

## 76. Cow & begging

It is strange that 'cow' was instrumental in suggesting subjects of my last few articles. This subject was also suggested by the cow and hence this title.

Last month I had been to my village. I just finished evening walk and was returning home. My wife was busy purchasing vegetables. I was just standing on the opposite side of the road. Suddenly one cow came and stood almost next to me. Cow was young & smart. She was pregnant. Her eyes were constantly searching for some thing. I thought that she must be waiting for her master. I soon realized that it was not so. I could suddenly noticed hunger on her face. Soon my observation was proved correct. One vegetable vendor threw few tomatoes from other side of the road. Probably Cow was expecting this. She just rushed like a dog and ate those tomatoes. In fact although grass was also available on road side but apparently cow was not interested. Thought flashed in my mind that due to pregnancy she might have developed liking for Tomatoes.

I thought for a while to purchase  $\frac{1}{2}$  kg. Tomatoes and feed her. But I thought that villagers may not understand my noble purpose behind this and which may trigger confusion. My wife finished her job of purchasing vegetables and we returned home. I also thought that as I will be returning to Mumbai after 2 days, my feeding tomatoes may not solve her problem on permanent basis. I decided to leave the cow on her own fate.

In spite of this clarity in thinking, some how I could not forget this topic. Suddenly I visualized small girls begging with few days old baby in the basket near railway station. They capitalize on that baby for begging. How that cow must have grown all these days without master? She could not protect herself from not becoming pregnant. But how about those girls? They could have but used that as aid for begging.

How strong her calf would be as cow herself was finding difficult to feed her?  
Whether that calf would get adequate milk from the cow?

Then I visualized senior citizens waiting in the bank corridor on 1<sup>st</sup> of every month for withdrawal of pension. When they see the notice board stating that pension can not be withdrawn today as the necessary credit has not been received from the employer /government, their faces turn helpless. They literally survive on that inadequate pension and also help their son for meeting household expenses. I also see Branch Managers and officers talking politely with these people. Why can't government credit the pension amount by end of the month? Has any one witnessed the situation in bank on 1<sup>st</sup> of every month?

You must be recollecting my earlier article on 'Beggars' wherein I had described different beggars adopting different methodology for begging. I would say that all of us are in fact beggars on both fronts. Firstly we all depend on someone for some service or the other irrespective of whether you are rich or poor, educated or otherwise. No doubt we pay for those services but when one day we don't get these services, imagine the situation and we almost fall into the category of beggars.

At other end, in spite of our position, knowledge, power, availability of finance, we fail to change the economic condition of the poor. We only discuss about population below poverty line but have we ever realized as to how these people must be surviving? We can't even tolerate inconvenience on one day or for few hours. It is really shame on us.

At this juncture I remember the method suggested by Late Shri Vinoba Bhave. He suggested that work should be assigned as per knowledge and competence but pay should be given as per requirement. Though the ideology is great, it is not followed. There is a growing tendency among the employers to recruit slightly low competent staff and offer them big designation and responsibilities. No wonder such staff would neither leave the job nor protest against the pay or working conditions.

If we look around our society, you would observe that rich is becoming richer and poor is becoming poorer. The disparity is increasing day by day and would generate more tensions in the society in days to come.

On my next visit to village, I should again trace that cow.