

Civil Society

The image shows a man wearing a black turban and a dark jacket over a light-colored shirt. He is holding a small solar panel in his hands. In the background, there is a large diagram on a wall titled 'd.light'. The diagram is a circular flowchart with 17 numbered steps, each in a different colored hexagon. The steps include: 1. PRODUCTION RELEASE, 2. PRODUCTION, 3. MARKET INTRODUCTION, 4. CHANNEL 3 CONSUMER MARKETING, 5. ONT FULFILLMENT COMPLIANCE, 6. PRODUCT RELEASE, 7. MARKET INTRODUCTION, 8. CHANNEL 2 CONSUMER MARKETING, 9. PRODUCT RELEASE, 10. MARKET INTRODUCTION, 11. CHANNEL 1 CONSUMER MARKETING, 12. PRODUCT RELEASE, 13. MARKET INTRODUCTION, 14. CHANNEL 4 CONSUMER MARKETING, 15. PRODUCT RELEASE, 16. MARKET INTRODUCTION, 17. CHANNEL 5 CONSUMER MARKETING. The 'd.light' logo is at the bottom right of the diagram.

BOTTOM-UP BUSINESSES

FROM SOLAR LIGHTS TO GARBAGE AND FARM FILMS



'YOU CAN'T DO REFORMS BY STEALTH'

Rajiv Kumar of FICCI says trust is critical
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HYD METRO TAKES DETOURS

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SOS CHIEF SAYS ADIEU

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TELLING IT ALL – ALMOST

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CHHOTA BHEEM'S BIG DAY

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NO VISION IN WATER POLICY

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SCOTCH EGGS & MEMORIES

Pages 31-34

Inviting Applications for the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2012 - India



Winner 2011

Name: Ms Neelam Chhiber
Company: Industree Crafts/
Mother Earth, Bangalore
Work Targeted at:
Artisans living Below
Poverty Line

At Jubilant we believe in Inclusive Growth. All our efforts and initiatives are directed towards that endeavour in our communities and the world in general.

To accelerate the process of Inclusive Growth at a macro level, Jubilant has collaborated with the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship to recognize, reward and support the leading Social Entrepreneurs through the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

We are committed to Caring, Sharing and Growing the world around us.

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Winner 2010

Name: Mr Rajiv Khandekwal
& Mr Krishnavtar Sharma
Company: Aajeevika
Bureau, Udaipur
Work Targeted at:
Rural Migrant Population

Entries invited between 1st April - 31st May 2012. To apply please log on to:

<http://www.jubilantbhartiafoundation.com/recognising-social-entrepreneurs.html>
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BOTTOM-UP BUSINESSES

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response@civilsocietyonline.com
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Civil Society

READ US. WE READ YOU.

Long live the start-up

THERE are many routes to inclusion. Entrepreneurs who push the boundaries of technologies and markets finally make invaluable contributions to improving the lives of people.

Our cover story this month is about such bottom-up companies. We find them attractive and full of value. It has become trendy to call them social enterprises. But such a description should not result in them being mistaken for bleeding heart attempts at dispensing charity. On the contrary, these are potentially robust businesses. Their promoters are driven people looking for challenging frontiers. They also go much beyond the very predictable and boring 'bottom of the pyramid' paradigm.

The garage is the place for new ideas. Unfortunately, the start-up gets little support in India. The odds are weighed against it. Academia doesn't connect with small entrepreneurs. The start-up can't find finance and when it faces the market, such are the odds that it feels it is being pushed off the planet.

But in start-ups, even the failed ones, we have the triggers for change. They encourage innovation and create the space for a change in values. We would like to see many more start-ups in solar energy, urban systems, farming, health care and, of course, the media.

Our opening interview in this issue is with Rajiv Kumar, the recently appointed secretary-general of FICCI. Rajiv brings a breath of fresh air to FICCI. Of course he speaks for industry, but it isn't mindless advocacy. Rajiv genuinely believes that there is a need to have dialogue and build trust. He is as upfront about what is wrong with industry as he is with this criticism of agitation for agitation's sake. Solutions are needed and both sides will have to acknowledge the need to go beyond slogans.

Rajiv makes the important point that Indian capitalists have to acknowledge the democratic framework within which they pursue their search for profits. Equally, those who champion causes should realize the importance of reaching at least some consensus on what is in the national interest. If there is no meeting point it is difficult to progress.

We were in the past month a part of an interesting exercise to evaluate the annual reports of NGOs. This competition is in its fourth year. The outstanding reports are given awards. CSO Partners runs the competition in collaboration with the Financial Management Service Foundation.

It will surprise you how inadequate the annual reports of NGOs are. Be it the financials or the get-up, the whole process of going back to society with a record of where money has gone and what has been achieved is mostly amateurish. There is serious work to be done here because NGOs have an important role to play in helping plug gaps in development and closer scrutiny is what they should be prepared for.

Publisher
Umesh Anand

Editor
Rita Anand

News Network
TS Sudhir, Shree Padre, Jehangir Rashid, Aarti Gupta, Susheela Nair

Photo-journalists
Gautam Singh
Lakshman Anand

Layout & Design
Virender Chauhan

Cartoonist
Samita Rathor

Write to Civil Society at:
E-2144 Palam Vihar, Gurgaon, Haryana 122017. Ph: 9811787772

Printed and published by Umesh Anand from A 53 D, First Floor, Panchsheel Vihar, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-17.

Printed at Samrat Offset Pvt. Ltd., B-88, Okhla Phase II, New Delhi - 20.

Postal Registration No.
DL(S)-01/3255/2012-14.
Registered to post without pre-payment U(SE)-10/2012-14 at New Delhi PSO
Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India under RNI No.: DELENG/2003/11607
Total no of pages: 40

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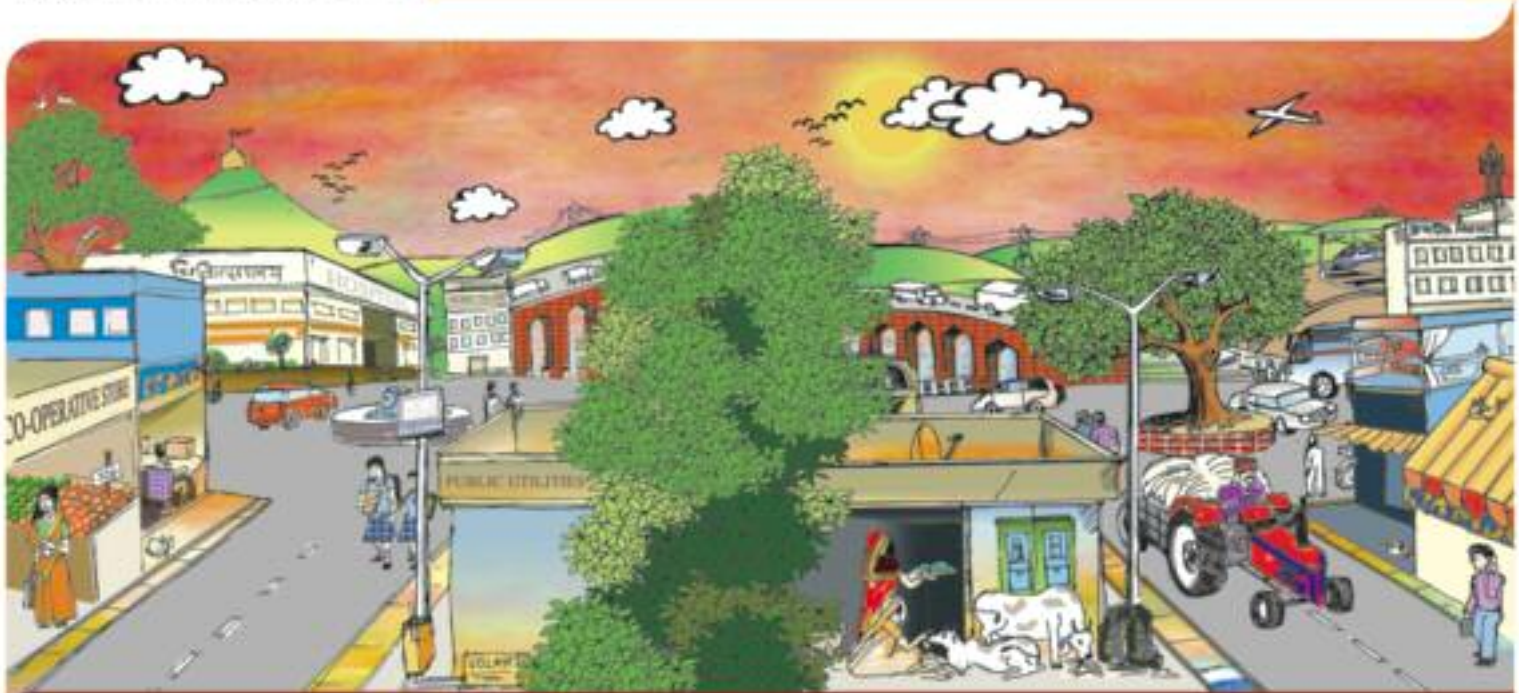
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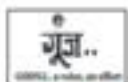
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For details, please contact:

Ms Neha Arora
Event Manager,
6th Indian Marketing Summit -2012

Ph. : +91-120-2323001-10 (Ext. 412)
Mobile : + 91 - 9650977042
Email : ims@bimtech.ac.in

Birla Institute of Management Technology

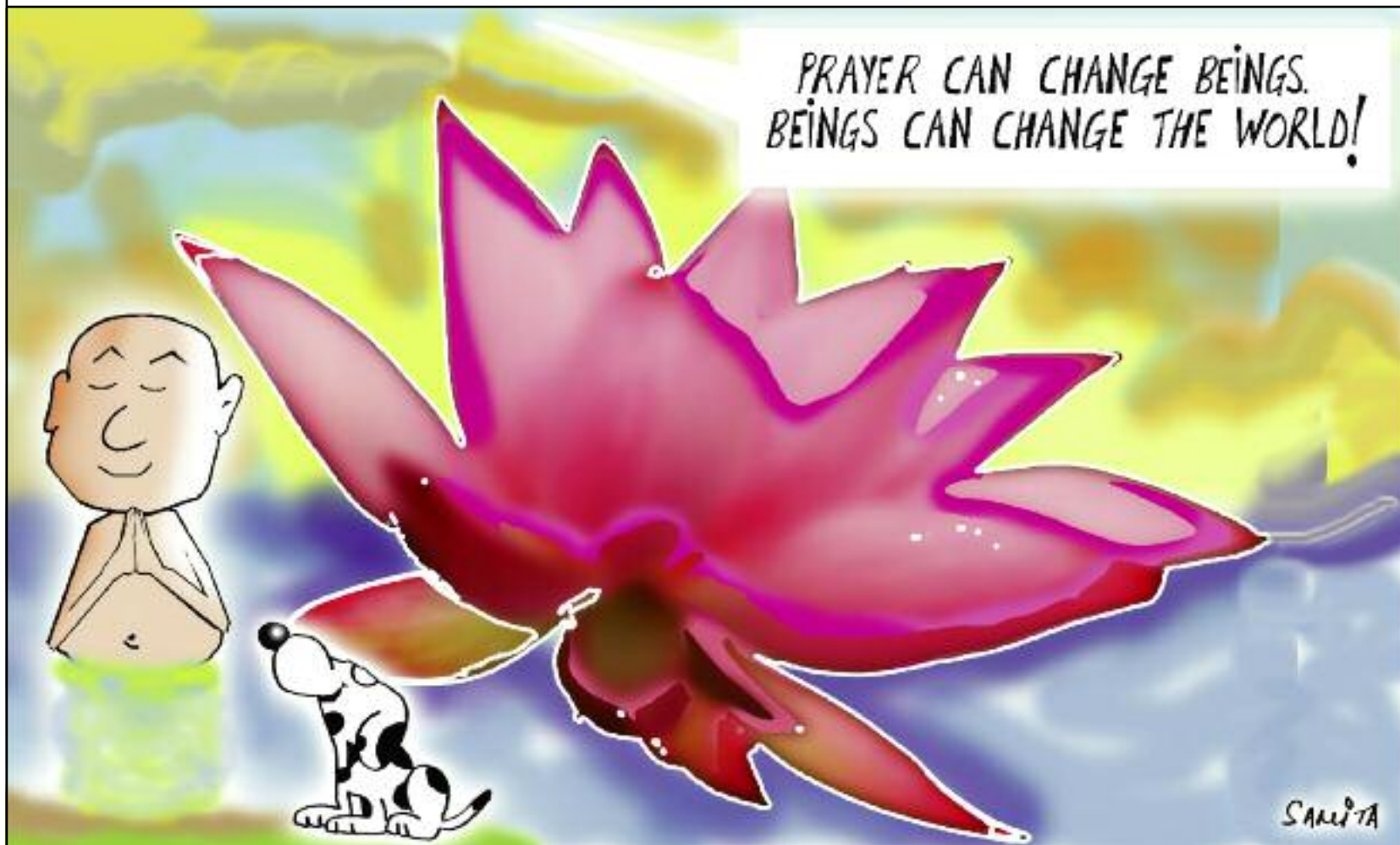
Plot No 5, Knowledge Park-II, Institutional Area, Greater Noida
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*Invited

IN THE LIGHT

by SAMITA RATHOR



LETTERS



Forest villages

The story, *Former forest village enjoys its new status*, in the February 2012 issue of *Civil Society* is a victory of the people's movement that had continuously put pressure on the state government to give constitutional recognition to such forest villages.

But after reading the report I strongly felt that it lacks valuable facts.

No state apart from Uttar Pradesh

(UP) has converted these villages into revenue villages. The report does not mention the important orders issued by the UP government and the role of national and state level organizations in achieving this great task. It is just impossible to attain this achievement without active lobbying with the state government.

Being a Special Invitee to UP's State Level Monitoring Committee, the highest constitutional body formed under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), we have worked very hard to get all these orders passed. In 2009, I persuaded the then Commissioner of the Social Welfare Department to visit Gorakhpur's forest and taungiya villages to understand forest village issues. As a result, a very important government order (GO) was passed on 2 June, 2009, to form forest rights committees in all forest villages including taungiya villages.

This GO not only helped Dafaadar Gaurhi but also granted rights to Surma in Khiri which is in the core zone of the Dudhwa National Park, plus 23 taungiya villages in Gorakhpur, Maharajganj and Maheshpur in Gonda district.

The district magistrate of Bahraich, Ringzin Samphil, was dis-

trict magistrate of Chadauli before being posted to Bahraich where we worked together. All these orders were provided to him that he used in Bahraich.

Another GO passed by the UP government was to transfer these lands into revenue records by creating a new category. Such an order has not been passed even by the Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Orissa governments. Yet another important UP government order passed in March 2010 says that if authorities find 50 years of convincing records, then rights shall be granted to other forest dwellers, doing away with the 75 years stipulation. On the basis of this GO, Gorakhpur and Maharajganj forest villages got their rights.

DEHAT has done some incredible work on FRA, according to this report. But the same NGO is an implementing partner of the controversial Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme of the forest department in Sonbhadra district.

This programme is creating serious conflict between the people and the forest department. The FRA and JFM are contradictory to each other. The JFM programme is being supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

In various places the World Bank constitutes committees of feudal and upper caste people in villages who work against the forest rights committees. This programme of NGOs and JFM is undermining the FRA in Sonbhadra.

The credentials of such organizations are very questionable. JICA is providing huge funds to many NGOs in UP to divert the issue of FRA.

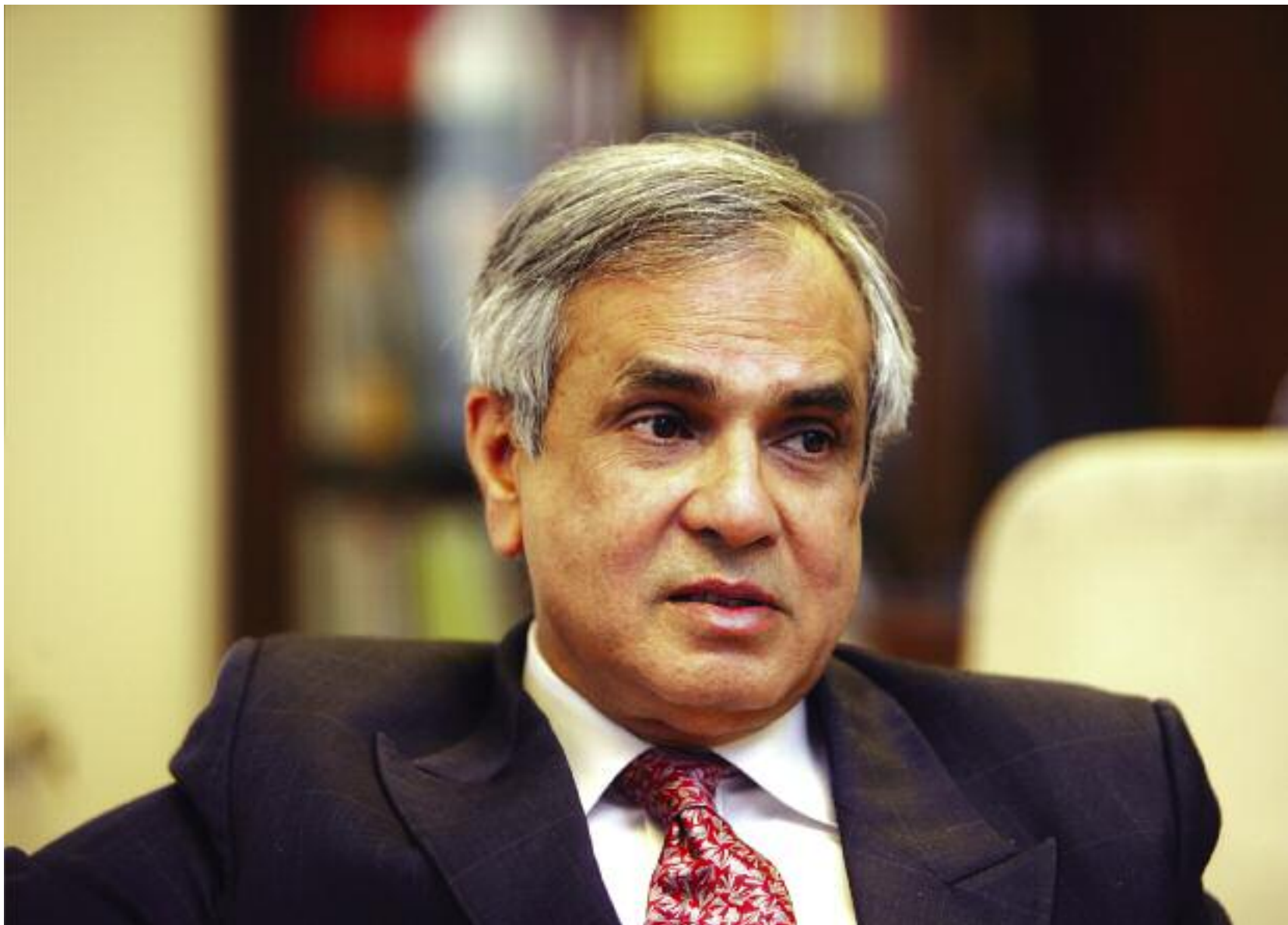
Roma
National Forum for Forest People
and Forest Workers
Email: romasnb@gmail.com

Rakesh Agrawal, who reported the story from Bahraich, replies:

The story was not about the various orders passed by the UP government due to efforts made by Roma. The story was about an impoverished forest village fighting successfully to get its rights and entitlements, not only to land and forest rights but to basic facilities like a health centre, education and subsequently a road. Land and forest rights are the starting point in development. Agreed the state has passed such orders. But Dafaadar Gaurhi had to really struggle to get those entitlements.

INTERVIEW **Rajiv Kumar says a broad understanding 'Reforms can no longer be done**

LAKSHMAN ANAND



Rajiv Kumar

Civil Society News
New Delhi

TWENTY years after the process of economic reforms began, a trust deficit haunts India. Industry and community groups are ranged against each other in seemingly endless combat. Projects are held up because of unresolved issues pertaining to land acquisition and environmental pollution. Allegations of crony capitalism abound where expectations were of fairer and more efficient markets. Businessmen and politicians are seen as being on the same page when what is needed is strong and transparent regulation.

Civil Society spoke to Rajiv Kumar, the secretary-general of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) on some of these concerns and the way ahead. Kumar finds it easy to be frank. His feel for contemporary issues

and trends brings freshness to FICCI's approach. Excerpts from the interview:

FICCI's recently concluded annual general meeting dwelt on the role of civil society in defining markets. How does this get translated in FICCI?

The distance between ideas and action is often a circuitous and not very clear one. But the fact that the idea got implanted and that we have brought this forward shows that not just me but others are also thinking along the same lines. What we are trying to do is basically two things: One we want to focus far more into the future and scan trends as they emerge so that our industry members are aware. We need to look into the future and draw industry's attention to that.

Secondly, we are trying not to make FICCI just an interlocutor between industry and government but also take into account civil society

which has emerged as a major stakeholder.

Now how are we doing that? We are trying to reach out to civil society organizations in our CSR cell and in our own verticals. In education, vocational training, health, manufacturing, environment, wherever, you will find us inviting civil society representatives to our committee meetings so that their voices can be heard.

Thirdly, we are planning to hold similar events to carry on drumbeating. In a democratic society like ours, all our points of view have to be taken together.

You know, there is a sense that there is a huge trust deficit that has emerged in recent years. Land, for instance, is a major issue. Do you see a trust deficit?

Yes I see that as a problem. First because it exists and, secondly, because it is not recognized. People

is needed on what constitutes national interest by stealth, behind closed doors'

tend to believe industry or government or civil society organizations can carry on merrily on their own and then an invisible hand will somehow emerge and take care of all the issues between them. That's a very lazy way of doing things and I say this with full responsibility that all sides are equally responsible. The onus is not on anyone so there is a problem. There is a trust deficit.

Does it matter? I think it does in a very crucial sense. See, earlier there was this feeling that you could do reforms by stealth, behind closed doors. That does not exist anymore – given the information explosion. So what you have to do is create the environment that you are not acting in narrow self-interest and you are taking other people's interests into account. It is critical to create trust.

Do you think there is anything at all that industry could do to bridge this deficit?

Well, clearly, we need better awareness. Secondly, I think we need to reach out because it is as much our responsibility as anyone else's. And as I said the best process would be to get civil society views on board day to day in our own chambers. The private sector, may not be able to do that individually but we in the chambers have the space. We can do it. So, therefore, I think the sooner we start the better-off we will be.

Lastly, we could share some neutral platforms with civil society where we discuss issues not as adversaries but as (allies) trying to find solutions to problems of national importance.

There is a feeling that industry is more comfortable talking to guys who are already on the same page. But here are a whole lot of guys who are not on that page. Do you think there is scope for widening this interaction or making it more creative – looking beyond the known players so to speak?

Sometimes I feel it is the NGOs, the civil society organizations who don't want this interaction. You know the feeling that I get is that...er...

That they are too rigid?

Well, I hope I am wrong but the feeling that we get here in industry is that their *raison d'être* will disappear if they talk to industry. So they reserve the right to criticize and stall things and not to converse or make a solution possible. So what they will do is to act as a pressure group on the government and stop what industry is doing rather than engage and talk to industry. And this is where I find it a little difficult to engage. There should be a broad understanding on all sides on what constitutes national interest.

Now let me give you an example. Mining. It cannot be anybody's case that mining should not be done in India. You can't do without minerals and you can't assume that you will import miner-

als and other people will allow you to do that. I mean you have seen the case with coal. Who pays that cost ultimately? It is the poor because goods will become more expensive, you have to import coal and so on.

So, if mining is a necessity, if irrigation is a necessity, civil society should come forward and say we are trying to find a middle ground here. It is not as if industry does not respect the rights of tribals, and they don't want them to be well-off. I am sure they do. This assumption that industry will just steamroll everything and go for the worst aspects of profit maximization is not a correct one.

Here I think it is important to recognize there are different strata in industry. And our plea to both the government and civil society has always been it is better to let the more organized segment of industry get into these areas and get them to behave in a transparent manner rather than make conditions that they pack up and go home and we are left only with the scoundrels.

'You know this whole notion that I have done CSR so I can go ahead and be as irresponsible personally and as obnoxious as I want to be just does not work anymore.'

As is happening in mining?

Exactly. So what have we achieved? For all the laws that you are passing, what are you achieving? So that is where I think it is important for NGOs to see the merit in working with national industry because all of us have or should have the same objectives.

But for that industry itself should be part of civil society. Instead it is either doing charity or CSR. Is there some evolution that is due?

I think along with CSR you should have personal social responsibility. People should feel personally responsible for society and therefore go beyond charity. People who have done well and are in public view should see themselves as role models. So they must take personal responsibility for bringing about better ethical standards in the country. There was this tradition in India, but it has been eroded.

You know this whole notion that I have done CSR so I can go ahead and be as irresponsible personally and as obnoxious as I want to be just does not work anymore. And this is happening a lot of

the time. It does not behove our society.

I think the Japanese set a very good example. Raj Sisodia gave a very good talk at our committee meeting on conscious capitalism. Capitalism has completely transformed from the time it took roots in England and so on. He is saying the changes that have happened – the environment, labour, climate – mean the nature of capitalism has to change.

Capitalism should not be only about maximizing profits but maximizing social purpose. There are examples. Take Facebook. Why did it come about? Because a chap identified lack of social interaction, people living in silos, as an opportunity. It did not start off with profit maximization as its goal. Google too I suppose. There are a number of companies like that. That is what you need at a more general level.

So, at one level you have Google and at the other level you have social entrepreneurship. Corporations don't necessarily have to make only profits. They can make profits and distribute them to society. That's one part.

Now coming to India's situation, we have to just accept that capitalism cannot grow if it does not really give greater heed to what Gandhiji said. We who are better-off have to take greater responsibility for the good of all the people. As I said we are growing in a democracy so we have to accept some degree of restraint on our corporate behaviour.

Also, primarily in the Indian context, we will have to adopt a greater degree of self-regulation because our regulatory structures in the State are not yet robust enough and they fall prey to capture. Two, what you said earlier, that a degree of self-regulation would generate trust between industry and society. If society sees industry as regulating itself then it will believe in it more, work with it, and greater trust will be created.

Very rarely do you see industry speaking up for external regulation. When it comes to driving government to do the things government needs to do, there tends to be silence. Is it because industry does not see any civil society role for itself?

I think so. I think there is a difference between individual firms and the chambers. I mean individual firms can't do this because then they will be seen as harming somebody else's interests.

But surely the chambers can and should do so. They should know that good competition exists only in a properly regulated market. And given the fact that all the chambers are wedded to the idea of fair and robust competition, they cannot but support higher quality regulation. The chambers should talk about regulatory weaknesses and work with the government to strengthen regulatory processes.

Continued on page 8

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There is one caveat though and that is that the government itself is often not very open to ideas from others and does not certainly extend an arm for you to come and work with them especially where regulation is concerned.

If the government co-opts or brings the chambers into discussions on regulation and then perhaps even on implementation, I think the quality of implementation will become very high.

In the end, the chambers are driven by their members. Doesn't it go beyond the chambers to business leaders to tell the government to sort these things out?

I don't think so. I don't think industry leaders, except a small number, have the credibility to say this. If they do it then others will snipe at them and accuse them of becoming too big for their boots.

I think the chambers do derive and enjoy a certain autonomy from their members. And that is why they can play a better role. But if chambers don't have that autonomy and have to toe the line of certain members then the chambers are not worth it. What gives them legitimacy is that they are in a position to look at industries from a broader nationwide perspective.

There are chambers in other countries like the Confederation of British Industries or chambers in Germany or Japan, who play a very important consultative role in the framing of laws and relations.

At the moment we don't have this relationship with the government. The way forward is for the chambers to evolve from merely being event managers to giving substantive inputs for regulatory and policy formation in the country.

There are some issues like land, green clearances, stuck projects. What would you like to see happening?

My strongest desire is for greater certainty in the policy framework. What I am looking for is a clear simple set of rules which will remain unchanged for a time period. Currently, rules are not clear, then they keep getting changed every now and then and their application changes even more. That creates a degree of uncertainty that is anathema for investment.

So state your environment clearance rules clearly. Put them on the website. What is killing is that you make rules and then you don't implement them in any time-bound manner. I am not for a moment suggesting you don't need to preserve the environment, the social, cultural aspects of communities. But if you make it so difficult for industry to abide by those rules then what happens is that the good boys move away and the bad boys take over. Your rules don't get implemented and then you lose the plot.

So is FICCI talking to government about this?

We keep doing that but I am afraid but we don't get the response that we need. So we come back to the deficit of trust. But I am glad to state that the second draft of the land acquisition bill did take into account some of our suggestions. In other cases we don't see that happening so it's a mixed bag. Clarity, simplicity of statutes, transparency and implementation in a time-bound manner are the key to effective regulation. ■

Hyderabad Metro on



Work in progress, but is it enough?

T S Sudhir
Hyderabad

THE Hyderabad Metro Rail is quintessentially Hyderabad – not on time! Indeed, almost in keeping with the city's notorious *chalta hai* attitude, the Metro rail too is taking its own sweet time chugging into Hyderabad.

First, Satyam Computers' chief Ramalinga Raju, caused the project to derail when subsequent to his infamous confession in January 2009, the Maytas Infra-led consortium failed to achieve financial closure and give a performance guarantee. Maytas (which is 'Satyam' spelt in reverse) Infra was owned by Raju's son. The Andhra Pradesh government cancelled the concession agreement and the project was subsequently awarded to Larsen & Toubro (L&T) after another round of bids in August 2010.

Meanwhile, metro rail projects in Bangalore and Mumbai have raced ahead. So it is reassuring to visit Nagole, Ground Zero of the Hyderabad Metro Rail. This is where a majority of L&T's 800 engineers and 5,000 workers are busy with the nuts and bolts work for the ₹14,132 crore prestigious infrastructure project. At 71 km across three corridors, the Hyderabad Metro is the largest metro rail project in the PPP model.

The end of 2014 is their first deadline when the initial eight km stretch from Nagole to Mettuguda will be commissioned. Between now and 2016 the

remaining work will also get started and there is hope that the Metro will be the way to travel in this historic city which is all of 421 years old.

Traffic experts say the Metro will be just what the doctor ordered for a congested city like Hyderabad. C. V. Anand, Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic) says, "Hyderabad's population in 2011 was close to eight million and is expected to grow to 13.6 million by 2021. With 2.8 million personal vehicles on its roads and 200,000 being added every year, only 42 per cent of the public actually travels by public transport."

City planners expect the metro to change this skewed ratio. According to their projections, 1.6 million passengers will travel by it every day, once it is fully commissioned. And it will reduce journey time by 50 per cent to 75 per cent.

The state government has chosen a different path to put Hyderabad on the metro map. Unlike other projects, which are government-funded, 90 per cent of the money is being invested by L&T, without any equity stake for the government. Profit or loss will be borne by the company. What the state government is providing is ₹2,000 crore worth of land adding up to 269 acres.

Like all urban development projects, procuring this land has been the most difficult of tasks. The 104 acres for the depot at Miyapur has been embroiled in litigation and finally there seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel. The site allotted at Nagole was marshy land and it took

track with detours

P ANIL KUMAR



time and effort to get it into shape for the depot structure. The Andhra Pradesh High Court in March stayed a part of the third corridor – from Nagole to Shilparamam – finding fault with the authorities for not notifying the revised route plan in the public domain.

But criticism and trouble has been familiar terrain for the Hyderabad Metro. The highly respected E. Sreedharan, the man behind the Konkan Railway and the Delhi Metro, had voiced similar concerns about the project when it was still being handled by Maytas. In September 2008, a good four months before Raju confessed to cooking Satyam's books, Sreedharan wrote to Montek Singh Ahluwalia, deputy chairman of the Planning Commission.

"The Hyderabad Metro is being cited as a successful example of the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) approach. I would like to caution that the example of the Hyderabad Metro is quite misleading as the negative viability gap funding has resulted solely on account of 296 acres of prime land being made available to the BOT operator for commercial exploitation. This is like selling family silver. Apart from the fact that this might lead to a big political scandal sometime later, it is apparent that the BOT operator has a hidden agenda which appears to be to extend the Metro network to a large tract of his private land holdings so as to reap a windfall profit of four to five times the land price."

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), the project consultant, subsequently pulled out when it found out that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) it had prepared had been "altered" to suit Maytas' commercial interests. Though subsequent events surrounding Ramalinga Raju proved Sreedharan right, the Hyderabad Metro Rail authorities say norms have been tightened after the Maytas experience. N.V.S. Reddy, Managing Director of the Hyderabad Metro Rail, maintains it is sensible for the government not to get into operating a metro, given the huge expenditure involved and the risk of losses.

"Of the 170 metros in the world, just four – Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taipei – are making money. The rest are either subsidised by the government or are losing money. A metro cannot survive just by passenger fare. At least 40 per cent of the revenue has to come from property development. Tokyo has gone in for vertical development around the stations. We estimate that after losses in the first four years, the Hyderabad Metro will break even in the fifth year," he explains.

Then there is Sultan Bazaar, a busy shopping area which will fade into history once the metro chugs along. Says C. Ramachandraiah, Convener of Citizens for Better Public Transport in Hyderabad, "The metro authorities claim that the businesses at Sultan Bazaar and Badi Chowdi began only about 50 years ago and not 150 years. These two heritage bazaars are part of the city's history and the ignorance of the metro authorities should not be allowed to become a curse for the city. Under the garb of providing public transport, this project is a real estate project with hundreds of acres of prime land being handed over to L&T."

Architects and conservationists have also been critical of how the presence of the metro in front of several architectural wonders from the Nizam era will deface Hyderabad. Go underground has been the demand. Reddy points out the economics just won't work.

"The Metro costs ₹200 crores per km when elevated. Going underground doubles that to ₹350 to ₹400 crores. The Delhi Metro, too, besides the core area, decided to go on the elevated route to the outskirts," says Reddy. "The metro will pass in front of nine heritage structures which include the Secunderabad Clock Tower, Moazzamjahi Market, Nizam Club and Hyderabad Public School but will not touch even a single one of them. A minimum distance of 50 feet is being maintained from each structure."

Another concern is the project cost. In 2003, when the DPR was first prepared, the cost of the project, conceived then with two corridors, was Rs 4,206 crores. A second DPR, adding the third corridor, estimated the project cost at ₹7,711 crores. When Maytas was to execute the project, it went up to ₹12,000 crores. L&T, which is implementing the project now, admits inflation, rupee devaluation and increase in the rate of interest in the last one year has been causing them concern. Officials

admit that the final cost of the project could go up by another ₹1,000 crores, even as L&T says it is optimistic that there won't be a delay of more than six months in completing the project.

"Since not much activity is happening on the road, the impression goes around that we are behind schedule. That is not true," says Vivek Bhaskar Gadgil, Chief Executive and Managing Director of L&T Metro Rail Hyderabad. "In fact, learning from the Mumbai experience, we have worked on the designs of the different utilities underground so that when we are on the field, we are not surprised at the time of digging. Alignment is fixed on all the routes, with all the obstacles marked. Two, since the DPR was done, the city has grown many times over so that has to be factored in as well."

The project has seen much angst among social activists and environmentalists in the city.

They are split down the middle. While one group wrote to the Centre, demanding the scrapping of the project, another environmentalist group says this is just what the doctor ordered for Hyderabad. Jeevananda Reddy, an environmentalist, points out that rail systems will score over private vehicles and other modes of public transport because they are more energy efficient, have the highest hourly passenger carrying capacity and are pollution-free.

Critics, however, point out that alternate modes of transport should have been encouraged instead of opting for the extremely expensive Metro Rail, particularly when space is at a premium on Hyderabad's roads, unlike in Delhi. For instance, there is the MMTS, Hyderabad's version of the Mumbai local. In fact, after much lobbying money has been allotted in this Railway Budget for Phase 2 expansion of the MMTS to newer areas. Critics of the metro say if even one-tenth of the money pumped into the metro was invested in the MMTS, Hyderabad would have benefitted. When the MMTS started a decade ago, the joke was that not even a fly would travel in these low-cost local trains. Today, with over 150,000 passengers using the MMTS every day, a fly cannot even get into the train during peak hours.

Another solution that is being suggested is to implement the Bus Rapid Transport System (BRTS), by specifying lanes for buses. "BRTS needs very wide roads, which is not possible in a city like Hyderabad," says Reddy. "And the metro will be a totally different travel experience. The air conditioned coaches will mean the work efficiency of passengers once they reach their office, will be better."

Mujeeb Hussain, a city planner, says while road widening, junction improvement, signalling solutions and flyovers are at best short and medium term solutions to traffic, improving public transport is the only long-term solution.

"Urban studies establish that any Asian city with a four million plus population will be chaotic and inefficient with regard to transportation and hence a metro railway is a necessity. But yes, it is also a costly antibiotic to cure this urban ailment," he says.

Despite the pessimists, urban planners expect a boom in real estate along the three corridors – critical for Hyderabad that saw a housing slump in the wake of the Telangana agitation. ■

Father of children in 133 countries

SOS to get a new President, he's Indian

Kavita Charanji
New Delhi

ALMOST 60 years ago, Helmut Kutin showed up as a destitute child at the SOS Children's Village in Imst in Austria.

He stayed on to work for SOS, set up more Villages and became the President of SOS Children's Villages International.

In months to come, that journey which began at the first SOS Village in Imst, is coming to a pause. Kutin will be handing over to an Indian successor, Siddhartha Kaul, who is currently Deputy Secretary-General in charge of Asia.

Siddhartha will be the first Indian head of SOS Children's Villages International. Like Kutin, Siddhartha has known SOS Villages from his own childhood. His father, the legendary J.N. Kaul, set up the first one in India in Faridabad.

"I will now go around the world as a grandfather," says Kutin cheerfully. He drops his guard when he is surrounded by his children, his warm laughter bringing a smile to every face.

Kutin was recently in Delhi on his way to Tirupati where there is now an SOS Children's Village. Kutin has seen every Village across the globe but not the one in Tirupati.

"I have seen all the Villages in India either from their inception or over 35 years. I haven't seen the Tirupati Village yet and this is a kind of change in my life since I hand over the presidency to younger hands," says Kutin laughingly.

Siddhartha set up the first SOS Village in south India in Chennai. He has also worked in 14 Asian countries including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Kutin was 12 when he arrived at the SOS Village in Imst in 1953. The fifth child of a lawyer, Kutin was born in Bolzano in Italy in 1941. His sister was murdered by a notorious serial killer and his agonised mother passed away. "I didn't have much of a family at that time," he recalls. "I lived with my old father in a rented place. My much older sisters and brothers had gone their separate ways."

Kutin recalls his first meeting with Hermann Gmeiner, the iconic founder of SOS. As Kutin was above the stipulated age of 10, Gmeiner was at first hesitant to admit him in family-based care. But impressed by the young boy's academic record, he agreed to give Kutin a chance for three months.



Helmut Kutin with children at the SOS Village in Faridabad

Kutin says he was thrilled to be at the SOS Village. "I had been through eight different schools before I came to the Village. Though that didn't do me any harm, SOS gave me stability. I wandered around the place, found it very beautiful with its woods, greenery, a sports ground and a house, not a tiny apartment somewhere. We

lived in a family environment in which I could play with my nine brothers and sisters. I recall those years happily," he says.

Kutin spent two years in Imst. Later, he moved to the SOS Youth House in Innsbruck. After graduating from high school he studied economics at Innsbruck University.

prepares to say adieu



A mother in her home at the SOS Village



Every child grows up in a family

In 1967, Kutin was handpicked by Gmeiner to start an SOS Children's Village in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), in Vietnam. Turning his back on comfortable jobs in tourism and teaching, Kutin took on his first assignment for SOS.

He rose to become Director of the Village a year later. It was at that time the largest SOS Children's Village in the world. Subsequently he took the lead in setting up more Villages in Vietnam.

Those years in Vietnam made a deep impact on him. "It was destiny and a clear indication that I would remain with the SOS. I was deeply affected by the tremendous suffering of children who were caught in the crossfire between the

American bombers and the bayonets of the so-called Vietcong. Those years shaped me to a great extent. The children, who are now between 40 to 55 years old, became my immediate family," says Kutin.

In 1976 he was forced to leave Vietnam after Saigon fell in 1975 and the Children's Village was closed by those in power. However, in 1987 he returned to Vietnam and to the Village. Now Vietnam is the second biggest SOS operation in Asia after India and one of the first five in the world.

Kutin's stellar contribution to the SOS has been recognised. He has served as the Asian representative of SOS and as Deputy Secretary-General of SOS Children's Villages International. In 1985 he succeeded his mentor, Gmeiner, as President of the organisation. Gmeiner died in 1986. Kutin has steered SOS from strength to strength.

Today, SOS supports over 2.2 million children through care, education and health programmes. The biggest achievement of SOS, says Kutin, are its dedicated mothers who "provide the children with a home in their hearts and minds."

A sense of vocation and mission is what SOS asks of them. "When I go through the Villages, I always ask the mothers where their home is. If they say Bhuj in Gujarat and so on, there is still something missing. In Villages where they say



Siddhartha Kaul is Helmut Kutin's successor

this is my home, you are sure they have understood the SOS philosophy".

For Kutin it is important that the organisation follows three guiding principles: humanitarianism, honesty and humility. "I hate pretentious people. We should not only preach but also act. We speak the most beautiful words, but we have to match them with our day-to-day actions."

SOS is far from being an orphanage. For one, the children are not adopted but given family-based care, asserts Kutin. Nor are siblings separated as in orphanages. They are integrated into the community and have a deep sense of belonging. They go to local schools or to SOS' own schools which are open to other children as well. They are given the protection and care of a mother.

Kutin's successor, Kaul, takes over in June this year. At a time when economically strapped Western countries are increasingly questioning the rationale of supporting children in 'fast developing countries' he will need to raise funds and support within India.

Kaul believes that the strategy should be to reach out to the government, companies and people in general.

"It is the responsibility of the State to look after its citizens, especially the vulnerable," he says. "If the State cannot have its own programmes to take care of them then it must provide financial and other assistance to organisations that are willing and competent to do this."

SOS' assessments is that its Villages in 30 countries, especially in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have tremendous potential to raise funds locally and become self-sufficient in the next five to seven years.

"China, I believe, would be the first to achieve this. Pakistan became self-supporting more than two decades ago," he says.

Kaul points out that in India development in the social sector is not matching economic development. Much remains to be done for children and the youth. ■

Gujarat's decade of apathy

Tanushree Gangopadhyay
Ahmedabad

TEN years after the Gujarat riots of 2002, displaced Muslims and a small number of affected Hindus continue to live in relief colonies built by Muslim charitable organizations and NGOs. The colonies they live in are in an abysmal state. But the state government continues to turn a blind eye.

Many Muslim victims of the 2002 Gujarat riots say they want to return to their former homes and jobs. But the state does not guarantee them any security or compensation to rebuild their shattered homes.

Before 2002, most Muslim displaced families were middle-class with proper homes and productive livelihoods. They have now sunk into abject poverty.

The displaced people live in 15 ramshackle colonies in Ahmedabad and 18 in Anand district, India's milk capital. There are no schools, health facilities, roads, sanitation, drinking water, roads or streetlights here.

"Left with no choice, we had to rehabilitate our own people who were devastated," says Dr Shakeel Ahmed, the anguished President of the Islamic Relief Committee (IRC). The relief camps were closed after six months and the traumatized victims were left to fend for themselves.

Ironically, the Narendra Modi government did not move a finger to help the Hindus whose homes were also looted and burnt in the 2002 frenzy. It was the Islamic Relief Committee that built homes for them too.

"We along with other NGOs were compelled to resettle the displaced in whatever land was available in Muslim majority areas as the government had no resettlement programme," says Dr Ahmed. "Amidst a financial crunch we built 24 colonies. We also resettled over 500 Hindu brethren whose houses were burnt alongside Muslim homes."

NGOs have been campaigning for declaring the victims of 2002 as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) on the lines of the Kashmiri Pandits. UN refugee status would entitle the displaced to better facilities.

Gulberg Society, Naroda Patiya and the Godhra region made headlines in 2002 for the sheer scale and brutality of the violence that was unleashed. Families who were forced to flee continue to seek justice and many a return to their old lives.

The 19 two-storied bungalows in Gulberg Society look like archeological remains of a bygone era. On 27 February survivors assembled here to pay homage to the martyrs of 2002 including Ehsan Jafri, former Member of Parliament and a poet who was brutally murdered.

"We shall definitely win. Why do you think so many people came here today to commemorate

the worst carnage a decade back? My mother Zakia Jafri is still in high spirits. There is no force that cannot give us justice. What is democracy for?" said Nishirin Jafri, daughter of Ehsan Jafri. The octagenarian Zakia Jafri is confident of getting justice despite the Special Investigation Team's (SIT) report not being given to her or being read in the metropolitan court.

For Suraiya Banu, 38, who was Jafri's neighbour,

compensation nor any civic amenities, our men are not given jobs. How long shall we tolerate all this?" ask the anguished women.

"The Islamic Relief Committee built all our houses and runs schools and madarasas. We got no help from the government. The committee built houses for our Hindu neighbours in Hussainnagar, in MEMCO and other places," says Shakila.

The women say some of them got Rs 5 lakhs as compensation for the dead. "Postmen inform us that the central government has given us cheques but they do not reach us," says Shakila.

The Hindus living in Hussainnagar support all that Shakila says. Hajaribhai Budhaji, is a welder who has lived here for more than 20 years. A resident of Rajasthan, he says neither the government nor any Hindu organization helped them.

At Bilkishnagar, Godhra, Javed Ahmed Sheikh, 39, recalls that he was forced to flee from his village Anjanwa in Panchmahal district to Godhra when their house was burnt in 2002. "We were compelled to work in a stone crushing factory, just a km away from our colony," adds Javed.

Silicosis has now consumed 13 people in Bilkishnagar, another colony built by the IRC on the outskirts of Godhra. "Three of my brothers died of silicosis. I too have the disease. I can't work anymore," despairs Javed. "Neither this place nor this house are conducive, but we have no choice as we can't return to our homes out of fear," say Hajra, Madina and Sabira.

Bilkishnagar has 35 housing units. Each consists of two rooms measuring 10 ft by 10 ft. Most Muslims living here fled from villages. They used to be farmers and petty traders who were economically self-sufficient.

"Now we walk miles to work in people's houses for paltry sums. But we are grateful to the IRC for giving us these houses. How are we to blame for the burning of the train?" they ask.

"Our status has been downgraded to Antyodaya, which is below the poverty line (BPL). The state government wants to deprive us of the housing scheme which the Antyodaya card entitles us to. The food we get from our ration cards is not enough. We are compelled to buy the rest from the open market," says Javed.

None of the widows here have received any compensation. The colony does not have civic amenities. The Latifa Mohammad Yusuf Giteli's Al Fazal Education Trust has started a school here.

The ray of hope is the youth. They are determined to study. Science is a sought after subject. Faizal is keen to improve his family's economic status and wants to become an engineer. His father, Jabir Mitha, used to be a farmer in Ghogha village and owned a tractor that was burnt down. ■



GAUTAM SINGH

A lane flooded with sewage water in Noman Nagri, a relief colony adjacent to Citizen Nagar in Ahmedabad.

life has changed dramatically. "We can't think of living here. I shall never forget saving my three-month daughter Sophia and my elder daughter. We ran up the stairs through the fire where over 100 people took shelter at Jafri sahib's house. I still have burn marks. Sophia, now 10, is epileptic and I have a heart ailment."

Ironically, Suraiya was born to Hindu parents. But they did not even bother to look her up. She lost 10 members of her family. "I can identify those who attacked us, but they will never be brought to book. We don't expect any justice from human beings, God will deliver justice."

She sees a bright future for her two daughters and son who are studying in English medium schools. "They ask me why do we live in such hovels when we own such a wonderful two storied house? I have no answer." The family makes it a point to visit their former home and spend time there twice a year.

At Naroda Patiya angry Muslim women came out to speak. "We have represented our case to the SIT, we have gone to Delhi, Mumbai and every place," say Shakila Banu and Firoze Ahmed Ansari. Unlettered Muslim women who never stepped out of their homes have now become emboldened.

They say neither the councillor, nor LK Advani nor Gujarat's home minister came to meet them ever. "Neither did they help the Hindu families who were affected," says Shakila. "The culprits are roaming around scot free, our children don't get admission in municipal schools, we don't get



Chief Guest Anupam Mishra with awardees, jury members and others from CSO Partners and the Financial Management Service Foundation

Telling it all – almost

7 NGOs get awards for annual reports

Civil Society News
New Delhi

THE 2010-11 annual reports of seven Indian NGOs have been chosen for being exemplary in terms of disclosure and design.

At a well-attended ceremony at the India Habitat Centre in Delhi on 10 March, awards were presented to the Community Outreach Programme (CORP), Sabuj Sangha, Astha Sansthan, Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief (EFICOR), Hand in Hand, Akshaya Patra Foundation and Helpage India. This is the fourth year of the awards, which are given by CSO Partners in collaboration with the Financial Management Service Foundation.

Anupam Mishra of the Gandhi Peace Foundation gave away the awards as chief guest. In a speech replete with his trademark humour, Mishra said effective NGOs come out of society and get their relevance and support from the people they serve.

"It is like when you break a leg you need a crutch. But once the leg heals the crutch is no longer required. NGOs need to learn to fix a problem and withdraw. The best annual report is work done on the ground," Mishra said.



A CD was released as an easy-to-follow guide for NGOs

Some 250 NGOs sent in their annual reports. Several of them had been in the running in previous years and had tried to improve their reports based on the feedback they got.

The purpose of the awards is to promote accountability among NGOs even as they come under closer scrutiny for the use of funds and outcomes of the programmes that they take up.

The reports were assessed for the most basic of disclosures such as addresses and contact details, names of office-bearers, programmes and out-

comes. They were also judged for thoroughness in accountancy. Had good accounting practices been adhered to? Numbers tend to get buried in the gloss of annual reports. But it is through the accuracy of its books that an NGO can provide an irrefutable account of its work.

Finally, the reports were evaluated for communication: design, use of pictures, typefaces etc. Finding a balance between the three areas was a challenge for the jury. If the accountant's work had been well done, the get-up was wanting and some of the annual reports that looked really good didn't go the distance on numbers.

Some of the reports had basic problems like the auditor's report not being signed or the CA's membership number not being mentioned. It was also evident that smaller NGOs from rural areas and towns are at a disadvantage. They don't have access to the resource persons that the bigger NGOs in the metropolitan cities draw on. The result was that no awards could be given to NGOs in the 'small category'.

To help raise standards all round, CSO Partners has released a CD and put it on its website as an easy-to-follow guide for NGOs who want to improve their annual reporting. ■

Jarawas continue to mystify

Zubair Ahmad
Port Blair

THE furore created by the Jarawa video no longer hogs the limelight in the national media, but on the Andaman Islands the blame game continues. Concrete action on how to tackle the core issue evades puzzled administrators with experts offering opposing solutions.

A two-day national seminar on 'Land, Water, and People: Competing Interests and Emerging Realities,' held during the Diamond Jubilee Celebration of the Anthropological Survey of India's (ASI) Regional Centre on 28 February brought together several anthropologists to reconsider standpoints and views.

Many participants strongly protested the proposed move to open the tribal islands for tourism. They categorically stated that such a move, even in the name of eco tourism, would be against the genuine interests of the tribes in these islands.

The most stirring contribution was a paper presented by Prof. Trilok Nath Pandit, an eminent anthropologist and the Founder-Director of ASI, Port Blair, who first came to the Islands in 1960. "We are converting the Jarawas into consumers by introducing the barter system among them," was his simple yet powerful declaration, reflecting a deep sense of history unusual in the recent cacophony. "When I first saw the Islands from the deck of a ship, it looked fairy-like. I wrote that it is a breathtakingly beautiful place. I still feel very sentimental about my yester years in Port Blair."

For Prof. Pandit, the tribal question is fundamentally about being sensitive to the basic philosophy that underlines tribal policy. When he talks about the Jarawas, his pain at this lack of sensitivity among policy makers and the general public, is evident. Prof. Pandit quoted Dr Guha, the founder of the ASI. In 1951 he had remarked about the Andaman Trunk Road (ATR): "When their country is opened up by the North-South Road, the Jarawa tribe will be molested with settlements coming

up around their habitat."

The Jarawas living in Port Blair at the end of the 1850s were pushed to the western side of the South Andaman District after Independence. The whole scenario changed in the 1950s when the government sent refugees from East Pakistan to settle on the islands. Economic migrants started pouring in from states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu too. The trend, distinctly peaceful, continued at a rapid pace in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1966, Prof. Pandit estimated the population of Jarawas to be around 300.

The Jarawa resistance towards the colonizers was but natural. Agitation took the form of warnings, which, if unheeded, were followed by well-planned attacks. These hit the headlines sensationally in the 1960s, with little understanding of the context in which they took place.

The well-intentioned ideas about 'mainstreaming' the Jarawas are ill-conceived and with little understanding. Attempts to mainstream the Onge tribe, another indigenous community of the Andamans, are a case in point. They have been pushed to a corner of the Islands, where they cannot carry out their hunting-gathering activities. India changed their huts and their lifestyle. But instead of integrating them completely into the development process, we left matters halfway, executing intended policy and plans poorly.

The Jarawas face a similar future, if the matter is not addressed urgently with sensitivity and wisdom. In recent months there has been a flow of news reports with half baked truths, myths and baseless 'expert comments' of various hues.

The Tribal Affairs Minister, V. Kishore Chandra Deo, for example, showed a shocking lack of understanding of the Jarawa community when he stated, "The Jarawas need to be immunised and probably medical experts and anthropologists will have to study them and tell us how they existed all these years and what needs to be done now." DNA declared in its editorial, "If the tribes in the Andamans are indeed full Indian citizens, the government must exert itself to ensure that they are

allowed to live freely the way they want without being disturbed by outside forces... If the only way to do that is to evacuate all the interlopers living there, so be it."

Many noted columnists have offered solutions that are readily available on the streets of Port Blair. One columnist even suggested 100 days of employment under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) for the Jarawas!

Indeed, the unsuspecting Jarawas are better off in their forested reserves and, in fact, need protection from the onslaught of such 'experts' and media.

The aboriginal tribes also enjoy Constitutional rights at par with other citizens of the country irrespective of whether they are aware of those rights. Bureaucrats, therefore, need to be more sensitive in providing them their genuine rights.

But the very people entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the Jarawas are guilty of not doing their job. The second senior-most officer in the Andaman Police, Inspector-General of Police Sanjay Baniwal, was relieved of his duties in the last week of February after he was charged with facilitating a rendezvous with the Jarawas at an area adjacent to the Jarawa Tribal Reserve. Ironically, his duty was to shield the Jarawas by keeping a tab on vehicular movement on the Andaman Trunk Road after considerable national and international uproar about the alleged exploitation of Jarawas came to light.

An unfortunate fallout of the distinctly vocal agitation is the detraction from the core issues. There has been a long pending Supreme Court Order for closure of two stretches of the Andaman Trunk Road, which passes through the demarcated Jarawa Reserve.

Rather than sensationalizing the issue, which is sub-judice, it is far wiser to settle this matter conclusively. But there seem to be no takers for such a simple and lasting solution. ■

Charkha Features

SAMITA'S WORLD

by SAMITA RATHOR



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Food a right not dole, say NGOs

Madhu and Bharat Dogra
Kolkata

A meeting of NGOs to discuss the National Food Security Bill suggested several changes to the bill that is currently under consideration in Parliament. Organised by Sansad, Oxfam, Disha, Food and Water Security Coalition and Wado Na Todo Abhiyan, the consultation concluded that food security depends on pro-poor agriculture, forestry, storages, seed protection and related policies.

Anil K. Singh, coordinator of SANSAD, said that the food security bill is a fairly comprehensive scheme for vulnerable sections of society. But it needs a more rights-based approach. Often states ignore delivering various entitlements to the people. Although the bill proposes to set up a grievance redressal system there is no provision for compensation or penalties if the people do not receive their entitlements. He also said the public distribution system (PDS) should be made universal and not targeted at only certain populations.

K.N. Tiwari, secretary of Disha, emphasised that more categories of highly vulnerable people needed to be included in the bill. Single woman and women-led households were especially vulnerable, said Jahnvi. Anish Bhai from Fatehpur said that while discrimination against Dalits in nutrition programmes is often highlighted, discrimination against low income Muslims is ignored. Muslim women hardly get any employment in cooking midday meals for schools in Uttar Pradesh. Uma Prakash said that the nutrition needs of people suffering from HIV/AIDS and other serious health problems needs to be considered by the food security bill.



LAKSHMAN ANAND

Harbhajan and Dr. Jasphool Singh from Punjab and Haryana, both food surplus states, said storages must be improved urgently and fertile land protected from takeover under the SEZ law or for other infrastructure. They said that even existing storages are not being used properly. A lot of food is wasted. They alleged storage is deliberately denied so that rotting crop can be bought very cheaply by the liquor industry.

Mahendra Kunwar, director of HARC, said that in remote parts of Himalayas when landslides block roads, a food crisis could emerge in just three days. He said government storages are

insufficient and the capacity of small local markets to store food is very limited. He said for food availability in hilly areas it was essential to encourage diverse crops, protect local biodiversity and traditional seeds. 'Cheap' food, he pointed out, could discourage farmers and lead to a downslide in agriculture.

Vijay Jardhari from Beej Bachao Andolan recalled the rich heritage of traditional seeds which contributed to self-reliance and strengthened farming systems in the past. He said that the new seed bill would further erode the seed rights of farmers. He suggested the seeds bill and food security bill be discussed together.

Arun Kumar, a Dalit activist, said that land reforms should be a crucial component of the food security system. Land reforms don't receive adequate attention from the government. In Saharanpur district officials have even made efforts to take back land *pattas* given earlier to landless Dalits for cultivation, he alleged.

Ashok Chowdhary, convener of the National Forum for Forest People and Forest Workers (NFF-PFW) and R.R. Furtado from Samta highlighted the injustices done to tribals and forest-dwellers.

They pointed out that food security for tribals and forest people depended on the ecological health of forests and other natural resources. Ashok Chowdhary said environment protection should be linked to livelihood protection. He asked for implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

The consultation was able to reach a broad agreement on changes needed in the National Food Security Bill. After coordinating this effort with other such consultations these recommendations will be sent to Parliament and the Union Government, the organisers said. ■

Ganga on the backburner

Rakesh Agrawal
Dehradun

THREE prominent members of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA), Rajendra Singh of the Tarun Bharat Sangh, Dr Ravi Chopra, director of the People's Science Institute and Rashid Hyatt Siddiqui, a former professor of the Aligarh Muslim University, have sent in their resignations.

The Prime Minister has requested them to take back their resignation letters. But the three say the NGRBA is not serving any purpose. "Unless there is solid proof that the Union government is willing to take up the Ganga issue seriously, to regenerate the river and protect its flow, there is no use serving in the authority," says Chopra.

The Union government established the NGRBA in 2009 with the agenda of tackling problems which the entire Ganga basin has been facing. Two problems were to be given special attention –

free flow of the river and pollution. Encroachment, mining and dam construction were identified as the main reasons for obstructing the free flow of the river. However, the NGRBA hardly held any meetings.

Meanwhile Dr G.D. Agarwal, the respected environmental scientist now known as Swami Gyan Swarup Sanand, went on a fast-unto-death to ensure the free flow of the Ganga. His health deteriorated after he stopped drinking water and he is now believed to be in a Delhi hospital.

"We are well aware that India needs energy. But India needs to sustain its rivers too. It is possible to produce hydropower and save our rivers at the same time. All we need are new dam designs, new equipment and new technology. Dr G.D. Agarwal in one of the best experts in the country on this. The government has a lot to gain by consulting him on dam designs that will generate power and ensure sustained environmental flow of the rivers," says Chopra.

The environmentalist and lawyer, M.C. Mehta, has also lent his support. "It is very difficult to find a person of Dr Agarwal's integrity and dedication. We must all strive to save him by protecting the Ganga. But the government has been very indifferent to him," he says.

"The government has neither the political will nor any executable plan. In three and a half years the NGRBA has met only twice. Its members were not given responsibilities. The government is not serious," says Rajender Singh.

Vijay Bahuguna, the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, is seen as a pro-dam person. Activists fear he may want to revive dam-building plans on the Ganga all over again. The lone Uttarakhandi Kranti Dal candidate who supported the anti-dam agitation has now joined the Congress.

Once again activists are gearing up for a fight. "It won't be so easy. They will have their way, we'll have ours. We'll not remain silent spectators to the destruction of India's holiest river," says Chopra. ■

From a village classroom to virtual education through Project Shiksha

Raghavendra Rao, a post-graduate teacher from Andhra Pradesh, dreamt of imparting quality education to his students at the residential Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya School. His vision of bringing biology lessons to life was enabled by Microsoft's Project Shiksha – a program where teachers are trained to integrate information technology into their daily lessons to make learning more engaging.

Today, the skills he has acquired through Project Shiksha aid him to bring the local flora and fauna into the classroom through self-shot videos and multimedia presentations. His brainchild www.biology24x7.in has also become the interactive virtual classroom for rural children, visually and physically challenged students and for the entire learning community.

RAGHAVENDRA RAO

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya | Khatampalem, Andhra Pradesh

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To know more about Microsoft's initiatives, visit www.microsoft.com/india/msindia



BOTTOM-UP BUSINESSES

FROM SOLAR LIGHTS TO GARBAGE AND FARM FILMS

Aarti Gupta
New Delhi

WHEN d.Light set out to sell its solar lamps in rural Uttar Pradesh, it went to village schools in the districts of Auraiya, Devariya, Pilibhit and Lakhimpur Kheri where electricity hardly reaches. After sundown, people here know only darkness. So, d.Light showed children in the schools how the lamps worked and gave them a few on trial, allowing them to take the lamps home.

The lamps made a world of a difference. They made the families feel brighter. Village schools do not offer much of an education. But parents want their children to study. They could now tell them to sit down with their school books after dark. The result was that nearly 1,200 solar lamps were bought from d.Light. At ₹399 a piece these are the cheapest solar lights in the world.

Around 200 million students don't have electricity in India. Reaching them is both a business opportunity and a social necessity. "Right to safe light is intrinsic to the Right to Education (RTE)," says Mandeep Singh, managing director of d.Light. "If we manage to reach even one million we would have made a big difference."

A Silicon Valley social enterprise, d.Light's mission is to replace smelly kerosene lamps with clean, bright solar lamps under one of its programme's called LiFE or Light for Education.

"There are 70 million households in India which are off-grid – no *khamba*, no *taar*," explains Singh. Add to that another 200 million who have to put up with power outages. That means almost 44 per cent of the country's population is without electricity. It makes India the largest market of off-grid people, estimated at 1.6 billion globally.

Based in Noida, d.Light is not a charity but a global social enterprise that designs, manufactures and distributes solar lamps and LED lights. It was seeded by four graduates from Stanford Business School in 2007 on the basis of a prototype they had invented in their 'Design for Extreme Affordability' curriculum.

Social enterprises are catching on in India like never before. And they are attracting idealistic, young and educated professionals from some of the world's premier institutes who gave up lucrative careers to invent and sell goods and services to people somewhere at the bottom of the pyramid.

Take the example of Rustam Sengupta. Armed with a degree from the University of California and a management education from INSEAD in France, he set up Boond to help villagers become micro-entrepreneurs in remote areas of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Or Piyush Jaju, who launched Onergy, a similar enterprise in West Bengal, hav-

LAKSHMAN ANAND



Rikin Gandhi, the young founder of Digital Green



A young girl learns plumbing at Amrita University's haptics course

Social enterprises are catching on in India like never before. And they are attracting idealistic, young and educated professionals.

ing quit an international finance job.

Similarly, Rikin Gandhi has a dazzling educational profile, coming from MIT and NASA. He was on the verge of fulfilling his dream of becoming an aeronautical engineer in the US. But instead he chose to walk through the farmlands of India, starting Digital Green that makes information films for farmers.

Parag Gupta has founded Waste Ventures, which seeks to work with municipalities in small towns. He was at the Kennedy School in Harvard and then

worked with the Schwab Foundation and the Bridgespan Group. Both promote social entrepreneurship. Waste Ventures has the expertise to handle garbage in an eco-friendly manner in partnership with wastepickers.

These enterprises have a clear social purpose but they are not based on philanthropy and are strict about being financially sustainable. There is a business model and costs are recovered by charging for services and products.

But these businesses also try to learn from successful NGO projects. The involvement of people is very important. Listening to people and mobilising them are key to the sustainability of these businesses. "The community should always have a stake in the progress of the project for it to be sustainable in the long term," says Gandhi.

"A billion people require a wide variety of solutions. We believe that these solutions are



Parag Gupta of Waste Ventures which wants to make small towns garbage-free

already all over the country, in the minds of social entrepreneurs just waiting to be released," says Sanjay Kadaveru, who recently set up Action For India (AFI) to help ventures working at the grassroots scale up through ICT.

The government, too, is interested. It is looking at such enterprises to substitute for its infamously inefficient services. At Action for India's first annual event in February, 100 young social innovators got together to brainstorm on best practices that could ramp up such ventures. AFI's honorary chairman, Sam Pitroda, who is one of the Prime Minister's advisers, said: "India is in a unique position to solve the problems of the poor. It has the largest number of the poor and a huge amount of talent to address the challenges being faced by them."

Pitroda disclosed that an additional corpus of ₹400 crore has been pledged by private investors to the National Innovation Fund. Once that is operationalised by mid-year, it will support social entrepreneurs to create new business models for social change.

Social enterprises are gaining momentum because a conducive entrepreneurial eco-system has come into being. Several agencies are now mentoring start-ups. There is Tata First Dot, a mentorship programme developed with the National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN), which is meant only for students in India.

Similarly, the Delhi chapter of TiE or The Indus Entrepreneurs, a non-profit, started a special interest group on social entrepreneurs in 2009. Says executive director Geetika Dayal, "A lot of mainstream investors are finding value in connecting with social entrepreneurs."

SANDEEPA VEERAMACHANENI



Geetika Dayal of TiE

Institutional investors in India and elsewhere are looking beyond conventional venture capital to social sector investments. Late last year, Aavishkaar concluded India Venture II, a fund of ₹3,000 crore focused on rural India. The money was raised in less than a year.

Pierre Omidyar, founding partner of Omidyar Network which has invested more than ₹300 crore in India in social-impact projects, is clear that the investments are for ventures that are financially sound and sustainable. It is beginning to dawn on innovators and investors that financial and social returns are not mutually exclusive.

However, the picture is not completely rosy. In the wake of the 2008 recession not every management student can hope to get easy access to funds for a novel social enterprise. One view is that India needs the equivalent of Britain's Social Impact Bond to promote ideas with promising social benefits.

But the good news is that by and large investment is available. Green and socially conscious enterprises are attracting venture capital. And they are yielding modest profits in a relatively short time.

In Chennai, a hi-tech 'vegetable e-farm' is helping farmers take their produce to market by optimising the supply chain, drawing inspiration from Mumbai *dabbawalas*. The fledgling company broke even in just three years and sold a 25 per cent stake to Mumbai Angels last year.

No longer do small off-beat enterprises evoke only curiosity value. We provide below four potted accounts of ventures in education, agriculture, energy and inclusive livelihoods which are making waves.

WASTE VENTURES

Cleaning up towns

WHEN it was Parag Gupta's turn to turn entrepreneur, he didn't wait to get his hands dirty. A former associate director at the Schwab Foundation, Gupta previously worked for its India portfolio. He realised that one of India's most crucial needs is waste management. Gupta honed in on a commercially sustainable model that would not only handle waste in an eco-friendly manner but also uplift the economic and social condition of wastepickers. So after studying waste disposal in Dhaka, Cairo and Lima, he drew up a blueprint of how to go about it. His start-up, Waste Ventures, was the result.

According to one estimate, urban India generates 40 million tonnes of garbage every year and just one-fourth of that is recyclable. Since municipalities prefer to pay for disposal of garbage by volume there is no incentive to process it. So waste gets dumped, adding to carbon emissions. "The entire system is currently wrongly incentivised," says Gupta.

Waste Ventures' business proposition is simple. Let the municipalities entrust his enterprise with the task, and they will do it in an eco-friendly manner by incubating wastepicker cooperatives and equipping them with technical expertise.

Waste Ventures is organising 1.5 million wastepickers into cooperatives and taking a minority stake in each in return for mentorship. These entities are then trained in processing waste and composting the organic portion which could be as much as 50 per cent. Composting generates additional revenue – first by selling the bio-fertiliser, and, secondly, through selling carbon credits. The balance



20 per cent of the trash can be sorted out and resold.

Gupta has structured Waste Ventures into two entities. One is a non-profit working with wastepickers and picking up a subsidised fee from the municipalities it works for. Additional revenue is created through composting and recycling waste.

The for-profit is the holding company which picks up equity in the wastepickers' cooperatives and also gives monetary support to the not-for-profit end of the business. Seed funding for both the ventures has come from the Peery Foundation and the Swift Foundation, both California-based.

Since this is a job done primarily at the municipal level and eyed by other waste management companies, Waste Ventures has decided to focus on smaller towns with populations ranging from 50,000 to 500,000. It's early days but things have begun moving. Waste Ventures is working on three pilots. In Bokaro, it has tied up with Nidan Swachdhara, a collective enterprise of ragpickers and sweepers. In Osmanabad, it has partnered Jan Seva, an NGO which undertook collection, recycling and composting for the first three months but had to back out because of opposition from the bureaucracy in the municipality. The third tie-up is happening in Indore with the Indian Grameen services team of Basix.

Waste Ventures was featured by the World Wildlife Fund as one of 50 'Green Game-changers', a select group of businesses around the world turning environment challenges into catalysts for innovation. For Parag Gupta waste is far from being a dirty word.

D. LIGHT**A LUV story**

SELLING solar lamps and LED lights to villages isn't that unusual. What makes d.Light atypical is the way it seamlessly combines philanthropy with business. This year the company hopes to break even.

Mandeep Singh, managing director, started d.Light in 2007 with three co-founders. All are from the Stanford Business School. The solar lights were invented from a prototype they had designed at Stanford. Each solar light costs only ₹399, making it the cheapest in the world.

Of the four, Sam Goldman has spent several years in the developing world. He has stayed on in India to understand the target market. Of the six million lives d.Light has touched globally in 42 countries, about a quarter have been those living in India's villages.

Having emerged from a premier design school, d.Light's compact and portable offerings are robust in design, says Singh. The LED lasts 50,000 hours, has a quality poly crystalline panel and its cheapest version can be charged with a Nokia thin pin charger. But more importantly, all its three light variants are value for money to the poor as the cost of kerosene used in conventional lamps can be recovered within a few months.

d.Light markets its products in several ways to its clients. For one, it uses the partnership route and rides on the distribution network of microfinance com-



Mandeep Singh

SANDEEPA VEERAMACHANENI

panies, NBFCs, NGOs, self-help groups and rural retail chains. For example, it uses ITC's e-chaupal network in UP and Maharashtra. World Vision, World Bank, World Wildlife Fund and CASA are some of d.Light's other global partners. Often, it enlists rural entrepreneurs to sell its products.

d.Light has two more strategies for expanding reach. Under project LiFE (Light for education) it is selling solar lamps to students in village schools. Children can take the lamps home free of cost and try them out before their parents decide to buy them.

Under its philanthropic approach named LUV (Light Up villages) d.Light takes on the responsibility of lighting up

all the households in a village and thereby boosting their quality of life. Seeing is believing. New Keringa in southern Orissa was the first such d.Light village in 2009. Once people got lights they could make plates out of banana leaf long after 5 pm, leading to an improvement in their livelihoods. More such 'LUV' stories are happening in Hussainpur in UP's Bijnor district and the tribal village of Bedaguda in Orissa's Koraput district.

d.Light is a for-profit company and Singh is confident about achieving operational break-even this year. Its list of investors is impressive: Nexus Venture Partners, Acumen Fund, Gray Matters Capital, Draper Fisher Jurvetson, Garage Technology Ventures, Mahindra group and Omidyar Network.

AMRITA UNIVERSITY**New roles for women**

SEVEN women – all married and from low-income families – have broken into a male bastion by training to become plumbers in Kerala. They have completed a 300-hour computerized course and have received certificates from the National Skills Development Corporation.

Empowering these middle-aged women, between 31 and 49 years of age, is Sakshat Amrita Vocational Education (SAVE) of Amrita University. SAVE uses cutting-edge haptic technology (technology that interfaces with the user through the sense of touch) to provide an individualised learning experience through simulated workshops.

"The idea was to take the concept of virtual learning beyond surgery and flying to vocational skills," says B. Bhavani, 41, project director. Traditional professions like coconut climbing, carpentry and masonry are dying. Truth be told, she said, there has been no substitute for this loss of manpower and skills which were being passed from one generation to the next.

In 2009, Amrita University participated in a pilot skill development project funded by the Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry in Idukki. At that time the university demonstrated its first haptic module – a plumbing and fabric painting course. The HRD ministry realised the concept was eminently workable and started SAVE at Amrita University to provide computerized training to the disadvantaged.

SAVE is the first programme of its kind in India and the only lab in the world to research haptics for vocational training. Modules are being regular-

ly developed and taken to actual users in the field.

To create modules, SAVE reworks the curriculum provided by the National Council on Vocational Training, bringing in multi-disciplinary elements – video, animation, graphic designing and engineering. All of this is adapted to haptic technology thereby reducing the instructor's time and the need for actual materials and tools.

Four more vocations are being added – beauty and hair care, two-wheeler maintenance, geriatric nursing and tiling. "The entire programme is being built in modules so that when it's time to expand, all that needs to be done is to fill the relevant content in the right module. Some 200 marginalised people have acquired skills through these courses and Amrita University now wants to scale it up," says Bhawani.

Courses can be accessed from any remote area which has Internet or satellite connectivity through a desktop or an ordinary mobile phone. In order to reach out to the digitally excluded, the university has developed MoVE (Mobile Vocational Education), which utilises fully equipped vehicles powered by solar energy to provide vocational education in far-flung areas.

All the haptic devices needed for a module have to be built from scratch. There could be as many as 500 tools needed for a particular trade. That's only part of the problem. Production initially was tough to crack. "You try getting a regular plumber to hold the equipment correctly and then you have to explain how it is used," laughs Bhawani.



DIGITAL GREEN

Indian Idol

IN Banihalli village, 80 km from Bangalore, farmers are watching a video on how to make vermicompost using banana leaf in mud pots. They ask for the film to be stopped midway. Just for a while. They have a few questions. No hard feelings. After all the 'hero' of the short film is their friendly fellow farmer. He stands in front of his audience and answers all their queries.

"When somebody from among them tells the story it tends to be reflective. It leads to a dialogue," says Vinay Kumar, chief operating officer of Digital Green.

Not surprisingly Harvard Business Review has nicknamed the programme: Indian Idol for Farmers.

Digital Green is a non-profit that uses low-cost portable video equipment to film live demonstrations of the best agricultural practices so that small and marginal farmers learn how to increase productivity. The topics needed to be shot are identified by the community, and then duly checked for accuracy by agricultural experts. These are then screened for farmers. An expert also steps in to help them adopt state-of-the-art practices.

So, be it garlic, mustard or paddy cultivation, cabbage transplantation, cauliflower pests or success stories of self-help groups, all have been filmed extensively and screened in those areas where they are relevant. A total of 2,000 videos covering over 1,000 practices have been produced. These reach nearly 84,000 farmers in around 1,300 villages.

Digital Green has set ambitious targets for itself. It hopes to reach one million farmers in 10,000 villages over the next three-and-a-half years.

Digital Green was initially part of Microsoft's research programme on technology for emerging markets. In 2009, Rikin Gandhi made it into an independent organisation. The 29-year-old entrepreneur was selected as an Ashoka Fellow and figured in the list of 35 innovators under 35 brought out annually by MIT's Technology Review. That was in 2010, when Gandhi was just 27.

If the venture has become a resounding success it is because the production and dissemination of videos is done cheaply in the simplest manner. Cameras costing as little as \$100 and portable Pico projectors priced at \$150 are used for the task. Shooting of an average film takes no more than four days. Screenings normally happen in the evening in public places such as

temples, school premises or even the local bus-stand. Time sensitivity is a priority. The video must match with the cropping pattern and season. Customising content is the key. Videos are recorded in local languages.

But all this would have been hard to accomplish if Digital Green had not approached the right partners. It has tied up with seven reputed NGOs well-known for their agricultural extension programmes – Pradan, BAIF, SPS, Access, ASA, PRAGATI and VARRAT. How crucial their role is can be gauged from the fact that two-thirds of Digital Green's effort goes into social mobilisation.

So what impact do Digital Green's videos have on farmers? The adoption rate of good farming practices is close to 50 per cent, says Gandhi. He points out that Digital Green is 10 times more effective, per dollar spent, in converting farmers to better farming practices than traditional agricultural extension programmes. This evaluation is done with Digital Green's open-source simple analytics system that can be deployed without any engineering staff. It provides day-to-day business intelligence on field operations, performance targets, basic return on investment and other metrics.

Digital Green's business model is pretty simple. As the technology development partner it is responsible for training 'community resource persons' who are the link with the farmers. It also funds technical tools. The operational costs are borne by the farmer community so that the programme is viable and relevant to their needs. So a ticket-based system – where every viewing farmer pays ₹2 to ₹4 per screening – covers costs. In future, money could come in from contextual advertising on videos.

The buzz about Digital Green has also got a lot to do with its use of social media. Digital Green has developed a Facebook game called 'Wonder Village' where anyone can build a village by creating the relevant socio-economic conditions. Also, each of its videos is on Youtube. It is now working to use mobile technology to shoot, project and download a video.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has invested \$3 million in Digital Green. The Deshpande Foundation and Ford Foundation are the other two investors. Digital Green also has a tie-up with the Union Ministry of Rural Development under its National Rural Livelihoods Mission. There are plans to replicate the Digital Green model in nutrition, animal husbandry and financial inclusion. ■

Business

□ Enterprise

□ Inclusion

□ CSR

□ ICT

□ Go Green

Chhota Bheem comes of age

PICTURES BY P ANIL KUMAR

T S Sudhir
Hyderabad

THE pace is frenetic at the Hyderabad office of Green Gold Animation. In the last week of April, Chhota Bheem will debut on the big screen – after four years of being a huge draw on the small screen’s Pogo channel. The 80-minute 2D animation feature film, produced at a cost of Rs 4 crore, will be Chhota Bheem’s big graduation day.

Rajiv Chilaka, managing director of Green Gold and the creator of Chhota Bheem, calls him a Salman Khan, who he hopes will be a big draw for children between four and 14 to the cinema halls. April is a good month – the annual exams are just over and the ideal stress buster could well be Chhota Bheem and his pals.

But before analyzing Chhota Bheem’s prospects of stardom, a quick flashback: Reel One was in January 2001 when Rajiv Chilaka, a software engineer, returned to India to set up Green Gold.

He had done a three-year stint in the US and a short course at the Academy of Arts in San Francisco (where he trained in 3D and 2D animation, visual effects, script writing and direction).

He was fascinated by the world of animation and realized that an opportunity existed in India to give Indian children stories rooted in their own land and culture.

“Animation was a childhood interest,” says Rajiv. “I grew up on Disney cartoons, Spiderman, Jungle Book and Amar Chitra Katha.”

So is the rollout from Green Gold an animated avatar of Amar Chitra Katha?

“No. We are completely different,” he insists.



Rajiv Chilaka

Chhota Bheem, after four years of being the number one show on the small screen’s Pogo channel, will move to the big screen.

“Amar Chitra Katha has always been in the mythological space or telling the stories of kings. Our characters are entirely created by us.”

Chhota Bheem is Rajiv Chilaka’s calling card. And his story goes like this: Chhota Bheem and his friends live in a modern-day Malgudi, called Dholakpur. But unlike R. K. Narayan’s masterpiece whose backdrop was an India he was witness to, Dholakpur’s location is more timeless.

The series revolves around Bheem, a nine-year-old boy, who is brave, strong and intelligent, and his rivalry with Kalia Pehalwan, an 11-year-old

bully, who is envious of Bheem's popularity.

The supporting cast includes Kalia's sidekicks and Bheem's friends. And Raja Indravarma, the king of Dholakpur, who trusts Bheem to tackle the toughest of problems.

"It gives us lots of flexibility. We can make Bheem and his friends come to the city from Dholakpur or even travel outside India. Robots can come to Dholakpur and we can have trains or

took a lot of creative energy and time.

"We also realized that it did not appeal to kids. With Chhota Bheem, the location and the characters are all fixed. It is the content that we play around with," he says.

Why Bheem? Rajiv admits he found inspiration for the character in his own childhood fantasies. "It is an aspiration for young boys to be powerful. It is a big deal to be strong. And Bheem is that kind of

in the long run, emulate Disney and Pixar by producing animation movies in India.

But that's easier said than done. Most channels use overseas content and dub it in various regional languages because it is far cheaper. Sudhish Rambhotla, Chairman of Colorships Animation Park, says, "It costs up to \$100,000 to produce one 30-minute episode. If you buy content from outside and dub it here, an episode costs you only between \$300 and \$1,500. So when you get high quality content far cheaper, why would Indian original content be encouraged?"

However, Indian content always gets bigger viewership, as is the case with Chhota Bheem. But that was also because Pogo wanted to make a point. So while the channel marketed itself as the Chhota Bheem channel, the rest of the airtime was filled up with overseas content.

"China does not allow broadcast of foreign animation on its channels at prime time. Ideally, 80 per cent of content should be India-produced. Today, less than 10 per cent of content is home-grown," says Rambhotla.

Hanuman in 2005 has been the sole superhit on the big screen from the animation industry. A good part of its success was due to marketing and distribution and the huge buzz around it.

"For any animation film to succeed, the distribution channels have to work for it," says Rambhotla. "It will be a disaster for the animation film market if Chhota Bheem does not succeed.



buses as modes of transport," says Rajiv.

That's one of the reasons Chhota Bheem has clicked with the younger viewer. Almost like cloud technology, the creators take the children on a rollercoaster journey through different situations, albeit always with a message.

Ranjini Ramnath, a parent in Kochi, says Chhota Bheem is what she allows her seven-year-old son to watch. "The other options are serials like Tom and Jerry, which are very violent, or Chinese products like Shin Chan or Doraemon. In contrast, Chhota Bheem is very rooted in Indian values and culture. Most families are nuclear today with grandparents not around to tell stories, Chhota Bheem fills that much-needed space on television."

Geeta Menon, Assistant Editor at Children's World magazine, says publishers always find more takers among kids and parents for books with Indian stories. "Even today, tales from the Panchtantra are a huge draw. Children find it easier to relate to Bal Ganesh stories than to a Doraemon, even if these Chinese characters speak in Tamil, Hindi or Telugu."

Bheem was a story that emerged out of Rajiv's experience with Vikram-Betal. Green Gold produced those stories in 2005 for Cartoon Network only to realize that pre-production work for a single episode took up to three months. That's because every story had different characters. It

character, who stands out in the Mahabharata. We also gave him cute characteristics like being fond of eating *laddoos*. All that endeared him to kids."

The 37-year-old Rajiv used his nephew and niece to test the stories on. What worked with them found its way into the storyline. The tradition continues to this day. Quite often, modifications and tweaking of content, storyline and characters happened based on this first feedback.

"Many times they tell me a story. Especially stories like when Bheem and his friends go on a picnic and get lost. Kids tend to connect with that sort of adventure. My niece was the one who pointed out that Chutki, the girl in Chhota Bheem, does not get to do much. So then we created episodes in which Chutki came up with smart ideas. Then my niece complained that only Bheem gets to fight while Chutki is a bystander. So we made Chutki beat up Kalia in an episode. That episode turned out to be one of the biggest hits," says Rajiv.

While a fiber model of Chhota Bheem occupies pride of place in the Green Gold office in Hyderabad, other characters also hold their own. There is Luv-Kush on Disney, Chor Police on Hungama, Krishna Balram on Cartoon Network and Mighty Raju on Pogo.

Green Gold started with just eight employees and now has 200. The mandate it has set for itself is clear – it will create original Indian content and,

But its chances are bright as in over four years Pogo has built it up as a huge brand."

But there could be a sea of difference between what works on TV and what works on the big screen. Maruthi Shankar, Managing Director of 7 Seas Technologies, points out that the Indian audience has got used to Lion King, Tintin and the Avatar kind of quality. "Anything less than the best in the world would disappoint this very demanding generation," he says.

The stakes are high. Despite a lot of animation work being outsourced to India in the past decade, the country is still an insignificant player in the global animation industry, accounting for just about one per cent of the \$100 billion pie. The number of production houses has seen a shakeout in the past decade. Animation academies, which had mushroomed, have also dwindled.

Piggybacking on the Chhota Bheem brand, Green Gold has ventured into merchandising and distribution. Green Gold stores have opened in Hyderabad, Ranchi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore, Rajkot and Ahmedabad, selling DVDs, comics, Chhota Bheem T-shirts and stationery. Each store does business of ₹3 to 5 lakhs a month.

Whether the Indian animation industry will soar high now rests on the shoulders of young, mighty Bheem and his ardent fans. ■

Jackfruit on the table

PICTURES BY SHREE PADRE

Shree Padre
Kasargod

THE humble jackfruit is headed in the right direction. Ready- to- cook (RTC) jackfruit will soon be available to consumers. All you will need to do is open the packet, dunk the jackfruit into your cooking pan and mingle it with your favourite masalas over a stove.

The CARD-Krishi Vijnana Kendra (KVK) Pathnamthitta in Kerala has taken the lead. In March this year it launched the RTC version of jackfruit at its sales counter for the first time.

Jackfruit, the biggest fruit in the world, is organic and rich in dietary fibre and nutrients. Yet its consumption has been languishing since the fruit is cumbersome to cut with all its thorns and latex.

Also, nature has made the jackfruit very big. You need a very large and hungry family to eat a full fruit. It is ideal for India.

The people set to benefit from minimal processing of jackfruit are farmers. "Instead of selling tender jackfruit for very little, farmers can themselves convert the fruit into RTC and supply locally. They can also approach supermarkets. An RTC enterprise does not need hi-tech machines or big investment. We hope this will spread like a mass movement in India," says Shana Harshan, Subject Matter Specialist of KVK Pathnamthitta, the person behind this pioneering venture.

INSPIRING NEIGHBOUR:

KVK Pathnamthitta has taken inspiration from Sri Lanka where RTC jackfruit is available in almost all urban areas. For nearly a decade the Sri Lankan Agriculture department provided training on minimal processing of jackfruit to interested entrepreneurs and farmers.

According to Sarananda Hewage, head, food research unit of the Sri Lankan Agricultural Department, "the ready- to- cook method has increased utilization of jackfruit to the tune of 10 per cent of our total production." (*Civil Society, August 2011 issue*). Consumers in Sri Lanka can buy RTC jackfruit almost through the year thanks to techniques like drying, preserving in brine etc.

Currently, KVK offers ready- to- cook jackfruit in three forms. You can buy tender cut jackfruit yet to mature, jackfruit seeds and jackfruit carpels. A 250 gm packet of tender jackfruit and seeds is priced at Rs 20 each. For the same price, you can also buy 500 gm of slightly grown jackfruit carpels.

KVK Pathnamthitta is in Thadiyar, a sort of interior village with bus services four km away. Yet the RTC packets produced on a trial basis are selling like



CARD-Krishi Vijnana Kendra's ready to cook jackfruit is selling like hot cakes

hot cakes.

"Housewives are asking us why can't this be made available in shops elsewhere," says the staff at the sales counter.

When the jackfruits mature, KVK intends to sell its cut seeds after removing only the outermost white cover. The brown skin contains medicinal properties, so removing it is not advisable.

The advantage of minimal processing for the consumer is that the jackfruit is very nearly fresh. Not much preservative is required. Neither is the texture or form of the fruit altered in any way. At the same time, utmost care has to be taken to prevent microbial contamination.

The downside of this RTC product is its short shelf life. It can be kept only for a day at room temperature. Of course, in a fridge, at temperatures below 20 degrees Centigrade, the jackfruit will

stay fresh for three days.

In Sri Lanka, vegetable shops, supermarkets and even some medical shops sell RTC jackfruit. The island has about 70 jackfruit minimal processing units, some of which provide the product for nearly six months since jackfruit is available for nine months there.

Another problem is browning. Within a few hours of cutting the jackfruit, the pieces begin to discolour. Although the quality and taste of the fruit remains unaltered in the initial hours, urban consumers could be driven away. A quick dip into a one percent sodium metabisulphate solution prevents browning but Shana says since most Kerala housewives know that slight browning is fine, KVK has

opted not to use any chemical preservatives.

Also, only stainless steel knives should be used for minimal processing since ordinary knives leave black stains on the cut pieces. Instead of shredding the tender jackfruit into small pieces, cutting it into cubes of around one sq. cm. helps in reducing browning.

KVK has used thermocol trays wrapped in cling film for packing the RTC jackfruit. This reduces costs. It also increases shelf life. This is because cling film is semi-permeable whereas pet containers are airtight, explains Shana.

Jackfruit minimal processing is a suitable enterprise for rural groups that have good human resources and are connected to taluk centres or towns by bus services. It is tailor-made for women's groups such as Streeshakti or Kudumbasree.

The market for RTC jackfruit looks very promising. It can be sold in vegetable shops, supermarkets, weekly vegetable markets, hostels and hotels. Caterers are an important segment. Like milk, RTC jackfruit can be delivered door-to-door daily in residential colonies. "Why go that far," says Mandemane Shripada Hegde, a farmer from Sirsi, "with the scarcity of labour turning acute, we can sell RTC jackfruit to farmer family weddings too."

KVK's RTC jackfruit has received encouraging response all around. A Bangalore resident inquired when the product would be available in his city.

Sensing the potential to scale-up this enterprise, KVK will be training interested people for a day at the end of March. "If there are groups outside Kerala who are keen to learn we can consider training them also," says Programme Coordinator Dr. C.P. Robert.

"In the days to come we would require devices or machinery to peel the thorny jackfruit skin and to cut jackfruit into pieces. Mechanization would mean less handling with human hands and less scope for contamination. That step would further increase shelf life," says Shana. ■

CARD KVK Pathnamthitta - cardkvk@yahoo.com Phone: (0469) 266 2094.



Chopped jackfruit is neatly packed



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No rural vision in water policy

HIMANSHU THAKKAR & PARINEETA DANDEKAR

ON January 31, 2012, the Government of India (GoI) came out with a draft of a new National Water Policy (NWP) to replace the existing NWP passed in 2002. The water resources establishment gave the people of India 29 days to submit whatever comments they may have. A credible mechanism, which would ensure serious and unbiased consideration of what people may submit, was not put into place. The draft was not available in the languages that most people would understand. The available Hindi translation was full of such difficult words that it is of limited use.

The draft NWP was only available on a website. How do we expect farmers from Vidarbha or dam-affected communities from the Northeast to even know about the existence of the draft NWP, access this policy, forget about commenting on it? Clearly, vulnerable sections like tribal, rainfed farmers, Dalits, women and rural populations who will be deeply impacted by the implications of this policy are excluded from consultation.

The National Water Policy is supposed to be for the people. It is an opportunity to reconsider the water policy and programmes in the light of past experiences. In a democratic set up the policy is expected to give people a role in its formulation so that it is by the people. But the NWP 2012 draft fails on these basic tests.

There is no hurry to finish this exercise quickly. The draft NWP could have been translated into all the state languages and sent to all the gram



sabhas and various concerned groups with a credible mechanism in place to ensure that the responses received from such an exercise would get unbiased consideration. None of this was done. This is the first major reason to reject the current draft NWP 2012.

The draft NWP is not a reflection of people's needs and concerns. The entire consultation process for the draft NWP which will guide our water resources planning and management in the coming water-stressed decades, consisted of a few invited consultations with 'experts', academia, the corporate sector and barely five Panchayati Raj

consultations.

To show how inadequate these consultations were, in the Northeast consultation, elected representatives from at least five states, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Mizoram and Nagaland, were not a part of the consultation.

Most suggestions from these few consultations do not find any reflection in the draft, like the overwhelming need to make agriculture one of the top priorities. On the contrary, the draft NWP states that 'over and above the pre-emptive need for safe drinking water and sanitation, water

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should be treated as an economic good.' Which means that water will then go to the user who is able to pay the most – certainly not the Indian Farmer. Therefore, besides giving implicit priority to industrial and commercial water use, is this another move to push corporate farming?

There seems to be blind belief that by making water an economic good, people will start valuing water. This is far from the truth. In practice, those who have the money would continue to waste water (and produce huge quantities of waste water which does not get treated!). Can this be acceptable when millions do not have water even for their minimum needs?

An analysis of India's water scenario highlights the ever growing dependence of our cities, villages, industries and agriculture on groundwater. Nearly 85 to 90 per cent of rural drinking water supply, over 55 per cent of urban and industrial water supply, over 60 per cent of our irrigation comes from groundwater. Groundwater is India's water lifeline, and a precarious one at that looking at our plunging groundwater levels and its deteriorating quality. Currently the sector is in need of urgent policy and regulatory interventions. But the policy does not even acknowledge the fact that groundwater is our water lifeline and is likely to remain one for years to come.

A push towards almost blanket privatisation in the 2012 draft is disturbing. It states: The 'service provider' role of the state has to be gradually shifted to that of a regulator... The water related services should be transferred to community and/or private sector with appropriate "Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) models."

Now, there are numerous global and Indian examples of failed PPP models. More and more municipalities around the world are reclaiming their control over water. We lack credible mechanisms to ensure transparent, accountable water

PRASANTA BISWAS



resource management, or laws to ensure legally enforceable right to water and democratic norms. As such, a blanket push for privatisation (which is what the draft NWP is de facto pushing for in the absence of any credible move towards transfer of services to the community), will only work towards worsening the water services scene, particularly for the poor, but actually for everyone.

Interestingly, the policy also firmly pushes states to establish Water Resource Regulatory Authorities (WRRAs). The experience of the only, sort of (actually even that is not fully functioning) functioning regulatory authority set up in Maharashtra, under a World Bank project in 2005 is far from encouraging. It has lost a lot of its effective powers of equitable water allocation and has indirectly facilitated a cabinet decision, changing water allocation in suicide-prone Vidarbha region from vulnerable farmers to polluting coal-based thermal power plants. Blindly pushing WRRAs is simply pushing the World Bank agenda.

The policy supports large multipurpose projects, big storages and inter basin water transfers from so called 'open basins' to 'closed basins' without even attempting to understand why such projects have not delivered any benefits for over two decades, nor how we can improve the highly non optimal performance of the existing water infrastructure that India has built in the last 65 years and which is the largest in the world. Such support for extremely costly, socially and ecologically destructive non-performing assets even before assessing the low cost and low impact options is clearly unacceptable.

We have not tried to exhaust the potential of endless sustainable options like watershed development, local rainwater harvesting systems, local groundwater recharge, demand side management, including water saving methods like system of rice intensification, sustainable sugar initiative, water

saving cropping patterns, avoiding non essential water intensive activities, recycling by water intensive industries, understanding and stopping export of virtual water from water deficit areas and the country as a whole etc., in a single basin or even in a sub basin of our country. In the absence of this, advocacy for inter basin transfers has no justification. The timing of the shocking Supreme Court order of Feb 27, 2012, which came on the heels of the draft NWP is interesting in this context.

Resettlement and Rehabilitation: Water projects in India have displaced millions of people till now, the disproportionate share of them being tribals and Dalits. Yet we do not have a single project where we can claim we have done just R&R. The R&R section should acknowledge this fact. The policy needs to ensure that only a project that has come through a bottom-up planning process like the one recommended by the World Commission on Dams shall be considered.

The section on 'Adaptation to Climate Change' is welcome, but misses the crucial lesson which is being learnt the world over, of trying to make the huge existing water infrastructure function optimally, responsively and adapt to climate change. The policy also needs to prioritise sustainable agricultural practices like increasing soil moisture by increasing carbon content, protection of grazing lands and enhancing their productivity through measures like the *chauka* system of the Gramin Vikas Navyuvak Mandal Lapodiya (GVNML) (*Civil Society, March 2008*), organic farming, etc as coping measures, but these do not find any mention.

While the policy giving second priority to ecological needs is welcome and the section on preservation of river corridors, water bodies and infrastructure is also welcome, there is no credible move to make any of these a reality in practice. Worryingly, the policy has paid little attention to ecosystems that sustain the water cycle. Clearly defined measures for conservation of source regions of rivers, floodplains, wetlands and riparian zones should have been included in the policy.

Large dams and undemocratic use of water is drying and destroying the rivers. While the policy says that water for ecosystems will be secured before treating water as an economic good, section 1.3 (vi) avoids mention of ecosystems and states that over and above meeting basic human needs, water should be treated as an economic good. Such inherent contradictions can be used conveniently to ignore the issue entirely, like the 2002 policy which paid lip service to "minimum flows in rivers". Nothing materialised in the last 10 years and the state of our rivers have only gone from bad to worse.

The Governments of Punjab and Kerala have already expressed dissatisfaction about the draft NWP and numerous CSOs, groups and communities have written to the MoWR, recording their concerns about the anti-poor, anti-farmer, anti-people nature of the draft. We hope that the water resources establishment pays attention to the genuine concerns and starts a credible, bottom up participatory effort to make this India's Water Policy and not the Ministry of Water Resources' Water Policy. ■

Himanshu Thakkar (ht.sandrp@gmail.com) and Parineeta Dandekar (parineeta.dandekar@gmail.com)
South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers & People (www.sandrp.in)

IRRIGATION FIASCO

In Sections 3, 4 and 5, in fact in the entire draft NWP document there is no mention of major and medium irrigation projects, the single biggest technology fix on which the government spends most of its money. Over 95 per cent of India's large dams are built for this. And these projects are not delivering. Since 1991-1992 when India's net irrigated area served by major and medium irrigation projects reached a peak of 17.79 m. ha. there has been no addition to the net irrigated area even though India spent over Rs 200,000 crore during the period. This reality needs to be acknowledged in the NWP. But there is no attempt at institutionalising the post facto evaluations or learnings from the experiences of the past.

Scania under the scanner

KANCHI KOHLI

IN this era of regulatory collapse, many local groups and individuals have begun approaching judicial bodies to seek remedy and recourse. If one speaks to local activists at the heart of many people's movements and struggles against widespread industrial expansion in India, there is considerable scepticism about seeking justice from the courts, tribunals and government authorities. Yet it is ironic that many irregularities do reach court-rooms by the same sceptics whether the issues pertain to human rights, land or environmental regulation. They do so with deep hope that justice is indeed a possibility.

So when Jan Chetana, a social and environmental action group in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, took the environmental clearance of M/s. Scania Steels & Power Ltd (or Scania) before the National Environment Appellate Authority (NEAA), it was with tentativeness and hope. Scania, which was formerly known as the Sidhi Vinayak Sponge Iron Ltd, operates in Raigarh district. The case could have gone either way and resulted in partial, total or no victory with respect to the contentions raised.

According to the NEAA Act, 1997, an appeal challenging an environmental clearance issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) could be filed within a maximum period of 90 days.

Jan Chetana's objections were filed after the prescribed period. Despite important contentions raised, the NEAA decided not to condone the delay. But Jan Chetana did not give up. Their advocates approached the Delhi High Court which set the NEAA order aside. The court sent the matter back to the NEAA, directing the authority to dispose of it as expeditiously as possible.

With the National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act, 2010, coming into effect and its establishment in October 2010, the NEAA ceased to exist. The Scania matter became one of 26 cases that was transferred to the NGT which began its full set of hearings in July 2011.

The facts of the case are as follows. Scania was operating a sponge iron plant in Village Punjipatra, Tehsil Gharghoda, in Raigarh district before 2004 i.e. prior to the issuance of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006.

The production capacity of the sponge iron plant was 66,000 TPA of sponge iron. The earlier 1994 version of the EIA Notification did not

require sponge iron plants to take prior environmental clearance before they started operations. If located in a forest area, permission for diversion of forest land for non-forest use had to be procured under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

But when Scania decided to enhance its production of sponge iron from 66,000 TPA to 1,32,000

But Scania got lucky. The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) which examined this project in the MoEF recommended that the proposal can be exempted from public hearing and be granted approval citing Section 7 (ii) of the EIA notification, 2006. The MoEF's letter followed suit on 5 November 2008 clearly mentioning that "no public hearing/consultation is required due to expansion of the proposed unit in the same campus as per section 7 (ii) of EIA notification 2006."

What is Section 7 (ii) which both the EAC and MoEF cited while granting approval? This section becomes applicable only to those units where expansion entails increase in production capacity from the earlier environmental clearance or modernisation of an existing unit with increase in the total production capacity beyond the threshold limit prescribed in the Schedule to the EIA notification. It also authorizes the EAC to decide on the due diligence necessary including preparation of the EIA and public consultations. The EAC's due diligence here meant that Scania can be exempted from the public consultation process.

Interestingly, the Jan Chetana petition argued that Scania did not have prior environmental clearance under the 2006 notification and neither did it have an approval under the 1994 notification. Therefore the interpretation of Section 7 (ii) did not apply to Scania and, as a result, they could not be exempted from public consultation. The Chhattisgarh Environment Conservation Board (CECB) responsible for carrying out the public consultation, also supported the EAC and MoEF and said that this was not required in Scania's case as the proposal was one of expansion of the proposed unit in the same campus.

This legalese did not examine the fact that Scania's expansion would double its current capacity. Basic environmental logic therefore required that Scania engage with the public before they did or did not get a green chit from MoEF. But sometimes the logic of experts seems to be to seek a way out for project authorities and Scania is one such case.

After a range of debates, arguments and presentations of case law related to the petitioner's locus standi on whether the increased capacity of the plant will have substantial impacts and whether or not Scania could have been exempted from the public hearing, the NGT gave its verdict on 9

Continued on page 30



Scania factory in Raigarh district

JAN CHETANA

The legalese did not examine the fact that Scania's expansion would double its current capacity. Basic environmental logic therefore required that Scania engage with the public before trying to get a green chit.

TPA by adding another unit, alongside installing a Steel Melting Shop, a Ferro Alloy Plant and a Captive Power Plant of 25 MW, the provisions of the EIA Notification, 2006, were applicable to them.

As per the EIA 2006 notification, sponge iron units manufacturing more than 200 TPA are placed in Category A at entry 3(a) in the Schedule to the EIA notification. Category A projects are those which need approval from the MoEF in Delhi and have to go through a mandatory public consultation phase as prescribed in the 2006 notification. This includes both a public hearing with affected people as well as seeking written responses on a draft EIA report prepared by a consultant on behalf of the project authority.

In and out of school

DEBJANI

RAMJI, a student of Class 4 studying in a primary school in Vedia, a remote Dalit Basti in Manpur Block of Gaya District, looks at his classmates forlornly. They have all learnt their multiplication tables and are ready to be promoted to the next class. Ramji, on the other hand, is sadly lagging behind.

The child returned to his village after a long 'vacation' of eight months. Now he has to repeat the same class. He is not eligible for promotion.

Ramji's 'vacation' is really a misnomer. He spent those eight months doing hard labour, helping his parents in a brick kiln in Ludhiana, yet another example of a migrant family in search of work.

Ramji reflects the plight of several children whose lives are seriously affected by migration. Vedia Dalit Tola is inhabited by nearly 100 families. Of the three schools in the locality, one caters specially to the education needs of these children.

Out of 100 children enrolled in the school only 45 attend classes regularly. The rest are subjected to the vagaries of "distress seasonal migration".

Children of seasonal migrants need special strategies to enable them get quality education. Currently, they are being left out of development strategies. Distress seasonal migration is a growing phenomenon due to drought or floods.

In Bihar, migration takes place every year due to lack of work. Families go to work in other states for survival. Mostly they take their children along, resulting in an increase in the school dropout rate. Migration is accepted by society as an alternative form of employment during the lean season when there isn't enough work and therefore the poor find it hard to buy food. Migrants comprise the economically weaker sections including the socially backward Scheduled

Caste and Scheduled Tribe groups.

There are additional factors which intensify migration – heavy debts, landlessness, expenses incurred for social functions like marriages and death ceremonies, repair of homes or simply the lure of a little more money.

In the states families migrate to, conditions are terrible. Work sites have no facilities for housing. There are no arrangements for health, nutrition or security. The work demanded forces women and children to take up physically grueling tasks



even at low wages. Also, the wages are based on piece rates and not the time spent. That is the reason why these little hands are perpetually drawn into the labour process.

Migrant children are always more vulnerable than their non-migrant peers. They don't have access to schooling on work sites. In the few cases they do, the miserable condition of government schools at such locations fails to meet their education needs. Children are pushed further into migration because poor quality education promises little for a better future.

Normally, the migration season starts from

December-January and continues till May-June. Children usually accompany their parents to other states. Those allowed to stay behind in their villages suffer their own share of problems. Lack of care and affection, low food consumption and other related problems affect their health adversely over time.

Migrant children are exposed to a great deal of hardship and a small window of opportunity. They not only start working early but accept the challenges of a tough life at an age when their better-off peers barely understand the meaning of their own names. They work day and night like adults, traveling hazardously between work sites and villages.

When they go back to their villages, they are tagged as 'outsiders'. Neither the schools nor the larger community accepts them fully. These children are difficult to track because of the nature of their parents' labour movement patterns. They are therefore easily left out of the fold of development and education policies.

Migrant parents have suggested construction of residential schools for their children in all areas prone to migration. They have also suggested introducing bridge courses to make up for the gap created by the migrant

child's irregular access to education. Addressing the livelihood concerns of parents would ensure better enrollment, attendance and retention in schools of children from these areas.

After school hours, provisions should be made to engage these children in extra curricular activities and sports. This will help them grow at the individual level and teach them team spirit and to bond with other children. Our country firmly believes in the Right to Education. With a few dedicated steps we will be able to include each and every child of India in the ambit of our education policies. ■

Charkha Features

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February 2012.

The Bench comprising Dr. G.K Pandey, Expert Member and Justice A.S. Naidu, Acting Chairperson of the NGT, concluded that while Scania cannot be blamed for an error in judgment by the MoEF, public consultation is a must. What the judgment overlooked was the onus of the company and its obligation to respect the spirit and word for the need of a public consultation.

Even though the environment clearance for Scania was not cancelled straightaway, the NGT has now directed the MoEF to get a public consul-

tation/hearing conducted for the proposed projects at the site or near the area of the site as per the provisions contained in the EIA Notification, 2006. This, felt the NGT bench, is necessary to achieve the object and purpose of the Notification vis-a-vis the Statute. But until the public consultation is completed, the environment clearance for Scania would be suspended. And in the process of carrying out the consultation, the MoEF was asked to revisit the entire project in the light of NGT's observations and rectify the deficiencies in the EIA report and Environment Management Plan.

With the implementation of this order pending and the public consultation still to take place, is it time for scepticism or of positive legal thinking? Will the MoEF pass an order allowing Scania to continue business as usual following the rectification and public consultation process? And this order, presumably will land up before NGT again, as the enactment allows for it. The dabbling with the court of law despite deep scepticism continues to hold the faith and attention of many. ■

Kanchi Kohli works and writes on environment, forest, and biodiversity governance issues. In her writing, she seeks to explore the interface between industrialisation and its impacts on both local communities and ecosystems.

Living

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The road less travelled: only 4,000 Indians are Rimcollians

Scotch Eggs and other memories

Old boys return for 90 years of RIMC

Chiranjit Banerjee
Dehradun

SQUEALING is a far graver offence than flunking an exam at the Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC). Students over generations have learnt to take a caning stoically but not name a classmate. It is such camaraderie that makes Rimcollians, as the old boys like to be known, hang together as an extended family and on 12

March, 200 of them made it all the way back to the school's verdant campus in a corner of Dehradun to celebrate its 90th anniversary.

Several decades and thousands of miles separate Rimcollians, but distance and time do little to diminish their bonding. "At last count, I know of 27 other Rimcollian chapters celebrating the event across locations that include UK, North America and the Far East", affirms Col. (Retd) Hari Handa, honorary treasurer of ROBA, which stands

for the Rimcollian Old Boys' Association. Col. Handa, a veteran of the 1965 war who lost a leg in action, travels to RIMC every year.

Founded in 1922 by the Prince of Wales and then known as the Royal Indian Military College, the school, with the motto "Ich Dien" or "I Serve", was meant to prepare an elite group of boys for the Indian armed forces each year. It continues to do that, Royal having been replaced with

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Col. Jasbir Khurana's spirit isn't bound by his wheelchair



Gen. Tich Sharma always finds an attentive audience

LAKSHMAN ANAND



D.N. Tripathi at home in Defence Colony, Delhi

Rashtriya after Independence.

For most civilian Indians, Dehradun is synonymous with Doon School. But it is on the RIMC's 140-acre campus that some of India's best officers have had their grooming in childhood.

Five chiefs have been Rimcollians. First there was Gen. Thimmaya and he was followed by Gen. G.G. Bewoor, Gen. V. N. (Tich) Sharma (the Chairman Emeritus of ROBA), Air Chief Marshal N. C. Suri and Gen. S. Padmanabhan.

Pakistani old boys have done as well having produced two army chiefs and an air chief.

The six senior-most serving Rimcollians are Air Marshal D C (Tiny) Kumaria, Air Marshal P.P. Reddy, Lt. Gen. S. K. Singh, Vice Admiral Pradip Chatterjee, Lt. Gen. Manvendra Singh and Lt. Gen. S. S. Jog.

RIMC also has to its credit one Padma Vibhushan and five Padma Bhushan awardees along with the mother of all bravery awards, the Param Veer Chakra, going to none other than Gen. Tich Sharma's elder brother, Major Som Nath Sharma.

The school inducts one boy from each state of



The sanctum sanctorum of RIMC - the senior ante room

India every six months in line with the intake of cadets by the National Defence Academy (NDA). Since it is not always that all states can generate a worthy enough candidate, not more than 50 students in two batches are admitted each year.

In the earlier years, the batches were as small as 15. "Our student-teacher ratio is by far the lowest in India," was the proud assertion of the late R.C. Singhal, who taught at RIMC for more than 40 years and was singularly responsible for grooming boys from diverse socio-economic back-

grounds into generals, bureaucrats, corporate honchos, business leaders and sports champions by the dozens.

As Captain R.M. Jolly, a seasoned seafarer remarks, "I did not experience even a whiff of casteism, communalism or cliques in my years at RIMC."

"The bonding is made easier by the relatively modest size of Rimcollians who don't number more than 2,500 of whom about a 1,000 are part of a closed e-group," reveals Wing Commander



Maj. Gen. Chinu Mohanty remains a draw with cadets



The crack kitchen team that serves up divine Scotch Eggs



Sharayer Khan's dossier comes into public domain



The honours gallery featuring five Indian Chiefs

It is on the RIMC's 140-acre campus that some of India's best officers have had their grooming in childhood. Five chiefs have been Rimcollians.

(Retd.) V. G. Kumar, an acknowledged computer professional who led the way in getting old boys connected online.

The class of January 1968 met on the eve of the reunion to celebrate their 40th anniversary of graduating and among the old boys was Pankaj Sewal, a US citizen, who was meeting his classmates for the very first time after passing out in 1972.

"For Rimcollians, their school is often their first home," avers Shirin Banerjee, a Rimcollian wife who has been a regular visitor to RIMC, "Our fami-

ly's holiday destinations, both in India and abroad, are mostly decided on the basis of the presence of my husband's schoolmates in a particular city."

No Rimcollian get-together, whether in Dehradun or elsewhere, is complete without "Scotch Eggs" being served. "How a boiled egg coated with mince batter can be a source of bonding for men across generations remains a mystery to me," frets a Rimcollian wife who wishes not to be identified because emotions are known to run high over the school recipe!

On the school motto of Ich Dien, Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Chinu Mohanti says, "Service to the country is the highest form of dedication and is not a cliché as many have come to believe. I salute the parents who send their children in their pre teens to RIMC despite the wide choices young Indians have today in terms of career options."

Maj. Gen. Mohanti was handpicked by the Armed Forces establishment to lead RIMC as the first Old Boy Commandant in the late 1980's. More than 85 per cent of Rimcollians have successfully cleared the UPSC examination for the NDA over the years which is a record in itself. And about 15 per cent of them have progressed to the rank of Brigadier or its equivalent in the armed forces.

RIMC has a tradition of featuring the photographs of all its former students who make it to the rank of Brigadier and beyond in its senior ante room which is really the lounge for the senior boys and the centre of attention during the reunions on 12 and 13 March every year. Dossiers of old boys are also thrown open for viewing by all Rimcollians and

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their families during the reunions. Some of them make rather interesting reading.

A general who was honored with the coveted Victoria Cross during World War II was not quite the toast of his teachers when he was in school, but was a serial prankster. Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi's maternal uncle, Sharayer Khan who is a former External Affairs Minister and top cricket honcho of Pakistan, was, in the words of his English teacher, "Able to speak and write English" when he joined RIMC in the 1930s. The Partition took away more than 50 cadets, including Sharayer Khan, to Pakistan.

Air Marshal Kumaria was admitted to RIMC thanks to another old boy, Devender Kapoor, who was the understudy to the Air Marshal's banker father in the early 60s. Kapoor fondly remembers young Kumaria as "a tiny fellow" and recommended RIMC to his father so that he could gain a few inches given the school's emphasis on outdoor activities! The nickname "Tiny" has stuck with Kumaria ever since.

It is not surprising that RIMC has spawned some fine national level sportsmen like former squash champions, Brig. Raj Manchanda and Ritwik Bhattacharya and sailing champ Lt. Gen. K S Rao (Retd.). The national inter-school riding tournament has seen RIMC riders making a top of the podium finish for the last four successive years.

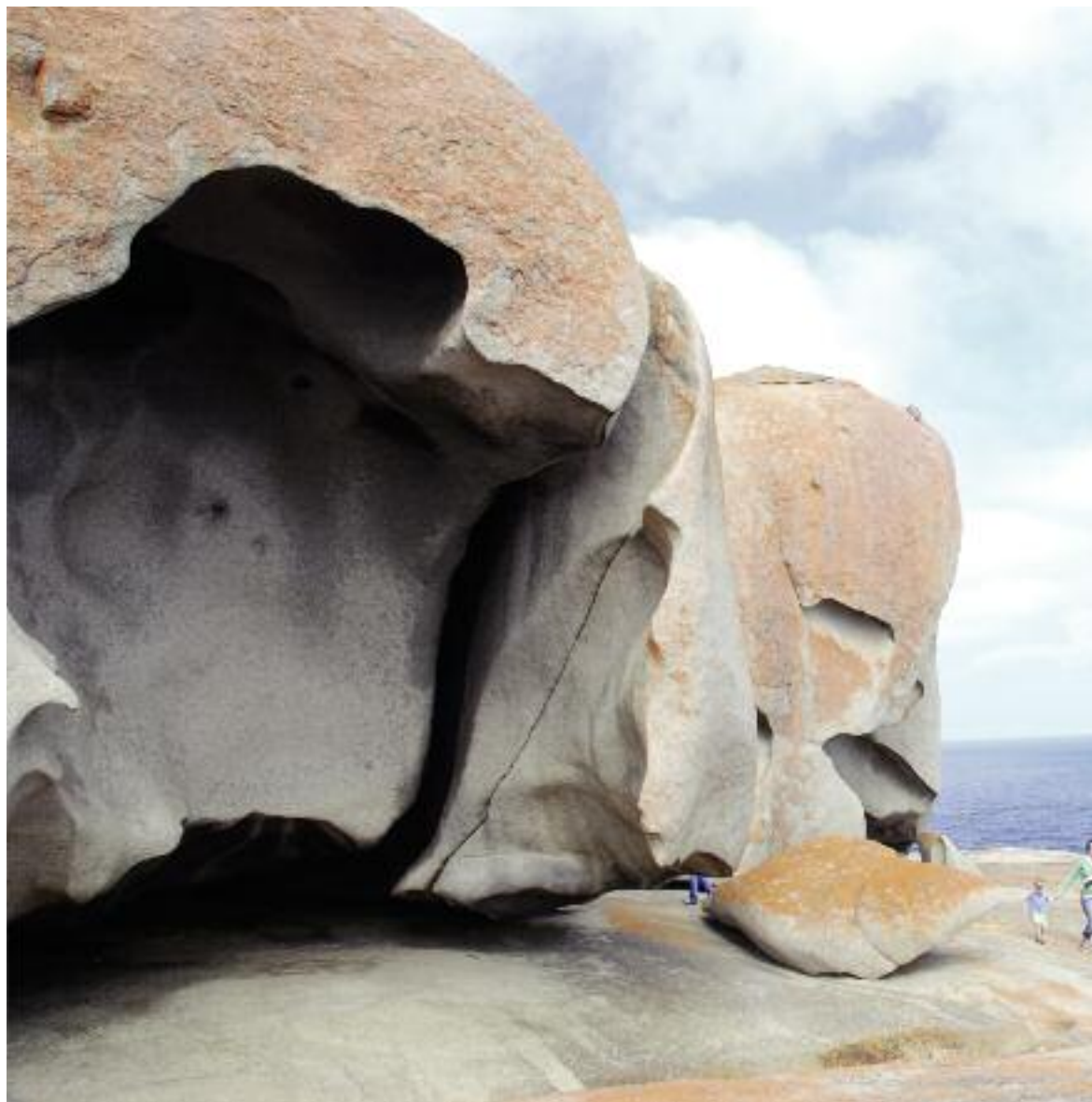
The depth of bonding among Rimcollians is infectious. On top of the school-wide e-groups, almost every class has its own closed group. And then there is the Facebook page that is run by an Air Force pilot who had an insightful observation to make, "If you notice, our masters are not segregated in a colony. They stay in close proximity to the boys which cements guru-shishya relationships."

Gen. V.N. Sharma describes it as an "education for a lifetime". Cadets are trained and put in uniform and get a military background from the age of 11. There is an emphasis on sports. So, every cadet has to box and play others games as well. He says what the school gives its students is the spirit of leadership. "It used be an old saying that you get leaders from the playing fields of Eaton and Harrow. From a young age you learn how to play hard and how to accept loss and victory and be generous in victory."

D. N. Tripathi was a batch mate of Gen. Sharma's. They both live in Defence Colony in Delhi not far from each other. He never joined the forces and went on to do a BSc in chemistry and work for ICI for more than three decades. But he has vivid memories of the school and the English masters.

Cadets came from different backgrounds — both social and religious. But they melded easily because of the frame the school provided. "I now realize what a nice mix we had," he says.

An anniversary celebration is an occasion to catch up. Even though old boys stay in touch, there is so much that doesn't get communicated. Tripathi, for instance, wants his mates to know that though he didn't join the forces because he was first turned down by the selection board for the Army and then a health issue kept him out of the Air Force, he did sign up in 1962 and was all set to be deployed when the war ended and there was no more need for reinforcements. ■



Remarkable Rocks

Kangaroo Island is a

The community's TOMM model ensures responsible tourism

Susheela Nair
Kingscote

FROM our resort in Kingscote it was a 45-minute drive to Flinders Chase National Park in Kangaroo Island, Australia's premier wilderness destination. Kangaroo Island's 155 km length is laced with soaring cliffs, dense forests, towering sand dunes, wetlands and vast stretches of snowy white beaches.

When Captain Mathew Flinders discovered the island in 1802, he found very tame kangaroos near Kingscote in Nepean Bay, which "were stewed down into soup for dinner on this and the

succeeding days." In honour of the feast, he named the place, Kangaroo Island.

The island is Australia's third largest. It is a haven for wildlife. Kangaroo Island houses 267 species of birds, 891 species of native plants, and the Ligurian bees found nowhere else on the planet. Half the native bushland remains just as it was when British explorer Mathew Flinders discovered it.

The island has five significant Wilderness Protection Areas. More than one-third is protected either as a National Park or as a Conservation Park. Separated from the Australian mainland some 9,000 years ago, the island is a veritable

PICTURES BY SUSHEELA NAIR



Koala bear hunched in the branches of a eucalyptus tree



Sea lions frolic at Seal Bay Conservation Park



Lots of kangaroos live here

fur seals. Here we observed seals basking on sun-drenched rocks or diving into the sea. Admirals Arch features a magnificent archway sculpted by the wind and sea where New Zealand fur seals play on the shore platform below. Cape du Couedic and Cape Borda Light stations are also located in the park.

Our next halt were the bizarre granite boulders of Remarkable Rocks on Kirkpatrick Point, just a 10-minute drive away. The rocks are a series of formations, sculpted by the Southern Ocean. Remarkable Rocks is a group of massive and precariously balanced boulders shaped over centuries by the weather and perched atop a huge granite dome rising 240 feet out of the sea. It is a favourite haunt of tourists, filmmakers and photographers.

The paucity of water and the poor soil on Kangaroo Island has kept its human population low and made it easier for conservationists to protect the island. With the wool industry taking a back seat, tourism has gained prominence.

Currently, Kangaroo Island is an excellent example of how tourism and conservation can converge. A drastic rise of visitors in 1997 motivated the Kangaroo Island community to develop an innovative model known as the Tourism Optimisation Management Model or TOMM.

Globally recognised, TOMM monitors the long-term health of Kangaroo Island as a tourism destination by measuring a series of environmental, social, experiential and economic indicators. These, in turn, provide information about the positive and negative effects of tourism on Kangaroo Island. Using TOMM leads to better decision-making based on relevant information and

knowledge.

TOMM is more than just a project. It is a committed partnership between core government agencies responsible for managing Kangaroo Island's resources. Key stakeholders include Tourism Kangaroo Island, Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board, Kangaroo Island Council, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Kangaroo Island Development Board, South Australian Tourism Commission, the Island's tourism businesses and the local community.

TOMM ensures responsible tourism so that the experience tourists enjoy today will be available for future generations. Kangaroo Island won the Best Australian Eco Destination in 2008. Its commitment to sustainable tourism is commendable. Kangaroo Island is protected through conservation zoning, wildlife reserves and heritage listing.

But it's also protected because the community strives to keep it that way. The reason tourists visit Kangaroo Island is the same reason why residents love to live there. ■

Noah's Ark of Australian wildlife. Kangaroos and other marsupials far outnumber the island's 4,400 permanent residents. You can find here farming land, untouched national parks, unique little country towns, fishing hamlets and a coastline that is a photographer's delight. The famed Vivone Beach, located here, is rated as the best beach in Australia.

The Seal Bay Conservation Park was the first halt on our day trip. A pleasant stroll along a broad boardwalk brought us to the beach lined with lolling sea lions and their pups. On the way we stopped at the lookouts and viewing platforms which offered us a stunning view of coastal headlands and the sea-lion colony. We strolled down to the beach and watched Australian sea lions on the sand dunes, lazing on the beach, growling, barking, and swimming. Young sea-lion pups played in the surf, learning to swim and mother sea lions nurtured their young. Some of the older sea lions lay sprawled across the sand occasionally raising their necks skyward before flopping down again.

We moved on to Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

on the western side of the island. It houses a bewildering variety of feathered and four-footed residents. Here we watched koalas snoozing in lofty eucalyptus trees and small grey kangaroos hopping around. The island is rich in native flora and animals including tammar wallabies, possums, heath goanna, echidna, etc.

Kangaroo Island is an avian paradise with some 270 species of birds in its diverse habitats. We spotted some noisy magpies, blue wrens, rosellas, lorikeets, pelicans and galahs, but unfortunately we did not sight the rare Glossy Black Cockatoo, an endangered species found only on the island. We also visited the award-winning Flinders Chase National Park Visitor Centre to see life-size murals of giant mega fauna, interesting displays on the island's flora and fauna.

The visit to the Remarkable Rocks and Admirals Arch – two of the island's most popular landmarks – was wondrous. Along the rugged southern coastline at Cape Du Couedic, is Admirals Arch, an impressive landmark that leads the way to a nursery of around 6,000 native New Zealand

Smiles that tell a thousand tales!

In our operations, we are blessed to bond with some very special people. People not daunted by odds, but with the passion and perseverance to overcome them. In doing so, they allow us to work with them to support livelihood generation and environment protection, to create education and health infrastructure.

Above all, they help us fulfill our goal to be a committed corporate citizen. True to the tradition of the Tata Group.

Mrs Sonal Natarbhai, from the Virpur Village in Sanand, Gujarat. Sonal used to sit on the floor and study. Today she and more than 250 other students benefit from the classrooms facility upgrade initiative of Tata Motors. The Company has a holistic approach to improving the access to and quality of education. The company supplements its infrastructural support to schools with training of teachers and extra-curricular activities of students.



Mr. Sukt Soren of Gopalpur village in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. He was the first in the village to adopt water conservation techniques of the Gram Vikas Kendra society of Tata Motors. Today, the village boasts of perennial irrigation for about 100 acres and about 10,000 fruit and timber generating trees.



Mrs. Rohini Bhamudas Wadkar of Pune in Maharashtra. A widow with three children, she was trained to become self-dependent with technical skills by Tata Motors' Grihini Social Welfare Society.



Mr. Jowhar Ram Paswan of Baranidhān Mohalla of Chhatis district in Jharkhand. Today, he is an employee of Nav Jagat Manav Samaj. It became possible when the Nav Jagat Manav Samaj, supported by Tata Motors, intervened to manage his leprosy and found him a job with a permanent income. Today, Mr. Paswan intervenes to bring comfort to others.

Mr. Man Singh Murmu of Bajnathdān village in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. With mostly infertile land holdings, Mr. Murmu and other residents found meeting both ends difficult. Tata Motors helped him lead change by beginning a tree plantation drive. Today, Bajnathdān has a forest of income-generating trees, and a Forest Protection Group to nurture its economic turnaround.



Mr. Vinod Pachpute of Vasuli village in Pune district of Maharashtra. A diploma holder in mechanical engineering, he is also a trustee and an alumnus of the Bhamchandra High School in the village – the only one in the vicinity covering seven villages. Tata Motors helped set up the school and continues to support it. About 600 students have passed through its portals till date.



Tata Motors' Sustainability Programme. Striving for Sustainable Change.

GREEN CURES

Baby talk

Dr G. G. GANGADHARAN



CHILDREN are the epitome of purity and divinity. An uncontaminated mind and an unprejudiced intellect make the child really divine. The child grows through the societal interaction he or she receives from peers and seniors. When a mother feeds her child by saying if you don't eat your food it

will be given to crows and cats is an example of how inadvertently narrow selfishness gets instilled into the child's mind.

Kashyapa divides the child's life into three stages:

- Foetal stage (Garbhastham) – 9 months
- Infancy and early childhood (Balyam) – 0 to 3 years
- Childhood (Kumaram)
- Drinks only milk – 0 to 1 year
- Takes milk and solids – 1 to 3 years
- Takes mainly solids – 3 to 10 years

These different stages show the intrinsic differences in the metabolic features of infants as understood by our acharyas. The scientific division of early infancy helps to plan food and nutrition for infants in a systematic manner.

The great thinker, political strategist and philosopher Chanakya has written a beautiful verse on grooming the child. "The child should be reared like a king till the age of five. All her/his needs must be met with great care and attention. For the next 10 years the child should work for self-discipline and serve at home. When the child attains the age of 16 she/he should be considered a friend and their opinion should be respected and taken into consideration."

Food is for physical growth. Training is for mental and intellectual growth.

The infant must be fed breast milk for one year as it promotes healthy growth. The nursing mother should sit facing east, take the baby on her lap, wash the right breast, and start feeding the baby. Food for the infant should be easily digestible and bland. The food should have six tastes with sweet being predominant. Rice mashed with tuar dal and ghee is a good combination for protein and starch. Cooked bananas, fruits and steamed vegetables are good for children.

The child should be fed frequently and not two or three times a day. The child's stomach is equivalent to his/her folded fist. So not much food can be stored. A small quantity of food given frequently is the best way to feed the child. Application of pure coconut oil made from fresh coconut milk by cooking coconut under a slow fire is the best oil for the baby's massage. A daily massage helps the baby to grow faster and without pain. The body becomes more flexible, circulation improves and nerve endings get smoothened. Apart from massage no exercise is needed for the child. From the age of one the child should be given smooth, non-sharp, light toys to play with which are non-toxic and do not have any adverse effect on his/her mental attitude. ■

vaidya.ganga@frlht.org



LOOK GOOD

Lighten dark circles

DARK circles can be caused by exhaustion, insomnia, stress, depression, nutrient deficiency, hyper pigmentation, over exposure to the sun or over use of medicines. As per Ayurveda, vitiation of vata and pitta doshas, or the factors governing air and fire elements in the body, can be the root cause of dark circles.

To overcome dark circles eat a nutritionally balanced diet with plenty of vegetables and fruits rich in Vitamin A and K. Drink lots of water. Avoid caffeine, tobacco, excessive salt, sweets and chocolates.

A good night of sleep for seven to eight hours is essential. Do yoga, pranayama and meditation. Use sunglasses and a cap when going out in the sun. Don't sleep during the day. And don't expose your eyes to the sun. Avoid sitting constantly in front of the TV or computer.

REMEDIES:

- Massage papaya pulp around the eyes for five minutes and then rinse. This removes dead cells and controls premature ageing of the skin.

- Mix together two teaspoons of tomato juice, half teaspoon of lemon juice, a pinch of turmeric and a pinch of gram flour. Apply around the eyes and rinse after 15 minutes. This helps to tighten the pores of the skin.
- Aloe vera gel reduces wrinkles and nourishes and tones the delicate skin around the eyes.
- Soak a cotton pad in rose water/aloe vera/cucumber juice and apply to closed eyes for 10 to 20 minutes daily.
- Applying cucumber juice or potato juice is effective.
- Application of almond/coconut/sesame oil is useful.
- Soak almonds in water overnight. Peel off the skin and crush into a paste. Add honey. Apply the paste around the eyes for 10 to 15 minutes and rinse.
- Eye creams fortified with saffron oil along with manjishta can be applied.
- Apply a paste of nutmeg (jaiphal) with milk all around the eyes.
- Jal neti twice a week can be beneficial. ■

Dr. Reena Mohan, Research Fellow, CCR Group of I-AIM

ORGANIC CHEF

Dalia & chutney

BROKEN WHEAT PONGAL

Ingredients:

Broken wheat or dalia: 1 cup
Green gram dal: 1/3 cup or 1/2 cup
Turmeric powder: half tsp
Pepper seeds: 1 tsp
Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
Asafetida: 2 pinches
Mint leaves: 2 tbsp (optional)
Coconut gratings: 2 tsp (optional)
Salt: To taste
Seasoning:
Mustard: 1 tsp
Curry leaves: 2 tsp
Asafetida: 1 pinch
Ghee or refined oil: 1 tsp
Red chillies: Two

Method:

- Pressure cook broken wheat and dal separately with ample amount of water till soft. Broken wheat requires 2.5 to 3 cups of water to cook.
- Dry roast pepper and cumin seeds.
- Boil the cooked broken wheat and green gram dal with cumin seeds, pepper, mint leaves, turmeric and salt. You can add 2 tsp of coconut gratings to this.
- Place one teaspoon of ghee or oil in a kadhai (vessel). When the oil is hot, add 1 tsp of mustard seeds and two pinches of asafetida. When the seeds splutter, add the dry chillies and curry leaves. Pour over the cooked pon-

gal. Serve hot with chutney or raita.

DRUMSTICK LEAVES CHUTNEY

Ingredients:

Drumstick leaves: 1 cup
Long red chillies : 6
Arhar dal: 2 tbsp heaped
Salt: To taste
Tamarind: Gooseberry size
Fenugreek: 1 tsp
Coconut gratings: 2 tbsp
Seasoning:
Refined oil: half tsp
Mustard seeds: 1 tsp
Curry leaves: 1 tsp
Asafetida: 2 pinches

Method:

- Dry roast red chillies, arhar dal and fenugreek seeds separately till golden brown.
- Soak tamarind in little water.
- Fry the drumstick leaves till they wilt.
- Grind the roasted ingredients, drumstick leaves, tamarind, coconut and salt into a thick chutney
- For seasoning heat the oil and then put asafetida, mustard seeds into it. When the seeds splutter put washed curry leaves in and pour over the ground chutney.
- This chutney can be served with dosa, rotis, idlis etc. ■

(Dr. Jayanthi S, Research Associate, I-AIM)

PRODUCTS

BAMBOO COOL

THE ubiquitous charpoy woven with nivar is found in every north Indian village. Elders recline on it puffing at their hookahs. Replace the wood with bamboo and colour the nivar. Suddenly the charpoy looks cool. The redesigned charpoy is one of Project Beeja's inventions.

Meghna Ajit of Project Beeja says they got bamboo artisans from the northeast to travel to Pilakhuwa village in Uttar Pradesh and share their skills with local artisans. They innovated comfy chairs too.

Project Beeja has other products for sale: containers and baskets made of papier mache, hand carved wooden table clocks and lamps, household linen made with khadi and more.

Project Beeja was started eight years ago by Meghna Ajit, an industrial designer, Meeta Goel, a climate change expert, and Arshad Kafeel, who has won seven national awards for block carving. The idea is to revive and reinvent traditional crafts using natural materials, and introduce them to urban consumers.

Project Beeja also works in villages around Hapur. "We began by doing a survey to identify existing crafts which could be converted into livelihoods. We now have nine groups doing paper mache, block printing and bamboo furniture. But handloom is almost a dying skill. We have to convince people to get back to it," explains Meghna. Project Beeja's team consists of around 200 artisans.

PICTURES BY SHAMIK BANERJEE



Contact: Project Beeja, UCMA Design Studio, 26, GDA Colony, Patel Nagar-1, Ghaziabad-201001. Phone: 9818212177
Email: project_beeja@gmail.com Website: www.beeja.in

BASKET BONANZA



Contact: Sangita at Eastend Handicraft Unit, 67A Second Floor, Humayun Pur, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029. Phone: 9774352346.
Email: eastend_handicraft_unit@hotmail.com

THE Eastend Handicraft Unit sells baskets of all shapes and sizes. These are made of water reed and woven by women in the villages of Manipur. "The women often design the baskets themselves by leafing through magazines and noting fashion trends," says Sangita Keisham, who helps market the baskets. "The colours used are all natural dyes. That is our speciality."

The baskets sell in Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore. Keisham says buyers often travel all the way to Imphal to see the manufacturing process themselves. "Then they place an order and the women get busy producing the baskets," says Keisham.

While Imphal remains Eastend's headquarters, they have a branch office in Delhi.

Changing Lives



General health care in rural villages by SST

Mrs. Nagama, 70 yrs, a poor widow from Padavedu, has been suffering from headache for months together. Whenever she suffered an episode of headache she was almost blinded, accompanied with vomiting, she used to isolate herself for hours together not able to do any other activities.

Left to fend for herself, she could not find a guardian to take her to any Government hospital, since she had to travel for more than 20 kms, let alone meet the expense of the traveling, She was anguished and helpless. She came to know from some SHG members of the village about the TVS-SST's sub centre in the close vicinity

A routine check up at the hospital revealed that she was

suffering from Hypertension. All other parameters were normal. She was first given a brief account of the nature of her illness and advised about DASH (DiETING Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, and prescribed anti hypertensive.

On following a strict dietary regime (cutting down of salt, intake of fatty foods and increasing the intake of fresh vegetables), and medication, Mrs. Nagama has been relieved of her headache. Now she is full of life. She is continually getting antihypertensive drugs from TVS SST hospital every fortnight. In case she hasn't turn up for her routine check up, SHG members in her local area are alerted by SST. They help her to come for treatment regularly.

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TVS MOTOR COMPANY
Post Box No. 4, Harita, Hosur
Tamil Nadu, Pin: 635109
Ph: 04344-276780 Fax: 04344-276878
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Because we believe gender should never be a reason not to be.

Because, for us, it doesn't matter where she comes from, but where she can reach.

Because she is one of our own.

Because we can't fly if she crawls.

Because we started thinking of ways to better her life over a hundred years ago.

Because it's not just a company policy, it's an unwavering belief.

Because, each time she confidently smiles, our belief finds strength.

Because however strong our steel may be, our values remain stronger.

TATA STEEL

Values stronger than steel



Asha Hansda
Beneficiary, Tejaswini Project

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