamy, who would supervise the festival. The function is being continued even today, uninterruptedly for nearly three decades. It is now organised by Swamy's brother Narayanan and son Srinivasan K Swamy.

Every year Father religiously presented the financial accounts of the festival, along with the balance amount, if any. Swamy would refuse to look at the accounts and the balance amount. Father would methodically file the accounts and carry forward the balance amount, if any to the next year.

I vividly remember the year 1981 when Swamy underwent by-pass surgery and was resting at Chennai. Very worried, Father arrived in Chennai from Oppiliappan Koil and I took him to Swamy's residence. Soon, both were in profuse tears - tears of concern and relief. Deeply concerned about Swamy's health, Father pointed out that he was exerting himself unduly, leading to his heart problem. Swamy on his part was concerned that Father had taken the trouble of travelling all the way from Oppiliappan Koil to meet him. If he had known earlier of Father's proposed visit, he would have vehemently opposed it. Father replied that that was the very reason why he had asked me not to divulge his travel plans.

Soon afterwards, in the same year, my father passed away, succumbing to a heart problem, the same heart problem that had led to Swamy's by-pass surgery.

I cannot forget Swamy's deep shock and sorrow on the passing away of Father. He said, "He called me his elder son and once again I have lost my father".

Till then, I had been an almost passive observer whenever Swamy came to meet my father. Only after 1981 did my association with Swamy become personal and intimate, with him regarding me as his younger brother. For about eight years during the 1980s, I was stationed in Chennai and this led to much more frequent interactions between us. We



Lord Mariappan with His Consort at Oppiliappan Koil. Swamy built this shrine and performed its sampreshnam.

used to spend an hour or so at my residence, discussing a wide range of topics.

Swamy was a regular visitor to Oppiliappan Koil. He never missed worshipping the Lord there on the monthly sravanam day, the birth star of the deity, the same as that of Lord Srinivasa at Tirumala. Swamy mostly travelled by car, and if sravanam happened to fall on a Saturday or Sunday, I would have the good fortune of accompanying him both ways. He would say: "The journey will last about six hours each way and during this uninterrupted period, I can clear many of my doubts and learn many things from you on religious and spiritual matters."

Father was contributing regularly to Sri Nrisimhapriya on the lives and teachings of the Azhvars. Death snatched him away before he could start writing on the most important of them, Nammazhvar. Swamy then forced me to write in Sri Nrisimhapriya on Nammazhvar and Tiruvaimozhi. This was in 1983. I had my own fears, doubts and reservations, but Swamy encouraged me. My humble contribution to Sri Nrisimhapriya titled "Tiruvaimozhi Amudam" still continues uninterrupted.

Swamy wanted to explore ways and means of educating young Vaishnavites in the greatness and richness of Vaishnavism, its acharyas and azhvars. With this object, he convened in the mid 80s a mini-conference of

Vaishnavite scholars at Desika Bhavanam, Mylapore. The discussions lasted nearly four hours and Swamy, as usual, noted down in his diary the decisions arrived at, for follow-up action.

In my speech at the meet, I mentioned the dearth of books in simple and user-friendly language on our religion and philosophy. It would be worthwhile, I added, to bring out religious books in simple English, since our youth are more at home in English than Tamil. Those present spontaneously endorsed my suggestion, and Swamy, in his characteristic way, said: "You are right. You are fully competent and equipped. So you write a simple book in English on Vaishnavism".

Thus, my speech boomeranged on me!! And that is how my book "A Dialogue on Hinduism" was born, with Swamy a source of inspiration and encouragement in all possible ways including the provision of secretarial assistance.

When Swamy and S V S Raghavan decided to set up Sri Visishtadvaita Research Centre, I was fortunate in participating in many of their discussions and put forth my suggestions. "A Dialogue on Hinduism" was brought out as the very first publication by SVRC and the credit for this goes entirely to Swamy.

He was very happy with the excellent response to the book in India and abroad and asked me to take up giving the meaning and summary of the Bhagavad Gita in simple English, as interpreted by our Acharyas Ramanuja and Desika. Accordingly I wrote this book in two volumes and this again was published by SVRC. Swamy again enthused me to take up this work as a public cause and he and S V S Raghavan supported me in this noble venture.

Swamy and Raghavan invited me to write "A Dialogue on Hinduism" in Tamil also, for serial publication in Sri Nrisimhapriya. I did so in the 90s and it was later published in book form as "Vainavam: Oor Urayadal",

Swamy wanted to explore ways and means of educating young Vaishnavites in the greatness and richness of Vaishnavism, its acharyas and azhvars.

again by SVRC.

During the 80s when I was stationed in Chennai, Swamy helped me in personal matters too. The marriages of two of my daughters were settled by matching of horoscopes by the astrologer to whom Swamy personally took me.

The shrine of Lord Maniappan in our temple at Oppiliappan Koil was in a dilapidated condition for a long time, and people were eager to have it renovated but it remained a dream. When Father casually mentioned this to Swamy, he readily undertook to bear the entire cost of constructing a new shrine. Thanks to his great efforts, personal, material and financial, the shrine was constructed in a short span of time. Swamy spent several lakhs of rupees on the project, with the utmost sense of humility. Maniappan Sannidhi, which now appears so beautiful and divine, is worshipped by hundreds and thousands of people every day. Several events, which can even be called miracles, happened during the construction of the shrine and more particularly during the samprokshanam period. Swamy duly recorded them to show his intimate friends. Swamy also wanted to do several improvements in the functioning of the temple and took great pains in trying to set right several irregularities. His efforts in this direction did not succeed in many cases, due to inaction, apathy and opposition from vested interests.

Whenever he referred manuscripts for publication by SVRC, he left the decision

entirely to me and did not want to know the reasons for my decisions, regardless of the author concerned. When in the 90s, Swamy wanted me to take up the post of principal of the Madurantakam College, and I refused to leave my Lord at Oppiliappan Koil, Swamy was angry with me.

Swamy's efforts in the renovation of the Sarangapani Swamy temple at Kumbakonam are well known. With great perseverance, he overcame several hurdles, and helped by his brother Narayanan successfully completed the renovation and samprokshanam, funding the project to the tune of a crore of rupees.

I vividly remember his last visit here. One morning he came to our house and even while climbing a couple of steps into the house, he was gasping. I rushed out to help him and affectionately scolded him, "Why are you taking this trouble of coming over here in your poor health? You could have sent word to me from the temple, and I would have rushed to see you". Swamy replied, "You are an acharya to thousands of sishyas and I too want to do kalakshepam under you. So it is my duty to come and pay my respects to you at your house. How can I dare to send word for you to come and see me?" We remained talking for about an hour or so. Within a few days I heard the tragic news that Swamy had passed away, leaving me dazed and stunned. ■

Swamy also wanted to do several improvements in the functioning of the temple and took great pains in trying to set right several irregularities.

Pitamahar



S KUMAAR
Sri Sukt Ashramam

Pitamahar is a title conferred on Sri R K Swamy by Sri Suka Brahma Maharishi in recognition of his devotion to Brahma Rishi and the Ashramam for nearly 50 years.

In recognition of his invincible faith and total surrender, Sri Brahma Rishi ordered us to install his photograph in the sanctum facing Sri Brahma Rishi's icon. With difficulty we collected his photo from his younger brother R Narayanan on whom the Brahma Rishi had conferred the title of 'Tiruppani Chittar'. Sri Brahma Rishi had also spelt out that aarti should be shown to RKS's portrait and that after the 'maha aarti to Sri Brahma Rishi, the tulsi leaves sprinkled over the head of the portrait,' as RKS used to sprinkle the tulsi leaves reverentially over his head and then swallow the rest of the tulsi offered to him as the 'prasadam' of Sri Brahma Rishi.

Here are excerpts from Sri Brahma Rishi's appreciation of his ardent devotee:

Sri Swamy lived and practised the life of a karmayogi. He approached and analysed all problems, be it business, family matters, religious or ecclesiastical matters, with pragmatism and arrived at an unimpeachable decision. He had an uncanny knack of arriving at the right solution, by systematic analysis. He practised this in his profession and in his personal life and put it to the extreme test in his spiritual pursuits.

As a mortal, he would sometimes get angry but call up the person concerned and have a cool discussion soon after the heat of the moment. His kindness and understanding made him a successful professional. Those in the field of advertising will always remember the way he brought out the best in a person.

He had an uncanny knack of arriving at the right solution, by systematic analysis.

RKS was sincere in all he said and did and sure enough success followed without any doubt. He was nominated the Chairman of the renovation committee of Lord Sarangapani Swamy temple at Kumbakonam, a job he took up ardently and in all seriousness. There were so many obstacles and hardships that a lesser man would have just vanished from the scene. But not RKS. At one stage, I asked him to let me handle the matter, set a squad to put things in order so that the renovation work could run on smooth lines. He would have nothing of this, because amongst other things, Sri Brahma Rishi had said. "If you are to be successful, you should maintain a cool countenance and not lose your temper."

He moved around like a young man and met the people concerned to remove the obstacles in the tiruppani work. He also gave me an opportunity to be a part of it. In the renovation, the finishing work of the Rajagopuram, which had been languishing, was taken up and completed by the ashramam, as instructed by Sri Brahma Rishi. RKS showed total commitment not only in his spiritual pursuits, but also in his profession. Despite hurdles and obstacles, he succeeded only because of his sincere hard work which made him climb the ladder of greatness. He was recognised as a 'Jambhavan' or colossus in his field.

He was a powerhouse of knowledge. Wisdom was second nature to him. As RKS used to put it in his inimitable style, "While knowledge can be transferred, wisdom cannot."

He was very methodical and had a fetish for accuracy. In the presence of RKS, you had to be accurate and authentic. He practised accuracy in just about anything he touched, be it the puranas, history, sastras, mimamsa.

I once accompanied an art director who took some designs to RKS for his approval. When the designs were placed on the table of RKS, he threw them out almost immediately.

While knowledge can be transferred, wisdom cannot.

The art director was stunned and asked for the reason for such an outright rejection. RKS merely said, 'Sharpness and accuracy are lacking.' Frankly, to a lesser person, these defects would not have been visible. After about 15 to 20 minutes, we both went to his cabin and sought clarification for his action. 'How did you find the mistake? We want to know so that we do not repeat it,' we said. He replied that it was very simple. 'Everyday I sit here, I am trained to spot the mistakes. Only after satisfying myself that there are no wrong thing, I start looking for the right things.' To affirm this, he narrated a story:

'Lord Krishna once asked Dharmaputra if there was any bad man in this world. Dharmaputra went around looking, returned and reported that there were no bad men. The next time around, Lord Krishna asked Duryodhana the same question. Proud as he was, Duryodhana went around and reported that there was no wise or good man around. So, everything seems to you the way you view it. In our body too, there is a Duryodhana and there is a Dharmaputra, and so in Karma-Yoga as explained by Lord Krishna.'

In recognition of his magnanimity, the ashramam instituted the 'R K Swamy Scholar Award'. When after his death, discussions were on for changing the title to 'R K Swamy Memorial Award', Sri Suka Brahma Maharishi, turned down the suggestion saying that RKS was very much alive.

RKS brought up an exalted family. Each and every member bears the stamp of the values of RKS and the things that made him great. Behind every successful man there is a great woman. Nothing can be truer to this adage than the companionship of Mrs Radha K Swamy over 55 years of exemplary married life. ■

A fearless friend



S. GURUMURTHY
Business and Corporate Consultant & Columnist

When we recall someone who had a deep emotional impact on us, we naturally turn personal and even sentimental. I am no exception to this general weakness when I recall my association with R K Swamy. The other dimension of my association was ideological, almost a kind of spiritual partnership. So the best way I can recall him is as an ideal friend, and as an ideological peer. As a friend he shared my most difficult times. As ideological companions we shared common beliefs about this ancient nation and its core identity defined by Maharishi Aurobindo, 'Sanatana Dharma'.

The confluence of the twin dimensions completed our relation. Swamy was many years older than I and yet he treated me as a friend - just like Ramnath Goenka who chose to call me friend.

The moment I think of Swamy my mind flashes back to March 13, 1987. That was the day the CBI arrested me at midnight. That morning they had raided me, the second time in three months. The first occasion was in December 1986. As the day advanced on March 13, it was clear that the CBI was moving towards arresting me. Swamy, a great believer in astrology and 'Nadi Sastra', had told me almost a month earlier that I had dangerous times ahead and that even my life could be at risk. As the staunchest believer in the Divine and in destiny, a quality I endeavoured to share with him, Swamy had arranged a puja of 'Suka Bhagwan' in the 'Nadi' form in his home the next day, March 14. Swamy's trust in 'Sukar Nadi' was almost blind in the eyes of the uninitiated.

But the CBI moved ahead of Swamy. It arrested me on the midnight of March 13/14 ahead of the puja in Swamy's house. With my arrest my entire family was shattered, especially my old mother and my wife. As the news of my arrest by the CBI spread, most of my friends and relatives stopped coming to my house. Despite the arrest and the panic that had set in, Swamy insisted that the puja

It called for guts, which he had in plenty, and high principles, which he had imbibed deeply.

should go on. For him the puja was the remedy. All the more as what he had predicted, the great danger ahead for me, had come true. So the puja had become even critical. This was the believer in Swamy. The uninitiated cannot understand this dimension of a believer, which is a product of accumulated experience of several thousand years. Undeterred by the turn of events, Swamy sent his daughter-in-law to my house and fetched my wife to the puja. If anything restored some confidence in my wife it was the puja at Swamy's house. My wife recalls that day even now with moist eyes. Left high and dry by many friends and relatives, she found solace in the Swamy family's spiritual care. The CBI then took me to Delhi. Swamy sent his daughter-in-law along with my wife to Delhi.

The new generation would not know why Swamy should stand by a 'criminal' like me, pursued by the CBI. So some references to me become unavoidable here. The whole country knew then that I was arrested for the crime of exposing, through some unprecedented investigative articles in the Indian Express, corruption in the government. My sin was that I had provided proof of it from the secret files of the government itself. So the corrupt decided to book me under the official secrets law for revealing the 'secrets' - read corruption - of the government. But they camouflaged my arrest by a forged letter planted on the government. The government game was soon exposed. Within a week of my arrest the forgery by the conspirators I had targeted for corruption in my columns in the Indian Express was proved. I was set free by the court on March 23, after 10 days of

detention. But that was not the end, but the beginning, of the ordeal. The Indian Express expose on bigger scandals, Bofors, HDW Submarine and other tainted deals turned it into an all out war between the newspaper and the Rajiv Gandhi government.

But throughout the excruciating period, just a handful stood by me. Swamy held my hand like a father would hold a son's. He used to spend days advising me, guiding me and encouraging me to carry on the battle. The Rajiv Gandhi government was the most popular government since independence, commanding a four-fifths majority in Parliament. Any one who was my friend was targeted, as it happens in a war. Yet Swamy would not bother. He also ran a business, which, in those days, was more dependent on the government than businesses are today. In those days any business could be crushed by the government by a stroke of the pen. But Swamy was with me, standing by me, inviting to be targeted along with me. It called for guts, which he had in plenty, and high principles, which he had imbibed deeply. This formed the foundation for our mutual admiration, with me looking up to him repeatedly as a tall man with no less than the tallest of ideas driving him in life, business or personal.

I can never forget those great days, which discovered for me Swamy as my great guide and benefactor, and as an unfailing friend. It is hard times that identify great men to associate with. That was what my ordeal of the late 1980s did to help me discover the greatness of a Swamy standing with me. Whenever I used to feel pained or depressed under the sheer weight of the tensions inherent in a great war, he used to motivate me and stimulate me. He was tremendously articulate. But his articulation was not a professionally set ornament of words. His advice and counsel were backed by deep inner experience, what in our tradition is known as 'tapasya'. Only evolved minds, shaped by hard

But for him modern never meant western.

and painful experiences, can find appropriate words to express the accumulated experiences and mould another for a task like war. Many times I had felt that his motivation of me was like a preceptor guiding a disciple.

If he was a great friend, he was equally a great patriot. A nationalist, he believed in the Hindu core of India, as I did. He was concerned about the 'pseudo-secular' distortions, which eroded the soul of India as a Hindu nation. He was a rare great combination of being utterly traditional with an unbelievable capacity to handle the modern. Here he was very much like Ramnath Goenka, another great man I had had the opportunity to associate with intimately. Many who saw Swamy externally found him medieval in his traditions yet modern in outlook. But for him modern never meant western and he synthesised the traditional and the modern, defining the modern as merely a change superimposed on the continuity called tradition.

He was perhaps the most noted personality of the Indian advertising profession, which was ever at the expanding frontiers of modernity. Yet he was religious in the way the deeply religious would have been a thousand years before. His matchless intellectual skills built in him the capacity to harmonise his modern business with ease and without undermining or damaging his belief in his traditions. He understood the longings of a highly religious yet equally highly catholic Hindu society deeply impacted by a pseudo 'secular' polity. He always used to lament that 'Sanatana Dharma' which came under attack a thousand years ago, was still under attack with the secular government joining to attack it, instead of protecting it. He felt that if any faith deserved state protection against organised and aggressive faiths it was the

commonwealth of Hindu faiths, which were non-conflicting and unorganised, even un-organisable. In fact it was the common concern for protection of the ancient faiths of India that drew me nearer to him and him nearer to me continuously. We shared an intense love of our motherland and all that this ancient nation stood for. He used to tell me that he was the potential energy and I was its kinetic form.

Yes, Swamy was a tall man, indeed a very tall man. When tall men disappear the society gets dwarfed unless it can find replacement through equally tall men. The society of today which is a product of the market and of money cannot easily produce men like Swamy who are products of concepts taller than money and greater than business. Men like him are shaped by high and unpolluted intellect, and guided and disciplined by high moral values rooted in eternally valid traditions.

Swamy followed the formula of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who said, 'Apply oil in your hands before you touch the jack fruit' and handled the world with an equal sense of detachment and, therefore, with ease.

It is adherence to such ideals deep rooted in the eternal values in a changing society that enabled Swamy to handle the modern world with astounding success. His success in the modern world did not violate the ideological roots of the tradition he drew his inspiration from. His life, both on the material plane and on the spiritual, is a practical guide for those who set out to conquer the world for this ancient nation in this era of globalisation. The greatest challenge confronting India in this godless materialistic global regime is how to preserve Sanatana Dharma and yet succeed materially at the global level. This is where Swamy was a living example, an example that illustrated a success formula, for the life here and the life beyond. ■

A tall man



AHMED IBRAHIM

Former Chairman and Managing Director, Everest Advertising Private Limited, Past President, Advertising Agencies Association of India, Former Chairman, Audit Bureau of Circulation

R K was a tall man. He was tall in more ways than one - tall on principles, tall on values, tall on professionalism.

His stature made itself felt in all fields of endeavour and in everything he touched.

I had the privilege of knowing him very closely as a colleague in professional bodies like the Advertising Agencies Association of India, the Indian Society of Advertisers, the Audit Bureau of Circulation and many others. He shot straight from the hip, appeared uncompromising to most, when it came to standing by what he believed to be right. R K was never two-faced and abhorred double talk and hypocrisy, which is why he would never have made a good politician.

A deeply religious man, he once said to me, "You must have been a true Brahmin in your previous birth, which is why we get along so famously."

Very few knew RK's infectious laughter and wry sense of humour. He had both in abundance.

Here was truly a tall man very few could measure up to in the advertising world. ■

He made 'BHEL' a household name



DR V KRISHNAMURTHY
Chairman, National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council, Member, National Advisory Council, Member, Prime Minister's Council on Trade and Industry, Former Chairman, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Maruti (Udyog) Limited, and Steel Authority of India Limited, Government of India conferred Padmashri, Padmabhushan and Padmavibhushan Awards on him

My first major assignment in the management of public enterprises was when I became the General Manager of BHEL Plant at Trichy in 1968.

BHEL is a complex organization, and everything we did at that time was new, with no precedent to go by. I had a very difficult assignment in setting the unit at Trichy into operations. It was a unique and new venture in India. We were dealing with large engineered products produced for the first time in the country. Successful operation of the plant was vital to the economic development of the country.

The image of the public enterprises in general was not good at that point of time. I had the responsibility to make BHEL a success and keep the morale of the employees high. This would be possible if I kept the public informed of its importance and the good work done by our young and bright engineers and professionals; also what their efforts meant for the common good of the country.

During those years, public enterprises did not believe in the need for communicating with the public through the media. The few ads issued were of a routine nature, either for recruitment for jobs or for inviting tenders for materials. We in BHEL Trichy felt the need to communicate with the public through media campaigns, but we didn't have a clue as to how to achieve this.

It was at this stage my brother Vaichyanathan introduced me to Mr R K Swamy of J Walter Thompson working at Madras. On my invitation, Mr Swamy spent a few days at BHEL plant, Trichy and talked to people at all levels. He made a presentation at the end of his visit. I was amazed at his understanding of the problems, his analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and his vision to build the image of BHEL.

Mr Swamy was interacting with a public enterprise for the first time. It was also the first time a public sector unit was planning a media campaign. Yet we came to a perfect

understanding on the essentials of the campaign, which, in the main, would highlight the benefits arising out of the activities of BHEL. We avoided anything that could be regarded as personal glorification.

We ran this campaign with outstanding success. It set a new trend in advertising, as it was the first time a public sector undertaking chose to communicate directly with the public. The image of BHEL reached greater heights. Employee morale improved tremendously. The campaign helped every employee of BHEL feel proud.

It would be worthwhile for all serious students of media communication to go through these ads, their meaningful copy and catchy slogans.

The campaign designed by R K Swamy was so unique it caught the imagination of all sections of society. The greatest tribute to Mr Swamy was that many other corporates in the public and private sectors followed the example of BHEL.

This success story brought in tremendous jealousy. The rest of the ad community became apprehensive of R K Swamy's success. They campaigned that JWT was a foreign company and that public sector enterprises should not deal with such companies. They thought that they could eliminate Mr Swamy from making inroads into other public sector enterprises.

Then R K Swamy resigned from JWT and started his own outfit. This was done with my knowledge and promise of support. Here he was assisted by a select band of competent professionals. This organization was adopted by us. It developed all our subsequent campaigns for BHEL.

By itself BHEL is a great organization; but its greatness was not fully appreciated by the public. R K Swamy helped us in projecting the organization in the right light. BHEL became thus a role model and became the envy of others.

By far the most valuable contribution

made by R K Swamy for the public sector in general and BHEL in particular was the presentation he helped us to make before Mr Robert McNamara, the President of the World Bank, in 1976. He showcased BHEL and India so well that it left a deep impression on the President of the World Bank, on India's ability to manage complex problems. We received public appreciation from Mr Robert McNamara. BHEL became a preferred organization in the World Bank. BHEL's stature within the Government rose to great heights. A film made for BHEL by Mr R K Swamy won the President's Golden Peacock Award.

Mr Swamy was generous in acknowledging the support given to him by BHEL. But in my view R K Swamy's contribution in building the image of BHEL far outweighed what we could do for him. For my part I will always cherish my association with Mr R K Swamy and the help given by him to BHEL during its most difficult period.

I followed with great interest the steady progress made by Mr R K Swamy and his team over the years. He was able to establish linkages with international agencies and form a successful organization in R K SWAMY BBDO. I have great admiration for his competence, professional ethics and innovative communication technique. He was a great friend to many of us and he will continue to shine as a role model for the younger generation.

I am extremely happy that the younger members of his family and staff are maintaining the high traditions, ethical values and standards set by this legend. ■

R K Swamy's contribution in building the image of BHEL far outweighed what we could do for him.

A natural elder brother



K KURIEN
Chairman
Radeus Advertising Private Limited
Past President, Advertising Agencies Association of India

The year was 1967. The place was Yacht Club in Bombay. Two men were in deep conversation, R K Swamy and I. Then, his voice softer than usual, Swamy started chanting the kurals of Tiruvalluvar. After each of these famous couplets composed in Tamil hundreds of years ago, Swamy would explain the meaning to me in English.

I listened, with rapt attention. The subject we were discussing was religion, specifically the concept of God. Tiruvalluvar's romanticised version of man's relationship with God and the universal bond of love came through clearly. The lilt of Tiruvalluvar's lines was spellbinding.

It set me thinking. In India, lofty and complex ideas had survived from one generation to another via the oral tradition. Verse which could be sung or chanted was an excellent aid to memory. It created impact, as when Swamy sang to me, and assisted understanding. Here form was almost as important as content. It was no accident that Tiruvalluvar's kurals, teaching moral, social or psychological truths, were chanted and memorised for generations.

I put these thoughts to the copywriter who was helping me with the Tamil text for Burnol ads. The result was a Tamil ad which differed substantially from the campaign in English. The response from the sales force was most enthusiastic. It came to be known as the "Burnol kural ad".

I narrate this episode to illustrate how conversations with Swamy yielded insights or knowledge which helped me in my professional life.

In the Seventies, when I joined the Managing Committee of Advertising Agencies Association of India, of which he was a long-standing member, I had such conversations more often.

Right at the start of my acquaintance with him I sensed that he had an "elder-brother attitude" towards me. That is to say he had taken me under his wing and would be

protecting me from wrong ideas and guiding me to right knowledge and right values. (Did his Walter Thompson background have something to do with this?) I recall that T. Parameswar who started his ad career in Thompson and became Managing Director of Reader's Digest in later years, and Subhas Ghosal, Chief Executive of Thompson in his last years, also had the same elder-brother attitude. Or was it because he was a six-footer and saw all shorter human beings as younger siblings who needed guidance and instruction? I rule out the latter explanation because neither Param nor Subhas was tall.

I for one slid easily into the younger-brother frame of mind from the beginning. This was easy for me, as the shortest of my father's five sons. Also, my eldest brother Cherian, one of Air India's station managers and an acquaintance of Swamy's, was a six-

Such matters as donations were not to be publicised.

footer. Both of them were voracious readers too. I once asked Swamy how he managed to acquire such a vast store of knowledge on a variety of subjects. He told me that JWT had once posted him to Calcutta where he found himself with a lot of spare time. He worked out a reading programme for himself, devoted a few hours every day to reading books and periodicals at the National Library there and made notes. These notes, if preserved, must have formed a miniature reference library. He was no doubt a systematic reader, like his friend M.V. Kamath (well-known author and columnist) who told me recently that he had 40 large boxes of clippings alone.

The "younger brother" had no qualms about asking for help when needed. Once I was in Chennai for three days, as a speaker at the annual convention of Parle bottlers.

I spoke with the aid of slides, projected from a carousel. Another invitee, scheduled to make a speech on the third day, asked whether I would help him to produce a few slides to illustrate his ideas. I did not know any vendors in Chennai and told him so. But he seemed so keen I did not want to disappoint him. If Swamy was in town, I knew there would be no problem. Luckily for me he was, and he agreed to produce the slides for me despite the very short notice. Swamy never sent me the vendor's bill for payment. When I reminded him about it he told me he would not be doing so, because he was looking forward to extracting a much more expensive quid pro quo from me!

I also recall the time when I was convalescing after a heart attack. Swamy had just returned after open-heart surgery in Chicago and was back to his vigorous self. Doctors had recommended open-heart surgery then not available in India for me too. I had refused to go. Swamy told me the operation had improved the quality of life for him, why didn't I go? I replied jokingly that if I had three lakh rupees (the then cost) I would rather die and leave the money to my wife and son. He was not amused. He told me that if money was a problem, it could be arranged. I knew he would do so too. I was deeply touched.

His commitment to established religion came through to me via a photographic news item I was reading in a Malayalam newspaper about an ancient temple in Tiruchirapalli. As I glanced through the longish caption my eyes took in R K Swamy's name. My curiosity aroused, I read the caption carefully. It told me that this famous temple was fully restored to its old glory thanks to the efforts of a few individuals. R K Swamy was one of them. He had in fact financed the renovation of an entire floor.

The next time we met I complimented him on his endeavour. "How did you get this information?" he asked. He did not seem too

pleased. I told him about the photograph. "But this was to be kept confidential", he said. In his opinion such matters as donations were not to be publicised.

Then he told me that he was only a small cog in a large wheel of a movement in Tamil Nadu to restore the many temples that lay in rack and ruin, and re-start puja there. He and like-minded people believed that worship of God in temples helped to preserve and enhance the moral values of society. Puja had been revived in many restored temples, he told me.

Outwardly Swamy followed the manners of a business executive in a prosperous company in Bombay of the early post-Independence era. He attended business meetings invariably in suit and tie. But he seemed to me to be more of what I may call an eastern sophisticate. He did not adopt certain habits of a westernised society of that time, like drinking and smoking. His boss Edward J Fielden was known to have openly refused initially to promote Walter Saldanha to an Account Executive's position because he did not smoke or drink; apparently Fielden believed that such a man would find it difficult to liaise with the executives of Thompson's client companies of that period. Swamy obviously overcame such prejudices and under Fielden he flourished as the Chief of the Chennai branch of the agency.

Fielden's successors were Greg Bathon and John Gaynor. During their time Thompson's fortunes declined sharply. A crisis seemed to be brewing, and there were rumours that Gaynor also was quitting. He confirmed this to me one day and said his successor would be Morris Mathias of Hindustan Lever. My face must have registered surprise because he asked me whether I thought it was not a good choice. I was indeed surprised because both Subhas Ghosal and Swamy were capable managers. I learned later that Subhas, then Calcutta manager, had declined the offer. Swamy was not considered to have sufficient

western sophistication to fit into a group of country managers in a global company (Swamy himself told me this). It was a grave misjudgement. Swamy set up his own agency in 1973. It prospered. His agency became one of the top ten advertising agencies in the country. And as collaborator of BBDO, a top global agency, he occupied a position which was higher than that of any country manager in Thompson Worldwide.

What were the secrets of his success? First, I'd say, was his patience, his perseverance, his tenacity of purpose, his never-say-die attitude. He used to say that he saw a door where other people saw a wall. When I was once in competition with him, he wrested victory from me after I had won the battle, thanks to his tenacity. I was then working for Advertising and Sales Promotion Company. Our branch manager in Bangalore had informed me that there was a good chance of his office getting a spark plug advertising account, if I could help him with a good presentation. I took my team to Bangalore and made a presentation to the spark plug manufacturer. (Swamy was the main competitor to ASF). Before we left Bangalore we were told that our Bangalore office had been selected to handle the account. I warned the Bangalore manager, however, about Swamy's habit of never giving up.

Six months later I learned that there was a change of leadership at the manufacturer's office. And Swamy who had been continually knocking at his door managed to wrest the business from our Bangalore office.

His tenacity was in full flow when a team consisting of Swamy, Ahmed Ibrahim and I (representing Advertising Agencies Association of India) was discussing the

He wrested victory from me after I had won the battle, thanks to his tenacity.

revised terms for the accreditation of advertising agencies by Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society. The three of us would meet and formulate our stance on each clause, and our fallback position in the event of strong disagreement. Thanks to Swamy's steadfast advocacy of our position we seldom had to retreat to a fallback position. One of the major achievements of this negotiation was the acceptance by IENS (now INS) that it had an obligation to back up agencies if any client defaulted in payment of dues. As a result the Society would blackball the errant advertiser.

Swamy was a seeker of knowledge, an eternal student. And he moved in a circle of people who also valued knowledge, especially in the several non-governmental organisations in which he took an active part. This was another secret of his success.

Because of his knowledge orientation he was much in demand, when various kinds of memoranda had to be prepared. Advertising was continually under attack in a socialist set-up. "I consider all forms of advertising as evil", said Morarji Desai when he was the Central Finance Minister. I remember two

under the accreditation system. Swamy was in the forefront of the memoranda battle against such attempts. He also introduced several public sector tycoons to the benefits of advertising.

I was in Chennai a few weeks before he passed away, and I called on him at his hospital. He was his old ebullient self. "I am completely satisfied", he said several times while reviving old memories. This filled me with dismay. I immediately thought of Kailas Jain, chief of National Advertising who had expressed similar sentiments about his personal life. This was in Colombo. He, Roger Pereira and I were there as members of the AAAI Faculty for a seminar on marketing and advertising. "If I were to die tomorrow I wouldn't have any regrets," he said. And he died the next day of a heart attack outside the hall where the seminar was being held.

Did Swamy have a premonition of his death? Whether he had or not, I am sure of one thing. He had ample justification for satisfaction, his was a life well spent. ■

One of the major achievements of this negotiation was the acceptance by IENS (now INS) that it had an obligation to back up agencies if any client defaulted in payment of dues.

attempts to curb the 'evil' of advertising by taxing it (like we tax cigarettes and liquor); and one attempt before the Monopolies Commission to kill the 15% commission

A great and good man



B MADHAVAN

Secretary, National Boys' and Girls' Education Society and
Addl. General Manager, Southern Railway (Retd.)

I met Mr R K Swamy for the first time in 1987 as a member of the Managing Committee of the National Girls' Education Society (now National Boys' and Girls' Education Society) managing the Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School at the time. It was friendship at first sight, which grew closer till it became a permanent bond, he playing the role of a kind and considerate elder brother to me.

He was a very shrewd judge of men and was able to size up a person's worth after meeting him once or twice. His contribution to the cause of education is praiseworthy. He was generous to a fault both in his appreciation of any good work done and in helping needy persons.

He played a masterly role as President of the National (Boys' and) Girls' Education Society. In the Managing Committee meeting held in 1988, he made an announcement that he was making a donation of Rs.1.25 lakh to the Society to start a CBSE school in the Sudharma building constructed to mark the birth centenary of Sir P S Sivaswami Ayyar, as the quality of education had suffered badly since the school became a government-aided school, owing to the shortsighted policies imposed by the state government. A CBSE school run by the society without state government aid and interference could provide good education. The Managing Committee decided unanimously to start a CBSE school at once. The necessary State Government 'No Objection' certificate was obtained within a reasonable time. A Ganapati homam was performed and Mataji Chellammal, the then secretary of the society and a great educationist who had put the Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School on a sound footing distributed sweets to one and all.

Soon after the school started functioning admitting a few children in some classes, somebody poisoned the mind of Mataji who



Receiving a memento from Vathukul Narayanaswamy at the Annual Day celebrations of Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya, while N Ram, Editor-in-Chief, The Hindu, looks on.

contacted the State Govt. Education Department and had the 'No Objection' certificate withdrawn. Mr Swamy became furious and called a meeting of the Managing Committee. He asked me to start the discussion, and I pointed an accusing finger at Mataji for serious violation of the code of conduct as Secretary by approaching the state government without the knowledge of the President. I stated that she had to answer for this betrayal and breach of confidence. Mataji handed in her resignation, which was accepted by the President.

He was a very shrewd judge of men and was able to size up a person's worth after meeting him once or twice.

After this the Managing Committee ratified a decision by Mr Swamy to make me the new secretary of the society. I was then charged with the task of getting the NOC restored. Armed with guidance from Mr Swamy with his immense experience in dealing with men and matters, I met the

Education Secretary who gave me a cold reception. Mr Swamy then advised me to take the help of some IAS officer known to me. Mr V Sundaram I.A.S., at the time the Managing Director of a state government enterprise readily agreed to go with me to the Secretariat. Mr Sundaram took me direct to the Secretary without waiting for the usual procedure and convinced him of the merit of our case.

The state government approval had a caveat: the school could function at the present premises for two years; after that it should shift from Sudharma which belonged to the Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School. We then took the help of another IAS officer friend of mine, Mr K V Ramanathan for whom the Education Secretary had great respect. The NOC was restored and Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya CBSE School started functioning. It has now made a mark as one of the leading CBSE schools in India.

Mr Swamy's financial help and valuable guidance at every step played a great role in the starting and successful working of the school.

His great concern for sorting out matters in regard to the functioning of the CBSE school threw up another facet of his personality, his faith in divine help as in human effort. He took me to a Nadi josyar who suggested a visit to a temple near Pondicherry to perform certain pujas. Mr Swamy strongly believed that not only our own efforts but also the performance of the pujas greatly helped us in solving the problem. Later he took me to the Nadi josyar repeatedly to help solve one of my personal problems in which he showed great concern. As the readings did not provide an immediate solution, we had to visit the astrologer many times, and Mr Swamy insisted on accompanying me despite his failing health. He made these trips even when he was in great physical discomfort. He would go to any

Such is the trust Swamy placed in persons for whom he had regard for.

lengths to help someone whose welfare was close to his heart.

Satyabhama, 'Bhama Teacher' to all, had a permanent place in his heart. According to him Bhama was a born teacher who had completely dedicated herself to the cause of education. On any problem relating to the school, she was the first person he consulted. He held her observations and opinions in high esteem. He used to say, "Bhama is running the show and all of us should give her full support". Such is the trust Swamy placed in persons for whom he had regard for their selfless and dispassionate nature and their spirit of service.

Swamy had definite views on finance, the economy, management, business, administration, industry, commerce and agriculture. He had a great flair for details and had with him valuable statistical data to support his views. Though he had a good word for the Nehru administration, subsequent developments based on petty politics pained him very much and made him move away from the policies of the Congress governments at the Centre and the States. He had contempt for pseudo-secularism that encouraged divisive forces based on religion, language, regionalism and caste. For him, the solution for permanent harmony among the people of India was to follow the great ideals of service to humanity advocated by our ancients. According to him, every individual has built-in capitalism in him based on his personal and family needs and his desire for acquisition and possession. He believed in the concept of voluntary socialism, in which the haves shared something belonging to them with the have-nots. Force creates opposition, according to him, and never succeeds.

"Capitalism succeeds when it is able to keep communism under control and in the same way communism succeeds when it is able to keep capitalism under check", he would say. Both ultimately fail, in his opinion, because they do not believe in voluntary acts of benevolence, charity and service but on force and striking work. He used to cite the instances of the great acts of charity and service of the Tatas and Birlas, which have contributed to the advancement of industry and education in our country right from pre-independence days.

His disappointment with the performance of the Congress Government was the main reason for him to place faith in the Bharatiya Janata Party when it came to power at the Centre and some of the States. After some time he became greatly disillusioned with their performance as, contrary to their professions, they too resorted to petty politics.

He was a deeply religious person with steadfast faith in the teachings of his acharyas starting from the great Ramanuja Acharya and the succession of illustrious acharyas after him to the present day. Of the definite view that a person who did not have unshakable faith in the preachings and precepts of his acharyas was bound to fail, he would quote the famous verse in the Bhagavad Gita, "A doubting person perishes". Though he was not exactly orthodox, he never failed to observe the essential preachings and practices of his faith.

R K Swamy was a great and good man. As Shakespeare said in Julius Caesar, "The elements were so mixed in him that nature would stand up and say, 'Here was a man'." ■

Malice towards none



N. MURALI

Managing Director, The Hindu Group of Publications and
Past President, Indian Newspaper Society and former
Chairman, Audit Bureau of Circulation and Advertising
Standards Council of India

When Mr R K Swamy passed away in June 2003, it marked the exit of a giant and the end of a generation of stalwarts. His career coincided with the evolution of advertising in India; he was not only a part of that piece of history but also played a big part in shaping it.

Mr Swamy was a self made man who rose to eminence by dint of hard work and determination. He strongly believed that advertising was a serious business that belonged to the realm of science.

The first part of Mr Swamy's brilliant career was spent in JWT/Hindustan Thompson. He ventured out boldly in 1973 to start his own agency, R K SWAMY Advertising Associates from Madras. Mr Swamy was fifty years old then! Very few would have had the courage to start a new

Very few would have had the courage to start a new business at that age.

business at that age. But Mr Swamy was made of sterner and different stuff, with a self-confidence that is rarely seen, particularly in the advertising professionals in this part of the country.

R K Swamy Advertising Associates' gain was Hindustan Thompson's loss.

Mr Swamy pioneered public sector advertising at a time the state owned enterprises not only occupied "the commanding heights of the economy" but were so bureaucratically oriented and rule bound that concepts like advertising were alien to them. What is worse they considered advertising expenditure to be wasteful. Mr Swamy shattered this mindset to be a path breaker in public sector advertising. The rest, as they say, is history.

Agency colleagues who worked closely

with him always thought of him as the ultimate client service person, who worked assiduously to build long-term relationship with clients.

Mr Swamy's tenacity of purpose, dedication and commitment to whatever he took up or was engaged in was worthy of emulation by advertising professionals and people in other fields as well. He was an intense strong personality, an inspirational leader, and a large hearted and generous person, whose involvement in charitable and educational causes was as deep as his commitment to advertising.

It was natural for a man of his vision, competence and knowledge to get involved and contribute significantly to the larger advertising world. His active involvement in the various industry bodies saw him assume leadership roles in all of them.

Though many years his junior, I had many interesting interactions with Mr Swamy, particularly at an industry level. It was a happy coincidence that when Mr Swamy was the President of AAAI in 1982-83, I happened to be the President of the Indian Newspaper Society (INS). Unlike the present cordial relationship between the two premier industry bodies that even borders on cosiness, the two bodies really took adversarial positions on many issues in the eighties, and their relationship was at times tense. Many thorny issues would emerge from time to time. We, from the INS, always had a healthy respect for Mr Swamy, and sometimes were even in awe of him. In any discussion, he was very well prepared, armed with a mass of information and data, articulate and at his fighting best. He was open but blunt and also had an adamant streak in him. The INS was more often than not able to persuade and convince most of his colleagues to accept its point of view, but Mr Swamy was invariably a hard nut to crack. He would sometimes even swing the discussions their way. While some of us would often be irritated by Mr Swamy's strong

and often rigid stand, all of us came away convinced that he had no malice or rancour towards anyone, but was only doing his duty by his association, by articulating some of its views and positions in a very forceful way. It was also obvious that some of his other, more tactful and diplomatic colleagues were firing from Mr Swamy's strong shoulders. But all of us on both sides thoroughly enjoyed these sparring sessions.

Mr Swamy always made an impression on everyone who was fortunate to come into contact with him. He also had a good understanding of history and economic policy. He had the vision and farsightedness to realise as early as in 1985 that the Indian economy would inevitably have to integrate with the world economy. He first

It was also obvious that some of his other, more tactful and diplomatic colleagues were firing from Mr Swamy's strong shoulders.

collaborated with BBDO, one of the leading agencies in the world. Today every major agency in India is in partnership with an international agency.

Mr Swamy's meticulousness was amply evident in the well-researched, comprehensive speeches or presentations he made in many forums. True to form, Mr Swamy's acceptance speech for the AAAI-Premnarayan Award in 1998, when well past his prime, was the longest, most comprehensive and serious acceptance speech ever made according to my friends in the AAAI. That was Mr R K Swamy, the quintessential communicator, in contrast to the present-day cocky but glib communicators.

Legends like Mr R K Swamy do not die, they live on in our memories. ■

A thorough professional



BAL MUNDKUR

Founder Chairman and Managing Director
Ulka Advertising Pvt. Ltd., (Now FCB Ulka)
and Past President, Advertising Agencies
Association of India

I always thought he was thoroughly professional. I liked to believe that I was too.

In my perception, he contributed a great deal of his energies to the profession - more than any of his peers including myself! I know what I am talking about as he sponsored many causes aimed at benefiting the industry, one that I thought was a bread earner and an unnecessary evil.

His most valuable contribution was doing battle with the Finance Ministry when Government wanted to tax advertising. No one else in the business did so much as he did single-handedly in the matter. He won the "case" on behalf of the industry.

He fought against the dominance of European and American Advertising Agencies and he encouraged, albeit in his own way, the emergence of truly professional Indian advertising agencies.

He fought corruption, kickbacks and the "perquisites" that most Indian agencies at the time offered as incentives to their clients.

He was intimidating as he was forthright and even feared by some of his peers, as he did not abide by charlatans (who abound in the industry).

Not being religious myself, I did not know at all until I visited his home in the early 1980s, that he was deeply religious. I think we had mutual respect for each other.

Finally, he was a thoroughly professional adman to the core, one who started his career in really modest beginnings. He was a great man! ■

Eastern sophistication



SANGEETHA N
Executive Vice President,
R K SWAMY BBDO, Mumbai

In life, most people feel the pressure of conforming to the ways and mores of their peers. More so in the work environment. They tend to dress similarly, socialize with the same kind of people and generally conduct themselves in a manner which they believe will make them "belong" to the group. Consequently, they could well be uncomfortable and even unhappy.

The ad industry in India is in just such a matrix - a model of Western origin. Thus presentations must be flamboyant. The "speak" must be the latest "lingo" from Ivy League schools and Wall Street. The dressing must be designer wear, particularly from abroad.

There must be regular gatherings of peers at bars and pubs to deliberate over the wine list and shake one's head sadly at the clients and colleagues who didn't cut it enough to join the fun.

As for making the family one's priority and believing in prayer, these are best kept secret.

In this milieu of western sophistication, Mr. Swamy stood out like a beacon because he clearly made his own rules.

At work, he made sure that content was given the highest priority with, of course, research and hard work going into its development. Presentations were made purely to address the problems that needed to be addressed. So they were intrinsically intelligent and effective.

The dressing was neat, tidy and correct. There is, in fact, hardly anyone who didn't feel the pull of his charisma.

Socialising meant happy, engrossing times over a glass of wine with business associates and colleagues who invariably became close friends.

And as for keeping prayer a secret, he so believed that he was but nought without his Maker that he saw no point in hiding it!

He was thus so caught up in all the various things the agency had to achieve, on the one hand, and all the things that needed to be

done at the temple and the school, on the other, that he had no time to muse over the doings of others.

His practical application and feet-on-the-ground approach kept him alert and prepared for any kind of circumstance. I recall an incident, way back in '87, when we made a pitch for the LIC. It was a significant business

And as for keeping prayer a secret, he so believed that he was but nought without his Maker that he saw no point in hiding it!

and so had a fair bit of competition.

After a particularly satisfying presentation, Shekar and I began to conjure up pictures of all that we could do for the brand and perhaps got a bit carried away. Suddenly, we heard a dry word of caution from the other end of the room. It was Mr. Swamy with one of his trademark sayings in Tamil. It went something like this: "When you're sitting in a dirty pond with a buffalo in it, just because you can see its head, it doesn't follow that you can reach it!"

Today, when things don't quite work out for us, I find myself thinking about what he said and chuckling.

The other striking thing about the gentleman was his strong belief in the family as a unit - be it his side of the family, his wife's side of the family or later his children's. His ability to just embrace everyone and their problems and to solve them as best he could was wonderful. This conduct extended to his greater family - his colleagues and friends as well. Undoubtedly, he could be quite the patriarch, once in a while, but everyone is allowed his foibles!

Another thing that kept us going was Mr Swamy's subtle and dry sense of humour.

One afternoon I walked into his room. He looked up from the business magazine in his hand and with a twinkle in his eye said. "The minute I began reading this article, I began to nod off. Do you think it's my age?" Of course, it wasn't. It was one of those articles which was full of incomprehensible business jargon with liberal amounts of repetition and contradictions. Its redeeming feature?

Mr Swamy and I spent a happy hour laughing as we tried to figure out just what the author was attempting to say.

So, as a person who joined the ad industry at this agency and watched all the other agencies at work, Mr Swamy and his life story give me the hope and confidence that simple honesty, hard work, good family values and devoted prayer have an equal chance at success, prosperity and happiness as any other.

I am glad I met him and hope I have the courage to make my own rules.

A cheer to a true gentleman and to Eastern sophistication. ■

Mr Swamy and his life story give me the hope and confidence that simple honesty, hard work, good family values and devoted prayer have an equal chance at success, prosperity and happiness as any other.

A big banyan tree



T. S. NAGARAJAN
Research Director, JNTU (Retd.)

The place Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Vishnu.

It is festive time in Vaikuntha. Everywhere there are festoons, arches. On one side, there is vedic chanting, both in Tamil and Sanskrit. On another, music and dance reverberate.

The two trusted guards of Lord Vishnu are anxiously looking at a distance. Yes, they are waiting for the arrival of a VVIP. Ah, here he comes, Rangaswamy Krishnaswamy, R K Swamy to one and all, ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu, in a pushpaka vimanam. Jaya and Vijaya receive him. Poornakumbham is offered to him with full honours, and Swamy is ushered in. Swamy looks around, perplexed, amazed, shocked. He has never seen such a scene. There, in the middle sits his idol Vishnu with Lakshmi by his side. All around sit all the gods and goddesses. Swamy has read so much about Vaikuntham. Never had he dreamt that he would be here. He is still dumbfounded and speechless.

Lord Vishnu breaks the silence.

"Swamy, my dear bhakta (devotee) welcome aboard, swagatam." Swamy recovers, falls at the feet of Vishnu and starts repeating all the names of Vishnu. "Narayana, thank you, I am blessed. What have I done to merit such recognition?" he starts to speak, but words refuse to come out.

Narayana: Calm down. Swamy, We shower our blessings only on the worthy and deserving. You deserve every bit of it. Do you know that you are the second person to be honoured, the first one being your preceptor, Azhagiyasingar of Sri Ahobila Math. Let me explain. We have certain criteria to judge people for their eligibility to be in Vaikuntha. (1) The person should have seen 1000 moons, or 80 years. (2) He must have a family of children and grandchildren. (3) He should have left a legacy to worthy children to emulate. (4) He should have built a temple or well or school.

You fulfil all these and your scores are on par with the scores of the illustrious and

righteous people who now adorn this place.

Swamy: Thank you, Lord. I have two questions to ask you. Do I have your permission?

Narayana: I should have known that you have an inquisitive mind. What is your first question?

Swamy: Narayana, you know that I gave 32 years of my life to one organisation called JWT. Yet the honour of leading the agency was taken away from me. You could have done something to prevent that. Why did you not do so?

Narayana (With a big smile): It is very easy to answer. I did it deliberately.

Swamy (Shocked): What? Why?

Narayana: I did not want you to become the JWT head. If I had ordained it, you would have received the recognition and retired with two lakh rupees in your P.F. You would have spent the rest of your life in the wilderness.

I wanted you to go out and reach great heights. So I decided to act through John Gaynor (you know, I always act through people) and he deprived you. But he did one of the greatest services to advertising and spirituality in general and you in particular. Looking back, won't you agree that you achieved greatness and fame only after you left JWT?

Swamy: Yes, I have never looked at it from that angle. I should have known that everything happens for the good. Now for my second question.

Narayana: Wait, you can ask it later. Before that, I have some obligations to people assembled here. While everyone here knows about your credentials, it is better that they learn from the horse's mouth.

All of us here have been following your career for the past 30 years, your starting of the R K Swamy ad agency, its collaboration with BBDO, the eventful advertising you created for them, the top honours you received from Management, Advertising and

other professional bodies, your total commitment and involvement in temple renovation, religious propagation and girls' education. We take pride in that and we bless you for that. However, many of us here have only some vague recollection of your JWT/ HTA years in advertising. Would you mind telling us about it?

Swamy (choking): I am blessed. I am speechless. I think that the best person to talk about that period is T S Nagarajan, my man Friday.

Narayana: OK. Let us hear from him. Jaya, connect us to T S Nagarajan.

Nagarajan's home at Chennai: Nagarajan here.

Narayana: Nagarajan, this is Narayana from Vaikuntham.

Nagarajan falls down from his chair. "Sir, what an honour! Can I see You in person?"

Narayana: Nag, that's what you are called, is it not? We have assembled here to honour R K Swamy. Swamy suggests that you are the best to talk about his days in JWT. We want to hear an account from you.

Nag: May I come in person to make a presentation!

Narayana: No. Not yet, your time will come. For the present, I give you power to visualize what is happening here. Go ahead and tell us. Be brief.

Nagarajan: I am honoured. I am given a difficult task. How can I describe 32 years of achievements in 30 minutes or less? Let me highlight some of the major landmarks.

Nagarajan begins: R K Swamy perfected risk management as an art. All the time he took risks and came out with flying colours.

When everybody was avoiding "war threat" Calcutta, he agreed to go there. Even though he was in media, he did a path breaking market research study on the tobacco industry.

When an offer came to head the Madras operation, he grabbed it. He knew that Madras was a "backward" state as far as



Swamy with his colleagues of JWT in 1960

advertising was concerned. There was only one consumer account, Binny. There were public sector undertakings, which did very little advertising. JWT would have been happy with Swamy if Binny were served adequately.

Swamy was not one to be satisfied with a "post office" role. He built a team and brought Mr Umesh Rao as his creative partner. This pair did wonders in the 60's and 70's in Madras.

Having built a very young and talented team, Swamy went after new accounts and the only way was to try and bring public sector undertakings into advertising. Here are two landmark accounts successfully bagged by R K Swamy and team.

(i) HMT: It was January 1969.

Mr Swamy met Dr S M Patil, the Chairman of HMT. Dr Patil abused the ad profession as racketeers, etc. Swamy listened to his tirade and asked Patil to give him an opportunity to present an ad campaign within three months with no commitment from HMT. Mr Swamy asked Dr Patil to extend cooperation to his staff during this period.

He came to the office, called a meeting and said: "On April 10th, we are making a presentation to HMT." I was asked to get a

brief for the creative team within a month. I met everyone in HMT connected with manufacturing, marketing and servicing. I also met the customers of HMT.

When the situation analysis report was presented to the creative team, the main problem that came through was that while HMT said that they were ready to fine-tune the requirements of the machine tool industry, the customers felt that HMT was not a good organisation. The presence of an unfavourable psychological attitude on the part of HMT customers was the inhibiting factor to programme business relations. Mr Swamy summed up by showing his two palms facing away from each other and said, "Our job is to make the two palms - HMT and customers - face each other. Once they come to know each other, the rest of the job will be easier."

"Mr Swamy, this is what I wanted to say, about HMT. I did not know how to say it. You have said it.

A series of ads conveying the message "HMT Today" was devised. It was slog time for the office during that period.

The day of the presentation: April 10th. Both Swamy and I reached Bangalore by the morning flight. We had breakfast with Lakshmi Ratan and went to the HMT office. Every one of us was tired and sleepy.

At 9 A M, the meeting started. Dr Patil, Nageswara Rao, Financial Advisor, and Krishnan Kutty, Marketing Director, were present.

After formal introductions, Mr Swamy began. I am still wondering how he got the strength. No tiredness, no slip.

When Swamy sat down after a marvellous 90-minute presentation, the first person to break the silence was Dr Patil, whose famous

one-liner still rings in my ear. "Mr Swamy, this is what I wanted to say, about HMT. I did not know how to say it. You have said it. The account is yours."

It was a giant leap for JWT and HMT. HMT, who were hitherto spending not more than Rs. 5 lakh a year on advertising, agreed to spend Rs. 30 lakh.

The rest is history.

(ii) BHEL: Mr Swamy along with some of us met Dr V Krishnamurthy and made an agency presentation. Dr Krishnamurthy requested us to prepare a greeting ad for the inauguration of the Ennore thermal plant. He asked BHEL to give us a list of State Electricity undertakings. We came back dejected. The creative team had a brainstorming session. It was agreed that advertising was resorted to not only to sell a product or service. It had other functions, like creating a favourable image among the Government, suppliers, creditors, future job seekers et al.

Once we all agreed on that idea, the ticklish problem of how to present BHEL still remained. If you listed all the State undertakings, that was no news. If you said that by supplying boilers to these Public Sector units, BHEL saved so much foreign exchange, it would not cut any ice, as the import component was very small.

Then the idea struck. The commissioning of the Ennore Thermal Plant with BHEL Boiler was to take place within a month. Instead of greeting ETP in the conventional way, it was decided to turn around and talk about ETP. The ad was conceived with the message "ETP, when commissioned will bring so much happiness to people. So many pumpsets will be energized "BHEL takes pride in being part and parcel of such a venture." It was brilliant. The ad was taken to Dr Krishnamurthy. The moment he saw it he jumped with joy and said, "Mr Swamy you did it. You advertised BHEL through praising my client. I want you to prepare 18 similar advertisements for the 18 projects in which we are involved". Then

He was a great manager, a man who got things done, got what he wanted.

it was decided to visit every one of the project sites to ascertain the benefits of those projects to the local people.

The ads are testimonials to what brilliant public relations advertising could do. Mr Swamy created the need for advertising where none existed.

I mention HMT and BHEL only as illustrations. The list of Mr Swamy's achievements is exhaustive: MICO, Madras Fertilisers, TI Cycles, Parrys, and many more. What some of the agencies of Chennai could not achieve in 30 years, Mr Swamy did in three. It was a golden era, when every week was party time.

The outsider, as the local agencies used to describe him, had arrived. Mr Swamy believed that the growth of any organisation should be interlinked with its commitment to the welfare and interests of the community. He was part and parcel of the professional, business and spiritual scenario of that time. Through his total commitment and organisational abilities, he put his stamp on every one of his activities. I mention three here:

He organised a Business Relations Conference for Rotary International, a unique event in which he was able to bring together stalwarts of the industry and intellectual giants like Dr S Radhakrishnan, Rajaji, S K Patil, and Morarji Desai.

When the Central Government levied a tax on advertising, he helped the local chambers of commerce to submit a memorandum, a masterly document.

His devotion to Ahobila Math led him to revive a dying magazine, Sri Nrisimhapriya, and made it a "must" for every Vaishnavite home. I can go on forever.

My presentation will be incomplete if I do

Once you are Swamy's man, you are always Swamy's man. That label sticks with you forever.

not touch upon his managerial skills. He was a great manager, a man who got things done, got what he wanted. He put complete faith in his staff, gave them full freedom to do things and he expected them to "deliver" successfully.

This independence enjoyed by R K Swamy staff was responsible for some of the success stories of the past and present colleagues of Swamy.

Narayana: Nagarajan, thank you very much for your masterly presentation. When your time comes you can join Swamy here. Till such time be happy and be healthy. Swamy, it was nice to hear about your various achievements. You thoroughly deserve all the praise. Ok, let us hear your last question.

Swamy: I have been praised and honoured. Yet, I was not allowed to complete my 100 years. Why this hurry to bring me here?

Narayana: I would have allowed you, but you have done everything you had to do. You don't have to prove anything to anybody. You will be wasting your time there.

Here I have a job tailor-made for you. Yes, today I find a sudden revival of Hinduism if the crowd in the temples is any indication. Money is pouring in good money, bad money and ugly money. What do I do with that? I want you to head a marketing/advertising department here. Devise plans, channelise the funds through proper means, organise PR seminars, revive ethics and good manners. I shall put them into the appropriate people's minds for execution. The budget is unlimited. You have many of your erstwhile colleagues here. Rope them in.

Now for the perks, you used to complain that you got increments in JWT from Edward

Fielden only on specific milestone achievements. We shall rectify that here. You are going to enjoy all the privileges and perks of the devas, including divine lunch with amrut for dessert. That's all, go ahead. Bless you.

Hi, folks, that is R K Swamy for you. I am tempted to compare him to a big banyan tree. Like a banyan tree, which grows from a small seed, R K Swamy rose from a scratchy and humble beginning to become one of the tallest men in advertising. Again, the banyan gives protection to one and all under its shade. In the same way, R K Swamy gave protection and nurtured people. When people leave the shade of a banyan tree to better pastures, they do remember the goodness of the banyan tree.

So do the people who left Swamy to seek individual glory remember him for shaping their mental toughness and decision-making faculties.

Now, from the imagination of Heaven, we descend down to the realities of the earth. Five years after Mr Swamy had started his agency, I was into my own market research agency. One day, I met Mr M V Arunachalam, the head of the Murugappa group. The moment he saw me, he greeted me with a warm smile, put his hand on my shoulders and asked me, "How is Swamy?" It was obvious he was not aware of the changes in my life. I smiled back and said "OK." He said, "Good" and left. I was not hurt that MV did not enquire about me. I realised then that once you are Swamy's man, you are always Swamy's man. That label sticks with you forever. ■

He was clairvoyant



R NARAYANAN
Vice President (Retd.) Vijay Tanks & Vessels Limited
and younger brother of Swamy

Like many south Indian children of the time, Swamy, named Krishnaswamy at birth, was known by another name, Mani at home. In his grown years, after he shortened his name to Swamy, he was RKS to the outside world.

Swamy was born in Kumbakonam, a small town with thirteen famous temples, located in the heart of the Thanjavur agricultural belt.

RKS could see far into the future, often offering a perspective at variance from the normal run, and often proving right. He was more than clairvoyant, and the natural leader of the family in all that mattered. He set standards for the rest of the family to follow, self sacrificing, honest to a fault and absolutely unassuming.

Our father migrated to Bombay in 1928, shifting his large family - his wife, daughter

His thirst for learning was phenomenal.

and five sons. The children had to learn Gujarati, an accomplishment that was to prove crucial in Swamy's career in later life. Within a year, Swamy earned two double promotions to the fourth standard.

He was eager to absorb knowledge from all directions. His thirst for learning was phenomenal. By the time he was nine, he had completed learning the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavatam from our grandfather. I, one of his younger brothers, was deeply attached to RKS right from my infancy. We were inseparable. He took to knowledge like fish to water. I was a silent admirer but never did want to emulate him.

He showered enormous love and affection on me. He would often repeat the couplets from Ramayana:

Lord Rama says about Lakshmana:

देशे देश कलत्राणि देशे देशे च बाढवाः ।
तंतु देशं न पश्यामि यत्र भ्राता सहोदरः ॥



R.K. Suresh and R. Narayanan along with His Holiness the 45th Jee of Sri Ahobila Math during the samprakashnam ceremony of the Lord Sarangapuri Suresh temple

"Among the several countries, kith and kin flock together But I have not seen, so far such a devoted younger brother".

It was a very warm hearted compliment coming from RKS who rarely wasted such words though it was I who was lucky to have RKS as an elder brother. A born leader, selfless, ever helping and guiding, he epitomized all virtues you would expect from a guru.

Mention of the word guru makes my mind wander to Kabir Das' famous song which in brief runs thus:

कबीरा जब हम पैदा हुये
जुग हंसे हम रोये ।
ऐसी करती कर चलो, हम
हंसे और जुग रोये ।
चदरिया बिता रे बिनी
हे राम ताम रस रे बिनी ।
ऐसी करती कर चलो हम
हंसे और जुग रोये ॥

In essence this means, when we were born we cried and the world laughed. Now in this world our actions should be such that when we die we die laughing and the world cries for

us. The fabric of our life should be woven with the spirit of the word Rama. Now in this world our actions should be such that when we die, we die laughing and the world cries.

To me RKS was the dyer of Kabir's qualification. He imparted knowledge of the itihasas, puranas, in slow but steady dosages and drove home the purport of each action and reaction and the lessons that we should absorb from these like the fast dye of the dyer. Over the years he mesmerized and possessed me to an extent that memories of him are so elevating and sweet. To me he is very much alive in my thoughts and actions and he is the guiding spirit even today. I feel and experience his presence every day.

A touching moment in my life (amongst thousands of them) happened soon after our marriage. He was married on 27th May 1948 and I was married on 4th June 1948, after a gap of 7 days. As kaalam alone would explain (we were both employed in Calcutta) we reached Calcutta three days later. RKS went back to his office routine (he was in JWT Calcutta then). Just as I reached Calcutta I was instantly shunted off to Srinagar (during the 1st Indo-Pak war). RKS set up family and was waiting for the war to be either over or halted by the UN so that I would return to Calcutta from Srinagar to start my married life.

I returned to Calcutta on October 1, 1948 and right away RKS sent a telegram to my in-laws asking them to send my wife over to Calcutta. A day later, on October 2, 1948 we received a telegram informing us that our father had passed away. So, we were back to square one and left Calcutta for Madras by train. In the train my brother took out a bound book and told me to read it as I would find it a great help. The book was by Marie Stopes on "Blissful Marriage".

So many things, small, big, negligible, explosive, embarrassing, happen in all large families. Through it all, our brotherly relations stood the test of time. My total



Lord Sarangapani (Kumbakonam) with His Consorts

So many things, small, big, negligible, explosive, embarrassing, happen in all large families. Through it all, our brotherly relations stood the test of time.

obedience drove him to a point of frustration. He once said: "You are meek and submissive by nature. You don't want to disagree or fight with me and you in fact make me feel an autocrat, which I am definitely not."

I was in harness right up to age 70. The day after my retirement he came to my house in Bombay and after some time came around to the purpose of his visit. He wanted me to accompany him to Kumbakonam, which I did. We went around the huge temple complex of Sri Aravamudan temple and all the while he was explaining the things that needs to be done to bring the temple to its pristine glory. He was nominated Chairman of the Tiruppani Committee (Renovation). In the first two years there was nothing at all he could get done. Every monthly meeting ended up in couple of pages added to the minutes book and little else. He wanted me to shift to Kumbakonam and attend to the renovation

work of Lord Sarngapani Temple. This was the quintessence of his love for me. He conferred on me invaluable blessings by making me take over the renovation of this great temple. The Tiruppani of this great temple commenced in February 1995 and was completed with the Samprokshanam done on June 30, 1999. The funds for the entire renovation work was raised by him from friends, well-wishers and from his own sources. He spent over Rs. 120 lakhs through me. He dreamt of getting this done as well as Sri Rama's Pattabhishekam. Neither of us had experience in this, but the presiding deity of the Temple left little doubt in our minds. He had so many fruitful plans but did not undertake them in right earnest because of his failing health, and all of them were nipped by self-centred persons.

In closing, I reproduce below, the one couplet that he enjoyed most from Thiruvaimozhi 5-8 sung by Nammazhwar which runs thus:

வாராவருவாய் வருமென்மாயா!
மாயாபூர்த்தியாய்!
ஆராவமுதாய் அடியேனாவி
அகமேதித்திப்பாய்
தீரவினைகள் தீர என்னையாண்டாய்!
திருக்குடத்தை ஊரா! உனக்காப்பட்டும்
அடியேன் இன்னும் உழல்வேனோ?

ஸ்ரீ ஆராவமுதன் திருவடிகளே சரணம்-

Oh Lord! You don't appear before me, rather you appear in an imaginary form. You are sweet to my heart, you are my acharya. As the days move on, I feel you are like insatiable nectar. You took my freedom to get rid of all my sins. You are the resident of Kumbakonam. Why should I live in this material world, when I have fully surrendered myself to you? ■

A friend in need, a friend indeed



S V S RAGHAVAN

Former Chairman of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Minerals & Metal Trading Corporation, State Trading Corporation, Bharat Business International Limited, Committee on Competition Law & Policy. A Padmaashri Awardee.

It was probably 1967 or 1968.

A tall and lanky gentleman accompanied by two of his colleagues came into my room, extended his hand and said: "I am R K Swamy from J Walter Thompson, an advertising agency". He added that he had met the General Manager earlier. The intention was "to see whether you can give your advertising account to us."

I replied, "We are a public sector company; we have no consumer product to sell, all our clients are Government organisations in India and as we are a kind of semi-monopoly, there is no need for us to start an advertising campaign."

Thereafter, he spent an hour with me explaining the rationale for the need for public sector projects to communicate their achievements to opinion makers in the country and their own employees. He made the following points:

He told me that after the release of the ad, there had been tremendous feedback from the drivers and conductors who were behaving most courteously towards the public.

Advertising in newspapers (TV did not exist then) was the only effective method of communication to the target audience. This had to be done by means of a sustained campaign about public sector performance in the press and in Parliament.

BHEL was doing good work and unless it was broadcast, it would be difficult to mould public opinion in BHEL's favour or motivate its own workers to do better.

To illustrate, he showed me a TVS passenger bus service advertisement in Tamil Nadu newspapers showing the

conductor gently helping an old woman to get into the bus. The slogan was "Courtesy is our motto". He told me that after the release of the ad, there had been tremendous feedback from the drivers and conductors who were behaving most courteously towards the public. At the end of an hour of non-stop talk by him, I was convinced.

It was a difficult task to convince the Board of BHEL and for BHEL to appoint JWT as its advertising agency, on a "single tender basis". The BHEL ad campaign made history. It was unique. It gave BHEL employees a sense of pride and the organisation became a name to reckon with in India and abroad. The credit for this goes to R K Swamy.

R K Swamy thereafter became a friend of mine. He was my partner in building MMTC from a loss-making organisation into a profit-making one. His MMTC campaign was a major success.

His unique achievement was that in an industry where success is measured and can only be gained by socializing, he built an advertising agency that ranks among the top ten in the industry. He was religious minded yet fulfilled all the parameters set for success in the advertising field. He became a successful entrepreneur. He was unique in this respect.

He was never calculating in his dealings with people, but his professional achievements are even today famous for the planned approach to his work.

Over a period of time, we found we had common interests and I became his sounding board for many of his domestic and official problems and vice versa. From 1990 till his

death, we lived in the same city, Madras, and regularly met once a week. He was never calculating in his dealings with people, but his professional achievements are even today famous for the planned approach to his work.

He is gone and I walk alone. ■

A great professional of our time



M K RAJU
Founder Chairman, M K Raju Consultants
Private Limited, former Chief Executive,
India Pistons, former Chairman of
Hindustan Photo Films

My association with R K Swamy dates back to the 1950s when he came over to Madras to build J Walter Thompson & Company (JWT) from scratch in South India. He did an outstanding job and JWT Madras grew by leaps and bounds under his leadership.

I was at India Pistons and it was the beginning of a long, happy association spanning nearly fifty years. We belonged to the same age group. I was only a little younger.

Swamy was a self made man. He had risen from the ranks to the highest position in the advertising profession by sheer hard work and merit. Even though only a matriculate, he acquired the skills of the highest order all on his own. His knowledge of English was exemplary and could easily match the best doctorates in English literature. In his long professional career, spanning over sixty years, he always brought a new dimension to whatever assignment he undertook. His database was up-to-date and he was meticulous in his details. He backed up his observations with extensive consumer research provided by his colleagues in his own organisation. This made him stand high above all, by sheer professional competence.

The essence of professionalism is excellence in whatever you do. Swamy left an indelible imprint in every field of activity in which he was involved.

In the fifties, advertising was a great professional challenge as most Indian managements were of the view that advertising was a sheer waste of money in a protected market. He enlightened his customers that advertising is an integral part of management and an important arm of marketing strategy in a protected market as much as in a liberalised economy.

When I came from Ford and joined India Pistons, it was a coincidence that about the same time, Swamy started JWT operations at Madras in 1955. At Ford I had exposure to

JWT as our advertising agency and I felt at home with them. However, the Simpsons Group had an in-house advertising agency - the Madras Advertising Company (MAC) - and they expected all group companies to work with them.

In this context, it was not possible for me to discard MAC altogether and shift India Pistons' advertising in its entirety to JWT. However, we needed the creative talent of JWT to fight the prejudice against indigenously manufactured products in the country, which had a preference for imported products.

Not only do you have to be good, but the public also must feel that you are good. Otherwise, you are as good as lost.

We, therefore, came to a working arrangement with MAC that they could enjoy the cream of our advertising budget but let JWT handle the creative part. When I approached Swamy, he knew that this arrangement would not bring him any significant revenues, but yet he was prepared to get an entry into the Simpsons Group for JWT to prove themselves. Swamy felt this would be a stepping stone to expand his business in south India.

It was here that Swamy and his team's advertising capabilities were put to test. They did some outstanding work in the automotive and ancillary industries.

At India Pistons, even though we had a technical collaboration from the UK, our quality image was poor. It was more due to the psychological prejudice in those days against all indigenous products.

R K Swamy and his colleagues designed an all-metal red and blue carton, better than the best anywhere in the world, for a new brand

"Power Pak". Overnight it enhanced our quality image. Even though it was the same piston ring, our customers felt we were producing a better product. It was a step forward for IP to take away a major share of the market.

Few recognised, as Swamy did, that advertising as a marketing arm of a company is an integral part of management. Advertising must add value and through consumer research ensure the public perception of the company and its products change for the better.

Swamy brought an integrated approach to advertising. This included letterheads, visiting cards, display boards, our emblem and consistent themes in advertising for years, building a lasting impact on the company and its image.

He blended professional competence with professional integrity. Under no circumstance should quality be highlighted, he insisted, unless you maintained unquestioned quality in your products all the time. For instance, when he worked with Hindustan Photo Films (HPF), his initial theme was *Indu is Film*, identifying HPF as the only manufacturing company in India providing a comprehensive range of film products cine, x-ray and bromide paper. Once this was established, the advertising theme referred to the testimony of so many satisfied customers.

HPF could not have been turned around without the pivotal role its advertising played. Within two years, the public perception of HPF changed to a progressive company producing a quality product to the best international standards. Unfortunately, in all the case studies on the turnaround of sick companies, the role of advertising has not been sufficiently emphasised. Advertising is crucial even for the best managed companies. Not only do you have to be good, but the public also must feel that you are good. Otherwise, you are as good as lost.

At a seminar on employer-employee

relations organised by the Rotary Clubs of Salem, Mettur Dam, Bhavani-Kumarapalayam and Erode in 1966, Swamy said, "It must be admitted we have a long way to go in achieving economic equality in the country and our frequent eruptions in the field of employer-employee relations are only a reflection of this larger malady." He maintained that this subject had to be, therefore, viewed in the larger concept of the social responsibility of business. This was certainly a new dimension in employer-employee relations, with strikes plaguing the country for several decades after independence.

R K Swamy was also involved in two other projects, the For the Sake of Honour Award and the Employer and Employees Relations Award initiated by the Rotary Club of Madras. His company designed the memento, provided the promotional folders and institutionalised the awards, which are continuing even today.

The theme Service above Self comes from his heart.

He prepared a monograph on agriculture for a Rotary conference, as a master document, which is as relevant today as it was then. He had the foresight to project agriculture as the main focus, if we were to eradicate poverty in the country.

The theme Service above Self comes from his heart. R K Swamy can easily be rated, by any standard, as an outstanding Rotarian of our time. He preached and practised the ideals of Rotary and placed his own and his organisational resources for any project he had undertaken, regardless of reward or recognition.

When Swamy left JWT in 1972, his entrepreneurial qualities came into full display and his company R K Swamy

Advertising Associates was ranked amongst the top ten in India within a short time. Swamy was respected for his outstanding qualities of leadership in the advertising profession.

I left India Pistons in April 1974. Swamy visited me next day and said "Raju, I know how difficult it is to rehabilitate yourself. Don't be disappointed if all those whom you considered your friends do not extend a helping hand. I have gone through this painful process myself. We have to stand on our own. I am a small man but I want you to know, I will hold your hand for what it is worth." I was indeed touched by this gesture. Swamy genuinely meant what he said. After a couple of months, when I needed some help, he readily came to my rescue. I will never forget this. Swamy was a true and genuine friend. How can you be a professional, if you do not give a helping hand to a fellow professional? How many of us do it?

I had the unique privilege of working with him on many epoch making events. He was my right hand and I must confess without his spontaneous support, placing at our disposal his entire organisational resources, there was no way we could have achieved success. For example, the very first Management Convention organised by MMA in 1969 with over 1000 participants covering all layers of management was a pacesetter. This was the forerunner for annual management conventions in this country.

The first MMA Business Leadership Award instituted in 1969 with JRD Tata as the first recipient, was the only award of its kind in India at that time. Swamy designed the award and it is continuing even today. The sixteenth MMA Business Leadership Award was given in December 2002.

The first National Management Convention held in New Delhi in February 1971 with the theme Management in the changing Social Environment was

How can you be a professional, if you do not give a helping hand to a fellow professional?

inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, Smt Indira Gandhi. Swamy designed the emblem and the promotional folders. The National Management Conventions continue to be an annual event.

The Fourth Asian Management Conference held in New Delhi for the first time in India in September 1971 on Tradition & Modernity was the best ever held. Swamy designed the AAMO IV emblem, which was well received.

In all these programmes, R K Swamy was actively involved. I have no doubt his contribution was in no small measure responsible for the success of these events.

I am glad MMA gave Swamy the one and only Life Time Achievement Award for his "meaningful contribution to the management movement" in September 2001, a rare gesture in its 48 year history. Swamy richly deserved it and it was not a day too soon.

Swamy was involved in a national seminar on the role of English in our education when Dr Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, Vice Chancellor of the Madras University was the Chairman of the Conference. He did monumental work and Dr Mudaliar was so impressed that it was a pleasant surprise for him to learn that Swamy was not even a graduate.

Swamy was a man of letters, an author of several books on economic development, agriculture and market planning; an intellectual giant and a man of knowledge. He really deserved an honorary doctorate but do we ever honour such men in this country? Swamy was least bothered, as he was at peace

with himself.

As stated in the Bhagavad Gita, his personal philosophy was "Never fail to perform your duty". He recognized that he was not the cause for the results of his activities nor was he entitled to the fruits of his actions. His faith in God was total and complete.

Swamy was an outstanding professional by any standard. Whatever be the criteria you choose, Swamy was well above all. He came out in flying colours. To mention a few:

He rose from the lowest to the highest ranks in his professional career by sheer merit.

He helped hundreds of young graduates to make a successful career in advertising.

He achieved excellence, in whatever sphere of activity he was involved, in spite of the many hurdles and regardless of reward or recognition.

He readily extended a helping hand to fellow professionals.

He exhibited a sense of social responsibility and helped in a quiet way, educational institutions, religious bodies and service organisations.

He firmly believed that knowledge, efficiency, ethical principles and values must all be integrated in a harmonious manner for success of an enduring sort.

He symbolised professionalism at its best. What better tribute can we pay him than recognise him as a great professional of our time. People like Swamy will begin to live in us when they cease to live with us.

It was my privilege to have worked with him. It was our misfortune to have lost him. We salute a noble man. We revere and cherish his memory. May it stand by us for all time to come. ■

He had great regard for women



C R SATHYABHAMA
Joint Secretary, National Boys' & Girls'
Education Society, Chennai

He was a man, take him for all in all.
I shall not look upon his like again.

R K Swamy was a rare human being, endowed with a brilliant mind and a kind and loving heart. He led a life of simplicity amidst plenty, of virtue and spirituality in a world rife with temptations. He was courageous in adversity, armed with resolve, wisdom and humility.

He was a magnificent man, rising above most men literally and figuratively, an interesting character to study, a judicious mixture of modernity and conservatism.

Attired impeccably in a suit or safari at work, very often he would attend religious discourses, dressed in the traditional 'panchakacham' with the 'tirunamam' adorning his forehead. He transited easily and comfortably from one role to another. At parties he attended or hosted, although drinks flowed freely, he remained abstemious.

When he was posted to Calcutta as a junior officer in J Walter Thompson he shared an apartment with his colleagues. Oft an evening and on holidays his friends would indulge in the temptations of youth but Sri Swamy would never join them, even though they teased him and called him a prude.

That Sri Swamy was a devout Hindu who served the Ahobila Math and several Vaishnavite temples is a well-known fact. I would like to mention how he helped our family to renovate our temple, the Sri Adivaraha Perumal Koil at Kumbakonam. While he was preparing for the samprokshanam of the Sarangapani temple, he heard of our great grandfather Varahakulam Rangaswami Aiyangar and the Varahaswami temple. He encouraged us to

**"It isn't that you can't
see the solution. It is that
you can't see the problem."**



At the 125th Anniversary celebrations of Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School on 12.12.1994, R.K. Swamy, President and B. Madhavam, Secretary, with J. Jayalitha, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

repair it and perform the samprokshanam for the good of the family and society. But for his inspiring words we would not have been able to take up that arduous task and complete it.

He left us before our work was done but we are sure his spirit was there with us, at the consecration ceremony, which his wife, his daughter, his brother and other members of his family attended.

Sri Swamy was a calm, patient, thoughtful man, ready to help people at all times. I always took my problems to him. Because he could always look at them differently, the solution would become obvious. It seemed as if he was saying, "It isn't that you can't see the solution. It is that you can't see the problem."

"Vision is the art of seeing things invisible," Swift said. Sri Swamy would tell me, "Have a vision, think big, and dream. If you do not dream, then how can dreams come true?"

It is his vision that materialized as Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya. He valiantly faced

many obstacles, to start the institution in June 1989. He spontaneously donated seed money of Rs. 1.25 lakh at the 125th birth anniversary celebration of Sir P. S. Sivaswami Ayyar at the school. His wish was that it should be a school of 'excellence', where students would be groomed to be people of exceptional character and behaviour, whose academic performance and achievements in life would be outstanding.

It is his vision that materialized as Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya. He valiantly faced many obstacles, to start the institution in June 1989.

He also believed that the Management must recognize the importance of its teachers. The best teachers must be selected and

I found Sri Swamy to be an unobtrusive leader. At all meetings he would elicit the opinions of other members and add his views only at the end.

thereafter we must care for their development, promote their academic qualifications and teaching skills, pay them adequately and give them job security. They must be of such calibre that the parents and society respect them.

Sri Swamy was keen on upgrading the school to a college, and had a dream of linking up with the best universities abroad. He even worked out a scheme with experts in the field of management and planning.

On the Board of Management of the school, I found Sri Swamy to be an unobtrusive leader. At all meetings he would elicit the opinions of other members and add his views only at the end. This gave us all a sense of participation and it was always easy to reach a consensus. This inimitable leadership quality drew all of us to him and everyone of us held him in high esteem.

A devout bhakta' of Lord Rama, Sri Swamy believed in the principle of 'saranagati'. He was so benevolent that he was able to forgive any offender who asked pardon of him. Thereafter, no one was allowed to make a reference to the matter. I had occasion to witness one such incident and I stand chastened by this sterling quality of his.

'Towering genius ignores a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored'. This may be truly said of Sri Swamy. His probing mind delved into various branches of knowledge and he was able to stand shoulder to shoulder with doyens in the various fields. This was an astronomical achievement, as he had not

entered the portals of any college. He was a self-educated and self-made man. He stands as an example to our students. Let them all understand what wonderful results aspirations and application can give.

Sri Swamy's daughters, all of them doing very well in their vocations, studied in the Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' Higher Secondary School. As a parent, he was in touch with the school and its activities, even before he became a member of the Board. I often contacted him and his juniors for help in the form of advertisements to the school magazines and they had always obliged. Sri Swamy collected a handsome sum of half a lakh for the school centenary souvenir in 1969 through advertisements alone.

After he became a member of the Board and later as its President, he would make it a point to attend three important functions we held annually - the School Anniversary, Acharya Ratna Sri K Rangaswami Aiyangar Memorial Day and Sir P S Sivaswami Ayyar's Birth Anniversary. He had great admiration and respect for both Sir P S Sivaswami Ayyar and K Rangaswami Aiyangar and paid glowing tributes to them at the meetings.

'Where women are respected there the gods are pleased', is a saying in Sanskrit. Surely the gods must have been immensely pleased with Sri R K Swamy. He had very great regard for women and would never speak harshly about them. On the other hand he showered sympathy on them for the burden they carry throughout life as homemakers. His eyes would become misty whenever he spoke of his mother. He would talk of how learned she was in the scriptures and how she taught her children the mythological stories, what care she took in their upbringing and education. He told me how he had the good fortune to look after her when she was in failing health. In this, it must be said he was ably assisted, by his wife, Mrs. Radha.

Sri Swamy's house was always bustling with people, full of chatter and laughter. There were people of all ages there from little children to grandmothers and grandaunts. And Mrs Radha reigned supreme as the queen of the home. She was given full freedom to run the house. Sri Swamy always had a word of praise for her and mentioned how she stood by him through thick and thin. With his voice choking with emotion he would say, 'She is the woman behind my success'.

He was an ideal and kind host. With his smiling face and warm-hearted welcome, he would put all at ease. The ball of conversation would roll very easily. His wife would add to the joy of the party by conjuring up a menu to suit everybody's palate.

Often I used to go to him with doubts in my mind about school and personal matters. He would listen attentively to me and then instead of instructing me on what I should or should not do, he would narrate illustrative stories from our mythology. How he remembered these parallels and conveyed them to me is still a wonder. I must acknowledge that with every meeting with him I drew strength. His benign presence and touching sympathy dispelled any fears and frustrations I had and removed the cobwebs in my brain. I learned to think laterally, to think 'big' and to have 'vision'. My greatest regret in life is that I did not meet him more often, to be inspired by him and to become more enriched in mind.

He practised without preaching!

Sri Swamy's care for his family was something extraordinary. At a family gathering, many broke down when they recollected the myriad good things 'Mani Anna' had done for them. It became quite obvious then that he was the pivot around

which the family revolved. Out of a sense of gratitude, duty and love for their father the children converted the hall in Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya into an auditorium named it after him.

Once I made bold to ask him why, after he had voluntarily retired from service, he still went to office on time and stayed there till the evening. He replied that it kept him healthy. He also said members of the staff came in on time following his example. He practised without preaching! ■

Swamy Saheb



AMEEN SAYANI

Well-known broadcaster, Past Chairman, Advertising Standards Council of India, and Radio & TV Advertising Practitioners' Association

R K Swamy was already one of the gentle giants of the advertising world when I was trying to find my feet as a young commercial broadcaster. I got the chance to know him only in the eighties, when he and I were Board members of the Advertising Standards Council of India. Working with him in ASCI, talking to him about the problems of promoting self-regulation and learning from him about the intricacies of ad ethics was quite a rewarding experience for me. It was a kind of guru-sishya relationship. The warmth of his tradition-based erudition resulted in my beginning to refer to him as "Swamy Saheb".

In 1988, he became ASCI's Chairman, and I was appointed Vice-Chairman with the additional responsibility of servicing its Consumer Complaints Council. It was during this period that I experienced the depth of his dedication.

I particularly remember one significant incident. His agency released an ad for a two-wheeler, in which his client's motorbike had been compared with a competitor's, with seemingly well-researched facts. However, a complaint came in (presumably from the competitor) saying that though the facts could be correct, the comparative elements were incorrectly aligned. We got the ad thoroughly checked out by an independent technical authority, and the complaint was upheld. I was feeling somewhat embarrassed that my Chairman's agency was said to be at fault, and I mentioned this to him. But he was absolutely calm and unruffled. "If the CCC has got the matter thoroughly researched, I'll immediately withdraw the ad. It is my duty to set right any wrong that may have occurred, especially if it's a mistake by my own agency because of any inadvertently misaligned information."

That was the Swamy Saheb that I knew: high in his principles and firm in his decisions - living and working at the confluence of traditional ethics and modern proficiency. ■

He stood by his word



DR RAM TARNEJA
Former Managing Director and currently
Board Member of Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd.

Mr R K Swamy came to almost all the professional meetings we had, with INS or within the AAAI, or the tripartite Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) from 1970 onwards. Basically, the three-way relationship in publishing is among the media - newspapers and magazines - the ad agencies, which in turn represented the clients. All clients advertise through agencies and therefore the relationship between the client and the agency, and because of the role of the agency, the relationship between the agency and the media, become important. Mr Swamy's voice was always respected; his views were sought after on each major issue by all of us.

Although Swamy was senior to me in age, he always accepted my position in the newspaper world. We remained friends even after RKS left HTA.

Swamy was fifty when the last Englishman in Thompson, John Gaynor, left for Taiwan, and Swamy decided to start his own agency. You may get different versions of the reasons why he left that agency, but my view is that he always had a zeal for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial capacity. He was enthusiastic about innovation and had an excellent creative mind. All these and his risk taking ability woke up fully in him the zeal to branch out on his own.

I recall that the naming of the new agency received the collective wisdom of senior media personalities, myself included. The first question at this juncture was what the name of the company should be. Some of us felt that the name R K Swamy had become a brand by itself. So why not call the agency

You may get different versions of the reasons why he left that agency, but my view is that he always had a zeal for entrepreneurship.



L-R: Shreyans Shah, R K Swamy, Arup Kumar Sarkar and Dr Ram Tarneja at the 36th Annual General Meeting of Audit Bureau of Circulations in 1984

R K Swamy Ad Agency?

From the first day, Swamy wanted his agency to have INS (then IENS) accreditation. As the Chairman of the advertising committee of IENS, I went carefully through his written submissions and recommended to the committee that his company be accorded accreditation straightaway. There were a couple of hitches: first the practice of giving provisional accreditation to new agencies, and second the need for the owner of the agency to give a personal guarantee to IENS about payment within 90 days.

Mr Swamy could not reconcile himself to the provisional status, nor was he a wealthy man to provide a personal guarantee, being the honest, straightforward professional that he was. During considerable discussion in the committee, I stood by him, as I felt professionalism could not ever come into being as a full fledged business unless we regarded his professional investment in mind, in his integrity and his leadership as equal to financial involvement. We gave his agency full accreditation from the beginning. My first professional encounter with him then was a

We gave his agency full accreditation from the beginning.

test of my ability to judge his honesty and integrity and I am happy to say that over all these years the agency has proved me right. As a newspaper publisher

I stayed in touch with his company, a sizable agency in the South first, and later on an all India level, when they opened an office in Bombay.

Swamy and myself had a common interest in ABC. The position of President and membership of the committee rotate among the three parties to the bureau and both of us served on the council of ABC, and headed it at different times. He fought many a battle, as circulation figures have to be authenticated through a rigorous system at ABC, and he was never in favour of misleading clients, always going by the rules and regulations of ABC.

Another area in which our paths intersected was that of our common interest in the professionalisation of management, and management education. Through the Madras Management Association, an affiliate of the All India Management Association, he began to contribute enormously to the proceedings, deliberations and activities of AIMA.

I succeeded M K Raju (President AIMA, 1971-1972), and distinctly remember the National Management Convention convened that year. That convention and the one during my

tenure helped make the conventions a national institution. The 31st convention was held at Mumbai recently. The foundation was laid by some of us like M K Raju, RKS and myself with much pride. When the turn of the South came next, we considered Mr Swamy for the post and he became President at a young age. His contribution made the management movement strong in India.

I was Chairman of ABC in 1982-1983 and Swamy its Vice Chairman. We two also managed ABC with an overlap at a very difficult period when newsprint became scarcer than before, and all kinds of fudging of circulation figures was being done.

Whenever we had meetings down south, at Madras, Madurai or Kodaikanal, we would enjoy the South Indian food on offer. At Madras, the food came from Swamy's household, and we also had the privilege of visiting that household. Swamy also took us to many temples, especially in Madurai and near Chennai.

Mr Swamy gave respect and honour to his wife wherever he went; this is one of two traits that gave him stature.

Swamy's enormous belief as a Hindu amazed me. Nothing in his life moved without a prayer. He withstood that test also; he died a happy man. Never once during his lifetime did he mention HTA in his conversations with me, though I knew him intimately and we travelled together in India and abroad, often staying in the same hotels. Whenever we were together, I saw him giving full respect to Mr Subhas Ghosal, his former colleague who became MD of HTA later.

I recall with pleasure a trip we took to Indonesia. Mr RKS and I attended the Asian

Advertising Congress in Jakarta (along with our wives) as the sole Indian representatives when, because of foreign exchange restrictions, only a handful of delegates from agencies, media and advertisers could attend. The Vice President of Indonesia, who inaugurated the meet, had been a fellow student at Cornell University with me. He instantly recognized me, and we were given VIP treatment in Jakarta for three days, driven around with security vehicles behind us and ahead of us. When I introduced Mr Swamy to the VP, he told him he felt humbled that I gave him the first honours.

In Jakarta, the only food available for the vegetarians in our little group, Mr & Mrs Swamy and my wife, was boiled or steamed rice. Mr Swamy always carried some powders (milagai podi) with him and yoghurt was available everywhere, so we managed fine. I always used to kid him by asking him how he remained healthy without eating, referring thus to his vegetarianism. His response was: "My belief as a Brahmin is that I must remain vegetarian, but I am surprised your wife is a vegetarian."

Mr Swamy gave respect and honour to his wife wherever he went; this is one of two traits that gave him stature. The other was that he stood by his word. Right or wrong, for he was human, and could not always be right, he stuck to his word and fully proved to be a gentleman in every respect.

Mr Swamy has left behind traditions, integrity, and a work attitude that is being emulated by his sons who now run the business. The agency has really moved with the times. The fact that his company entered into collaboration with BBDO shows how progressive his company has been.

I haven't directly dealt with agencies in the last twelve years and whenever I meet old friends from the profession, we always end up talking of the glorious contribution made by Mr Swamy and the impressions he has left behind for all of us. ■

Devoted to what ought to be done



BRAHM VASUDEVA
Chairman
Hawkins Cookers Limited, Mumbai

I had known Mr R K Swamy as a leading light of the advertising profession. He came into contact with me when the advertising industry had in the year 1976-77 to represent to the GOI the case for advertising, the utility of advertising, the social and economic role played by it.

There was at the time an impression in Parliament that advertising was a waste of money and time in a country of scarce resources. In order to discourage advertising, the government introduced fiscal measures such as disallowance of advertising expenditure for tax purposes. Such actions had a variety of harmful effects on the economy in general and individual units in industry. The Indian Society of Advertisers, the AAAI, and INS, all got together to represent to the government against such moves.

In this representation which happened more than once, as these disallowances kept coming back repeatedly, I had occasion to work closely with Swamy in the preparation of the case, the documentation, and the actual representation itself, going and meeting the ministers and secretaries. Swamy and I were among a group of four or five. I was then the Managing Director of Hawkins. He was already running his own agency. We worked pretty close together and came to know and respect his talent, his integrity, his determination and his skill in persuasion. We became professional colleagues and friends.

Later, in the mid-1980s, Hawkins were looking for an agency to do their advertising. They thought of R K Swamy Advertising

We worked pretty close together and came to know and respect his talent, his integrity, his determination and his skill in persuasion.

Associates - in its pre-BBDO days - and invited Swamy over to Mumbai. I recall the occasion with much pleasure: He responded to our invitation and we did not take much time to arrive at a decision. I signed the contract on behalf of Hawkins and Swamy on behalf of his agency. The contract is still extant, but we have never had a chance to take recourse to it or quote chapter and verse. Our relationship has grown in confidence, mutual respect and utility. RKS left the day-to-day operations of the account to his son Shekar and we never had occasion to go back to the old man and say, "Why don't you look into what your agency is up to?" It has been a very pleasant association, personally with RKS, and professionally with Shekar and his team in Mumbai.

We also worked together on the Advertising Standards Council of India or ASCI, of which I was the first Chairman and Swamy followed suit within four or five years.

During that time, he shared with me his vision and professional standards, his commitment to truth in advertising and his belief in the supremacy of the consumer. His major contribution to advertising was his advocacy of issues affecting the industry, his representations to government and the INS in defence of the industry, whether it was the tax laws in force or issues involving the accreditation of agencies and the credit period allowed to agencies.

The contract is still extant, but we have never had a chance to take recourse to it.

When Swamy made the transition from JWT manager to entrepreneur at the age of 50 taking a principled stand, he set an example to many in the industry, particularly in the ethical and professional standards he

He set an example to many in the industry, particularly in the ethical and professional standards.

established. He did not compromise his personal values in the pursuit of business. He successfully combined the family aspects of managing business with professional partners, culminating in the partnership with BBDO. To this day, the collaboration remains an unusual hybrid between the largest agency in the world and a family business.

Swamy worked hard to establish the value of advertising in the minds of a number of new sectors, pioneering the propagation of public sector advertising, when he convinced organisations like BHEL and HMT to advertise on a considerable scale.

He will always be remembered for his personal involvement and commitment to excellence, his relentless devotion to what ought to be done. ■

He became sage-like



L VASUDEV

Former Chairman & Managing Director, Indian Airlines & Madras Fertilizers Ltd and now President, Xantia Consultants & Executive Consultant, Alpha Energy Systems Limited

I had resigned as Chairman & Managing Director of Indian Airlines and returned to Madras by the Tamil Nadu Express. This was in May 1993. Among the first friends to call me was Mr. R K Swamy.

I said "friend" but at that time, I really knew him only as my father's friend. My father and Mr. Swamy were contemporaries and had immense regard for each other. More than that, as Mr. Swamy would point out from time to time, they shared similar midlife crises like I was facing at that time of being in the late forties, with a young family and no job!

My father had resigned from the Indian Overseas Bank after over 25 years of distinguished service. In similar fashion, Mr Swamy had resigned from J. Walter Thompson after having steered it to the numero uno position in India. Both had resigned on principle for having been passed over to the top slot despite having been largely responsible for the preeminent positions of their respective organizations. I had also resigned on principle that the writ of the CEO was being undermined by a new Minister of Civil Aviation in total contrast to his predecessor who had hired me. And so, Mr Swamy saw several parallels in our lives.

Both men went on to seek new opportunities and to make a grand success of their new challenges. My father, the late Mr G Lakshminarayanan, joined the Indian Bank and by the time he had retired as Chairman and Managing Director, he had transformed it fundamentally. That era is still talked about with reverence. And Mr R K Swamy went on to found his own advertising agency that became a new star in the advertising scene in an unbelievably short time. The point of this story, as Mr Swamy would say, is that the future is never finished.

The future is never finished. Only the past is!

Only the past is! And that a midlife crisis is just what it is and that I should get on with life just like they did!

While my father quietly faded away from engagement with the corporate world after his retirement at 60, Mr Swamy continued his professional life with zest and energy almost to his last days. In fact in 2001, when he was awarded the Life Time Achievement Award by the Madras Management Association, he was just 79 years young! And so, he remained on the scene even as I had begun to acquire some seniority as a professional. So much so, I had occasion to interact with him as my contemporary as well.

I recall that when I had taken over Madras Fertilizers as CMD, Mr Swamy made a fine and lucid presentation of advertising strategy that showed how deeply he understood fertilizers, the product, the market and what influenced

Time and age were no barriers to Mr Swamy as his professional life showed.

purchasing decisions! A thorough study of the background, incisive analysis and insight ... finally crowned by a creative burst of strategy, was characteristic of the man in whatever he did in life, be it advertising or anything else he took upon himself.

Later, when I assumed charge as CMD, Indian Airlines, he made a courtesy call at the IA headquarters in Delhi, regardless of the fact that I was some twenty years his junior in age and professionally! In fact, time and age were no barriers to Mr Swamy as his professional life showed.

They were no barriers either to friendships. Care and concern he had for people across the whole age spectrum. He would interact with a young person with as much regard and dignity as he would with someone of his own age. He believed in the continuum of life

beyond the mortal human frame and respected the soul in each person. He also believed that there could have been some connection with an individual in some previous incarnation. Perhaps this is the only explanation to Mr Swamy's call to me that morning after I had returned to Madras from Delhi by the Tamil Nadu Express. Perhaps, this is the only explanation to the love and affection he showered on me like his own son in spite of the fact that I had done nothing for him then, or ever after!

Mr Swamy gave me an office close to his with a telephone and unrestricted access to all his staff and facilities in R K SWAMY BBDO. I was free to work on any project for anyone and establish myself as a freelance consultant. I shared many lunch breaks with him when he would discuss practically everything under the sun. He was a good raconteur, drawing from his ample and rich experience as a professional. And, often, to drive home a point, he would recall a story or two from the vast Indian mythology and the puranas. These stories would be not only apt for the situation but also interesting in understanding how and why humanity is the way it is!

Despite his deeply religious nature, Mr Swamy held a catholic and inclusive view of life. His Vaishnavism did not preclude him from building relationships with people of other backgrounds and faiths. Some of his close and trusted friends were from other sects and R K SWAMY BBDO as an organization has a collection of people of different beliefs from different parts of the country. For many like me, it was Kamala Joseph who was the face of R K SWAMY BBDO, because she was for years, the person you saw first when you visited its corporate office. And, what a warm, friendly face at that! I do not think Mr. Swamy or anyone else in his organization, ever thought of her as Christian. Kamala was, and is, very simply, Kamala!

Mr Swamy was a liberal in his economic perceptions. In a short monograph in July

As much as he was committed to building the future, he drew inspiration from the wisdom of the very ancient.

1992 titled "INDIA: How To Succeed Without Tears" he observed that India was weighed down by public debt, internal and external, which at that time was estimated at Rs. 360,000 crore. He felt that if this could be liquidated somehow, India could be freed of its massive interest and subsidy burdens, which were eating into government revenues, leaving little for building enduring national assets that could generate revenues and create employment.

He believed this could be done by systematically privatizing in three to five years some of the 236 public sector units, whose total market capitalization was conservatively estimated at Rs. 1,375,000 crore at that time. He was very clear of course that this was not going to be easy given the widespread opposition it would face from all quarters including from within the ruling party, which was at that time a Congress led coalition under P. V. Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister and Dr Manmohan Singh as Finance Minister. He believed however that those that opposed the idea needed to be "educated" and persuaded to accept that privatization is merely a change in the ownership of assets within India, and that PSEs would only become widely held public companies as are Tatas, Birlas, Mahindras, Escorts, to name a few. If they are persuaded to accept the view that they can have the cake and eat it too, it should be possible to make the change positive and beneficial.

He believed that there was enough liquidity in the Indian investing public to subscribe to the new public sector shares

"because they will see in them a new kind of gilt-edged securities" and that as the British experience had shown, "the administration of the newly privatized PSEs will undergo a sea change to become more productive and profitable and, therefore, the economy as a whole will benefit."

In retrospect it seems that Mr Swamy had a prophetic vision! His suggestion has been implemented in principle if not in full measure by successive governments regardless of their political hue. Yet, as an advertising man, Mr Swamy may have been disappointed that no government in India has seriously applied itself to educating the polity on public policy. Except for advertisements in the media at election time, usually to promote the government of the time, like the 'India Shining' example, there has been no attempt to agitate, invite debate and forge a final consensus on crucial economic issues like disinvestment of the public sector or pricing of public goods like electricity for instance.

Though a man of advertising, Mr. Swamy was deeply religious. While a devout Vaishnavite, he established enduring relationships with people of other faiths. He engaged in renovating historical temples as much as in building places of modern scientific learning. And, as much as he was committed to building the future, he drew inspiration from the wisdom of the very ancient. I realize that I may be inviting ridicule, but it is true that Mr Swamy would, from time to time, engage in dialogue with this ancient sage who, he believed to be Sri Suka Brahmanaharishi. And this, he would do, live and in real time and I have been witness. Except, that I have no proof to the identity of his interlocutor. What I know however is that this interlocutor has great power that defies rational explanation, and like a time machine, can see events of the distant past and foretell events to take place in the future! Whoever this great personality is or whatever this phenomenon is, may I, for

want of any better description, merely call it the 'Entity'?

The midlife crisis I referred to earlier made me see that there may not necessarily be logical cause-effect relationships in life. Or, if there is, it was not evident in terms of my own cognitive life experience. And so, one evening, Mr Swamy asked me to put away reasoning and logic in suspended animation, and visit a small, unpretentious place in Nungambakkam, Madras, called Sri Suka Brahma Maharishi Ashramam. In a small but brightly lit room was a young man in his mid thirties, wrapped in a green silk dhoti and reading out from a sheaf of pages! This was Kumaar Guruji reading out the words of Sri Suka Brahmamaharishi. The language was archaic Tamil, very alliterative and initially difficult to understand. Examining the pages I found them blank! In effect, Kumaar Guruji was reading out the words of the great sage out of thin air!

Mr Swamy asked a question concerning me and the words of the sage were that I should first pay obeisance to Goddess Durga for 42 days before he would give me a detailed reading of my life. I thought I should test the sage out and I did visit the Kapaleeswarar Temple at Mylapore for 42 days, though having been a long-time atheist I felt embarrassed and often looked over my shoulders to see if I would be spotted by friends! But soon, I had begun to enjoy the visits and was too absorbed by the peace and ambience of the temple to give credence to the ego.

After the 'humbling experience' of these visits, I returned for another question and answer session with the sage, together with Mr Swamy. The words of the sage were duly recorded on a cassette tape. The cause and effect disconnect in my recent past was ascribed to karma or consequences of past actions in a different incarnation; but the good news was that the worst was over. I did not know what to make of this, but the

language of the sage or the Entity was so sweet and compassionate that I kept returning to it from time to time over the years from 1993. And from then on, I made many major decisions that were contrary to my rationalistic way of thinking but out of faith in the words of this Entity. These decisions turned out right all the way!

About two weeks before Mr Swamy passed away, we spent a long evening together. He had just then been discharged from hospital after a life-threatening crisis. Uncharacteristically, he was reminiscent, speaking of his life and the sense of satisfaction he felt at how it had unfolded. He was particularly happy at how his fledgling agency had become a major player in the advertising world and how it would continue to be a force to reckon with after his time. He was pleased also with the outcomes of his various other interests in education and religion. But these were not words of any premonition, as he expected to fully recover and complete some unfinished missions. I also met him late one evening to say that I was to be away for three days out of Chennai on tour. He was unusually quiet and hardly spoke. He was absolutely alert but preoccupied and nodded when I said I would see him immediately on return. He passed away the next morning quietly and with dignity after his customary prayers.

Mr Swamy was a great personal friend though he was so many years my senior. I miss him, his great warmth and affection and of course his wise counsel. Every time I visit the R K SWAMY BBDO corporate office in Madras, I step into his office and, in my mind's eye, I see him sitting there with his beckoning smile. He is gone for sometime now, but I still feel his presence now and then. Such was R K Swamy. ■

Father figure



DR VASANTHI VASUDEV
Former Principal Sir Sivaswamy
Kalalaya Senior Secondary School.
Founder Osmosys Learning Products
and Services, Chennai

I met Shri R K Swamy when my professional life was at crossroads and I was looking for direction. To me he was my father's esteemed friend and to him I was a qualified and ambitious young woman.

I met him in a very formal context; I was being interviewed to assess my suitability to take on the mantle of Principal of Sir Sivaswamy Kalalaya.

The school represented his dream and vision for 21st Century Indian education. In it he had made a huge emotional investment and through Kalalaya he hoped to realize the crystallization of his educational leadership.

On that eventful day, I spent more than five hours hearing him sculpt his vision with the eloquence of a poet. He marketed his dream and drove home his definition of what Kalalaya should be, with illustrations of stories from mythology and verses from the Gita and the Vedas that gushed forth like a mountain cascade.

My disbelief knew no bounds when he said, "You are a very educated lady, holding a string of degrees, and I have barely had any formal education; I am illiterate by your standards but I have the wisdom that life has given me."

I have often reflected on these words. If such erudition could be learnt from life, then why bother to build schools! But my experience in schools has also taught me that there aren't too many students in the school of life or in the classroom like Swamy, with his ability for life long learning.

"You should look after Kalalaya like your own child and make every child unique in whatever he or she is born with, and I will support you in this mission."

This was the promise of trust that bonded us in a relationship that had many dimensions:

Boss and Mentor: he was the President of the National Boys' and Girls' Education Society that governed Sir Sivaswamy Kalalaya Senior Secondary School and

A superior mind goes one step further. It synthesizes, connects and finds commonalities amongst dissimilar entities. Swamy was a great synthesizer.

I was the Principal.

A concerned 'Father', who welcomed me into his heart as a daughter. He guided, advised and directed me in many a critical decision in my personal life. In fact his rational and modern outlook combined with a philosophic acceptance of destiny and karma, helped me to sort out many sticky emotional and personal situations. His kindness and empathetic acceptance of me gave me the confidence to move on with life and I, like a daughter, held on to his supporting hands at every juncture.

A Guru, who inspired me and taught me the joys of a larger existence for a cause, built on conviction without fear of pain or hardships.

He practised purposeful living and his Life became my Teacher.

His ability to include and integrate was remarkable. He created group minds that imagined what he would like and what he would say, and tried to be like him, not out of fear but out of admiration.

He adopted a forgiving attitude to erring or recalcitrant colleagues and even put up with disrespect and insolence. Totally unmindful of his hurt, he remained glued to his goal of public good at the cost of personal pain. His ability to look only at the positive and marginalize the negative was truly amazing!

Swamy was a rare example of wholesome and expansive parenting. He made me realise that biological contribution alone need not

make one a parent. He was a father to so many of us! He attended committee meetings unmindful of his physical ailment and pain and conducted the proceedings without any fuss. His indomitable spirit always carried the day.

The human mind is good at analysis and classification. When we create groups, we do so by differentiating one from the other. A superior mind goes one step further. It synthesizes, connects and finds commonalities amongst dissimilar entities. Swamy was a great synthesizer.

He was able to reconcile his devout Vaishnavism with multiracial tolerance; his egalitarian principles, which made him advocate flat organisational structures without inequities in compensation and privileges, went hand in hand with his belief in capitalism; that quality comes with a price.

In his mind, there were no paradoxes. He saw wellness in everything and everybody and he built on their strengths to guide them towards a goal. And once he saw others' own his goal, he willingly took a backseat and made others feel that they were the drivers! Everything was integrated in supreme inclusion.

R K Swamy was able to bind his colleagues, friends and associates in bonds of godliness and I still see him like Lord Krishna, the Universal Father, preaching in a voice gentle but firm, the gospel of Karma: Do your duty at all times and the end will be the logical fruition of your effort!

To conclude:

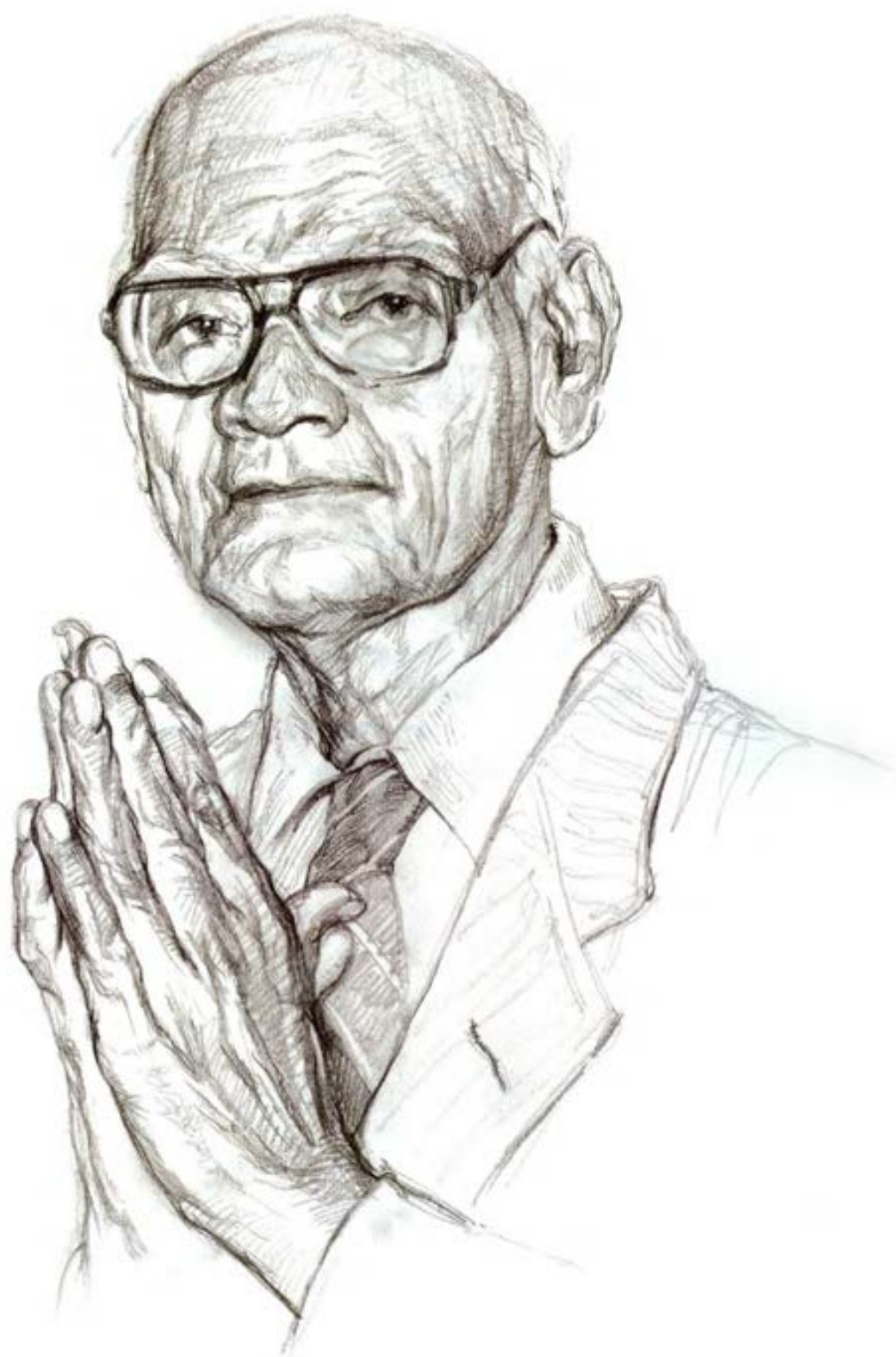
*And father to me and to many others
as well*

*And also elder brother to every other
worldwide*

*Who by the providence of coincidence crossed
his path*

*Or run with him along and become inspired
For the rest of his life without interruption
By one who will remain and always
remain forever. ■*

REMINISCENCES





J C CHOPRA
Former Marketing Director
Hindustan Lever
and Member of the Board, Voltas

He was a dear friend, a very clearheaded man, an excellent team leader, who knew what he wanted and set out to achieve it. There was no messing around, no changing his mind, and he never played any games with anybody.

Mr Swamy's campaigns resulted in the Government and people of the country recognising BHEL and Madras Refineries as premier institutions serving the country and achieving the objectives set forth for the public sector. The morale of their employees went up as they felt they were participating in nation building.

His eloquence, deep commitment to the task, and desire to satisfy customers were the hallmarks of his personality.



V R DEENADAYALU
Former Chairman
& Managing Director
Madras Refineries Limited
& Former Executive Director
Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd



R KRISHNAMOORTHY
Former Advocate General
State of Tamil Nadu

He was widely regarded as a Bhishma of the advertising industry. He gave his ideas liberally even to his adversaries.

He has left behind him a great institution which will serve as a constant reminder to all of us that by sincere and dedicated work we can attain pre-eminence in whatever field one chooses.



H. LAKSHMANAN
Executive Director
Sundaram Clayton Limited

'Impossible' and 'difficult to achieve' were words not found in his dictionary. He was a thorough person never yielding to failure, who had tremendous will power to live and do the best he could and wanted to. It was this will power, absolute faith in God, and planning in a big way, working earnestly to achieve it that sustained him so long in life.

His strategic vision and knowledge application saw him emerge as a leader in widely diverse fields: corporate or professional bodies, social organisations, religious missions, to name a few.



P. T. MALLIK
Former Vice President
R. K. SWAMY BHADO



T. R. MANI
Senior Advocate
& President, National Boys'
& Girl's Education Society
Chennai

Sri R K Swamy was Whig and Tory alike, progressive and reformative. Like all puzzles, the riddle of Sri R K Swamy is enchanting. It behoves us to emulate his passion for excellence in all the fields of activity that he adorned, including education.



K S NARAYANAN
Chairman (Emeritus)
Chemplast Sanmar Limited

A completely self-made man and a man with a mission, constantly espousing the causes he believed in. He was a tower of strength to the Madras Management Association.

Mr Swamy was a friendly personality. He would never speak ill of anyone and said all the good he knew of everybody.



V NARAYANAN
Former Chairman
and Managing Director
Goodyear India Limited



K PARASARAN
Senior Advocate
and former
Attorney General of India

He was as religious as he was spiritual. In him was an ideal blend of the values of religion harmonized with secular values and spiritual traits.



N S RAJAGOPALAN
Former Director
R K SWAMY BBDO

He preferred loss of business to loss of credibility because he very strongly felt that no price could be put on a man's credibility.

He built his empire by nurturing human relationships. He embellished all relationships with a personal touch that made all of us feel special.



RADHA RAJAN
Joint Secretary
Vigil Public Opinion Forum



R V RAJAN
Chairman &
Managing Director
Amgrah Madison
& Advertising Services P Ltd

*His life has taught me a few lessons. Take every challenge as an opportunity; never take anything lying down; be meticulous in whatever you do; research well before you make any presentation and that age is not a barrier to dreaming.
A binding force.*



HEMALATA RAMAMANI
Committee Member
National Boys' and
Girls' Education Society

He would extend his helping hand to any project that would be beneficial to education and to society at large.

Eager to contribute to society in every way possible, he could pick people for the work to be entrusted, bring out the best in them and make them do the work properly.

He was a nice man, decent, wedded to his task and an able administrator.



ATMARAM SARAOGI
Formerly Advisor Corporate
The Times of India Group
Managing Director
& CEO STP Limited



B T SESHADRI
Senior Advocate
Madras High Court

He was responsible for organizing the grand function at Ahobilam in commemoration of the completion of 600 years of Sri Ahobila Math.

But for his initiative in organizing this function, Ahobilam, which was not known to many until then, would not have become a household name it is to every one today, and attract huge crowd.



**PADMA
SUBRAHMANYAM**
Director, Nrithyodaya
Chennai, Dancer &
Research Scholar

Sri Swamy became extremely successful in business without sacrificing the basic values of life and heritage.

Let the present and future generations endeavour to follow the value systems he believed in. He excelled in each of his varied roles.



P. UNNIKISHNAN
Former Managing Director
Binny Limited



**K. A. VARADAN
IAS**
Former Chief Secretary
Sikkim

In whichever circle Sri Swamy moved, he became the centre of attention. He was there to propagate cheer, wisdom and encouragement. I have seen him in close family circles, congenial social situations, sophisticated professional presentations and formal, intensely religious occasions. In each one of these differing situations, Sri Swamy always played his role appropriately and with good effect.





R K SWAMY BBDO burst into the world of advertising as R K Swamy Advertising Associates on April 2, 1973. Within the first few years itself, through its phenomenal growth, it emerged as one of the top ten advertising agencies in the country, with offices across India.

Following a contrarian path, the Founder Chairman and Managing Director, Mr R K Swamy focused on converting public sector enterprises to meaningful advertisers. Companies like BHEL, ONGC, HPF, HMT, HEC, IPCL, BEL and others came into the limelight supported by his efforts, with some of these enterprises featured as successful case studies in management institutions.

R K SWAMY BBDO reinvented itself completely as it went on to serve clients drawn from the Indian private sector and multinational corporations, contributing to many a brands' success.

R K Swamy promoted the *HANSA* companies to offer Marketing Services. Today, *HANSA* Research is the largest Indian-owned independent in the business. Other *HANSA* offerings cover Television Content production, Outdoor Media management, Events & Activation, Consulting, Medical Education, Retail ID and InfoSource. Taken together, *HANSA* represents one of the most comprehensive and fastest growing marketing services groups in India.

Following the contrarian footsteps of its founder, the Group has set up *HANSA* Marketing Services USA, Inc. to cater to the largest and most competitive market in the world.

With its unique work culture based on a sharp focus on solving Clients' problems, and the strong base it has created in terms of its people and customers, the Group is set to write exciting new chapters in the current global environment.

the Shans and Colons (name)
advice of a multitude of competitors
and open to comparison to the common
evidence of his controlling power and
of choice

of new commodities, supplemented
by old commodities. A basis for
it is clear from the history of
new ideas were born. Then
the national advertising became
an educational force. This
unlike the scientific method
because one could stray away
to the court of public opinion.
is not necessary, for propaganda

He was a dear friend, a very clearheaded man, an excellent team leader, who knew what he wanted and set out to achieve it. There was no messing around, no changing his mind, and he never played any games with anybody.

J C JHOPRA

Mr Swamy's campaigns resulted in the Government and people of the country recognising bhel and Madras Refineries as premier institutions serving the country and achieving the objectives set forth for the public sector. The morale of their employees went up as they felt they were participating in nation building. His eloquence, deep commitment to the task, and desire to satisfy customers were the hallmarks of his personality.

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