



NARENDRA JADHAV

Dr . Narendra Jadhav is the Principal Advisor, Department of Economic Analysis and Policy, Reserve Bank of India. In this role he influences monetary policy, the budget and thus his conclusions affect everyone of us. He is also a scholar and an author. His book, "amcha baap aan amhi" written in Marathi has been translated into English as "Outcaste". It has also been translated into French, Spanish and several European languages and is a textbook in several Ivy League Colleges. Recently Simon and Schuster bid and won the rights to publish the book in the United States. He has also written several books in his area of expertise such as "Monetary Economics for India", "Challenge to Indian Banking: Competition, Globalization and Financial Markets" and "Dr. Ambedkar : Economic Thoughts and Philosophy".

Dr. Jadhav's achievements have not weighed him down. He is approachable. He is extremely polite. He is not arrogant. He is extremely likeable. A most fascinating person.

Dr. Jadhav, can you tell me something of your childhood?

I was born in Wadala in Mumbai and spent all my formative years there. My father began living in Wadala in 1938 and all my brothers and sisters were born there. My parents had six children. I was the youngest. My eldest brother, Janardan, was 15 years my senior.

At the time I was born we were staying at Juna (old) Wadala in the railway colony as my father was attached to the railways. It was a slum. The buildings were barrack-like. There was a light only in the veranda. There was no bathroom. That convenience was outside. Nine of us lived in a room that was 10 feet by 10 feet. Then when I was three we were given an opportunity to move to another colony across the yard which was called Naya (new) Wadala.

I remember my grandmother (who lived with us) arguing that we should not move. This was because at that time that part of Wadala was emerging as a gang haven. There were goondas (scoundrels) and thieves. She felt that if we moved whatever little we had would be stolen. My father was upwardly mobile. He wanted to improve our living conditions. In Naya Wadala, there was electricity in the rooms and the bathroom had running water. He insisted that we move as it would help us, his children, to study. He wanted all of us to be educated.

Even though it was Naya Wadala, the living conditions were only marginally better. It was still a slum. The socio-economic cultural life was terrible. Two things stand out of that life. One - it was survival of the fittest. I had a fight every day. It taught me a lot and made me as I am. The second thing that stands out is my father. He was a terror. He was a strict disciplinarian. If we did not do well in school he would beat us up. He would beat others too if they did not do well. The other parents looked to my father as an example to ensure their children studied. The unwritten rule the other parents followed was that they'd make their children study as long as there was a light in Jadhav's house. The language I spoke at that time was foul and impure with every sentence peppered with abusive words.

Upto the fourth standard I went to the Bombay Port Trust School in Juna Wadala. All the teachers there were Dalits. We really respected our teachers. If we did well they'd give us a cake of soap. If we did really well it was a towel. I believe the idea was to instill the concept of cleanliness in us. The teachers would come home and my grandmother would give them the choices of fruits.

Mother (who used to sell fruits) thought that was an absolute waste. My grandmother and my father, on the other hand, believed in investing in human capital.

There was a club there called the Reynolds Institute. In those days it had a billiard table (it had been founded by the English for the English). I found out later that many of the filmy crowd used to come there to play. It had also a reading room and I would go there to read the magazines. My father encouraged this. My mother was simple. She would wait for me to return and she'd grumble about my wasting time reading magazines. My father would tell her that we needed to know what was happening

around us. Her reply was always, "why should they need to know?" In those days I wanted to be a dada. They were my heroes and we had some very colorful characters. There was a guy whose arm got entirely cut off (when he was running from the police).

The arm fell on the tracks. He stopped, picked up his arm and then took himself to the hospital. Then there was Shivaji who was known as Shivja. He used to enter the last compartment on a train.

Then as the train left and gathered speed, he would jump off the train as it reached the end of the platform. He never fell. Then there was a person who hit people with his head when he fought them. There was another - a wiry man who could single-handedly fight fourteen persons. There were also some who could draw very well. Another painted beautifully with his nails. There were many very talented people and they could have done so much. I was one of them. What made me different? How was I able to pull myself out? There was only one reason - I had my father.

The turning point in our life was in 1949 - before I was born.

My father decided that Chabildas School in Dadar was a good school and wanted us to learn there. So he took my brother there and met the headmaster and said he wanted his son to join the school. I think it was midyear. The headmaster said very nicely that there were no vacancies. He pleaded. He begged. He wanted his children to go to good schools because he wanted us to have the best education he could afford. When the headmaster was adamant he began yelling. To no avail. He then told the headmaster that he was going to do satyagraha and go on a hunger strike unless his son was admitted. The headmaster finally gave in and the next day, my father took my brother to school. He watched the teacher take him to the class and seat him. It was only then that he left.

How did you find this school?

Chabildas School was different from the Port Trust School that I had gone to in Juna Wadala. This was a Brahmanical school.

I was in conflict as I was living in different cultures - at home it was one and in school another. I got a split personality because of that and a complex. I was afraid to talk as I thought people would laugh at me. Or beat me up. During my entire school days I never opened my mouth. I did not speak "punned" Marathi. My Marathi was "ghati" and my classmates would laugh at me. I now speak better than many of them. I was once speaking on economics on television. During the talk I forgot the Marathi word and said "subsidy". The result was a flood of letters and calls asking me how I could use an English word. They said that they ask their children to listen to me if they want to speak good Marathi. To say "subsidy" in English was letting them down.

The school was Marathi medium. We learnt Sanskrit too.. There is an All Maharashtra Award for the best Sanskrit scholar called the Jaganath Shankarsetti Scholarship for Sanskrit. It was very prestigious and anyone who was above average competed for this award. Of the questions 80% were from the textbook and the remaining 20% from other sources. To prepare, several students kept two books of homework. One they'd hand over to the teacher to correct. The next day they'd collect it and then hand over the

second book. On the third day they'd submit the first book and collect back the second book. They would translate the works of Tulsidas and other classics. I wanted to do this too but because of my circumstances and the huge socio - economic divide I did not. After the contest was over my teacher was told that one of his students had narrowly missed the scholarship. The teacher was very happy. Whom he enquired and named several of his students - all brahmins. He was then told it was Jadhav who had missed it by one mark. The teacher could not put a face to my name and asked to see me. I did not go as I thought the teacher would beat me up as I had beaten the brahmins. Now I know it was a foolish thing to do. It happened because I was so suppressed. There were many in school who made caste-based remarks.

A teacher who greatly influenced me was Madhav Sakharadande. He made me realise my potential. In school there were all kinds of competitions. I would never enter these because of the complex I had. When I was in the 7th even though my handwriting was excellent, I did not enter the handwriting competition. After the competition was over he came to me and enquired why I had not competed. I murmured an unconvincing remark.

He then asked me for my notebook and then opening it, placed next to it the passage that had won the contest. My writing was far superior. This, I think, was a convincing way of showing people of my background our potential.

How did you get on with your classmates?

It was not easy. In the beginning they treated me badly because of my language - the language of the streets. It was foul and impure. My mother would also, before we went to school, put a lot of oil in our hair and as a show of affection rub it on our faces. The boys would tease me as "oily". The result was that I had a complex. I had very little communication with my classmates.

There was also the socio-economic divide. Many of them were brahmins and reasonably well off. I felt suppressed. I rarely talked. Several years later when I mentioned this to my wife she couldn't believe it. Then she laughed and said, "since then you have not stopped talking."

Can you recount an incident that affected you?

When I was a little boy a big event in our lives was going on the annual pilgrimage to the Khandoba temple in Jejuri near Pune.

One summer my father had bought me a hat. I was very proud of it. On our way back, in the rush, the hat fell off. I did not realise this till I was in the train and it had started. A friend of my father asked me what had happened to my hat. I began crying. Then someone to console me said that Khandoba had taken it. In my young mind the thought that flashed was why would such a great god take the hat of a little boy. I was hurt and I gave vent to this by unleashing all the abuse I knew; My family was shocked. My mother began crying. They could not believe that I knew such words. It was only a few years ago, just before my mother passed away, that I went to the Khandoba temple to seek forgiveness.

What did your father do?

My father was a cabin man. His job was to ensure the tracks were clear for goods trains. It involved moving the levers and changing tracks. His cabin was just outside Reay Road Station. He was very proud of his cabin. On the land around it he created a garden. He grew vegetables and fruits. During my holidays when he worked the morning shift I would take his lunch to him. In those days we were so poor that we did not receive any pocket money. We were a family of 9. My father's salary was only Rs. 300.

I would be given just enough money to buy a return ticket to Reay Road. I was a child. I wanted "goodies". I would therefore buy a one-way ticket and use the remaining money I saved to buy sweets.

One day my father asked me for my return ticket when I met him at the cabin. I told him that I would buy it on my way back. I thought I had convinced him. On my return I went to the station.

As I knew my father may be watching I sauntered towards the ticket booth. Then when I thought I was out of his sight I doubled back. The next moment my father was beside me. He then bought me a ticket and sent me home. I will never forget the beating I got that night.

What about your mother?

My mother was simple and submissive. As far as she was concerned the ultimate was having two meals a day and a place to stay.

Let me tell you of an incident to explain this better. After my return from America I would spend hours on research. My mother wanted me to relax. She couldn't appreciate my saying that I was still a student. Though uneducated my father was a very intelligent man. He told my mother that a degree is like getting a driving licence. Just because you have a licence you do not stop driving.

You continue practicing. This, he said, is what I was doing. Even today, I cannot defend my research better. My mother constantly fought with my father but in the end she would do whatever he wanted. Her forte was sacrifice. I think there was only one instance when she did not accept my father's decision. Dr. Ambedkar had exhorted us to convert to Buddhism. Men found it easy to do so. It was not so for women. My mother refused; She had been brought up believing in and praying to Hindu gods. She refused to change. She hid her gods and prayed to them. I have them with me now;

To sum up I believe my father was a visionary. He was a strategist. He was the captain. He decided the direction we'd go. My mother was the unseen engine. She ran the house.

Dr. Ambedkar was like a god to my father. As you know Dr. Ambedkar's ashes are preserved at Shivaji Park. On April 14 (birthday) and December 6 (the day he died), we'd go to Shivaji Park to pay our respects. On one occasion, to return home, we were waiting for a bus near the Plaza cinema. A very crowded bus came. Believing the others were behind me I rushed in. It was only after I got in that I realised that none of the others had alighted. I got out at the next stop and then walked back to the stop

outside the Plaza cinema. There was no one there as they had got into another bus which came soon after which was empty. I was in a quandary. I had no money and I did not know the way home.

Then I hit on an idea. When the next bus came I saw the route it took. I followed the route to the next stop and then waited for another to come. I saw where that went and then went to the next stop. In this manner I found my way home. When I reached home I found my mother weeping. She was convinced that she had lost me forever. Her immediate reaction was "wf?ydid you get lost?" My father was happy and delighted at my resourcefulness.

In mathematics there is the concept of local maxima and global maxima. My mother had local maxima (limited vision) but focused maximum (entirely) on the family. Let me tell you another story. My elder brother was fifteen years older than me and on him the hopes of my father lay. He had to lead and show the way. In 1956 my brother passed out of school. My mother spoke to someone (the first time she ever did) and got him a job at Swastik Oil Mills. The job required him to push empty oil barrels from one location to another, My mother felt very proud that her eighteen year old had a job and would be paid. My father refused to even consider this. He insisted that my brother should go to college. My mother thought it was a stupid idea. She thought all that one needed were two meals a day and a place to sleep. Her aspirations were limited. At the time Dr. Ambedkar had started a series of colleges which one could attend in the morning (7.00 AM to 10.00 AM) and at night. This permitted one to work during the day. This is what my brother did.

My mother was very religious and her world was full of gods.

One of her beliefs was that the earth rested on the head of a snake. In 1969 Neil Armstrong went to the moon. The Imprint Magazine published photographs of the moon in colour. I was very excited and took the photo to my mother and asked her, "Where is the seshnag (snake)." She looked at me with pity and compassion and said, "you will alwqys be a fool. Do you think your photographer will be able to take a photograph of god?"

Could you tell me a little about your siblings?

I don't know if you have seen the Hindi movie "Chalti Ka Naam Gadi". It is a story of three brothers. The eldest brother gives an impression of being a tough, strict person but has a heart of gold. The youngest is a revolutionary. The middle one is the most interesting. He wants the freedom of the youngest but wants to appear like the eldest. And it was so in our family, I believe. In the end it was my elder brother and myself who achieved the most.

In 1962 when I was in the fifth standard my brother appeared for the IAS exam. In those days telegrams were badly written by hand and for some strange reason delivered in the middle of the night. When it was delivered late at night my second brother was studying. My elder brother was not at home. He opened the telegram and read "JD Jadhav passed awqy" as opposed to reading 'JD Jadhav passed IAS". My brother screamed that my brother had died and fainted. The others woke up, heard that my brother had died and began weeping. There was a lot of commotion. At the time there was a Madrasi, Prabhakar, who was illegally staying at the colony. No one had attempted to read the telegram as the

brother who had fainted was the only one who knew English. This Madrasi picked up the telegram and said, "Arre, you should be rejoicing. This says he passed. JJ Tears of joy replaced the tears of sadness.

The day my brother went to Mussorie for training, as far as our colony was concerned, was a great event. The platform at Bombay Central was full of the poor from Wadala - there were Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Christians, Bhaiyas from UP and Madrasis.

It was a national crowd. Many did not understand what was happening. They knew something great had happened. Their thought was that, "if it can happen to Damu's son, it can happen to us." It gave them hope. The expressions on their faces are carved in my memory.

Tell me of your college.

I had done well at school and was accepted into Elphinstone College. I joined the college but quickly realized that I did not belong there. I got carried away. ~ did all kinds of things. I did not study hard and my results came down. People expressed sympathy.

I did not want pity. That hurt me. This was the turning point of my life.

Turning Point!

Yes, for the first time I began to think of my future. I then knew I had to make something of my life. I made my first decision. I decided to change college to Ruia. It is a good college and was near my house. Getting admission in the middle of term was difficult. When I went to seek admission there were many there for the same reason, armed with letters of recommendation. I had nothing. The principal was known to be tough. I went to him and told him that I wanted admission. I showed him my marks and admitted they were poor but they were not a good reflection. I showed him my SSC marks too. He looked at me with some surprise, took my letter seeking admission and wrote "admit". No one believed I had got in without a recommendation. Straight talk helped. This was the first time I did something for myself.

Inter science was the worst year of my life. I had no friends. I could not mix. I felt very low. I did not do well because of my mental turmoil. My elder brother had, at the time, gone to Mussorie on a refresher program. I wrote to my brother that I would like to see Mussorie. He sent me a ticket. It took me 33 hours to get there. While there I saw my brother mingling with other IAS officers. That too was a turning point. I told myself that I should be like that.

I loved mathematics. I hated physics and chemistry. While at Mussorie I read a book my brother had entitled, "Poverty in India" by Dandekar and Rath. After I read this I knew that economics was the subject I wanted to study. I decided to give up science. At the time only four colleges permitted one to study both science and economics. Ruia was one. I did my BSc in statistics with economics as a minor. Once I began studying economics I knew I was on the right track. I worked like mad. I was also insecure and would often wonder to my mother "With so many unemployed what job will I get." My mother would say, "worry. Your brother is the Collector - he can give you a job". This would hit a raw nerve and I'd yell, "I want to get the job on my own."

I had studied hard. After the exams one waited for the newspapers as the results were at the time published in the papers. I wanted a first class. My father had retired by this time. At 6.00 AM of the day the results were to be published I ran to the station. On checking the paper I could not find my name among those that had secured a first class. With a sinking heart I checked the second class. My number was not there too. I didn't know what to do.

Then I happened to look at First Class with distinction. My name was there. I rolled on the platform. I was so happy.

I enrolled for MA in economics. At the time everyone was attempting the State Bank of India exams. I took the exam too.

Several of my teachers took the exam at the same time. My brother was, at the time, the Collector of Bombay. He asked me whether he should talk to someone about me to better my chances.

I refused as I wanted to be accepted on my merit. I went for the interview. Early in the morning of the day the results were announced I ran to the station but Bombay was flooded. There were no papers. Then when I was wondering what to do a friend of mine came with the Free Press Journal. It had the results. But I had forgotten my number. In spite of the rains I decided to walk to the corporate headquarters of the State Bank at Nariman Point to check the results. It took me three and a half hours to reach Nariman Point and when I reached there I found that the Bank had declared a holiday. I was frustrated. My brother was staying on the way to Cuffe Parade and I went to his house. He made me relax; He gave me a drink (the first time I had alcohol) and I spent the night there. The next day I went to the State Bank. On the way the personnel manager met me and congratulated me on being selected. Then I went in and saw my name. This made me realize that I have it in me.

My brother was vehement that I should not take the State Bank job. His reasoning was that no Dalit has ever got a first class in MA and that I was close to getting it. He argued I could get a better job. I was adamant. Over a 100,000 apply. Only a few get in. I had got in through my own efforts. Therefore this job was important. I wanted the cake and I wanted to eat it too. I told him that I will join the State Bank., I would also ensure I got a first class. I had to do my second year MA. I went to my professor, Dr. Brahmanand. He is truly a legend. Dedicated and sincere to economics. He never married.. I told him that I was quitting economics as I had got a job. When I told him this there was so much pain in his face. He said, "IOu are going to be one of the great economists.

Don't do this." I told him that I did not want to but I am being posted outside Mumbai. If in Mumbai, I would continue my MA.

He took me in a taxi to State Bank Headquarters and to the cabin of Mr. Lawrence D'Mello who was the Chief economist of the State Bank. He was also a student of Dr. Brahmanand. Most economists at the time were his students. The professor told Mr. D'Mello that I must remain posted in Mumbai to study economics and that he would not leave Mr. D'Mello's office until he was assured that I would remain in Mumbai. There were internal calls made. I really do not know how he arranged it because departments are different but it was done. I remained in Bombay.

I completed my MA and got my first class. I was the first Dalit to get an MA. When I joined SBI I was not even 21.

I worked in SBI from 1974 to 1977. I did no outstanding work. It was a lackluster period. After the first year I was sent to small branches, one of which was Sakoli. When I was in Sakoli I realised my interest was in research. At the time there was an advertisement from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). I applied and got in very easily.

Then what happened?

I became quite complacent in the first 2-3 years at the RBI. I thought my career path was sorted out. I got involved in social work. I started an organisation that gave free coaching classes to people from slums on banking - the intent was to get them jobs in banks. Many got in. I had realised that passing an exam is a technique. Intelligence is randomly distributed.

A stage fortunately came when I questioned the purpose of my life. I asked myself what I was doing. I needed to do something for my career. I wanted to go abroad for my doctorate. I applied for a National Scholarship. I was chosen for economics in 1980. I went in 1981 to Indiana University and was there till 1986.

In those 4 1/2 years in America I found myself.

What was your first memorable experience in the States?

The number five is linked to my stay in the states. On the fifth day of my arriving in Indiana I became the President of the Indian Union. It happened like this. We were to arrive at Bloomington, where the University was located at 1 AM. This was my first trip abroad and I assumed that at 1 AM everything would be closed. I did not think I'd get a place to spend the night. I therefore looked up the information I had with me and rang the President of the Indian Union at the university. I asked him if I could stay in his room. He was very rude. He said the Association was not for this. Fortunately, when I actually arrived there was no problem. I got my room. I was however agitated by the way he spoke. On the fifth day of my arrival on campus there was a meeting of the Indian Union. The incumbent President was there. I was still seething. I stood up and said that the purpose of the Union was to help.

If they refuse that and are rude there is no need for the Union. I recounted very passionately the way I had been treated. Others spoke up too. At the end the body said that I was absolutely right and asked me to become the President. While I was President we did work hard for the community. We made sure new students were met. On weekends my wife and several others organized home cooked meals at \$3. It was extremely popular.

I must narrate another episode too. When one reads for a doctorate, one needs someone as the Head of the Committee to chair it. He is the one who guides the student. At our College there was a professor who had just returned from a secondment at the IMP - George Von Furstenberg. He was of the German nobility and clearly heads and shoulders above the others. Everyone was in awe of him. Even the person I had chosen to chair the Committee suggested I ask Von Furstenberg. I did. He was a cruel guy. I believe

he thought that if he killed my thesis he would create an aura around himself. He decided to scuttle my work. He would ask me to do some research and then after I had spent considerable time on it to make me do something else. In the meantime the Reserve Bank was getting restless. They felt I was wasting my time and began putting pressure. I was halfway through. I began debating with Von Furstenberg. He was a calculating man. Very devious. My best friend on campus was a Lebanese person - Wasim. One day he asked Wasim, "What! wrong with Naren? I am completely convinced he has Arab blood He is like a stallion. I cannot control him. " He wanted Wasim to tell me and Wasim did. I was livid. I accepted anything he said of my writing but I was not going to accept a personal attack. I would not be able to live with myself. I went with Wasim to the head of the department who was quite fond of me. I demanded that Von Furstenberg should publicly apologise. The head said, "Do you realise that if you insist you'd have to return without your doctorate?" I replied that I do but that I would not be able to live with myself if I go back with a degree gained after compromising. It was difficult for the head as Furstenberg was their star.

He called a meeting of the professors. They asked me to reconsider and not to make an issue. I insisted that I wanted a written apology. They asked me to think of the reputation of the university and not insist on a public apology. I finally relented and agreed to his apologizing in front of all the professors. They considered this and called Von Furstenberg and had him apologize to me. I asked for an unconditional apology and he gave it. Everyone was certain he'd kill me after that. To the contrary. He respected me. All the papers after that went smoothly. When I was leaving he gave a party at his house. At the party he took my wife aside and said, "Naren is a great fighter." On the fifth day of my getting the doctorate I returned to the RBI. This was in 1986. At the time I had several job offers but I wanted to return.

Wanted to return!

When I was going back several people asked me why I was returning. My retort was that you do not ask an innocent person why he is not a thief. The question that should be asked, in my opinion is, "Why are you not going back?" I remember a person coming to me and saying, "I wish I was as clear as you." If you compare me with professionals in India there is a gulf. Most people who enjoyed privileges in India and then elected to stay in the States are always cribbing that in America one is treated as a second-class citizen. I, on the other hand, was worse than a second-class citizen in my own country. Yet I, who was oppressed, elected to return.

I went to America on a Government of India scholarship. It was for one person. The amount I received was \$480 per month.

We were three. To make ends meet I looked for a job. I was told I could be a teaching assistant. Our professor in economics was a Phil Saunders. When I went to him he asked me to do a course and then return. I told him I do not need to. I can teach. I am a good teacher. He enquired whether I had taught. I replied that I had not but that a course would not make me a good teacher. You cannot make a teacher out of a person who is not a teacher.

Saunders asked me whether he realised how arrogant I was. I asked him to give me a class to prove to him. He would not. His ego was hurt. He even said that he would see that I would not get a chance to

teach economics. I went to the maths department. I said the same thing. The attitude there was different; They heard me out. Did not promise anything. I thought I had no chance.

When I reached home I got a call asking if I could begin teaching from the next week. I was overjoyed. They had taken me at my word and trusted me. I was glad I was honest. I taught for a year.

Later I had the satisfaction of Phil Saunders asking me to teach. I did not. I enjoyed teaching and my classes were very popular.

What did you do on your return?

I came back in 1986. This is when my real career with the RBI starts. Before this I was complacent. I spent time doing rural work.

I now felt I should do something. I had come back with ideas that I wanted to share. I started publishing like mad - 70 research papers and 7 books. Very soon I was noticed. One day the Deputy Governor called me in. He said India's quota in the IMF is going down (the loan a country can get is a multiple of the quota). He said that technical work has to be done to support the need for a good quota. I knew this was my break. RBI had never done any technical work like this. I wrote several papers. The Reserve Bank has a culture of subordinates, not talking when their seniors are present. Even in the elevators people enter based on seniority. If one goes for a meeting, one is told not to open one's mouth. It is very conservative. A meeting was called to discuss the quota. There was Arjun Sen Gupta who was at the IMP. There was Bimal Jalan.

I was not called. I went to the adviser and wondered whether I should go. I went. It was exciting. It was the first important meeting that I had attended. I asked my senior, Mr. Deshpande, who was there -what the strategy was? I asked him to tell me the dos and the don'ts. He was a very nice person. He said, "if you like talking talk. If you don't, don't." The meeting was chaired by Mr. Venkitaramanan. Mr. Jalan and Mr Sengupta were there. They were arguing about various issues. After an hour I could stand it no longer and put up my hand. This was a shock to others as another rule in the Reserve Bank is that you do not interrupt. I started speaking. Everyone stopped. I spoke for 10 minutes. After I had spoken Mr. Venkitaramanan took a decision. He said that we are now ready to make a presentation and that I should go to the IMF to present our case. I went. Mr. Sen Gupta kept me there for three months. This was the first time a report from the outside was presented to the IMP. This was my first break. It also landed me in trouble. If you are praised by people outside the Reserve Bank, it is not appreciated.

I had a mentor in Mr. Tarapore. He saw my potential. He was an extraordinarily cautious man. He tried me out on writing a speech for the Governor, Mr. Malhotra, on globalization. As Mr.

Malhotra went to Delhi, I went there too. I stayed at the guest flat of the Reserve Bank. Mr. Malhotra was there too. He was a man of few words. He told me what he wanted. He was receptive and we did interact while I was writing the speech, He often came to my room to discuss the issues. On the day of the speech he came to me, stopped in front of me and said, "teek hai" and tapped me on the shoulder. I was devastated. I thought I would be congratulated. When I returned Dr. Tarapore asked me how it

went. I narrated the whole thing. It was then that he told me I had been given a great compliment. Later he told me the governor was very happy with me.

During this time I was doing many things. I was very high profile. I was publishing more than could be absorbed by the rest. I was only a C grade officer though and I was not getting promoted. The RBI is a rigid organisation. I was way below in seniority. I told Tarapore that I am thinking of quitting. He had tears in his eyes. He said, "Do not. You are an asset." Tarapore along with Deputy Governor Rangarajan went to Amitav Ghosh, the other Deputy Governor to recommend my promotion to the Governor. Ghosh refused. Tarapore then went directly to the Governor and said that he wanted to promote me to director. Malhotra was under the impression that I was already a director. The next issue was how. Tarapore suggested that as I was from a reserved category that I could be from that quota. Mr. Malhotra said, "do not insult the young man." Then Tarapore came with another thought - ' make the position highly technical and keep it open to anyone to apply. Many applied. I was chosen and promoted. Next turning point. Venkitaramanan saw my potential. It was the time of the Harshad Mehta crisis. He called me in at 5.00 PM. Called me on the intercom. No other person. Told me to take over from the next day as PRO. RBI in the eye of a storm. I had no experience. I was thrown to the vultures. I was successful. I handled all press conferences. Interestingly I was the person who introduced the TV in RBI. Did you know the media did not have Tarapore's photo till he became deputy governor?

This was the time I wrote my book "Outcaste." I also wrote on, Ambedkar's economic thoughts.

In December 1997 I was chosen to go to Washington as the economic adviser to the Executive Director of the IMF on Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and India. I was there for 4 years.

After being there for 4 years I was in a quandary. I wanted to return. Yet it was difficult to give it up. The tax free salary was \$130,000. My son was in Canada. I wanted to spend a few more months to complete my daughter's education. Montek Singh Ahluwalia was also at the IMP. He spoke to the governor and I got the time I needed.

I came back to the same position. In 2003 I was made principal adviser.

You are also well known for your book Outcaste

As you know I had written it in Marathi. I did not think I could write it in English. I went to professionals to translate my book to English. I was disappointed by what they wrote. The book had lost its soul. When I went to, America I decided to do the translation myself. I finished the translation 15 days before I left Washington.

I approached Penguin and Harper Collins. I was going to Paris on work and asked a friend to arrange a meeting with publishers. I met them. They asked for the book. Fayard said they would buy it.

I agreed. They bought the non Indian rights. They got a real bargain. Fayard brought out the French edition and the Spanish edition. I was invited for the launch. RBI said I could not go. Finally I was

permitted one week. The books sold very well. ABC news interviewed me. So did National Geographic. Shot me in Lalit Basti in, Ghatkopar. This caught the attention of a lot of people. National Geographic helped me get a very good agent in California. After reading the book she sent one letter saying, "Can I represent you?" My agent was able to create a lot of interest. Several publishers including Random House and Simon and Schuster were keen. I finally, chose Simon and Schuster..

Your father was a disciplinarian. Are you?

Yes and No. I am very organized. I structure everything I do. I plan. I rehearse everything. Meticulous organisation. I have never hit my children. In this day and age that is not required. I like to make them think.

Your management style

I like to think I am the most popular officer in the bank. Most important thing is the human touch. I am accessible. I know all those who work for me and with me intimately. I try and give everyone the big picture. I am transparent. I believe you have to be consistent. That has worked well.

I believe in my people. I send people abroad for training. I am flexible. I always give the broad picture. I tell them how important their contribution is. This inculcates professionalism.

I believe that I am fair. I do not let others be unprofessional.

Children

I am completely involved with my kids. I give them complete freedom, We communicate very well. I remember my son saying, "The biggest thing I got from you was you made me think." I have an excellent rapport with the family. When I am with my family I am like a child.

Regarding our life all the big things are decided by me. I am the captain. Everything is delegated to my wife. I derive strength from my family.

How do you relax?

1 drink. Every Saturday and Sunday evening I drink. I have an unusual bar in my home - an 85 year old one. I never drink outside. I listen to music.

And the future

Who knows. It may be the RBI or teaching or politics .or governance.

