

ODE TO A QUINTESSENTIAL BUREAUCRAT

Our maternal Grandmother dreamt of knitting tiny footwear and saw an augury plain,
Wished-for news from and about eldest Daughter sure to lend gravitas to her stature,
Manohar fondly called Mohran, precious Gem, leading the way to a formidable Twain,
Younger Himmat, funny and frolicking, fittingly Hitty, so different in looks and nature,
Both rising to heights in Civil and Defence, contrasting Domains showered with gain,
Acquiring strength and depth from Humanities, empathy and finesse from Literature,
Joined IAS during hazy phase of transition from bold ICS to opening of wider Terrain,
Tentative Politicians testing Ground, Bureaucrats apprehensive of impending capture,
Despite acknowledged competence, experience, less sure of ascendancy to sustain,
Only few courageous Officers availed opportunities to smoothen fluctuating rupture,
Looked beyond Labyrinth of Files, saw Public as the true measure, again and again,
Conviction in their expansive responsibilities of appointed Leaders, a lofty conjecture,
Shrinking by the day in equally qualified Successors, getting used to restricted Lane.
He saw Village in place of Individuals, wider perspective than usual narrow aperture,
Never letting innate Farmer die, exhausting himself in a dogged persistence to retain,
At ease with the sophisticated Lot, at home among sturdy Farmers, almost in rapture.
As Chief Election Commissioner, twice Rajya Sabha MP, Minister, in the rare totality,
Moved from one Avatar to another with confidence, far from arrogance and servility,
Widely Read, consummate Conversationalist, Benevolent, at the acme of Versatility,
Tour de force of Nature, impressed high and low with awesome force of Personality.

– Devinder Singh Sra