

Civil Society

∞ Hall of Fame ∞

NEW LEADERS TO LOOK OUT FOR

| Pages 6-10 |

Best of Civil Society

ORGANIC UPRISING

Janhit helps farmers go organic and find a market as well in UP



AMAZING HOSPITAL

Surgeons save lives and redefine the cost of reliable healthcare

VALIANT FARMERS

Farmers in Himachal fight a legal battle to stop polluting factory



NEW WHEELCHAIR

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AIRJALDI

It's a wireless network that links Tibetan communities



SPECIAL ANNUAL ISSUE

Inclusive growth

Getting all on board as India prospers

ARUN MAIRA, RAVI VENKATESAN,
ANUPAM MISHRA, JUG SURAIYA, KAVALJIT SINGH,
HARIVANSH, RAJIV MEHROTRA, MIHIR BHATT,
DUNU ROY, RATISH NANDA, MILINDO
CHAKRABARTI, RIAZ QUADIR,
MANSHI ASHER, RUMJHUM CHATTERJEE,
JK BANERJEE

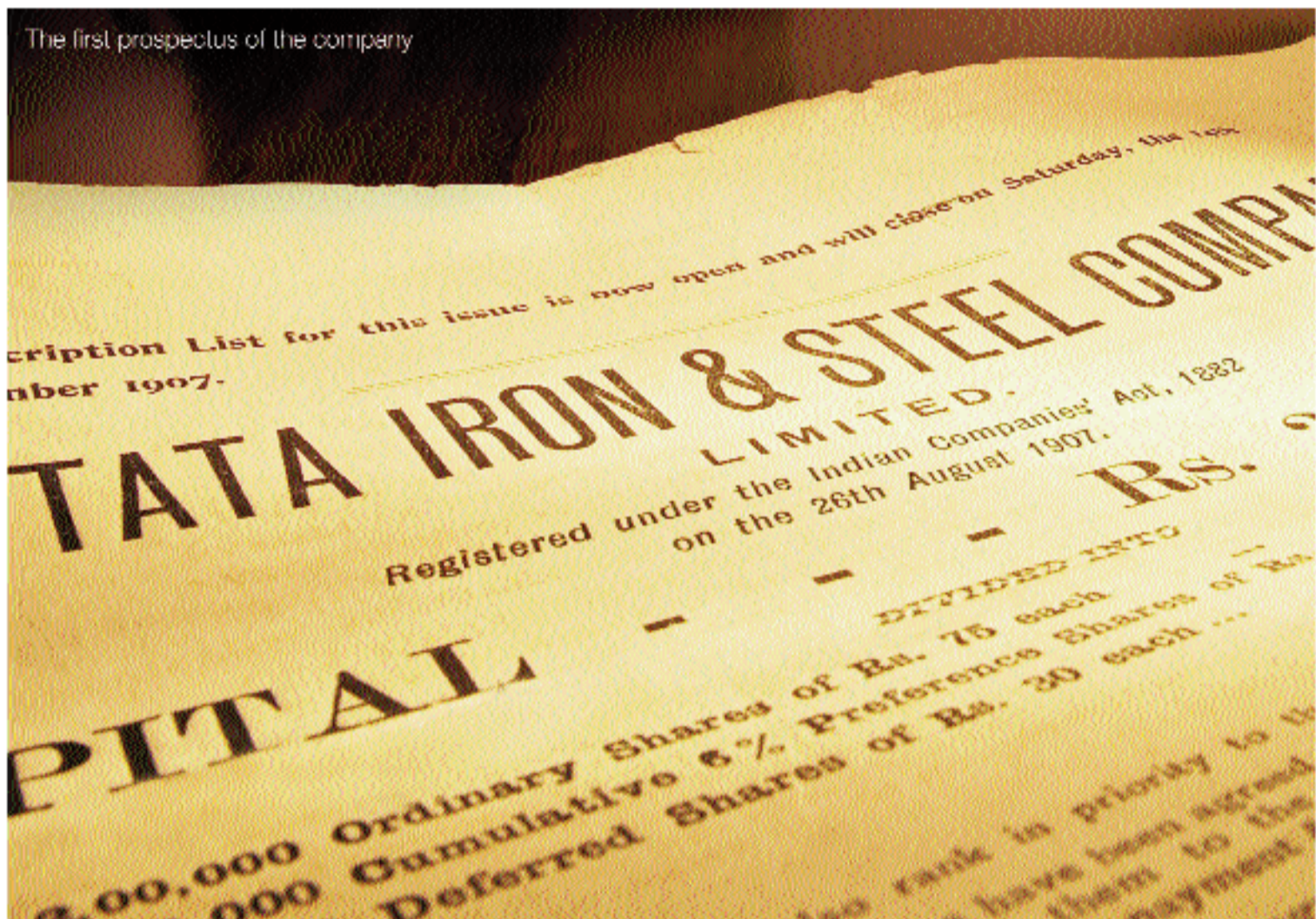
Celebrating a hundred years...

of values as enduring as the steel we make

26th August, 1907 was a momentous day in the history of our nation. It marked not just the formation of our company, The Tata Iron & Steel Company Limited, now Tata Steel, but the birth of the Indian Steel Industry. Since then, never losing sight of the values propounded by our Founder Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, we continue to create wealth and well-being for the communities and the nations where we operate. Making business a tool to improve the quality of life, we follow the highest standard of corporate governance, delighting customers, reinforcing the trust all stakeholders repose on us, filling every member of the Tata Steel Family with pride.

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The first prospectus of the company



TATA STEEL



1907 - 2007

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ANNUAL DOUBLE ISSUE

This September-October issue of *Civil Society* marks completion of four years of the magazine. The next issue will be in November.

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Civil Society

READ US. WE READ YOU.

Four years and our Hall of Fame

CIVIL SOCIETY has completed four years with this issue. Who should we thank for our survival? First of all, we would like to thank our readers because if we did not have them, there would be no real reason to exist. We are happy to report that we are well received all over the country, including in some very remote places. And we are deeply touched when readers get back to us to tell us that they like or dislike something or that an issue hasn't landed. Without our readers, we would be nothing. Then, we would like to thank our advertisers, who have been generous and supportive. We also have a huge debt of gratitude to our close friends and members of the Advisory Board who have always spared time for us and actively promoted the magazine, often more successfully than we could have.

Civil Society was launched to prove that it is possible and worthwhile for journalists to build small businesses in print. Are we a viable business? The fact that we have survived and continue to grow speaks for itself. But we live with many nightmares. Where will future advertising come from? Will companies get put off with our insistence on telling a story as we see it? When can we pay ourselves better? How do we afford to get more people on board so that we can cut some of the current stress, which is taking its own toll? How soon can we put some money into a much needed marketing drive?

Perhaps one way forward is for us to remain a business but look for donor funding for some of our activities. Without doubt there is a need to tweak our model based on our learning of four years so that we find a new threshold of viability and meet the rising expectations of readers.

Editorially, *Civil Society* was meant to tell the stories of change-bringers, ordinary folk doing their own thing and making life a lot better for themselves and others. It was also meant to capture the voices of those who go unheard -- such as the people who unfairly lose their land to industry or tribal communities whose rights and aspirations are trodden upon or the middle class with its newfound concern for better governance.

We aren't in the game of wallowing in problems. Instead we look for people who have solutions. And we are happy to say that the country is full of them except that they get overlooked. It has been very exciting to report their stories and discover their ways of getting ahead. Beginning with this anniversary issue we will have a *Civil Society Hall of Fame* for such individuals. Membership is only by invitation and our choices are determined by a network of eminent individuals who will remain anonymous.

Thank you for supporting *Civil Society*.



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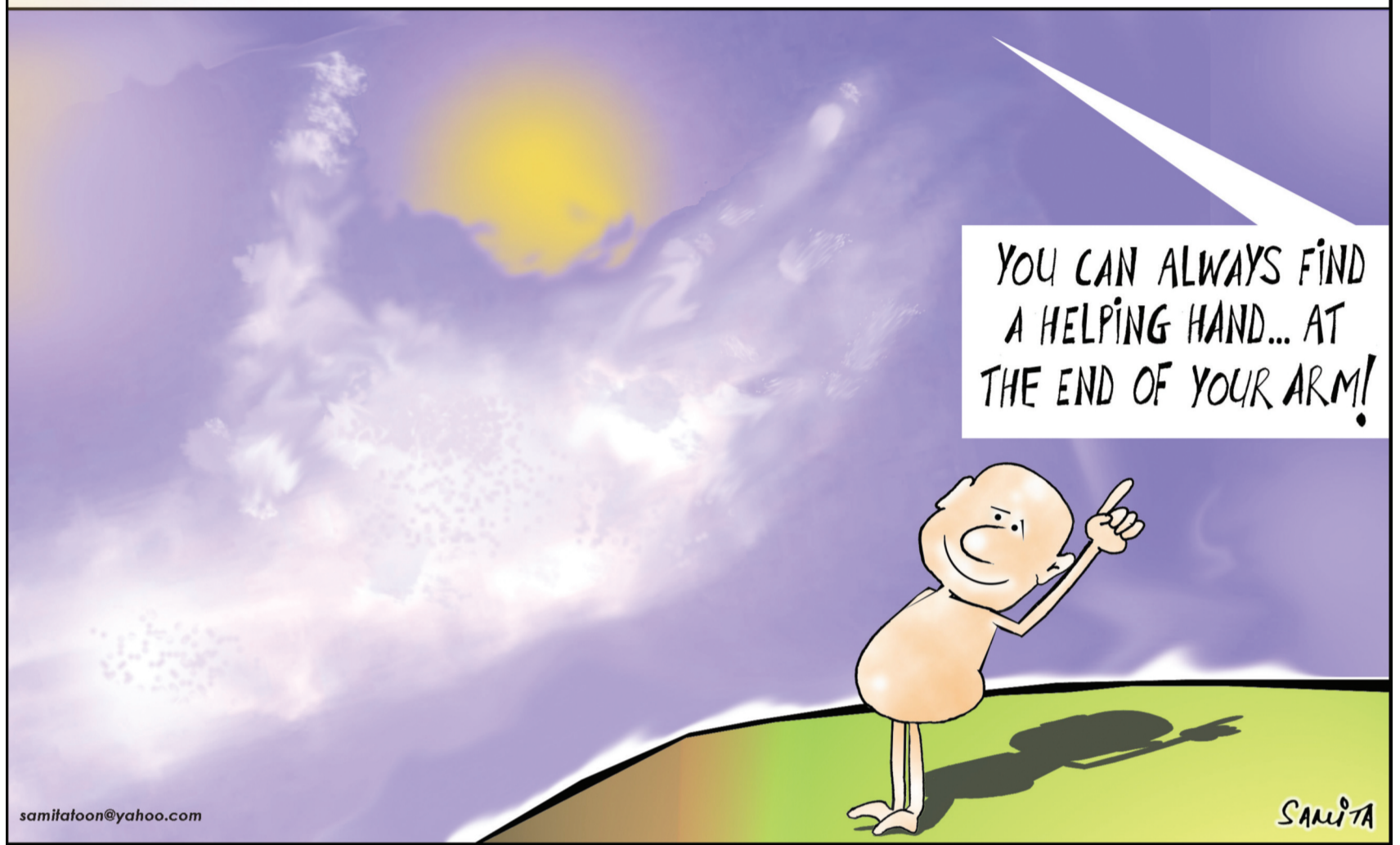
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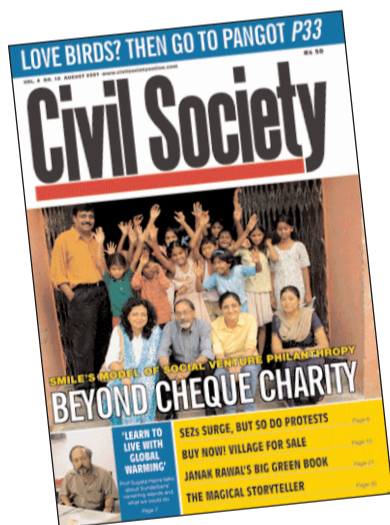
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IN THE LIGHT

by SAMITA RATHOR



LETTERS



Smile Foundation

I am a retired army officer. It was really refreshing to read about the Smile Foundation's work. I would like to volunteer. How do I get in touch?

Sampat

Please log on to
www.smilefoundationindia.org

I came to your website accidentally and I was amazed by its good content. Keep it up. It was great to read about the work of Smile Foundation.

Bhupatiraju

Website

I liked your website. Please could you do some stories on civil society in India's northeast.

Raman Venkatraman

Global warming•

I am from the West Indies. I read the article, 'Learn to live with global warming,' on your website. It is a serious threat. I have never been to India. I have no idea about the Sunderbans. But I can associate this to my country. You can talk to any person in any island nation. He will tell you how coastlines are engulfing land. We have to do something very fast.

Samuel

I am a scientist. I want to say global warming is a serious threat and people and governments are not giving it the attention it needs. We need a mass revolution kind of movement. I appreciate the article. I would like to say if you can bring in a special section on global warming it will be great. It would be a small step to create awareness.

Ramakrishnan

Men for their greed and comfort have played havoc with nature like cutting forests. The University of Chicago has just published a scientific study showing that a vegetarian diet is the most effective

way to counter global warming. The British government has decided to promote vegetarianism. Further, men have invented devices that add to pollution like air planes. Actually, travel by rail is better and you can really enjoy the beauty of nature looking out of the window.

Mahesh Kumar

HIV figures

HIV is a much dreaded disease. Figures are not important. I was deeply moved by the story of a baby girl who was just three days old and got a false report of being HIV. She was abandoned several times. It shows the social stigma attached with AIDs. We have to address that along with awareness.

Rohan Mishra

Errors in report

This refers to the article on Dr. Reddy's Foundation written by Rakesh Agarwal that has appeared in the July 2007 issue. The report contains so many factual errors that it dilutes the very image and credibility of your publication.

To begin with, the headline itself is very misleading. In the text of the article, Mr Agarwal says, 'Dr. Reddy's Laboratories are best known for their Apollo chain of hospitals.' As you must be aware, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories is a global, vertically integrated pharmaceutical company with a presence across the value

chain, producing and delivering safe, innovative, and high-quality finished dosage forms, active pharmaceutical ingredients and biological products, which are marketed to over 100 countries worldwide. We are in no way concerned with Apollo Hospitals.

Elsewhere in the article, Mr Agarwal says, 'LABS is now going global; centres are opening in Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.' DRF has no such plans.

At another place, Mr Agarwal says our first 'Gramin LABS centre was started in October 2006 in the Old Charminar area of Hyderabad.' Nothing could be farther from the truth. Grameen LABS (not Gramin LABS, as spelt by him) is a project in partnership with the Union Ministry of Rural Development; and the Old Charminar centre was not our first centre under the project.

Mr Agarwal has quoted one of our beneficiaries as saying, 'I now know how to grow baby corn and where to market my produce.' Growing baby corn doesn't feature anywhere in our initiatives.

Capt (Retd) K Raghu Raman
Head – Corporate Communications
Dr Reddy's Foundation
Hyderabad

We apologised for the errors in the August issue, even before receiving this letter. We hold the foundation in high regard. Editor .

Reduce govt, but govern more

Some of the most engaging stories that *Civil Society* has done in the past four years have been about people trying to solve their problems and get on with life. The stories have been about setting up social businesses, opening hospitals and schools, going organic on farms, saving water bodies from pollution, reviving traditional water structures, providing finance, delivering justice and something as unlikely as teaching lower middle class girls unarmed combat.

Invariably, these efforts have been prompted by governments having failed to either deliver services or help citizens cope with problems. As India turns 60, such examples of self-help are reason for hope.

Our *Civil Society Hall of Fame: Leaders To Look Out For* consists of remarkable individuals from across the country who are committed to building a modern India. To us they are the best of the Indian private sector and their entrepreneurship equals that of the business leaders we fete so loudly in newspapers and on television.

What is the market cap of the *Civil Society Hall of Fame*? On what basis should the net worth of these leaders be assessed? We ask you and leave you to judge. For sure, ours is not an exhaustive list, but that is hardly the idea. A basket can at best be representative. So, welcome to our Sensex.

We have called these individuals leaders because they have cut new paths with courage and have searched with positive energy for solutions. They were each chosen specifically for the work they have done. They were identified by a network of public spirited people who are friends of this magazine and will silently continue this process in coming years. It is our way of celebrating the distant solution and highlighting the inadequacies of centralised authority.

The entrepreneurial spirit in India, as we have been fortunate to observe it, is alive despite adverse conditions. We see it amid the teeming activity in the unorganised sector in our cities and we sense it in the urgency that farmers show in solving their problems of falling yields and finding better prices for their produce.

By contrast governments are fat, slow and weighed down with the cholesterol of corruption. There could be a mood of optimism over nine per cent growth and a flourishing corporate sector. But if the government has made things simpler for industry and allowed it to prosper, it hasn't done much for the common man. If anything, there is a sense that government and industry read each other a little too well for the comfort of everyone else, be it the poor or the consumer.

Industrial growth is needed for reducing poverty. When companies invest people get jobs, when technologies settle in economies move up. But industrial growth cannot be a substitute for good governance, particularly in a country with embarrassing backlogs in social infrastructure. It is also important to ask whether industry can substitute traditional livelihoods. And if not, what will be the fate of people yanked out of their current security?

Often pronouncements help define a government. Policies and laws on tribal rights, the right to information, rural job guarantees add up to a certain kind of pro-poor image. These are important measures and the government should be lauded for them. But it is simultaneously necessary to work on delivery systems.

We could ask why farmers continue to die in Vidarbha even after Rs 1,000 crores was showered on them. The answer is that the government needs to hone its search for solutions. It needs to be contemporary and less driven by older and unworkable models of development.

You can see from the change leaders we have listed and been covering on a regular basis, how new and localised solutions are being found to conserve water, improve agricultural yields, get children into schools and so on. There is very innovative work being done in healthcare.

For a government to be effective it has to bond with and learn from these efforts and not deny and suffocate them. It has to learn to listen.

It should perhaps bother us that our democracy does not provide adequately for dialogue and discussion. It doesn't have the bandwidth for taking messages of change to people and decoding their responses. It is because of this that the BJP-led NDA was defeated and there are some who believe that similar insensitivity will be the undoing of the Congress-led UPA as well.

There are feelings of mistrust. As aspirations rise, there is concern over how fair the system is. The farmers who don't want to give their land to industry aren't against growth and development. They want a better life for their children and themselves. But they have the fear that they are being diddled and pushed out of the way, which is undoubtedly the fact more often than not.

While the government celebrates its role in bringing in investments and taking up the GDP, it has little to show for its core responsibilities of improving the quality of life, bringing a third of the population out of poverty and preparing the others (who may not be poor) to be globally competitive.

When we talk of India being a great economy and a country whose moment has come, we have our work cut out for ourselves. We need to reform the justice system, root out corruption, deliver education and healthcare, restructure our cities, put our forests to productive use, take banking to 500 million citizens, clean rivers, cope with water shortages, halt if nor reverse environmental decline, provide electricity, develop public transport, generate affordable housing . . .

Can an unfinished and gigantic development effort be accomplished by large doses of industrial investment alone, as is now being attempted? Will that trickle become a healthy flow on its way down? Will the growing wealth of a few bring everyone up? Should we expect miracles from special economic zones (SEZs)?

At *Civil Society* we have all along believed that there is an urgent need to redefine the private sector so that it includes not merely industry but a sea of enterprise, both socially inspired and profit driven, both rural and urban, that can bring fresh talent and inspiration to a national growth push.

Having given such private efforts the space and encouragement to find solutions, the government needs to create social assets, channel technology in ways that deliver exponential results and be trusted as an impartial facilitator of change.

The government should define policies, create opportunities and allow communities, groups and individuals to lead the way. Much of what is required to be done is region and area specific, many of the solutions already exist but aren't allowed to take shape. There are answers to current problems to be found in traditional knowledge and skills. There are measures of sustainability that people know to instinctively respect.

Innovation is the key to growth. Once again it should come from freeing up space in which individual enterprise can experiment with ways forward.

We have in this issue a wide range of contributors who have dealt with these issues. As is our mantra, they come from industry and the social sector. You could say that they don't all add up. But then that is what makes them interesting.



The entrepreneurial spirit in India is alive. We see it amid the teeming activity in the unorganised sector in our cities and in the urgency farmers show in solving their problems.

NEW LEADERS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Who are our leaders? Are they the select few who normally hog the headlines and keep popping up in TV shows? Are they billionaire captains of business, celebrity activists, argumentative politicians, bull operators, glib physicians and talkative film industry types? Or are our leaders to be found burrowing deep in society working on things that make our lives better, far from the limelight of national prominence?

At Civil Society we have spent four years telling the stories of those who make a difference, but can't easily be found in the day's headlines. These are people who exist at ground level in more ways than one. In them we have invariably seen much hope for the country's future.

The Civil Society Hall of Fame seeks to go beyond our journalism. It hopes to be able to identify people through other public spirited individuals who are friends of this magazine. Our jury will remain anonymous. But let us assure you that they are, like the people they have chosen, some of the best hearts and minds in the country.

How representative is the Hall of Fame? Do we have too many leaders from one region? Are their concerns too narrow, their solutions too area specific? Frankly we aren't bothered by such issues. We would like our selection process to be flexible and honest and not premeditated.

Desert hero

FARHAD CONTRACTOR

WHEN Farhad Contractor finished school, he didn't want to pore over dull books in some university. Neither did he want to stay in Ahmedabad and savour city life. Farhad wanted to live in rural India.

It was his father, Firoze Contractor, who inculcated in him a love for village life. Farhad spent six and half of his formative years growing up in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Barmer in west Rajasthan. He worked as an activist in Janavikas.

For the past five years, Farhad has headed a social service organisation, Sambhaav. He read Anupam Mishra's classic book on traditional water systems, *Aj bhi khare hain talaab*, 12 times after he first came across it in 1993. So inspired was he that he decided to devote himself to implementing what he had read.



Farhad's motto is: we work with people, not for people. In 12 years his mercurial motivation has resulted in the construction and rejuvenation of about 8,500 traditional water harvesting structures like tankas, talabs, nadis and beris.

But his most fulfilling achievement must be the rejuvenation of the Nanduwalui river. Work started in about 17 villages of Rajgarh block of Alwar district in 2003, though plans were charted much earlier.

Women were walking between seven to 12 km to fetch water. The cost of rejuvenating 17 km of the river worked out to Rs 31.6 lakhs. The villagers contributed Rs 13.3 lakhs from their meagre resources.

Earlier, 190 wells were completely dry. Now, all 237 open wells have been recharged. After 30 years the Nanduwalui river has started flowing again. It is alive for some months.

"Believe in people, in their capacity to decide, plan and build. Not in a single occasion has this belief of mine gone wrong," says Farhad.

Bridge builder

GIRISH BHARADWAJ

GIRISH Bharadwaj, an engineer who runs a fabrication unit at Sullia, in Dakshina Kannada district, is famous for his Suspension Footbridges (SFBs), or 'hanging bridges' that connect remote villages.

"We bridge the gap between places, people and hearts," says Girish.

Such villages become isolated islands during the monsoon. The bridges are a big relief for the villagers since their persistent demand for a pucca bridge was never met by the government. Now, they can cross the hanging bridge and return home any time.

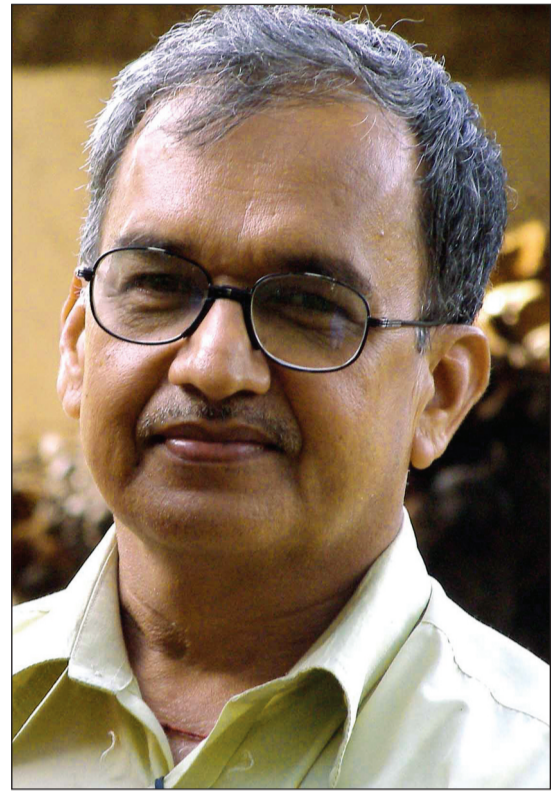
So far Girish has constructed over 60 SFBs-- 36 in Karnataka, 23 in Kerala and one in Andhra Pradesh. He stresses on people's participation. Most of his SFBs are proposed by local bodies like the gram panchayat and zilla parishad. Four SFBs are completely participatory.

While building bridges Girish's social commitment overrides financial concerns. He often spends

from his own pocket to work out estimates for a bridge. Girish's dedication is such that by the time his hanging bridges get erected, villagers feel he is one of them.

Some years ago, Girish explained his methods to delegates from Bhutan. They were stunned. In Bhutan, engineers used to get components all the way from Kolkata. Then they would complete construction near the spot and finally erect the bridge. Their method was laborious and time-consuming. When they studied how Girish built his bridges they said that they will happily follow his method in future.

An amazing example of his work can be seen at Dodderi near Sullia where he has erected a 115-metre-long SFB at a cost of half a crore rupees. For 2,500 people who lived in Dodderi and the neighboring Ajjavara village, it was a question of their livelihood. As Sullia city is just 2.5 kilometres away, most travelled to the city to earn some money. Around 500 children crossed the river every day to reach school. Jam-packed boats were a common sight. The situation was worse during heavy rains. The only alternative was to take a longer route of eight kilometres. But now Girish's bridge serves them well.



Drought fighter

MALLANNA S. NAGARAL

MALLANNA S. Nagaral belongs to the third generation of farmers who have been spreading awareness about drought-proofing in the water-scarce Hungund taluk of Bagalkot district in Karnataka.

Inspired by a 170-year-old book, '*Krusha Jnaana Pradeepike*', written by Ghanamatha Shivayogi Swamiji, Sanganabasappa Nagaral, his grandfather, started farming by following soil and water conservation measures described in the book.

These methods proved to be so successful that he soon started a mission to spread these ideas. His son, Shankaranna Nagaral, wrote *vachanas* (poetry) highlighting the importance of such drought-proofing techniques. He not only demonstrated these methods in his farm and on other farms, but he travelled far and wide to propagate these 'life-saving' ideas. The slogan he made popular was '*Ara-baradaaga emtaane bele*' or fifty per cent crop during half drought.

Mallanna Nagaral follows in the footsteps of his wise elders who became gurus to hundreds of farmers, free of cost. Recently, during three successive years of drought, many villages of Hunnund taluk were insulated. They had water. Mallanna was recently presented an honorary doctorate from Karnataka Agriculture University, Dharwar, in recognition of his services.

Employment reinvented

CHHATAR SINGH

FROM a very young age, Chhatar Singh, 48, wanted to work for his desert society. So he joined many social institutions, movements and NGOs but he did not find the right path.

Chhatar Singh is from a traditional family in Ramgarh, district Jaisalmer.

He returned to his village and started working with his own community. He is reviving water harvesting with traditional tools of social engineering.

He has revived a system called Lhas where almost everybody participates in reconstructing the village. Nobody keeps any account of how much labour each person has done in a day. People contribute whatever they can. There are no muster rolls. There are no wages. Everyone eats together and completes the public work which they see as their own.

People now proudly say that they are playing Lhas after a long gap. Otherwise they were merely doing labour.

Seed saviour

G. KRISHNA PRASAD

Rural Karnataka's 'native seed man' is G. Krishna Prasad. Since 15 years, he's been leading a movement to conserve indigenous varieties of seeds.

An important outcome of his movement is the establishment of 34 seed banks in collaboration with 12 NGOs in Karnataka. He has written prolifically on seed conservation. Both *Beeja bangara* in *Prajavani*, and *Tenegoodiballa* in *Adike Patrike* are avidly read.

Krishna Prasad has brought many seed savers into the limelight. He has organised four conferences of seed-savers in Karnataka and he succeeded in including a seed conservation programme in the state's organic farming policy. The Green Foundation has backed him fully. Krishna Prasad has built a band of youngsters who are at the forefront of the 'save native seeds' campaign.

Krishna Prasad and his friends have rescued many seeds from the brink of extinction. Among them is '*Pichakatti*' ragi which is once again popular with farmers. Another seed is '*Bannada musukina jola*', a jowar variety he discovered with the Soliga tribal community. Then, there is a brinjal variety called '*Musukina badane*' that lasts five years and '*Gamgadle*,' a rice variety that is ideal for making payasa.

Farmers' journalist

SHREE PADRE

HE calls himself a farmer by profession and a journalist by obsession, but Shree Padre has really merged the two. He is the guru of farm journalism or 'self-help' journalism as he calls it.

Agriculture is in the doldrums, everyone agrees. But there is also a new economy of agriculture emerging which is very inventive and traditional. Shree Padre belongs here.

He is from Vaninagar, a village in Kerala bordering Karnataka. In 1985 when the price of arecanut fell, worried farmers of the All-India Areca Growers' Association got other professionals together to study their problems and suggest solutions. Shree Padre was invited as a journalist. A newsletter, *Areca News*, was suggested and he agreed to publish it. The experience made him realise farmers did not have relevant information. Most of the newsletter's content came from bureaucrats and scientists who didn't get their hands dirty.

So he proposed a magazine by farmers, for farmers. The Association was sceptical but agreed and the first issue of *Adike Patrike* rolled off the press in

November 1988. Shree Padre now had to coax farmers to write about their innovations and experiences. He assured them their knowledge was invaluable. But they were suffering from an inferiority complex. Shree Padre started workshops at which farmers could learn to write. The trained farmers not only began to write about their own farm experience, but also to report, interview and narrate farming experiences in their neighbourhoods.

Adike Patrike has a circulation of 75,000. It is priced at Rs7 and supported by ethical advertising. The magazine has a cult following among farmers.

Shree Padre now works on soil and water conservation in Karnataka and Kerala. He has been conducting awareness programmes and collecting information on rainwater harvesting from all over the world. In fact he has written seven books on rainwater harvesting and does a column for *Vijaya Karnataka*, a Kannada daily. He has also started a water forum 'Jalakoota' on soil and water conservation, including rainwater harvesting.

Shree Padre successfully initiated a campaign against the hazardous endosulfan spraying on cashew plantations in the Kasargod district of Kerala. Endosulfan has had serious repercussions on the health of the villagers. It is thanks to him that its ill-effects have been given national coverage.



Rain catcher

SHIVANANDA KALAVE

SINCE five years, Shivananda Kalave, a farmer and development journalist, has been fervently spreading knowledge of rainwater harvesting and afforestation.

A big fight started when municipal authorities of Sirsi, in southern Karnataka tried to construct a dam at Kengre village, to supply water to Sirsi town. Shivanand realised making people in urban and rural areas receptive to 'self-help with rainwater harvesting' was a better solution than fighting. Unfortunately, there weren't enough models of rainwater harvesting for people to learn from.

So Kalave took on the task of educating people about conserving and 'sinking' water. He inspired 300 families in Sirsi to take up open well recharging on their own. Most lodgings in the town are harvesting water in a big way.

But this was not enough, Shivanand thought. He wanted to start a Rain Centre that would give citizens all information and guidance. Now, after three years of effort, a Rain Centre has been opened at Neernalli High School at a cost of Rs 2 lakhs. It houses 28 rainwater harvesting models. In addition, there are a dozen 'live' models for visitors to see. The Sirsi Rain Centre in the first to display all available methods of rural rainwater harvesting in one place. Many NGOs and social activists are now considering replicating this idea.



Coastal unionist

BHUVANESWARI

ALMOST from nowhere Bhuvanewari jumped into the tsunami recovery and response process, with verve and commitment, to work with coastal agriculturists all the way down from Nagapattinam to Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.

The agriculturists were badly hit by the tsunami but their needs were largely unrecognised. Within months Bhuvanewari found her feet and created an active federation of 3,000 coastal farmers.

Interestingly, Bhuvanewari is not a farmer. It wasn't easy for her to lead poor coastal farmers and to think of salinity ingress as an opportunity. But she did. She introduced many innovations to tackle saline farmlands: organic agriculture, vermi-culture and permaculture.

Thousands of farmers benefited. They are now on the path of economic and ecological revival. At a time when coastal farming and poor farmers are being left out in the race to corporatise agriculture, Bhuvanewari's work shows a way to follow. She has forged coastal farmers, mostly ignored, into a strong federation.

No wonder Mani Shankar Aiyar, Union Minister, Panchayats and Youth, found time to see her work and bestow her with the Anita Sen Memorial Award in July 2007.



Barrage maker

ASHOK TUNGAL

ASHOK Tungal a civil engineer, was the technical genius behind the 430 metre historic people's barrage built at Chikkapadasalagi across the Krishna at Jamakhandi in the Bagalkot district of Karnataka in 1987.

His barrage has inspired people to build another three barrages across the Ghataprabha river. The one at Mudhol, for instance, is 390 feet long and 12 feet high. It has cost Rs 40 lakhs and was completed in just 92 days. If the government had built it, the barrage would have cost Rs 1.2 crore and taken at

least three or four years to complete.

Tungal's success lies in identifying a suitable site that requires a minimum foundation. He uses locally available materials and most importantly he relies on people's participation. Since the beneficiaries take part in the construction of the barrage, quality never suffers.

One instance of his common sense approach was illustrated in the construction of the Mudhol barrage. Granite stone had to be brought from a site located from far away. Tungal suggested using granite that was locally available. The government engineers who had to give permission didn't agree. He was under-terred. He took them to a nearby place where the British had used this stone for a bridge which is still standing strong. The experts, when they saw this, finally gave the green signal.

Media mentors

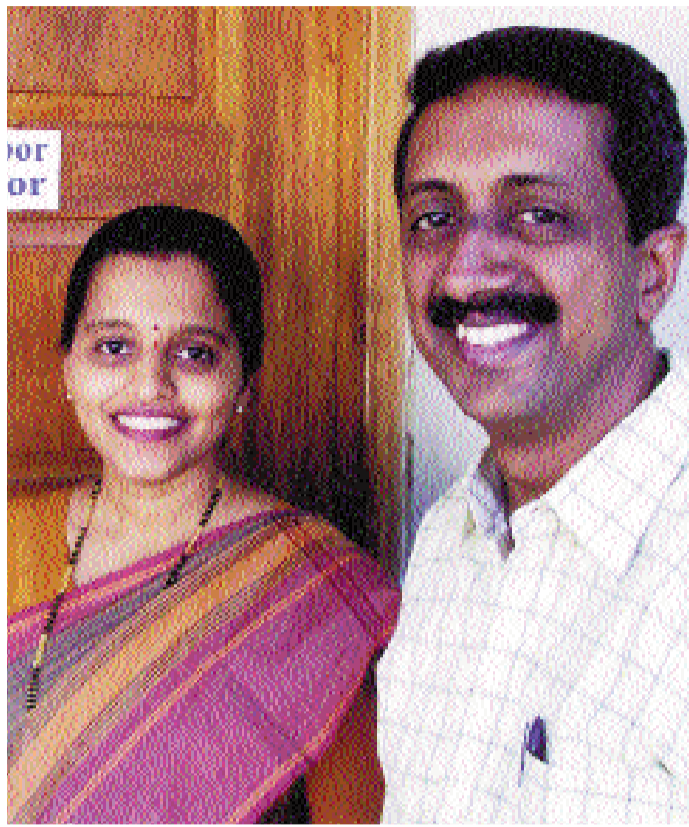
SHIVARAM PAILOOR AND ANITHA

SHIVARAM Pailoor and his wife Anitha, both from farming families, dedicate most of their time to farm journalism. Six years ago they started the Centre for Alternative Agriculture Media and a website to fulfill their dream.

Every year CAAM gives awards for the best features on agriculture in two categories. The first is awarded to stories written by farmers and the second is for non-farmers. CAAM propagates communication between farmers to spread knowledge and to safeguard their interests.

Four years ago, Shivaram and Anitha started a one-year diploma course in farm journalism. This correspondence course starts with a three-day contact programme where leading farm journalists take sessions with students. There are practical lessons and the students' writings are carefully evaluated.

These students are now treading a new



path in farm journalism. Experienced farmers and time-tested field experiences are their main source of information and not stale library write-ups by so-called agriculture experts.

CAAM has published two excellent handbooks on farm journalism that describe what to write, how to write and what not to write. It is also publishing regular newsletters to inspire and instill confidence among students. The Pailoor residence at Narayanapura, in Dharwad, Karnataka, is like a gurukul with a library. When in doubt, students stay here to glean knowledge from Anitha and Shivaram.

CAAM gives students a lot of time and attention. Many notes and tips are given along with monthly assignments, information that students would not be able to get elsewhere.

Today, farm editors of mainstream dailies contact CAAM students to commission stories. The Pailoors are steadily, but methodically striving to change the quality and utility of farm journalism. Their success is now visible in printed columns, though in a small way.

Ice tapper

CHEWANG NORPHEL

CHEWANG Norphael makes artificial glaciers so that farmers can get water when they need it. He is a retired engineer from Leh in Ladakh. This area gets only 50 mm of rain. For irrigation, farmers would depend on melting ice from the Himalayas.

But by the time water from the ice-melt reached their fields, it would be too late. Farming was becoming a losing proposition in Ladakh since farmers didn't get water on time. With no work, young people migrate for jobs.

In 1986, Chewang conducted his first experiment to solve this problem. He planned to create 'artificial glaciers'. The canal water from the foothills of the Himalayas was diverted with the help of a check-dam and made to spread in a sloppy area with the help of galvanised iron pipes in winter. The outflowing water froze and got blocked in the lower area where Chewang had already constructed big contour walls with local stones. He had made his first 'artificial glacier'.

This artificial glacier melts before the icecaps of the Himalayas as temperature here rises earlier. And so the fields below get timely flow of water. Chewang has built more than 30 artificial glaciers in the last 20 years. The Leh Nutrition Project has supported him.

His artificial glacier at Fukets is 100 feet long, 150 feet wide and 4 feet in height. It has cost Rs 90,000. This is sufficient for a village of 700 people. If a cement tank has to be built to store one cusec of water, it will cost Rs 80 to 90 lakhs. An artificial glacier costs just Rs 80,000 to Rs 90,000.



Disaster manager

HASMUKEH SADHU

SADHUBHAI, as he is popularly known, set up an innovative urban initiative among the victims of the 2001 Gujarat earthquake in the slums of Bhuj.

At a time when a quick assessment and timely response are crucial, Sadhubhai stepped forward to help Muslims, Dalits, and casual labour.

He took great pains to enable poor victims who had no access to any means of communication to locate and contact lost relatives with the help of UK's Department for International Development team. He did not hesitate to use high-tech tools like the SAT phone to serve the poor from day two of the disaster.

He has more than a decade of similar hard work to his credit. He began his career working with handloom weavers, quietly touching every aspect of this excluded community's social and economic life.

His understanding and leadership have grown tremendously over the years, enabling him to grasp the complex nature of low-income communities and their needs after the 2004 tsunami in Tamil Nadu, 2005 earthquake in Kashmir and 2006 floods in Surat.

In an easy, direct, cost-effective and efficient way, he is able to evaluate, review, monitor and plan every necessary step to reach out to those who are repeatedly left out of the recovery process. Such qualities make him an invaluable asset to India.



Ideal village leader

G. GNANAMANI

G. Gnanamani, 52, is a model grassroots leader who has dedicated his life to serving village communities in Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu. After finishing school he formed a youth group in his village, Padavedu, to carry out programmes for cleanliness, remarriage of widows and eradication of illicit distillation of arrack.

When he became a panchayat ward member from 1973 to 1983 he built 100 individual toilets, 20 bore-wells for potable drinking water and he bought for villagers 100 cross-bred milch animals with government subsidy. As secretary of Padavedu farmers' wel-

fare association from 1996, he introduced villages to the latest agricultural technologies. Now as the president of the Padavedu micro watershed development programme which is supported by the Ford Foundation, he has constructed several check dams and percolation ponds. He has also promoted dry land horticulture and been involved in the cleaning of water channels and so on.

With the watershed revolving fund of Rs 22 lakhs, he motivated 205 beneficiaries to buy high-yielding cross-bred cattle. Their average net income went up by Rs 1,200 to Rs 2,000. About 649 families were helped through 18 income generation programmes to earn an additional average income between Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,100 per month. G. Gnanamani is associated with the Srinivasan Services Trust in its programmes on adult education, clean villages, health awareness and literacy





Awesome teacher

GOPADKAR

GOPADKAR, a professional teacher, has invented an amazing method of learning. It's called self-education. Since 13 years, his *Vathara* at Mangalore is open to all children. There are no application forms, interviews or fees. He believes in making it really easy for children to learn.

Gopadkar knows many things: mimicry, nail art, memory techniques, you name it. He spots latent talent in children and creates situations by which their talents can blossom and flower without restrictions and rules.

Gopadkar has a big team of people who think like him and carry out his philosophy of learning without expecting any money. Gopadkar and team have organised many summer camps in remote village schools for underprivi-

leged children.

Within a few days even shy students enthusiastically take part in the camp's manifold activities. There are many things they can do: write for a wall magazine, mimicry, story-telling, acting, singing, mime.

No school syllabus is ever taught. Yet school results, where camps are held, improve considerably.

What is even more amazing is that Gopadkar's self-education system has created 'wonder kids'. He gives such children a new surname, 'Swaroop'.

There is Nischith Swaroop who has a wonderful memory. Then there is Jatin Swaroop who can tell you the medicinal value of 150 herbs. Anvitha Swaroop can read and write three languages fluently: Kannada, English and Hindi.

Gopadkar has groomed 40 'wonder kids'. He would prefer to say he has just helped them educate themselves.

Herbal guide

PS VENKATRAMA

PS Venkatrama, a civil engineer, comes from a family that practised herbal medicine for three generations. They belonged to the famed 'Panaje Vaidya' tradition.

Venkatrama knows a lot about herbs. Yet, for the past 30 years he has been travelling all over to increase his knowledge. Today, in the districts adjoining his village, he is an authority on identifying herbs. Apart from providing free consultation, he encourages his patients to identify and use herbs growing around their homes.

Whenever somebody points out a new plant or gives him a little information about it, he seeks out everything about the plant. He travels, if needed, and rests only after getting the correct medicinal knowledge about the plant. Such information is stored in his diary.

Venkatrama has been documenting information on herbs, disseminating it through his workshops and by writing. *Manemaddu*, his column in *Adike Patrike* which he has been writing since years, identifies plants and their medicinal uses. Venkatrama takes time and trouble to show patients the specific herb he prescribes from his vast collection grown around his household. He encourages people to conserve and spread knowledge.

Instead of bringing medicinal plants from far flung places and growing them, Venkatrama emphasises knowledge of the medicinal values of local plants and in-situ conservation.



Child rescuer

PAULOME MISTRY

DURING the January 26, 2001, earthquake in Gujarat, Paulomee Mistry, chose to help people who are often left out. She worked with tribal construction workers in Gujarat's villages, especially their children. Paulomee, who studied at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), brought concerned citizens together and formed a strong state network against child labour.

Children of tribals have to work to survive. By focusing on them, Paulomee gave the community hope and confidence to rebuild lives. She helped to organise poor, rural women from tribal communities in the eastern belt of Gujarat. By helping them find meaningful work become active citizens of India she found great satisfaction.

Her dedication underwent trial by fire during the Gujarat riots of 2002. But she emerged stronger and more determined to keep tribals and Muslims united. Reaching out to the most disadvantaged, Paulomee helped them climb out of trauma and despair. She put them on the path of recovery. No wonder her voice is heard in tribal huts and in the corridors of power.

Women's Farm Union

BHARATIBEN BHAVSAR

BHARATIBEN, as she is known, has brought natural resource management into the hands of poor landless women at Ganeshpura village in Gujarat. With her quiet determination and vision, she has helped farm women transform their arid plots of land into profitable green fields which yield an income.

The women have formed a farmworkers' union, the Mahila Khedu Mandal, which has given them visibility and strength. Policy-makers can't ignore the union. It collectively decides what the women would like to do.

At a time when companies are intruding into agriculture and farmers are committing suicide, Bharatiben shows women an alternative path. She has given real meaning to the phrase 'a farm of her own' for millions of women. She has truly empowered women farmers, overlooked so far.

Tree planter

SHIVAJI KAGANEKAR



KATTANABHAVI, a village in Belgaum district, Karnataka, once had dense forests where tigers roamed wild. Then, some 20 years ago it became treeless. Reason? The 160 families who live here were mostly poor. So they started selling firewood to earn a little money. The result was that drinking water became scarce in all five community wells.

Shivaji Kaganekar rescued the village from this crisis. A Gandhian, Kaganekar was born into a poor shepherd's family. He completed his graduation despite great financial hardship. Kaganekar became a teacher in the local night school. He didn't know anything about rain harvesting. But deeply moved by the plight of villagers he started searching for a solution. Some people who had come from abroad met him by chance and encouraged him to find a way out. They offered to raise money for his efforts.

Step by step, Kaganekar started learning about soil and water conservation. Motivating villagers was a formidable task. This redoubtable barefoot activist persisted and succeeded. In one year, he inspired villagers to plant trees and dig trenches to save their environment. Today, Kattanabhavi has 40,000 trees. All village wells have water. Nobody cuts trees even for their own use. All houses have biogas.

Kattanabhavi has become a model for this region. Neighbouring villages have started following in Kattanabhavi's footsteps. The village has bid goodbye to its earlier poverty. Success hasn't turned Kaganekar's head. He continues to live simply and work honestly.

27

A brief history of the TVS Motor Company.

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ARUN MAIRA
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Learning to sail together in

THE challenge of 'inclusive growth' evokes a picture of four men in a boat. Two men at one end of a boat that is sinking into the water are furiously bailing. At the other end, rising into the air, two men are gloating, one saying to the other: "Thank goodness, the hole is not in our end!"

In September 2000, at the UN Millennium Summit, 147 heads of states, rich and poor, signed a declaration to make poverty history. They established the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that specified the results required in eight areas by 2015. A mid-term review shows that the goals are unlikely to be achieved.

One part of the world is poor, yet to 'develop'. The other is rich, and 'developed'. The MDG, as they should be, are aimed at the improvement of conditions in the developing world which is affected by poverty, inadequate education and health facilities, and environmental degradation. They broadly reflect the goals of inclusive growth that India is also pursuing. The richer parts of the world, at the other end of the boat, are expected to help the poor on compassionate grounds, and it is not surprising that their support is not as forthcoming as may be necessary. The alarm about climate change that began to ring loudly in 2007 with Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth', the Stern report and the IPCC's report, have made people realise that everyone, whether in developed or developing countries, is in the same boat. Climate change will affect everyone, even the rich in their comfortable end of the world.

Climate change has taken centre stage in all international gatherings that discuss the state of the world. Clearly, humanity cannot stay on its present path to economic growth – a path that has overused resources and created inequities. More sustainable and equitable solutions have to be found. But they are difficult to conceive. Even perceptions of the pain caused by climate change and environmental degradation are not the same. The rich are worried about melting ice-caps and the fate of polar bears. They talk of carbon in the atmosphere. The poor have more down-to-earth problems. They have already run out of clean water sources to support human lives. Thirty litres a day is a good benchmark of need: 5 litres for consumption, 25 for hygiene. The average citizen in the US uses 500 litres a day while many African countries have less than 10.

When the developing countries, in particular China and India, are told that they dare not follow the path that brought the West its comforts because it will aggravate the climate problem for everyone, there is a reaction, particularly from the Chinese. 'You created the problem, so do not lecture us now', they say. And they ask those who lecture them: 'Are you willing to change your lifestyles to drastically reduce the amount of the earth's resources you are using so that the developing countries can have a fair share of the depleting resources of the earth?'

There is no easy way out. At a conference in Sweden, an American remarked that nature itself would solve the problem which had been caused by more people living on the earth than it could support. The earth's resources can support a billion people having the quality of life that people in rich countries have, he suggested. The other billions will die, he said facetiously. And, he added jestingly, 'I intend to be one of the billion that remain'. He illustrated a point Mahatma Gandhi had made: the earth may have enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed.

His remark also illustrated a troubling mindset that makes inclusive development impossible. This is: if the boat is sinking because there are too many in it, throw the others out, or at least stop them from coming on board! Pause a moment and consider. Is this not the same mindset which suggests that immigrants hungry for work should be prevented from coming to richer countries? That slum-dwellers should be evicted because they mess up cities? That people from poorer parts of the country should be stopped from coming into the metros? And that the developing world must be stopped now from enjoying the rich world's way of life because it will ruin the climate that affects everybody?

By all reckonings, those who 'have not' have too little even to sustain their lives, whereas those who 'have' have much more than they need.

CHANGING MINDSETS

We must change our mindsets if we want sustainable and inclusive growth in India and the world. For this, we should examine the validity and implications of nine underlying 'theories-in-use' driving prevalent approaches to eco-



omic progress. Propounded often, these nine nostrums could be retarding inclusive growth.

GROW THE PIE BEFORE YOU SHARE IT

This implies that the poor are asking the rich to give their wealth to them, and that therefore the rich must be allowed to increase their wealth even more so that there is enough to go around. What the poor are actually asking for is a chance to participate equitably in the process of wealth creation. They want to get a share of the pie while it is growing. Not 'trickle down', but growing together. They point to the reality of 'cumulative causation' in economies – that those who already have wealth, education, or power, have the means to create even more for themselves. The poor want opportunities to create wealth for themselves, through access to capital, education, and income-generating opportunities, thereby helping to grow an even bigger pie.

IT IS UP TO THEM: THEY SHOULD TRY HARDER

This is a tricky one. The poor want to stand on their own feet. Therefore, it is up to them to make the effort. However, there are two assumptions in this statement that are not often questioned. The first is that the rich have obtained their wealth by hard work only. The second that the poor are not trying hard enough. When those ahead, walking higher up the mountain, look back and see the poor behind them on the mountain's lower reaches struggling to make progress, they may fail to see the deep moats that the poor have to cross before they can come up to the slopes the rich are on.

These moats are the 'structural disadvantages' built into economies and societies that prevent the poor (and others disadvantaged by history or geography) to have as easy access as the rich to capital, education, etc to improve themselves. Some of these moats are deliberately built by those ahead to protect their advantages against the hordes behind – think of the physical wall being built across the US-Mexico border, or of criteria for employment that exclude 'people not like us'. Often these barriers develop over time as social prejudices: of whites about blacks, 'upper' castes about 'lower' castes, etc. Those behind have to cross these moats and it is not easy. The purpose of 'affirmative action' is to acknowledge these moats exist and for those ahead to drop the draw-bridges across them from their side so that those struggling behind can come across.

choppy waters



LEAVE IT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR IF YOU WANT PUBLIC SERVICES TO IMPROVE

Citizens everywhere need basic services like water, sanitation, elementary education and public transportation. The fairly widespread experience in poor countries is that the government does not deliver the required services: it is bureaucratic, insensitive to its customers, wasteful, and corrupt. Handing over such services to the private sector seems an attractive way out. There are many examples of improvement of services by the private sector. Very frequently, the story of telecoms in India is cited as one such example.

However, experience with the privatisation of public services has not been always good. Nor can it be. Because there is a conceptual problem in making 'private' what is 'public'. In 1989, primarily for ideological reasons, Margaret Thatcher privatised water utilities in Britain. The way it was done led to fantastic profits for the companies and huge 'performance related' payments for their directors. Between 1989 and 1995, customer charges jumped 106 per cent, and in 1994, water supply to 12,500 households was disconnected because they could not pay their bills. Meanwhile, profit margins for the companies increased by 692 per cent. The public was shocked because water, a public resource, had been privatised to line shareholders' pockets. In Manila, Buenos Aires, and other cities across the world, experience with privatisation of water services has been disastrous. Very often the poor cannot afford to pay the price the private companies ask for to cover their costs and make a profit.

By definition, a business enterprise is not a social service. Managers of businesses are required to run them in a way that improves profits. They have no obligation to give their products and services to those who cannot pay for them. They make money by serving those who pay more and shunning those who cannot pay enough. Unfortunately, the latter are those who may need the services the most.

While a human being can live without a telephone, she or he cannot survive long without basic necessities like water, sanitation, elementary education, and

public transport to get to work. Therefore the state, funded by taxes, must ensure that even the poor have access to these services to give them a chance to stand on their own feet. Even if it engages the private sector to assist in improving efficiency of public service delivery, the State, which is accountable to its citizens, must play a strong role in regulating the delivery to temper the private profit motive with public service responsibilities.

THE BUSINESS OF BUSINESS MUST BE ONLY BUSINESS

The triumph of capitalism over communism was marked with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and with it, according to Francis Fukuyama, the history of ideological struggle had ended. The power of business corporations in societies everywhere, including India has risen with the ascent of capitalism. Simultaneously, governments are being pushed back. Thus an institutional gap is widening between the needs of societies, such as those expressed in the MDG, and institutions required to fulfill those needs. It may be ideologically correct to say that the business of business must be only business, but it is neither morally nor practically tenable any longer. Therefore businesses must strengthen and support governments to fill those needs or take responsibility themselves.

The role of business corporations in society must evolve. Their performance must be gauged against a wider set of measures that reflect broader social needs, and not merely those of their investors. They must develop new models and install new processes to fulfill these broader societal requirements.

HUMAN BEINGS ACT PURELY IN THEIR RATIONAL SELF-INTEREST

This is a bedrock principle of economics underlying most free market models. The interaction of selfish agents seeking to gain more, each for themselves creates richer economies. Therefore the theory seems to work. However, an excessive reliance on selfishness to motivate change does not produce compassionate societies nor, as innumerable studies have revealed, even happy individuals. Because the truth is that the theory is flawed. Human beings do care for others. They value the qualities of equity and justice in the organisations in which they work and in society. (In fact, recent experiments with monkeys and even rats have shown that they too appreciate equity and justice!)

The only way to reconcile this basic principle of modern economics with reality is to acknowledge that human beings may include concern for others as part of their own rational self-interest. As Mahatma Gandhi retorted when someone said that he was a totally unselfish person, "That is not true. I am very selfish because

I work hard to get something that matters a lot to me even if others do not seem to want it." What mattered to him was that the weak are justly treated and are helped to stand up on their own. Lyndon Johnson knew that he could not have passed civil rights legislation in the USA if he presented it as something that would benefit the blacks alone. He sold it to the whites as a vision of a just society that they would be proud of – in other words, something that they would desire for themselves.

JUST DO IT

The Nike slogan, 'Just Do It', reflects the strong bias for action in economies that move ahead. There is a bias against reflection and against posing questions for which there are no easy answers because they waste time and time is scarce.

The problem with this is that the right actions to address the major problems the world is confronting today are not obvious. George Bush and his advisors thought they knew how to eliminate terrorism – "We will get them wherever they are", as Donald Rumsfeld said shortly after 9/11. Or how to democratize Iraq – eliminate Saddam Hussein and a grateful people will accept the American way of life.

Bold fixes often backfire. Because the systemic connections amongst the variety of interacting forces is not understood. The US Corps of Engineers drained the Everglades in Northern California by straightening the meandering natural water channels to run into the sea to make place for large farms. Man had improved nature: it was an engineering marvel. Now, decades later, changes in soil and water conditions and weather patterns have emerged that were not anticipated. And the engineers are back, trying to restore nature's circular ways to save the environment!

UNEDUCATED PEOPLE CANNOT MAKE GOOD DECISIONS

No doubt, those who have more information and insights into why things work the way they do will make better decisions about how to make improvements

(Continued on page 17)

What the poor are asking for is a chance to participate equitably in the process of wealth creation. Not 'trickle down', but growing together.



ANUPAM MISHRA
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

So, what's your *pura* quotient?

WHILE in office, President APJ Kalam came up with a scheme called PURA or Providing Urban Facilities in Rural Areas. It was for 7,000 villages. You could ask why just 7,000. Surely the Rashtrapati needs to think about the entire Rashtra? There was no logical explanation for 7,000, but it was the chosen number for unstated reasons. The PURA scheme never got going since the villages were in the states, funding was to come from the Centre and the Planning Commission had no such allocation. Moreover the President is now gone.

But we should examine the scheme to understand our supercilious attitude to villages and their development. President Kalam suggested that villages be grouped in clusters of 20. Then a ring road would be put around these 20 villages. There would be health and educational facilities and a communication centre. Only battery vehicles would run in the cluster. There would be employment for 50 per cent of the people in the cluster.

If this is the urban vision the President had for rural areas, why not imple-



One of the dry and disused channels of the Indira Gandhi Canal. Traditional water structures however deliver

ment it in our cities first?

The village is the *pura* that you will see attached to so many names on the map. How good is our *pura* quotient?

Not very if we go by our development record. The government's plans in the past 60 years have either caused disruption or had very little effect on our rural areas. Money is spent in huge sums and it is no secret that much of it is siphoned off. The 'Two Rupees' statement of Rajiv Gandhi that as much as ninety-eight rupees are spent on the government machinery itself out of every hundred rupees given as grant, is quite apt. And that which does get invested is invariably misdirected.

Across party lines, political leaders do not go to find out what could be going wrong. You could say this of the BJP, the Congress or the Left, of rich leaders, leaders who have come up from humble beginnings. You could say this of successive Planning Commissions.

India is a country of 500,000 villages. It is a cliché worth repeating because it is unlikely that anything we do will substantially change this reality. Talk of inclusive growth must, therefore, begin with an honest question: how much do we know about our villages – how they plan, draw upon the environment, finance themselves and so on.

My journeys into rural India have always been full of surprises. I have taken away more than I have given, learnt much more than I could possibly impart. Of course villages need to benefit from new technologies and the opportunities that emerge out of linkages with industrialised parts of the economy. You could say that it is necessary to make our villages more urban. They need phones, roads, railway lines and access to modern healthcare.

But while they need all this, it would be wrong to assume that our villages don't have their own sophistications. That they are waiting to be urbanised and transformed into cities. Indeed you will find marvels of traditional engineering, systems of resource utilisation and models of voluntary governance that are difficult to replace without paying a huge social and environmental cost.

Allow me to transport you to Ramghar in the Jaisalmer desert in Rajasthan.

Ramghar has the lowest rainfall and population density in India. It is on the border and therefore the roads are in good condition. But you won't see people

or a village near the roads.

The villages are strung out at locations where they have over the years been able to carve out an existence for themselves based on the availability of water and pasture lands. Since they are in isolation, the villages have their own ways of planning based on social customs, traditional technologies and their equations with the local environment. The villages don't depend on social workers and bureaucrats. They govern themselves.

Where the State has tried to intercede, it has failed quite miserably because there has been no attempt to understand local realities. You will see Rajiv Gandhi Schools built and lying shut. You will also see what a farce the Indira Gandhi Canal has been in this area. Channels from the canal have always been dry. Incredibly, the government believed that the canal would promote agriculture among the sand dunes!

The people here aren't into widespread farming since they receive just 6 to 8 cm of rain. Instead they rear animals because they have always had excellent grasses and pasture lands. This was nature's gift to them and they know to preserve it and use it in sustainable ways.

The water in the ground has always been saline. So insignificant is the rainfall that it is not even possible to do water harvesting; the great NGO solution to scarcity of all kinds.

Where there is some rainfall, we find *nadis* or small ponds. But in the rest of the area here is only ground water and it is saline.

Just three sweet water wells serve people over a hundred kilometres. I repeat, just three wells. But since this is a pastoral economy, people don't crowd around the wells. Interestingly, the pasture lands are not near the wells. So people draw on the wells in a use-and-go fashion. Their attitude to water is use and preserve instead of use and throw.

The wells could be 800 years old and people have kept them in good condition over generations. There is no panchayat, no reservation system. Animals too know instinctively how to find their way to these wells.

A *chang* is a herd of animals. How a new *chang* is created is an example of local inclusiveness. Herdsmen give one or two animals each to an aspiring *chang* owner who could be a young man setting out or a brother branching out. The animals are given so that a new *chang* has a base number of roughly 20. A key condition is that the animals cannot be sold or killed for two years by which time a *chang* of 20 reaches the optimum number of 60 or 70.

And from then on the new *chang* owner is on his way.

Whatever little agriculture that does take place is done at a *khadeen*. All *khadeens* are hundreds of years old. They have traditionally located atop a bed of gypsum. This is because the gypsum retains moisture that otherwise dissipates in sandy soil and desert conditions. In fact such is the effect of the gypsum that despite very low rainfall it is possible to grow wheat at a *khadeen* as a rabi crop. It is only here that any agriculture at all can be done. The Indira Gandhi Canal with its hundreds of crores of rupees of investment is no match for the *khadeen*.

The *khadeen* also functions on the principles of a commune. It is owned by all the families that work on it and the crop is shared. If someone is unwell and cannot work the share is still given. There are no caste distinctions. Suppose someone leaves the village and goes to the city to return after a few years, his share of the *khadeen* is restored to him.

Waterworks have been created by ordinary people. For instance one of the *nadis* is called *Gunga ki nadi*, which means a *nadi* made by a deaf and dumb person. This is the only source of sweet water in the area. It could be 200 years old and has served several generations. That a handicapped person could create such a structure with dexterity is proof of the inclusiveness of the community.

Similarly, there is a sizable pond that has been created by a herdsman. It is an ongoing process of asset creation by the community, with internal resources and for specific uses. For the government and the Planning Commission to intervene in processes that are so intimately woven into geography, environment and local custom will require learning first. It is all a question of being honest about our *pura* quotient.

Anupam Mishra is with the Gandhi Peace Foundation



RAVI VENKATESAN
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Innovate, empower, unleash

VILLAGERS angered by a South Korean steel company's plan to build a \$11 billion plant in eastern India kidnap two company executives before releasing them unharmed and this latest episode in a saga of continuing delays in land acquisition jeopardizes the future of this investment. In West Bengal, intense opposition continues to the establishment of a car factory to build a \$2,500 "people's car" resulting in pitched battles with the police leaving scores injured. Just a few months ago, another violent clash between police and villagers protesting the creation of a special economic zone left 14 dead, putting into doubt the future of SEZs. Harnessing the anger of the rural poor, Maoist insurgents roam freely across half of India's states causing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to call them the single largest threat to our country. What may be common across these episodes is the rising anger of people who are mute spectators to the Indian economic miracle.

The rise of the Indian economy is one of the most impressive and important geopolitical events in the world today, and is being counted on by investors, governments and people around the world. As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of our independence, in many ways our prospects have never been brighter. Yet, worryingly, our new prosperity has accentuated the already stark contrasts in wealth and human development and we may be reaching the point where unless there are more beneficiaries, democracy may not let growth continue.

Business leaders like me for the most part tend to believe that growth will cure most sins and that our responsibility stops at creating competitive enterprises and paying taxes. Eradicating poverty is the government's job, not ours. Right?

Wrong. The consequences of abdicating this issue will be grave. There are already signs of growing lawlessness as disaffected young people turn to crime, insurgency and terrorism. But even more ominously, inequity inevitably generates a political response that can thwart the ambitions of the affluent. Last year, political parties, vying to tap the discontent created by inequity, enacted legislation reserving half the seats in India's educational institutions for lower-caste students. This policy, and the controversy surrounding the creation of special economic zones, should serve as an early warning of what majorities can lawfully do when we elites ignore them. Furthermore, unless we educate hundreds of millions of people at the bottom of the pyramid and create jobs for them, we will starve our businesses of the skilled talent and the consuming middle class we need to buy our products and keep growing. So reducing poverty and inequity is very much in our self-interest.

However, even when business leaders agree that poverty is our problem, the approach is often confused. Two methods in particular have dominated recent thinking on the subject, and, in my view, both are well-intentioned but futile against so vast a problem.

Lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty cannot happen through "corporate social responsibility." Important as these initiatives are, they are neither sustainable nor scalable, and therefore achieve limited impact. Nor will poverty be overcome through the "bottom of the pyramid" initiatives that seek to make the poor into bigger consumers of shampoos and televisions by

enabling them to pay per use.

We need a new approach driven by innovation and entrepreneurship. We need to focus less on doing small, nice deeds for the poor, and less on selling them affordable versions of what rich people consume. Instead, we must marshal the best minds and the resources of big, innovative companies to think freshly about the shackles that keep people poor and invent solutions that break these shackles. The poor don't need our charity; they need us to innovate them out of their morass.

India is filled with efforts of this kind. For instance, the biggest hope for the next agricultural productivity revolution in India lies in the rural business initiatives of companies like Reliance Industries, telecom operator Bharti Airtel

and ITC, which are investing billions of dollars to create an efficient agricultural supply chain bypassing scores of middlemen. Look, too, to the rural banking initiatives of companies like SBI and ICICI that will deliver affordable credit and insurance to half a billion people, helping them finally break a historic cycle of poverty.

Doing good is also good business: Scalable business models that help the poor access markets, or deliver essential services like education, healthcare or drinking water, represent huge economic opportunities waiting to be tapped. For example, at my company, Microsoft

India, engineers are working on problems like how to use the Web to deliver services to rural entrepreneurs, or how to help tiny businesses access global markets. Seeing the pressing challenges of our educational system, we are thinking hard about how information technology can be applied to learning and skilling. Through an initiative called Shiksha, we've learned how to effectively and inexpensively deliver computer literacy to school teachers and children – nearly four million so far. We're now trying to put a business model behind this so that the programme can be scaled. Recognising that English is a passport to jobs, we are working with partners to evolve new ways for people to learn English using a computer.

Microsoft is not doing this for charity. Working collaboratively with governments, business partners and NGOs, we are applying innovation and resources to solving some tough societal problems in the process sowing the seeds for tomorrow's growth. If we get it right, the poor will be happy to pay to get jobs they otherwise wouldn't have and we will have expanded the potential base of users for our software to 500 million from 100

million. It is quite conceivable too that the next big innovation could come from immersion in the problems of India's poor.

India today stands at a tipping point. We have the opportunity to eliminate poverty and become a developed nation in the next few decades. We have the responsibility to ensure that a stable secular democracy anchors a very troubled South Asian neighbourhood. We have the opportunity to evolve a new model of capitalism – one with a human face. The key here is to apply the same intense focus, creativity and innovation we have applied to our businesses to solve some of the pressing problems of our society. Doing good has never been more rewarding!

Ravi Venkatesan is Chairman of Microsoft India.



Unless we educate people at the bottom of the pyramid and create jobs for them, we will starve our businesses of talent and the consuming middle class.



KAVALJIT SINGH
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Watchful State keeps companies

PRIME Minister Manmohan Singh's sermon on inclusive growth at an annual summit of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) evoked sharp reactions from the corporate world and media. Most comments were aimed at resisting the enforcement of a Ten-Point Social Charter spelt out by the Prime Minister through regulatory and legislative measures. "The government cannot legislate CEO salaries," was industry's common refrain.

This is nothing but a complete misreading of the Social Charter because it nowhere hints at curbing excessive remuneration or eschewing conspicuous consumption through regulatory and legislative measures. And, to my mind, that is a big problem with the Social Charter. In fact, since 1991, successive governments have been weakening the regulatory mechanisms on corporations (for instance, removing curbs on CEOs salary compensation and reducing corporate taxes) and thereby, deliberately or otherwise, contributing to iniquitous growth.

Although there is nothing wrong per se with the contents of the Social Charter, the root problem lies with its method of implementation. The Charter is purely voluntary in nature, based on moral persuasion and self-regulation. It does not, for instance, recognise the need for a regulatory framework to bring big business under legal purview. No corporate entity can be held legally accountable if it violates the Social Charter. At best, corporations can be persuaded through public pressure to implement it. Nothing more.

THE ORIGIN OF CODES

The Social Charter and similar initiatives undertaken by Indian big business in recent years have to be seen in the present international context where the globalisation of trade and investment flows have led to the emergence of several codes of conduct.

It is important to underscore that codes of conduct and other voluntary approaches did not emerge in a vacuum. Their appearance has to do with a change in the paradigm of how global capital should be governed. The deregulation and 'free market' environment of the 1980s gave greater legitimacy to the self-regulation model embedded in the Anglo-Saxon business tradition. Many developed countries, particularly the US, encouraged transnational corporations (TNCs) to adopt voluntary measures rather than enact and enforce strict laws to govern their activities and behaviour. The argument against regulation was based on the belief that TNCs would undertake greater social and environmental responsibilities through voluntary measures.

In the late 1980s, campaigns launched by NGOs and consumer groups changed public perception of corporate behaviour significantly, which in turn facilitated the proliferation of voluntary initiatives. Investigations into popular consumer brands such as Nike and Levi's brought to public notice some of the appalling working and environmental conditions in some of these companies' overseas production sites. Realising that bad publicity could seriously damage corporate and brand reputations and that their products could face consumer boycotts, many corporations suddenly started adopting codes of conduct and other CSR measures. Pressures generated by the 'ethical' investor community and other shareholders also contributed to the proliferation of voluntary measures.

Given that there is often a considerable discrepancy between a corporation undertaking to follow a voluntary code and its actual business conduct (e.g., Nike), many critics argue that voluntary measures have become corporate public relations tools to create a positive corporate image. In today's competitive world to be seen as a responsible company adds significant value to a company's business and reputation and helps it manage various risks. Thus, the growing popularity of voluntary measures in recent years have not ended debates on how to regulate TNC behaviour.

Broadly speaking, codes of conduct can be divided into five main types: specific company codes (for example, those adopted by Nike and Levi's); business association codes (for instance, ICC's Business Charter for Sustainable Development); multi-stakeholder codes (such as the Ethical Trading Initiative); inter-governmental codes (for example, the OECD Guidelines), and international framework agreements (such as the International Metalworkers' Federation agreement with DaimlerChrysler).

Despite their diversity, most codes of conduct are concerned with working conditions and environmental issues. They tend to be concentrated in a few business sectors. Codes related to labour issues, for instance, are generally found in sectors where the consumer brand image is paramount, such as footwear, apparel, sports goods, toys and retail. Environmental codes are usually found in the chemicals, forestry, oil and mining sectors.

Codes vary considerably in their scope and application. Very few codes accept the core labour standards prescribed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Although codes increasingly cover the company's main suppliers, they tend not to include every link in the supply chain. Codes rarely include workers in the informal sector although they could form a critical link in the company's supply chain. Only a small proportion of codes include provisions for independent monitoring.

WHY CODES DON'T WORK

Voluntary approaches have several inherent weaknesses and operational difficulties, some of which are summarised here. First, as discussed above, corporate codes are purely voluntary, non-binding instruments. No

corporation can be held legally accountable for violating them. The responsibility to implement the code rests entirely on the corporation. At best, corporations can be forced to implement codes only through moral persuasion and public pressure.

Second, despite being in existence for many years, the number of companies adopting such codes is still relatively small. Moreover, corporate codes are limited to a few sectors, particularly those in which brand names are important in corporate sales, such as garments, footwear, consumer goods and retailing businesses. A large number of other sectors remain outside the purview of corporate codes.

Third, many codes are still not universally binding on all the operations of a company, including its contractors, subsidiaries, suppliers, agents, and franchisees. Codes rarely encompass the workers in the informal sector, who could well be an important part of a company's supply chain. Further, a company may implement only one type of code, for instance, an environmental one, while neglecting other important codes related to labour protection, health and safety.

Fourth, corporate codes are limited in scope and often set standards that are lower than existing national regulations. For instance, labour codes recognise the right to freedom of association but not the right to strike. In many countries, such as India, the right to strike is a legally recognised instrument.

Fifth, the mushrooming of voluntary codes in an era of deregulated business raises serious doubts about their efficacy. There is increasing concern that corporate codes are being misused to deflect public criticism of corporate activities and to reduce the demand for state regulation of corporations. In some cases, codes have actually worsened working conditions and the bargaining power of labour unions. Moreover, increasing numbers of NGO-business partnerships established through corporate codes and CSR measures have created and widened divisions within the NGO community and sharpened differences between NGOs and labour unions.

Voluntary codes of conduct can never substitute state regulations. Nor can they substitute labour and community rights. At best, voluntary codes can com-



in check

plement state regulations and provide an opportunity to raise environmental, health, labour and other public interest issues.

Implementation and monitoring of codes is problematic. Information about codes is generally not available to workers and consumers. Researchers have found that labour codes have often been introduced in companies without the prior knowledge or consent of the workers for whom they are intended. A key issue regarding implementation is the independence of the monitoring body. Since large auditing and consultancy firms usually carry out the monitoring of company codes with little transparency or public participation, whether the codes are actually being implemented or not remain a closely guarded secret. Besides, auditing firms may not reveal damaging information since they get paid by the company being audited.

Recent voluntary initiatives, such as Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs), are considered more credible because NGOs and labour unions are involved as external monitors. But the authenticity of such monitoring cannot be guaranteed by the mere involvement of NGOs and civil society. Researchers have found that the development of standards by some MSIs has taken place in a top-down manner without the involvement of workers at the grassroots level. For instance, concerns of workers in India and Bangladesh were not taken into account in the standards created by MSIs such as the Ethical Trading Initiative and Social Accountability International.

If recent experience is any guide, the struggle to implement codes could be frustrating, time-consuming, and ultimately futile. It dissipates any enthusiasm to struggle for regulatory controls on TNCs. This was evident in the case of the decade-long campaign in India on a national code to promote breast-feeding and restrict the marketing of baby food by TNCs along the lines of the WHO code. Therefore, voluntary codes require serious rethinking on the part of those who consider them as a cure-all to problems posed by corporations.

The unveiling of corporate scandals (from Worldcom to Enron to Parmalat) underlines the important role of strong regulatory measures. All these corpo-

rations were signatories to several international codes while some of them (for instance, Enron) had developed their own codes.

PROTECTING THE CITIZEN

The proponents of neoliberal ideology argue that states should abdicate their legislative and enforcement responsibilities by handing them over to NGOs and civil society organisations which can then develop voluntary measures in collaboration with business. Without undermining the relevance of such voluntary approaches, it cannot be denied that the primary responsibility of regulating the corporate behaviour of TNCs remains with nation states. It is difficult to envisage the regulation of TNCs without the active involvement of states. State regulations are the primary vehicle for local and national governments and international institutions to implement public policies. National governments have the primary responsibility of protecting and improving the social and economic conditions of all citizens, particularly the poorer and most vulnerable.

There is no denying that all states are not democratic and that supervisory mechanisms are often weak, particularly in developing countries. Despite these shortcomings, however, states remain formally accountable to their citizens, whereas corporations are accountable only to their shareholders. The additional advantage of national regulatory measures is that they would be applicable to all companies, domestic or transnational, operating under a country's jurisdiction, thereby maximizing welfare gains.

It needs to be stressed here that a robust, transparent and efficient supervisory framework is also required to oversee the implementation of regulations. Otherwise expected gains from a strong regulatory framework will not materialise. India provides a classic example of having a strong regulatory framework but poor supervisory structures.

Voluntary measures such as the Social Charter can never be a substitute for state regulations. Nor can they substitute for labour and community rights. At best, voluntary measures can complement state regulations and provide space for raising environmental, health, labour and other public interest issues.

It is in this wider regulatory context that the efficacy of voluntary initiatives (such as the Social Charter) in building inclusive growth needs to be questioned and debated.

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Sailing together

(Continued from page 13)

when desired. Thus a mechanic, who knows how a car's engine works and with instruments to sense what is going on in it, can tune up the engine whereas a layman will not know what to do.

The expansion of human knowledge with the Enlightenment since the 17th century has produced tremendous advances in various fields that have benefited humanity – in medicine, engineering, etc. As the amount of knowledge has increased, it has become more difficult for anyone to know everything. Therefore, science continues to split into many specialisations and educated experts know more and more about less and less. Often they do not understand how the larger system works into which their narrow discipline fits. Economists do not understand the minds of social and emotional human beings. That is left to sociologists – who do not understand the intricacies of economics. The 'inconvenient truth' about climate change is that it is the result of an accumulation of decisions by 'educated' people mostly in the 'developed' world.

Often we experience the perils of specialisation in our personal lives. When we feel a vague unease in our bodies, which specialist shall we turn to? Highly potent specialists can produce remarkable results provided they are working on the right problem – and in ways that do not cause problems elsewhere in the body! We miss the old-time 'general' physician who could assess the situation and suggest which specialist, if any, we should go to, and also keep an eye on our overall progress. As specialisation proceeds, holistic medicine is becoming more attractive because specialisation may have gone too far.

Compartmentalised thinking is hazardous. It often results in fixes that backfire. Therefore education must be redesigned to encourage more systemic thinking and intuitive insights. This must begin right at the beginning, in primary education. And experts at the top must learn to listen to those who have other perspectives so that together they can understand the whole system before (over-confidently) advocating solutions.

WHEN EVERYONE IS IN CHARGE, NO ONE IS IN CHARGE.

Whenever there is need to make things happen faster, or to 'scale up' good work, we think of putting someone in charge. We feel this person should have

full authority to cut through any opposition and to take decisions quickly. Thus we conceive of 'anti-poverty tsars', 'anti-terrorism tsars', and 'homeland security tsars'. Stop and consider for a moment. Tsars were considered to be tyrannical and mankind may be well rid of the idea. Must we resurrect the concept of a supreme, all powerful authority whenever we want coordinated action on a large scale? Isn't there another way to coordinate many actors than to impose an authority over them?

We need a new model of governance that is built on the participation of many and not on the need for one to dominate many. Inclusive growth requires that all can take charge of their own lives, and every nation of itself, while also taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions on the world around. The model of the tsar or the monarch with divine rights in its many variants, some more benign than others, like the all-powerful CEO and the commander-in-chief, are not solutions for an interdependent world in which none should (nor can perhaps) dominate others. However the theory in use continues, past its 'sell-by date', that the only way to get big results is to hand over authority to one powerful person. Hence 'tsars' rule even in the USA! And institutions of international governance like the UN and the World Bank are dominated by powerful nations.

It is a human right enshrined in the concept of democracy that those who are affected by any decision must be included equitably in the process by which that decision is taken. They must be satisfied that their interests will be fairly considered even if they do not participate in every step of the process. This is a fundamental requirement for inclusive growth.

EITHER YOU ARE WITH US OR YOU ARE AGAINST US.

This is an overly simplistic view of the world, in which the opposite of a wrong is presumed to be right. It is the world in black and white; a world of good guys and bad guys; a world of Left versus Right. Whereas the real world is composed with many colours.

None of the 'theories in use' mentioned above is always wrong. Nor are any of them always right. If 'Just Do It' is not always right, neither is 'Don't Just Do It'. It is neither this nor that. Even opposites can coexist. Therefore one must respect other perspectives. This is the eternal truth of inclusion handed by the sages down the ages.

(Arun Maira is chairman of the Boston Consulting Group in India).



MANSHI ASHER
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

SEZs are harsh on the landless

LOCAL communities dependent on agriculture have in the past year and a half come out in vehement opposition to the acquisition of land for Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Examples abound from Nandigram in West Bengal to Raigad in Maharashtra, Jhajjar in Haryana and Nandagudi in Karnataka.

The SEZ policy is the government's most recent tool to spur economic growth. At present there are 360 formally approved SEZs. These will cover an area of 583 sq km (58,300 hectares). Combined with the in-principle approvals, the total land requirement is expected to be as much as 1,945 sq km (194,500 ha). The Ministry of Commerce points out that this is only 0.065 per cent of India's total land mass.

We make the assumption that an average land holding size might be 1.3 hectare. This means that land for SEZs could be directly supporting some 150,000 families or 600,000 people. Around 1.3 ha per family is higher than the 1.06 ha NSSO has reported as the average national land holding size in 2002-03 but then not all land acquired will be farm land.

How can we hope to compensate 600,000 people for the loss of their land and, at the same time, ensure new sources of livelihoods for them? Do we have estimates of how many agricultural labourers, traders or even fishermen accessed resources or earned an income because of this land? Given this reality, we can see that millions of people are at risk. The SEZs will create a much smaller number of industrial jobs which will be appropriated by educated, urban people.

In the absence of a strong national rehabilitation policy, land acquisition for industrial and 'development' projects using the Land Acquisition Act 1894, has led to the displacement of millions and been a key issue of concern since independence. Movements in the late 1980s brought this question to the fore, demanding the withdrawal of or amendment to the Land Acquisition Act (LAA), which gives the power of 'eminent domain' to the state to acquire any land for 'public purpose'.

All states saw a wave of land acquisitions with the formation of Industrial Development Corporations (IDCs) in the 1960s and 1970s and later in the 1990s. IDCs acquired land from farmers using the LAA and created small industrial parks or belts. Most of this land was strategically located near cities, ports or areas where infrastructure was available or could be easily built up and strengthened.

The land was mostly fertile, agricultural land (irrigated and non-irrigated), and wasteland (mostly grazing or scrub forests). As more industries were being set up in non-IDC areas, the LAA continued to be used for acquisition with the government aiding big and small companies. If we look at figures from Gujarat, for instance, more than 50 per cent of the land acquired by the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) has been lying unused. With the announcement of the SEZ policy this land is now being handed over entirely to private developers or in partnership.

The government is now talking about direct purchase of land by corporate houses more so after land acquisition for SEZs came under the scanner. The UPA government has repeatedly announced that state governments should stay out of the acquisition process and that if land is directly purchased then the farmer has the right to say 'no'. A new rehabilitation policy and possible amendments in the LAA formalising this arrangement are likely to be announced soon.

So how would this translate on the ground? How does a company deal with the farmer? The farmer 'interface' would vary from state to state and from region to region. In India, 'farmer' is not a term representing a homogenous category.

The current experience indicates that companies are operating through a chain of *dalals* or agents, typically found among upper caste, big landowners. While these *dalals* can make large sums of money selling their own land, they also have the resources to obtain land from smaller farmers and take care of opposition to land sales in return for contracts, perks, jobs and commissions from the company.

Further, it is rare to find companies with comprehensive rehabilitation packages. It is cash compensation that corporate enterprises prefer to minimise liabilities and recurring costs. If money or jobs for land are not accepted by smaller landowners, the question is what will happen when the state has retreated?

A recent meeting of farmers opposing land acquisition for a Reliance SEZ in Jhajjar near Gurgaon in Haryana was cut short by a loud gang of pro-SEZ youth. This is just a glimpse of *goonda* rule and use of methods outside the rule of law to curb opposition.

This process is especially widespread in states that have seen faster economic growth and a collapsing agricultural sector. Some prominent examples are Dholera, Dahej, Pipavav in Gujarat; Nagpur, Pune and other areas in Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana. In these regions, movements against SEZs have been mainly for better compensation. The courts have been approached and protests have intensified. And so companies have hiked land rates, almost three to four times.

Most SEZs are close to cities and rely on good transport routes. This proximity boosts their real estate value. So, while the reasons for setting up SEZs is to promote industrial activity, the reality is the SEZ will always be profitable for a developer since the land can be used for real estate if no industry ever comes up. For instance, in Gurgaon land prices are as high as Rs 2 crore per acre. Reliance knows that land prices will increase and its investment in the Jhajjar SEZ is a safe bet.

The real losers are those who have very little land, the marginal farmers, those who work as agricultural labourers or depend on fishing, livestock rearing and other related occupations in a rural economy. These people, who comprise as much as 50 to 70 per cent of the population in a village, mostly belong to backward and deprived castes. They receive little or no compensation for the loss of their livelihood and are reduced to becoming labourers in nearby towns and cities. They will find it very difficult to make ends meet.

Since contiguous lands are required for large SEZ areas, some farmers are first bought off by the company and those with little land are ultimately forced to sell, even if they don't want to. There are also examples of farmers in Punjab and Haryana who prefer to sell their land and buy fertile, cheap land in Chhattisgarh. In places around Nagpur in Maharashtra, factors like the lack of irrigation facilities and indebtedness are driving distress sales.

Then there are areas in the central-eastern belt of India and parts of the south and even Western Maharashtra which are resisting land acquisition by the government or by companies. Most of these regions practise subsistence agriculture. Rural societies here are tribal/non tribal and fairly cohesive. Subsistence agriculture is practised and land is more evenly distributed among the community.

Some of these areas have a history of resistance to mining and other industrial projects. And it is here that industrialists are finding themselves paralysed for SEZ related acquisitions. Such situations have seen extreme polarisation and emergence of violent clashes. The state has resorted to violence and back-handed tactics to suppress or dissipate movements resisting industry.

Where panchayats are strong with some semblance of collective decision making, the government has come down heavily, curbing and overlooking gram sabha powers and resolutions. In villages where aspirations of the landed class are strong, political parties and companies are running panchayats on money and power. Many areas are struggling somewhere in between these two situations. The upshot is that it is becoming difficult for the poor to access democratic institutions to hold on to their livelihoods.

Legislation is needed on rehabilitation and acquisition of land that recognises the sovereignty and protects the rights of farmers and other rural communities. Minimising or avoiding displacement with fair, informed and prior consent before acquisition is essential to ensure the rule of law and just development.

But even with the best policies and laws we need a government that does not side with the industrialists and economically powerful urban and local classes against the poor. We need local decision-making and local accountable mechanisms not only for all projects which require land acquisition but also for the social and environmental impacts. More than ever, the government needs to be made accountable, not to private companies, but to poor, land-based communities.

This report was done with Patrik Oskarsson who is doing his PHD at the School of Developmental Studies, UK. Manshi Asher is an independant researcher.

The real losers are marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and those who depend on fishing and livestock rearing in a rural economy.



The softer side of SEZs

It is early afternoon and a group of women and girls gather near the temple of Yamai Devi, the presiding deity of their village in western Maharashtra, around 45 km from Pune. The women and girls finished their morning chores early since they didn't want to miss Seema's session.

Seema is a member of the Feedback Ventures team that is managing the community engagement process leading to the acquisition of land for developing a multi-product SEZ in that area. The Capacity Building Division of Feedback Ventures has developed the Community Led Sustainable Rehabilitation Intervention (CLSRI) model that works on a win-win-win principle for the private developer, the government and the community by using the trigger tools of clean water, education, sanitation or health. The primary objective is to improve the quality of life in villages.

Seema, a no-nonsense woman, is at the temple steps before the group congregates. She looks forward to meeting them. "How are you Akka?" she asks an elderly woman and before the woman can reply, Seema sharply asks her, "So where did you shit today?" The woman is flustered and replies with eyes downcast, "Out in the open. What to do? My son-in-law is not digging the pit." Her voice trails off.

Others chip in. "He is no good, a loafer, doesn't want to work, and his wife is pregnant." Seema quickly intervenes: "So what is the solution?" Hectic plans are drawn up, someone volunteers to find a spot, other women find the tools and most are willing to help dig a pit.

By tomorrow the pit will be operational and a makeshift toilet will have been constructed to provide dignity to one more generation. Satisfied, Seema checks the status of a few more toilets, understands the issues and gauges the behavioural changes taking place. As she ends the meeting, someone invites her home. "Come and have lunch with us today."

In the evening, Seema and her team will discuss job related skills villagers would like to acquire.

This is no ordinary story.

In just 15 days, Seema and her team have inspired this village of over 2,500 people to examine issues that hinder development. They have held meetings, participated in gram sabha discussions, walked into people's homes and used every opportunity to trigger a collective wave of consciousness.

There is a buzz of confidence. People are beginning to feel empowered. There seems to be an urgency to take charge, fix their own backwardness and hasten infrastructure development of their village. They have many wants - education, drinking water, loans for entrepreneurial opportunities, roads and a better life for their own progeny. They want to participate in making this happen and share the financial and physical efforts required!

And will you believe it? They all willingly acknowledge that taking away barren land for setting up an SEZ can be leveraged to their advantage and help them achieve a happier, more secure and better quality of life. This is their chance to break free of the notion that their future will always be decided by what their 'karma' has decreed. Suddenly this 'karma' is theirs to shape and design by improving their village and their lives.

So while adjoining villagers are in the throes of agitations and unrest over forcible land acquisition, in this village, community leaders are engaged in examining the resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) options, the opportunity for building and strengthening their technical skills, the time frame for getting the village school repaired and so on.

Surprised by all this? We aren't really!

The Capacity Building Division of Feedback Ventures has been involved with the human side of infrastructure development for the last few years. Going by our experience of working with grassroots projects and of community develop-



Quietly and without acrimony villagers are giving themselves infrastructure that many governments have promised them for years!

ment we were convinced that if industrial growth and economic success had to be achieved then an acceptable balance needed to be established between reckless investment for industrial growth (which provides pockets of affluence, a huge market for export and foreign exchange) and patches of abject poverty with impoverished farmers from whom the land is acquired.

Merely paying compensation for land acquired is a travesty of justice. The fruits of development and progress must also make a difference to villages. The process of SEZ creation must involve them and the progress and growth of SEZ turnover must improve their financial and wealth creation capacity.

This can be done only if the community is seen as a partner by the SEZ developer. It requires an enlightened SEZ developer, a business house that is truly concerned with India's equitable growth along with an equally credible implementation partner. But more importantly, since very little gets done without the threat of legislation in our country, it is our policy makers who must envision the prosperity of India through inclusiveness and participatory approaches. And the state government should play a facilitating role in letter and spirit.

Feedback's Capacity Building Division has been successfully using its CLSRI model in different parts of the country and on four ongoing SEZ projects in Maharashtra.

We work with communities to build consensus that giving up land and opting for alternative livelihoods will improve their quality of life. At the same time we also work with the developer to ensure that development projects for communities are carried out around the location of the project.

It is not true that villagers are unwilling to part with barren land. The process is important. It involves compensation, upgradation of skills, ensuring sustainable livelihoods and empowering communities to take decisions that will improve their quality of life. If communities are convinced that their lives will improve, they will never oppose the project. The political environment must also be included in this engagement.

The most critical part is to gain the people's trust in a transparent and fair manner. Once trust has been built, specifically through rallying points like sanitation or education, it can lead to discussions on a wider range of issues like health, education, literacy, jobs, roads, etc.

A whole set of participative tools are used that result in clusters and groups

(Continued on page 20)



JK BANERJEE
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Wanted: Doctors who will lead

DOES the phrase 'inclusive health care' sound like jargon? Several slogans like 'health for all by 2000', 'comprehensive healthcare', 'total healthcare,' and some political ones such as 'primary healthcare,' have been coined earlier.

Are all these slogans attempts to assuage the 'middle class guilt' of politicians, bureaucrats and 'yes minister' health professionals who draw up health policies?

The health status of the country has changed only marginally in the past 60 years.

Unreliable government statistics try to show the brighter side by quoting improved health indicators. But nobody does a cost benefit analysis of the money that has gone down the drain.

Several health ministers, deputy ministers, secretaries, directors of health services and other officers in the states and the Centre have drawn salaries during this time. But none of the targets fixed in the eleven Five Year Plans have ever been achieved.

Vertical programmes starting from population control, leprosy eradication, malaria eradication, tuberculosis control and child health have failed as planning was done with a view that healthcare was disaster management. So vertical programmes replaced planning for radical, comprehensive change.

The late Dr PC Bhatla, past president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and the initiator of the National Institute of Primary Healthcare said: "It is not health for all, but hell for all by 2000."

But he was only partly correct. While rich Indians and foreigners are buying hi-tech healthcare including kidneys to survive, the poor sell theirs in a desperate effort to survive. The story of blood transfusion is similar. A large number of prestigious institutions called 'corporate hospitals' where lifestyle diseases are treated efficiently with the latest technology have sprung up in the country. Children from foreign countries are operated for congenital heart disease with wide media publicity while children of the poor die of rheumatic heart disease while in the waiting list of heart care institutions. Thus, Dr Bhatla's prediction is applicable in the right context.

According to a survey by the Voluntary Health Association of India, 400 million people in our country have no access to modern health care. Also, 26 per cent of the population which is just above the poverty line, gets pushed below the poverty line when they spend their hard earned money on medical care. While 80 per cent of our population lives in rural areas and peri-urban slums, 80 per cent of hospital beds are in large cities.

For 'inclusive health care' to materialise, what is the way out? Starting with the Bhole Committee Plan immediately after Independence, the government today seems to have given up in despair. Privatisation is being promoted, much in the pattern practised in the US. The government sector is taking a backseat. Corruption is rampant - starting from admission to a medical college, passing the examinations, post graduation and practice. And unfortunately, we have come to accept it as a way of life.

We fail to realise that unlike medicine, other professions do not have a direct

bearing on human life. In days of yore, the Charakas and Sushrutas of Bharat realised this. At that time, knowledge of medicine had to be acquired more by preceptorship than by reading 'MCQ's like today. And admission to a course in Ayurveda was restricted to those who showed an aptitude for service rather than high intelligence or the strength of their family money.

For inclusive healthcare to succeed, this spirit has to be revived in the profession, both at the educational and the practical level. The professional has to lead

from in front. Whether we Indian doctors can do this is the million dollar question. The country is churning out more than 20,000 doctors a year. They end up in large cities or going abroad. The role model for them is the corporate super-specialist or the NRI consultant. This attitude of the professional has to change if inclusive health care has to succeed.

In March this year, the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) dedicated a whole issue to the breakdown of the health care system in the US. While costs are at an all-time high, 60 million people have no health insurance. After some discussion they came to the conclusion that a radical change could be brought about only if doctors took the lead. The profession must unite in driving reforms away from cost-cutting and short-term fiscal competitions to catering to the patient's need. Can we import this attitude along with the import of technology?

In Europe, the European Society of Medical Decision-Making (ESMDM) has been playing this role since the 1980s. Equitable access to high-cost technology and prioritisation for appropriateness was slowly being pushed down in the services.

Prof. Wilfried Lorenz, a past president of this society, mentions in his chapter in the book *Surgical Research*, "The role of the scientist today is no longer that of a precise methodologist or a sophisticated thinker but also of the provider, a person whose primary concern reflects the needs of the individual and of the society."

Several innovative changes are being introduced in the medical education systems of these developed countries to suit the needs of their changing societies. Meanwhile the Indian Medical Council functions with primitive policies and an outdated constitution. It is not willing to live up to the needs of the people.

To bring about a radical change and provide inclusive healthcare, the professional in India will have to reject the glamour of its industry-based high-tech orientation. The spirit of national service has to replace the greed of personal profit. The professor has to induce the younger generation to serve humanity and not become a slave to technology. The established rural practitioner has to be eulogised. We cannot have a corporate hospital in every village. It is our responsibility to provide health care for the people.

The best way forward is to train a generation of doctors who can perform multidisciplinary service and train village boys and girls to run a small hospital and sustain it with voluntary effort. When such a move comes from the profession, the government will support it. This is the only way of providing 'inclusive healthcare' for India in the 21st century.



The softer side of SEZs

(Continued from page 19)

aggregating at the village level to map their own needs and priorities. In the process 'natural leaders' emerge: shy schoolgirls, the physically challenged, the garrulous mother-in-law.

In villages where Feedback is involved, these 'natural leaders' have happily donned the mantle of change-makers: resolving queries, influencing others, inspiring action. The intelligent mapping of issues is followed by participative decision and action on what they will undertake to do themselves and what requires support. Many issues which require support form part of the detailed R&R plan design.

The R&R plan is drawn up by Feedback based on the community engagement process and the understanding of ground realities. This then leads to initial negotiations with the villagers by the Revenue Department officials of the State Government. Feedback acts as facilitators. The villagers are first met together and the broad outlines of benefits are announced and agreed upon. Thereafter, different elements of the R&R package need to be specifically targeted for different segments of the community. The approach is inclusive and so the R&R

package has something for all project affected people - including the landless and other vulnerable sections.

In this village near Pune, Feedback is ensuring open defecation is eradicated. The approach is to work on the principle of no subsidy but behaviour change and self-provision of low-cost toilets. To upgrade these toilets at a later date, the Feedback team will help villagers access government funds. The water project being undertaken in the village gets funds from the developer, some amount from the community and the rest from the state government. Communities monitor the project and Feedback only oversees and ensures it is done in a time-bound manner.

Significantly, the community becomes the decision-maker, financier and implementer. Quietly, methodically and without acrimony, villagers are giving themselves infrastructure that many governments have promised them for years!

So when the issue of SEZ development and land acquisition is brought up, the environment is not charged nor is there an all pervading fear of uncertainty. Instead, discussions lead to mature methods of examining and exploring the developmental benefits that can be derived from such a project without coercion or false 'sweet talk'.

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DARSHAN SHANKAR

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Making green communities rich

INDIA'S traditional medicine sector is growing. In 1947, its total national turnover was said to be less than Rs 50 crores. In 2007, the traditional medicine sector is estimated to be around Rs 8,000 crores. The sector is growing at the rate of approximately 20 per cent every year.

If larger strategic investments are made in R&D to establish the safety, quality and efficacy of traditional knowledge products, therapeutic procedures and services, the sector can grow exponentially because then the country's exports will also boom.

Today R&D investments in traditional medicine are neither substantial nor strategic. Good strategy would mean directing research investments to the top five public health problems and the top five global health needs. It would also mean investing funds not only in drug research but also on validating the extremely sophisticated traditional knowledge related to food and nutrition, drinking water, immunity, maternity care, detoxification procedures (*panchakarma*) and mental health.

Adequate and sustained funding should replace sub-critical, short-term funds. Competent research centres, which may be in the not-for-profit sector and in reputed educational institutions, need to be supported and encouraged instead of pumping most of the tax-payer's money into government institutions that lack vision, leadership and motivation.

Why is this sector growing? The answer to this question becomes evident when one analyses recent health-seeking behaviour. Studies reveal that in urban centres of developed and developing countries more than 40 per cent of the population seeks help for their health needs from a complementary system of healthcare because they realise that no single system can provide a satisfactory solution to all their health problems. At times, in developed societies, traditional healthcare services are not supported by insurance companies. Even so, the customer has been paying from his own pocket.

In rural areas of our country, however, the scenario is mixed. In remote districts the population almost exclusively relies on traditional healthcare, but this is because there is no choice. In small towns, taluka and district headquarters, particularly in northern states, traditional health services are on the decline because people are conditioned into believing that modern medicine is more efficient in all matters of healthcare. Over time this conditioning is likely to wear off and larger sections of even the rural populations will begin to realise that every system has its strengths and weaknesses and ideally one needs access to several mature systems of healthcare.

The global healthcare scenario is thus undergoing a paradigm shift and is moving rapidly towards an emerging era of medical pluralism. Medical pluralism poses huge challenges to policy-makers and intellectuals because combining different medical knowledge systems is a complex task. It cannot be done mechanically. There are several epistemological, ethical and operational issues to get sorted out. These will probably be set right in the next few decades because pluralistic healthcare appears to be here to stay.

Is the current growth of the traditional medicine sector and its future trends pointing towards inclusive growth? The answer is clearly no!

This is evident from the closed holding pattern of the traditional medicine manufacturing sector. It is also evident from the way medicinal plants, which



The global healthcare scenario is undergoing a paradigm shift and moving towards an emerging era of medical pluralism.



constitute the raw material base of the sector, are collected and cultivated. The benefits from the sale of raw materials are cornered by traders and the primary collectors and cultivators barely get a subsistence wage.

It is also evident from the nature of market demands on traditional knowledge products and services. These show a distinct pull towards the needs of the affluent sections of society. Wellness centres, health clubs, resorts and five star hospitals guide the direction of healthcare investments. Exclusive growth is also evident from the themes on which the government uses its funds for R&D and its subsidies for cultivation of export-oriented medicinal plants grown by big farmers who need no subsidy.

What would be the operational implications of inclusive growth? If one were to implement strategies so that at least 10 per cent of the industry consists of community-owned herbal enterprises, 60 per cent of medicinal plant cultivation and wild collection is in the hands of small and marginal farmer and landless labour cooperatives, 30 per cent of the R&D investments are directed to developing standards for primary healthcare herbal products, 50 per cent of public health funding is for traditional medicine solutions for malaria, anemia, leprosy and tuberculosis, one could consciously move towards inclusive growth.

On the government's part, its Ayush department and the Planning Commission along with the banking sector, national and international development funding agencies and socially responsible companies should all set their priorities and commit financial resources to support this kind of inclusive growth. It will not happen through sentimental lamentations about glaring gaps. These laments will remain mere sound bytes in space if change does not take place on the ground.

Darshan Shankar is director of the Foundation for the Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions, Bangalore.



RAJIV MEHROTRA
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

The public broadcaster

THE mandate for public service broadcasting in India is today enshrined in the Prasar Bharati Corporation. Few will argue that it has essentially failed to deliver. There is continuing confusion and ambiguity about its role and hence inevitably the structures that will make it truly effective and successful.

For public broadcasting in India to develop its constituency, we have waited for far too long for Prasar Bharati to rise to its potential and its obligations. Yet there seems possibility again. A Committee of Ministers is reportedly engaged in evolving a strategy to re-vision and restructure Prasar Bharati. A draft Broadcasting Bill is stirring debate and consternation especially amongst the commercial channels. While their concerns about the government's heavy-handed attempts at content regulation are widely shared, there is much else in the draft bill that calls for celebration - especially the efforts at mandatory public service and locally produced content obligations for all broadcasters.

Commercial broadcasting is not interested in audiences who are not consumers of the goods and services that their advertisers promote. This excludes hundreds of millions of the disadvantaged, the disenfranchised and those not driven by cultures of consumerism. Commercial television that fails to deliver audiences to its advertisers cannot survive. In its programmes, it is obliged to perpetuate and promote values and information that will encourage their consumption. This applies not only to 'entertainment' programmes and channels but to 'news and current affairs'. Yet if this synchronicity is to work effectively, there must be an illusion of credibility and an apparent commitment to the public good so long as this does not run counter to the advertisers' interests and sub texts. This is the only reality check, apart from the law. A society that lacks an effective alternative media space or voice diminishes its fundamental democratic freedoms and choices while reinforcing the cultures of the privileged.

Public broadcasting delivers messages to audiences. Its value rests in its independence and credibility. Independence both from the imperatives of commercial broadcasting and that of the government or the state. It must set exemplary standards of quality and serve as an example of good taste, of decency and values; it must be impartial and should meet the needs for information and entertainment particularly of those that commercial broadcasting excludes. It must synchronize with the principles of a good 'public enterprise' committed to transparency and accountability.

Public broadcasting represents a vital democratic space for an independent credible voice that informs and articulates the agendas, concerns and needs of civil society and the community as they are locally perceived. It needs to be the contemporary repository of its heritage and the best of its culture using its platform to preserve, promote and perpetuate them. It must set standards of excellence, of experimentation and innovation in the broadcast media. Public broadcasting to survive and grow must remain on the cutting edge of the convergence technologies.

Public service broadcasting is not merely the supply push of development support programmes, of what a centralised bureaucracy, or a group of 'experts' believe the community must be told. The imperative is to create a public culture through the airwaves that is plural and equitable in its representation. Even as the broadcast media have become more powerful and influential, public entitlement to the creation and shaping of content has not grown in proportion to its growth.

This does not mean that public broadcasting has to be dull, pedantic and boring. It can and must compete for at least some of the audiences that commercial television reaches out to but more importantly those that it does not care about. It does this by reaching out effectively to the demand pull from both kinds of audiences for their information and entertainment needs that commercial television is unwilling or unable to meet. Even as successive governments have paid little heed to the crumbling structures of public broadcasting in India (paid for by public money), they have been obsessed with a supply push of what they believe the public ought to see or hear, inevitably with a generous lacing of the government's political agendas. Audiences with an alternative have simply switched off. Yet public funds continue to be used to send out futile radio and television images into thin air. It is time to look at a responsible response to the existing real audience needs, and to help create these where they do not exist.

The Public Service Broadcasting Service Trust (PSBT) was born out of a felt

need to create a new, sensitive, empowering and independent voice in the non-print media - a voice that was not driven by merely commercial imperatives, or of the emerging monopolies and nexus between big business, politics and the media, or of the imperatives of state funded and managed media. It is a small initiative that provides modest funds and a space at prime time on Doordarshan News (Saturday's 10.30 pm) for 52 independent voices to articulate their passions, visions and concerns using the genre of the documentary film.

PSBT has not sought sensationalism or explicit confrontation, though that might bring in TRPs. Rather, it has provided quiet, considered insights and dare I add wisdom to focus on contemporary predicaments and valuable elements of our heritage. We are privileged to have people like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Shyam Benegal, Mrinal Sen, Kiran Karnik, Sharmila Tagore, Sunita Narain and Aruna Vasudev as our trustees and Pt. Ravi Shankar, Fali Nariman, Anjolie Ela Menon, Habib Tanvir, Mark Tully, and Vandana Shiva on board. We feel together we can make a difference to the cause of public broadcasting.

In the public spirit of our enterprise in public broadcasting, Prasar Bharati shares our costs of production and provides airtime of upto an hour a week. We

started five years ago with a grant from the Ford Foundation for the other half of the cost of production and our operational expenses. So far we have support for only half an hour each week. It is a very small space. With Ford Foundation winding up their support for media projects in India, our financial situation has become tenuous. While we continue to find funds, these come with agendas and strings attached - compromising the very principle of 'independent' content that drives us.

We have thus far supported the production of more than 300 independent documentary films from about 200 odd film makers, most of them aged under 30 and half of them women from all over India. Apart from Doordarshan, these have been screened in as many festivals in India and abroad from MIFF to Oberhausen, Berlin, Sundance, Yamagata, Montreal, et al. They have won close to 50 awards. Produced at modest budgets of under Rs 5 lakhs, they compete with the best, often produced at budgets between 10 to 100 times that of ours globally, in terms of form and content.

We encourage film makers to work with the newer, less expensive digital technologies so that they explore more

innovative treatments and approaches to the documentary, afford more time on location and create truly in-depth incisive films. We urge film makers to evolve honest realistic budgets and believe it is legitimate for them to make a decent living from their work. We are upfront about the range of budgets we can support. These are generous by most Indian standards.

We seek to demonstrate that it is possible and viable for a small, independent, engaging and constructive voice to find a relevant, credible place in a growing cacophony of sounds and images disseminated through cable and airwaves. We believe that in a spirit of genuine partnership, rather than of confrontation, of evoking respect for what we are doing and how we try and go about it, we can actually do something beyond merely complaining. We seek the shared joy that comes from achieving something difficult and meaningful together.

Crucial to PSBT's agenda is the effort to democratise the electronic media by encouraging the production and creation of media content by the community, and not just by trained professionals, or large production houses who may have access to high-end technology and large resources. We have produced instructional materials in the form of DVDs on the basics of Camera, Editing, Sound and 'How to Read A Film'. These were funded by UNESCO and are being distributed globally. These are available at a nominal cost, as are our instructional books that include 'The Open Frame' - a documentary reader, 'How to Write A Script', 'The Art of Interviewing', etc. We conduct workshops on 'User Created Media' wherein we encourage people to learn how to create small films on issues of concern they feel passionately about, and upload them for dissemination on the Internet.

Some aspects of our vision will be more difficult to achieve than others. Ours is one small, tentative step. We are trying to create a small ripple. India needs millions of ripples of energy and daring that will sweep down the mighty walls of resistance, corruption and inequity.

Rajiv Mehrotra is director of the Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT).

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MIHIR BHATT
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Lots of money, but none for you

SO far it has been argued that the exclusion of poor and marginalised women, Dalits, minorities, tribals, and informal labour takes place in India because of competing claims over limited resources. There just isn't enough for everybody so some people are left out.

But the tsunami recovery process in coastal South India shows that even when there are almost unlimited resources we still find persistent exclusion, deliberate and by default. A comprehensive joint evaluation of the entire humanitarian response to the tsunami, under the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, found that "India is the only country where the share of aid commitments exceeds the share of long-term recovery costs". From \$13.5 billion worth of total commitments, India received 12.5 per cent, that is, \$ 1.49 billion. Certainly these resources did not go to the Government of India or to Tamil Nadu but to a wide range of UN, international and local agencies.

We do not only exclude victim communities from mainstream national development. We also exclude them from outright acts of charity and compensation after disasters.

The tsunami is no exception. Exclusion is deeply embedded in our disaster response. Many women, casual labour, minorities, tribals and Dalits were left out of the 1999 Orissa cyclone relief activities. Eventually, Action Aid had to launch a social audit to cautiously collect data on who received what and when. Sneh Samuday, or 'care group' was launched across coastal villages in Orissa to reach out to those who had been excluded.

During the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, rated as the most successful recovery in the recent past and decorated with national and international awards, a local NGO Navsarjan and a local NGO network Janpath had to build houses for the Dalits and the salt farmers and their community groups who had been left out of the response process. After the 2002 Gujarat riots, minority communities, the major chunk of victims, were often ingenuously excluded from the government's compensation by being offered unusable miniscule sums of Rs 170 or Rs 328 for lost shelters or other assets. As a result, after four years the Government of India had to declare a revised package and ask the Gujarat government to repeat their compensation assessment.

In the tsunami response, Christian Aid, an international NGO, hurried to work with CARE and the National Centre for Advocacy Studies to design and develop a 'Social Equity Audit' to again put the estimated 7 per cent to 12 per cent of Dalits, who had been left out among coastal communities, and urban scavengers on the relief to recovery agenda in South India.

Almost all types of organisations exclude the most needy. It could be a UN agency working with labour or on food issues, or an international NGO with over 50 years of field presence in India, or a local NGO addressing human rights of the poor. A first time respondent or an NGO with long time government-NGO coordination experience can hardly stop the exclusion of social and economic groups in our response system. Media, however well meaning, often gets attracted to more dramatic acts of exclusion or discrimination in a particular location or community and leaves out widespread and persistent exclusion on the basis of caste, religion or occupation in bilateral projects.

Similarly, international NGOs, unaware of local context and unprepared to touch local power structures, often bypass dealing with local power dynamics, such as elected panchayats or traditional Fisherman's Panchayats. The local NGOs, without national reach and often with only a three month response budget, avoid inclusive relief in favour of timely and effective project delivery. The national government avoids issues of exclusion in bilateral projects to maintain a more egalitarian profile among the international community of nations. The multilateral agencies are dependent on the national government and cannot step aside and point out who is being left out and why. The international financial institutions have to finally wrap up a loan agreement and hardly ever take up such thorny issues in project planning and designing consultations.

The state and its agencies are allowed to take over response and rehabilitation—what is really the domain of local communities and local markets. Now, if such a takeover was effective, it may be tolerated as a transient stage. But neither centralised planning nor top-down management shows that the recovery performance is anywhere near the desired levels. Depending on where you look for information, from 40 per cent to 60 per cent of tsunami victims are

still without adequate and sustainable shelter. Additionally, data on livelihood recovery is impossible to gain as baseline data is rarely sought on to compare impact of recovery expenditure and control groups are seldom observed.

This social exclusion is made invisible in official and civil society statistics by local authorities, international financial institutions and the global humanitarian system. The excluded are also made invisible in loss and compensation lists.

As a calm but fiercely committed Mr Wilson from the Safai Karmachari Andolan, Chennai, active in 13 states points out in his ongoing study, 'scavengers and safai karmacharis are hardly anywhere to be found in the recovery process,' nor are they found in the up coming Rs 1,000 crore World Bank-funded tsunami shelter programme.

Even district or state level coordination initiatives, increasingly in government-NGO cooperation mode, with excellent credentials, adequate funds, and unmatched advocacy skills, do not sufficiently contest this top-down and administrative approach that continues to exclude the vulnerable among the victims

across sectors, locations, communities, and projects.

Though sustainability of any real mainstream tsunami recovery is based on local housing and labour markets, especially for the poor and excluded, the state agencies and civil society initiatives continue to avoid any intervention in it. Instead they provide a wide list of livelihood support. They avoid any intervention in housing and construction markets but build thousands of temporary and permanent shelters. They also avoid any intervention in the local agriculture and fisheries market but almost endlessly supply boats and farm implements.

The most valuable finding of the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute's (AIDMI) work in tsunami areas over two years in South Asia is not about who is excluded and why, but the fact that the excluded are demanding the right to be included. They are standing

on their own feet and not on the crutches of civil society initiatives or government schemes.

Exclusion, when repeated, produces two types of responses from the excluded. The excluded become more astute and find ways to organise themselves and access social and economic recovery benefits that are rightfully theirs. The other result of repeated exclusion is a more activist or militant response where the excluded try to delay, derail or sabotage mainstream recovery with direct or hidden interventions. The first response flowers when civil society and its resources are available. The second response flares up when conditions are volatile. In any case, due to exclusion the incomparable energy of the victims to recover on their own is not available for rebuilding their own lives or the nation's.

So is there any hope? Is all lost? What really gives us hope comes from experiences in our July 2007 field work from Nellore to Rameshwaram. It is the initiatives taken by those who are excluded that are the most inspiring. Subjected to repeated exclusion from relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery processes, excluded communities are more and more insisting on their right to be included, in having shelter, a sustainable livelihood, fair compensation and freedom to make decisions. Mr Muttuswamy of the Covenant Centre for Development, Madurai, who has been systematically building open organisations asserted that, "landless women are coming forward not only for compensation for lost days of farm work due to the tsunami but are also demanding a piece of land of their own to recover."

In the communities we visited throughout the tsunami recovery process there is no major evidence that the excluded have internalised exclusion, or that they have developed dependence on government or NGOs or mighty humanitarian organisations and agreed to submit to the exclusive mainstream recovery process. Asuntha from NESA, Pondicherry, a network of 130 local NGOs, gently repeats, "It is a question of human rights. The Right to Relief is inherent in human rights".

Acceptance of being left out is being rejected. Jesuratnam, a vocal and fearless leader of a 15,000 member fisherwomen's federation called SNEHA, Nagapattinam, explained: "Coastal areas belong to all coastal communities: to the fishermen and resort owners as much as to those who collect crabs and sweep beaches". Even after being sidelined in the tsunami recovery the excluded do with grace, subtle sarcasm and a smile – ask to be included. Their hands were folded. Not in submission but in calm determination.

Mihir Bhatt is director of the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, Ahmedabad.

Tony Reynolds contributed to this article.





RIAZ QUADIR
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Demolish the work ethic

DESPITE all the efforts of Patrick Delanoë, the Mayor of Paris, to bring summer to his city, the Paris Plage remained deserted this year.

Plage is the Mayor's gift to the deprived. "If the poor of Paris cannot go to the beach in summer, the beach will come to Paris," he had promised with typical French grandiosity - and created a new tradition: a beach along the Seine every August.

The sand and the water were there this month but no beautiful bikini-clad Parisians. Summer had made an accidental stopover here in April. And then ashamed at her mistake, hasn't shown up in May, June, July or August.

Unable to banish their trench coats, trousers, hats and umbrellas, the nor-

lent social welfare system that both France and Sweden practise.

So what was the difference? History provides us the answer. In northern Europe, since Calvin a work ethic developed (it's principle export to America), now commonly known as the Protestant work ethic. In Calvinist times it was believed that hard work was a moral statement. Loosely translated, it meant that you reaped the material benefits of your labour and became prosperous. It was largely this belief (and its direct results) that led to the prosperity of western Europe for the last few centuries.

The Guadeloupeans, on the other hand, can trace their history to western Africa, from where they were brought as slaves to the Islands. Forcefully cut off

from their origins, cruelly deprived of their identity and all their rights as human beings, including the right to literacy and education (often punishable by death, as in the US), their attitude towards work was a direct derivative of their circumstances. The benefits of their labour accrued, not to them, but to their masters. The more they worked, the more work they were given. The better they worked, the better they were expected to work.

Shirking without being caught became the natural outcome and thereby the slave work ethic. A whole paradigm was created where work had a negative connotation. If history is to be rightly interpreted, much of western European prosperity came from exploiting both the wealth and labour of the colonised world - and not from the commonly accepted myth of merely working hard. Sadly, it continues to his day. Therefore, to call the natives of the colonised world, lazy, is to heap insult upon centuries of injury.

The most 'American' of American Presidents, master of the glib one-liners, Ronald Reagan's coinage of the 'Welfare Queen' has become a part of American folklore and added immensely to the myth and

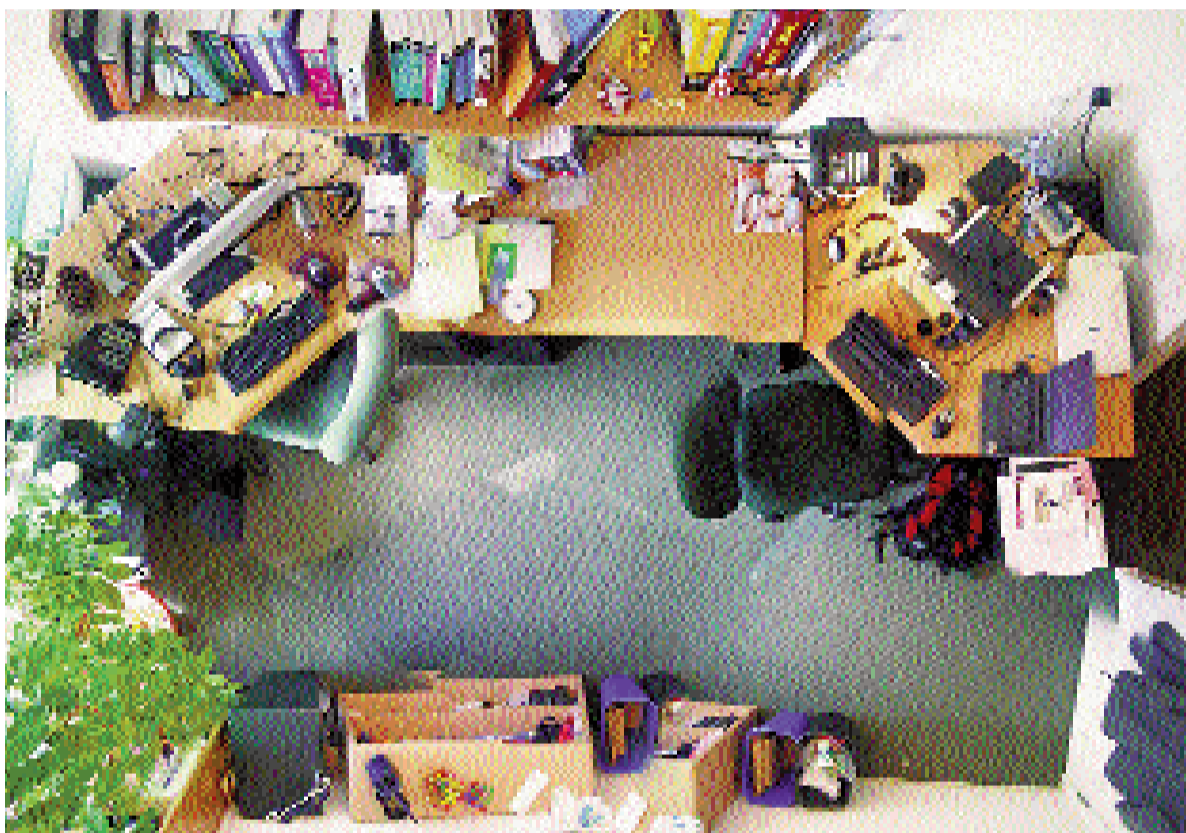
image of the lazy African. The truth is that even in the Swedish and French systems, welfare benefits never exceed 80 per cent of the last salary earned. The US is way below that figure. To consume excessively on such welfare benefits, as Reagan claimed, is well nigh impossible.

This century is surely going to change some of the basic economic premises on which we have been bred since Calvin, and above all, the later day capitalist saint, Adam Smith. If *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* were to be conducted today, surely we would arrive at some very different conclusions from those of Mr Smith. The ecological imperative (on which the very survival of the human race may depend) will surely force us to reject the economics of such an unsustainable, ever-spiralling cycle of production and consumption that we had (to our great chagrin) taken for granted.

In such a utopian world of reduced consumption how would we view the 'lazy' Guadeloupean? In such a world we will discover that our ecological footprint directly correlates to, not only our consumption, but to

our ownership and thereby to our 'prosperity'. Prosperity may not continue to command the same respect it does at present. Gandhian values of simplicity may one day take hold of our imagination.

In that utopian world surely our role models, like the President of the French Republic, will be frowned upon if they continue to spend obscene amounts of money (reportedly \$22,000 per day on rent alone) on his holiday, like he did this week in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, US. Fraternising with Microsoft big wigs in Davos may not be seen in the same light as renting their celebrity pads for a family holiday.



mally miserable Parisian continued to be even more miserable, or flew south across the Mediterranean to old France in greater numbers than ever before. Foreigners, on the other hand, were oblivious of the weather and continued to replace every missing native, two for one, providing free English conversation practice to diligent French students, who, for lack of opportunity, lag behind their European counterparts in spoken English.

Recently, on one such miserable afternoon, I was indulging in an indoor luncheon and the interesting conversation that usually accompanies such indoor affairs. Two friends had just returned from their holidays overseas. One from Guadeloupe, a French island in the Caribbean and the other from Sweden. The notable observations of the island visitors were that the Guadeloupeans were probably the laziest people in the world. "Nobody works in Guadeloupe. They don't even pick the ripe mangoes off the laden trees. They even get people from Haiti to come and cut the sugarcane in Guadeloupe..."

Both my friends were from India. The visitor to Sweden observed that the majority of people he had met in Malmo did not work. Those who did said that they did so merely out of a feeling of self-esteem or that their work was fulfilling.

Work as a source of fulfillment? Work as a source of self-esteem? Never for the slaves! Not for those who don't have the liberty to decide their own lives!

Being of the school that believes that beneath the rather thin veneer of historical and geographical conditions that feed culture, human nature comes in one standard model, I was set thinking as to why native Guadeloupeans and native Malmsos were so different. The common factor was the highly benevo-

Western Europe's prosperity came from exploiting the colonised world and not from the commonly accepted myth of merely working hard.



JUG SURAIYA
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

What the hell – it's home

LAKSHMAN ANAND

RETURNING to India after a trip abroad, I always tell myself that there's no place like home, thank God. For if foreign were like home, where the hell would I go when I wanted to get away from home for a spell?

While here, we're too close to notice it. It's like trying to read this with the paper stuck an inch from your face, the print a fuzzy blur. But when we return from foreign parts, we get a different perspective, and can read the message only too loud and clear.

The first thing that strikes you is the sheer, overwhelming mass of people. People reduced to basic biological functions: Hawking, spitting, peeing, crapping, digging their noses, hanging about without goal or intent. People not as human projects but as primal anatomy. Buildings in a state of pro-active decrepitude, in terminal decay before they are complete. Roads and pavements forever dug up, like a perpetual grave the city excavates for itself. Nothing works: Traffic lights, *bijli*, water, transport, public toilets. There is an air of unredeemable squalor, an entrenched inertia, as unremovable as the *paan thook* that stains every conceivable surface like self-generative stigmata.

Don't I know we are a poor country, people retort accusingly when I point out all this. India's been a poor country ever since anyone can remember, I reply. So then, what do I expect? How dare I moan and bitch when I'm lucky enough to belong to a minuscule elite, a pampered privileged class, living in the showcase capital, able to afford the unthinkable luxury of an occasional foreign trip. I ought to be ashamed of myself. Don't I know that in rural India women have to walk for miles just to get a pot of water, which probably isn't safe to drink, anyway? That they've got no schools to send their children to, no hospitals to go to when they're sick?

Yes, I do know these things. And yes, I am ashamed. But not because I feel particularly pampered and privileged, but because 60 years after independence we still have to wear our poverty like a martyr's hairshirt. Finish all the food on your plate; don't you care about the starving millions, we are told as children. I never quite understood that. I did care for the starving millions. But how was my cramming myself with food I did not need or want, and quite possibly making myself ill in the bargain, going to help? It was not as though through an unspecified process of distribution the surplus food – had I not helped myself to it or had it heaped on my plate by adult intervention – would have found its way to those



anonymous millions who were being used to emotionally blackmail me.

We are taught to carry these hobgoblins of guilt into adulthood. Power cut? Don't grumble. Do you know how many thousands of villages have no electricity at all? Roof leaking because a crooked building contractor ripped you off? Don't kvetch. Do you know how many millions are homeless? Borrowed poverty as a blunt instrument to bludgeon you into acquiescence in the scheme of things. The paper shoved back in your face so that the print becomes an illegible blur again.

And if you still persist in quibbling – that as a disgruntled member of the privileged class, far from finding solace in the thought that so many are so much worse off than you, you despair all the more because if life is pretty grim for you, how much more godawful and hopeless must it be for the truly disadvantaged – you are given the final, knockout punch: If you don't like it here, what stops you from going elsewhere?

And the answer to that, in my case at least, is not the fear that elsewhere won't have me. The fear is that elsewhere might well let me in, and by the same token let in enough of my compatriots to turn elsewhere into here.

And then where the hell would we all be?

*Source: IRS 2006 R2 **Source: ABC JJ 2006

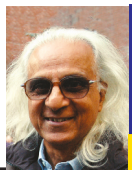
आपकी नई सोच से मिलती हमारी नई नज़र

आपके साथ-साथ बदला प्रभात खबर

It was the year 1984 when a new revolution in journalism started.
A revolution called Prabhat Khabar.

प्रभात खबर
ख़बर नहीं ख़ांदोलन

Published from Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Deoghar, Patna, Kolkata & Silliguri



DUNU ROY
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Cities of the chosen few

IN 1981, Bombay's Municipality was planning to evict pavement dwellers from downtown areas of the city when Olga Tellis, a journalist, filed one of the first public interest petitions. In 1986 the Supreme Court gave a landmark judgement. It said that under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, the Right to Life included the Right to Livelihood and hence pavement dwellers could not be arbitrarily evicted.

At that moment urban planning seemed to have taken a radical turn-- from the exclusionary process of removing the poor to the more inclusive process of providing basic services and livelihoods.

Yet, some years ago, the government in this city moved with massive armed force to evict 73,000 families in response to Court orders in yet another 'public interest' petition filed by the Bombay Environmental Action Group (BEAG), to protect a 'National' Park reserved for 'tourism'. No one seemed unduly bothered by the sundry religious ashrams inside the Park or the proliferating private apartment houses on its boundary. It appears that in two decades, notions of 'public interest' and of a 'planned' city have dramatically changed.

This phenomenon is not confined to some governments. Chennai, where 40 per cent of the population is living in slums, is relocating 69,000 families to areas far removed from the city. Kolkata launched Operation Sunshine in 1996 to evict over 50,000 hawkers. In Delhi, judicial activism has been evicting vendors, rickshaws, beggars, industries and shopkeepers with alarming regularity. Hyderabad was distributing land titles and housing loans to the urban poor in 1977 but is now leasing large tracts of land at heavily subsidised prices to corporate groups. Bangalore is in keen competition as it builds lounges, pubs, parks, apartment complexes, malls and layouts, through collusion between bureaucrats and corporates. Chandigarh displaced almost 40 villages when it was built, then it demolished the construction labour camps, and is now evicting the service class from the occasional slum. In Ahmedabad, the closure of textile mills in the 1980s led to workers being laid off and its slum population has doubled. Jaipur wants to become a national hub for economic activities. It has over 100,000 casual workers of whom 40,000 live on the footpath.

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was launched in December 2005 without any debate or discussion in Parliament, with the promise of providing Rs1.26 lakh crores to 63 million-plus cities and towns for a massive and comprehensive programme of urban renewal.

But it is not clear how JNNURM will ease the pressure on infrastructure and provide services to the poor. In fact, JNNURM deliberately separates the two by setting them up under different ministries. But there are a set of compulsory 'reforms' attached to the Mission that are clearly designed to improve the 'efficiency' of the money market and benefit those who own money, land and property.

An overview of the City Development Plans (CDP), prepared under the JNNURM by consultants, provides several clues about the 'vision' of the future, even for smaller cities and towns. Chandigarh wants to offer 'world-class services to its investors'. Ludhiana has decided that it would 'become a leading economic centre of the country'. Jaipur wants to be 'a vibrant, 21st century renaissance city'. Lucknow's vision is articulated as 'a city with a dynamic economy driven by service sectors such as knowledge-based education, health, tourism and information technology that provides ... an attractive investment destination'.

Indore shall 'enter an era of prosperity with spatially restructured environment, improved urban infrastructure to ... becoming a world class commercial city.' Raipur wants 'a beautiful eco-friendly city for all, providing high quality of civic services'. Guwahati is visualised to be 'one of the most admired state capitals of India', with the aim to 'create a city without slums'.

The vision for Coimbatore, though, is 'to achieve improved service levels and a better quality of life for the citizens of Coimbatore, including pucca houses

for all slum households and education for all in slums'. Similarly Pune expresses its desire to focus on the basic needs of citizens rather than create show-piece infrastructure projects to attract foreign investment.

The Union government's Urban Poverty Removal Strategy (UPRS) lays great emphasis on 'people's participation' and facilitating access to livelihoods or employment through the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors and the SJSRY. In contrast to the Master Plans and the CDPs, prepared by public sector authorities and private consultants, the UPRS has to be undertaken by NGOs in a period of six

months. This underscores the thinking that governments and consultants do not possess the ability to dialogue with the poor any more. It is also another reflection of the gradual withdrawal of the state from service provision, the concurrent attack on work and shelter, and the annihilation of democratic functioning so that corporate structures can take over decision-making and policy formulation. The UPRS is currently being prepared for 12 cities – all of which are listed under JNNURM.

An examination of the Inception Report for the UPRS prepared for Pune reveals the gulf between what has been articulated as strategy and what is actually being prepared. Different estimates have been provided about the number of urban poor, and the Report avoids the issue by stating that 'migration, livelihood, proximity to work are no longer the only indicators of poverty', and so looks for other parameters such as housing, access to better sanitation facilities, and capability to function in society.

For livelihoods, the Report cites the 2001 Census to state that the service sector industry forms a major source of employment but provides no independent city level data to back this claim. This gives a qualitative picture of slums and livelihoods, but there is no quantitative assessment of urban poverty – which is necessary for planning purposes. On the other hand, since the CDP has decided that 'all settlements presently located in vulnerable areas are to be relocated', the UPRS for Pune conveniently ignores the whole issue of livelihoods and merely focuses on relocation of slums and the provision of basic services at new sites. Similar patterns are discernible for the UPRS for other cities.

Three trends become apparent when we look at this recent history of urban reform. First, large sections

of the urban poor working in the informal and service sectors are being displaced by every government. Their displacement has as much to do with the space they live in as with the work that they perform. It is being promoted by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies. Secondly, the geographical and occupational space that the urban poor occupied is being transferred to larger private corporate entities or wealthier groups, such as commercial complexes and residential layouts. Thirdly, while the driving force behind these changes is manifestly the new globalised economy, it is offered on an environmental platter of 'cleanliness' and 'beautification'.

There appear to be three paths that are emerging from the rising dust of destruction. First, there are those well-meaning souls who feel that the working poor can be housed in resettlement colonies far away from the periphery of the city, forgetting that neither livelihoods nor services exist in the periphery, paving the way for the eventual 'illegal' return of the resettled.

Secondly, there is the demand for a legal place for the informal sector families within the city in accordance with provisions in urban plans, asking for the poor to be housed in multi-storied complexes, or on land reserved for 'weaker sections', but tragically ignoring the 'free play' of market forces that enables the wealthy to acquire and maintain property. Thirdly, the activists acknowledge that there is little choice other than to challenge the changing order being promoted by global forces, requiring larger federations of the working people, to resist the demonic slaughter being carried out under the banner of reforms. Questions of unity and political alliances stare them in the face.

Dunu Roy is an activist with the Hazards Centre in New Delhi



The space that the urban poor occupy is being transferred to larger private corporate entities or the rich.



MILINDO CHAKRABARTI
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

The unfair laws of the jungle

In the last two months, newspapers here have been consistently publishing incidents where animals have gone on rampage killing people and destroying crops. Elephants and tigers have not escaped unhurt. People have retaliated.

On 18th June, a Royal Bengal tiger was found dead near Dolong Railway Bridge between Ghokshadanga and Falakata railway station in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal.

Five days later wild elephants trampled to death two brothers aged five and seven in their home and destroyed 10 bamboo houses after straying into a village in Bangladesh. The herd of elephants also uprooted trees and damaged crops one night at Panihata village in Tangail, 100 km north of Dhaka.

Two days later tigers strayed into villages around Bangladesh's Sundarbans mangrove forests killed three people and some 50 cattle.

On 28th June, a herd of wild elephants went on rampage, trampled two people to death in a tea plantation in Hautoli, about 250 km from Guwahati and wreaked havoc in the area.

Then on 11th July a bullet-ridden female elephant was found dead in Nepal's Bamondangi region bordering the Naxalbari block in West Bengal's Darjeeling district. Eastern Nepal's Jhapa district veterinary doctor S Sapkota, while denying an earlier report which stated that the Royal Nepal Police (RNP) shot dead the pachyderm, said the tusk and nails from the carcass had been removed, pointing at it being the work of poachers. Three bullets were found from the carcass after post-mortem, Sapkota said. Earlier a report said that the RNP shot at a group of 50 pachyderms to divert their route, but it was later denied.

Three days later, on 14th July, an elephant herd that was attacked by villagers on the India-Nepal border on Tuesday chased and killed a villager in north Bengal on Friday. Kharanand Jaishey, 53, was flung to death at Naxalbari's Kalabari area. Jaishey, who was physically challenged, hadn't heard the herd approaching him, the police said. Wildlife experts said it could be a revenge attack by the herd that was being tormented by villagers at Bamandangi in Nepal's Jhapa district.

Subsequently, a two-year-old elephant calf, which was slightly behind its herd, was run over by an express train on the railway track running through the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary. The accident spot, located close to Gulma station, around 20 km from Siliguri, is a known elephant-crossing zone, identified by boards put up near the tracks.

And on 4th August at least three rhinoceroses and 30 elephants caused havoc in the Jadavpur tea garden in Jalpaiguri district, destroying tea bushes. The animals put a complete stop to work in the garden as panic-stricken workers refused to report for duty to the manager of the tea garden. More than 200 tea bushes of the garden, located close to the Gorumara National Park, were destroyed by the delinquent elephants.

Recently, Anil Rabha, 50, a resident of Poro Forest village, was trampled to death when he went fishing in a river inside the forest that falls under the Buxa Tiger Reserve. While his wife who was accompanying him managed to escape, Anil died on the spot.

A policy-maker or an academic will say these events resulted from unfortunate man-animal conflicts. Environmentalists will call for more stringent action against poachers and those responsible for killing these wild animals.

But surely there is another side to the story? Forest officials will pay a compensation of Rs 50,000 to the families of those who were killed, even though it is difficult to say how long it will take for the compensation to reach the affected.

Concern for conserving the forests and their inhabitants – both flora and fauna – has reached its peak. Given the recent research findings on the fast depleting forest cover and biodiversity and their possible impact on man's future, such concerns are never misplaced. However, the irony remains that those, who till recently, maintained a balanced relationship with the forest and its inhabitants, are bearing the brunt of the animal-man conflict, while those unaffected play a vital role in intensifying such conflicts!

A legal debate has been going on in the Supreme Court to settle the amount to be paid as compensation to the forest department to divert forest land for non-forest uses like mining, hydel power generation and irrigation, construction of roads etc. Obviously, the forest department and the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) have argued in favour of an astronomical figure of about Rs 10 lakh per hectare of well-stocked forest. The degraded ones will fetch a proportionately lower amount depending on the degree of degradation.

The estimated value reflects the net present value of the resources and services that would have been obtained from the forest land over its life time had it not been converted to non-forest uses. The resources include timber, wood for



Has there been any scientific effort to estimate the net present value of a human life that is lost due to our efforts to conserve these wild animals? Or is it just a token amount?

fuel, non-timber forest products, and the services considered are the capacity of the forests to conserve biodiversity, water and soil as well as its role in carbon sequestration. Those in favour of 'development' are pleading for a lower rate of compensation as they think the required investments for development would be higher if this high cost of diversion of forest land is factored in, which a country like India, suffering from chronic scarcity of investible funds, can ill afford.

What about the amount of compensation to be paid to those who are killed by wild animals? Has there been any conscious scientific effort in estimating the net present value of a human life that is lost due to our efforts to conserve these wild animals? Is the compensation amount paid derived logically by using all the arguments similar to those used to estimate the net present value of forest land? Or is it just a token amount influenced by the fact that the incidence of poverty is abnormally high in areas in and around the forests in India, on account of which the net present value of life of those residing therein is very low?

Anil Rabha from Poro Basti or Kharanand Jaishey from Kalabari, would, in all probability, never ever have boarded a train in their life time. But they will continue to be killed by animals whose lives are often threatened by speeding trains! In the absence of sympathetic support from the powers that be, do the neighbours of Anil or Kharanand have a legitimate right to resort to revenge killing of these endangered animals?

Milindo Chakrabarti is Director, Centre for Studies in Rural Economy, Appropriate Technology and Environment (CREATE)



HARIVANSH
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

When the State fails...

AS we celebrate 60 years of independence it is necessary for our democracy's health to make note of examples of where the State has failed. If we cannot deliver justice and create conditions in which economic growth and development are possible, we should be prepared for democracy being in serious peril.

In Jharkhand, democracy is already severely compromised. Jharkhand was created out of the larger state of Bihar six years ago, so as to be a more manageable entity and deliver better governance. Quite the contrary, it is wracked by corruption, confusion and decline.



Politicians have no time for the state assembly. It should meet for at least 60 days, but it has never gone beyond a sitting of 37 days. Under the UPA a new dubious record has been set: the state budget was passed in one day!

In six years there have been almost as many governments. Feckless politicians have switched sides. There is no accountability and no administration to speak of. For the past several months there has been only an acting chief secretary because factions within the ruling UPA won't decide on a candidate.

Jharkhand is blessed with enormous mineral wealth. It could be a leading industrial hub. Instead, it has the largest number of poor people in the country. In the absence of an effective administration, it fails to attract investment. It is said that Lakshmi Mittal could not proceed with this plans for a steel plant because he did not know who to talk to in Ranchi. Some Rs 60,000 crores of investments in the power sector have been lined up with various industrial groups, but nothing has materialised.

As the local politics goes, Independents call the shots. They make the larger

combinations dance to their whims, switching sides and extracting whimsical prices for their shifting loyalties. When the NDA was in power, the BJP, Janata Dal (U) and so on had to bow to the wishes of Independents. Now the UPA does the same.

Politicians take care of each other in Jharkhand. They share in the loot and it doesn't matter which side they are on. So, as one lot goes out and another comes in, there is no real attempt to assess and correct. Not once in the legislative assembly has there been a serious debate on the core problems of

Jharkhand. In fact, politicians seem to have no time for the assembly. The assembly should meet for at least 60 days, but it has never gone beyond a sitting of 37 days. Under the UPA a new dubious record has been set: the state budget was passed in one day!

There is little concern for how public money is being spent. Many examples abound, but sample these: Bihar with 243 legislators has 625 employees in the state legislature. Jharkhand with just 81 legislators has 600 employees. Each MLA now has a fund of Rs 3 crores. If the Accountant General's report is to be believed, in the past six years Rs 46,000 crores have evaporated in extra budgetary expenditures.

Among politicians there is no attempt to check this extravagance or to even discuss it. Once the UPA took over from the NDA, it was happy to turn a blind eye to the excesses of its predecessor.

The fodder scandal in which a thousand crore rupees were siphoned off from the animal husbandry department by presenting fake bills took place in Jharkhand when it was a part of Bihar. Nothing

has changed since it became a separate state. If anything many such scandals are going and vast sums of public money are being drained out.

Chief Minister Madhu Koda recently made two important admissions. He said entire Jharkhand is under the threat of Maoists. He also said corruption has spread like a cancer for which there seems no cure.

Koda is quite accurate. But the responsibility for such collapse rests with politicians like himself.

The legislature plays an important role in maintaining checks and balances. It keeps watch on government and ensures that it is accountable for all that it does. In Jharkhand, this role of the elected representatives of the people has been all but forgotten. The reason is that Jharkhand's politics is not based on any principles. There are no goals that have been set for development. Everything boils down to personal aspirations and greed. If there are 13 ministers in the government, each regards himself as the chief minister. No one is interested in accountability.

It is a government that talks big and does little. Its invitation to invest in the Jharkhand attracted proposals from the Tatas, Mittal, Jindals, Essar. But none of these has materialised. The few small companies that did set up units are preparing to pack up and leave.

If the government is indecisive and corrupt, Naxalites, who hold sway over the state, also deter investors. Then, power shortages are endemic. There have been no additions to the generating capacity. The State Electricity Board was to be restructured and made more efficient. But engineers with vested interests in the board have managed to defer reforms in spite of pressure from the Centre. The board loses Rs 900 crores a year.

What does the future hold for Jharkhand? Going by what we see, it can only plunge deeper into chaos and arbitrary governance. It is perhaps more important to think of the implications for the republic when constituent states collapse. Can we afford to write off chunks of our land mass in this fashion?

Harivansh is Chief Editor of Prabhat Khabar, one of eastern India's leading Hindi dailies.



RATISH NANDA
INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

The value of India's heritage

In India we pride ourselves for being an ancient culture. We are delighted when Delhi, because of its rich heritage, is referred to as the 'Rome of the East'. Yet our monuments are rarely visited, historic buildings periodically knocked down, conservation areas receive no incentives and public participation is limited to supporting meaningless endeavours such as the Taj Mahal's inclusion in the 'Seven Wonders of the World' list!

We seem to be treating our heritage resource as a burden rather than as an irreplaceable asset. The World Bank, in a preliminary study in 1997 observed: 'The cultural heritage of India is among humanity's priceless assets. It is as varied as rich... is an asset which is seriously threatened today, and although there are ongoing efforts to protect and preserve this heritage, these are fragmented, lack institutional and legal frameworks, or the holistic and multi-sectoral linkages to make them effective'.

In the UK over 600,000 buildings are protected and there are over 10,000 conservation areas. Similarly, in the US, Washington DC has over 40,000 protected buildings within several dozen conservation areas. But in India we offer legal protection to less than 30,000 buildings (173 in Delhi), and there are only a few recognised conservation areas for which no special plans have been prepared.

If Britain's historic buildings are a 'major economic resource, contributing significantly through tourism to the earnings of foreign exchange, to local employment and prosperity...' then why is India not replicating those lessons to provide for the poor and underprivileged who inhabit her historic neighbourhoods?

In the US, the preservation movement started in the 1930s, much after the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established in 1864. Yet in America conservation efforts were led by the public and aimed at preserving the historic character of residential areas rather than individual buildings. It has achieved phenomenal public participation and success. The designation of conservation areas entails an extensive public curatorial commitment. This will only come about if public awareness of potential benefits increase, possible only once pilot projects have been successfully implemented.

Support to historic communities can demonstrate how conservation of cultural heritage can provide a springboard for social and economic development. In many cases, this is the only asset a community has.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture sponsored the urban conservation project for the Humayun's Tomb - Nizamuddin district, in partnership with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, Central Public Works Department and the Aga Khan Foundation. The trust's completed work on the Humayun's Tomb Gardens had a positive impact well beyond conservation, that of promoting good governance, employment generation, growth of civil society, a rise in incomes and economic opportunities, greater respect for human rights and better stewardship of the environment.

One of the principal reasons for the poor presentation of our historic wealth and the inability to leverage public assets for public good has been that conservation is largely seen as the government's responsibility with no public awareness or interaction required. Also, urban building regulations and bylaws are rarely implemented or respected, allowing haphazard development.

NGOs such as INTACH have done stellar work in conservation, but this has been mostly limited to 'buildings'. In India, we should be more '...concerned with improving the quality of life than preserving authenticity.' To make conservation shed its 'elitist' image and make conservation efforts meaningful to society, expeditious action is required in areas like generating public awareness, pilot conservation projects, urban renewal schemes, traffic management, infrastructure improvements, environmental development and waste management around key heritage locations.

To be effective, conservation efforts need to be co-ordinated with a comprehensive planning policy through the preparation of 'local area plans' with participation of the resident community and an urban design programme aimed at



the upliftment of poverty and improving the access and living standards in historic settlements.

There is a lack of public awareness of the potential of heritage assets in India's historic cities that can be leveraged, as European and US cities have shown, for economic gain through tourism or re-use.

Conservation efforts are labour intensive (thereby providing employment), use local materials (sustainable and environmentally friendly), are educational resources (can be related to teaching primary school history, architecture, religion-communal harmony or geology). Historic buildings in dense settlements such as Zafar Mahal in Mehrauli or Khirkee Masjid in Khirkee village of Delhi can be re-used for community functions such as primary schools/adult education centres or women's vocational centres, thus fulfilling various government objectives.

Lack of public policy integrating conservation efforts with other government objectives results in a lack of committed finances for urban conservation leading such efforts to focus exclusively on authenticity or corporate gain and resulting in façade restoration in rich urban areas, such as the Fort

Heritage sites can improve the living conditions of people who live in those neighbourhoods.

in Mumbai, or conversion of private palaces into heritage hotels – both are essential but we need to take urgent steps to strengthen the effort.

In a recent effort by Intach Delhi Chapter, conservation of a 16th century tomb in Lado Serai village was opposed by the local people until the surrounding space was landscaped by the DDA. Similarly, in the Humayun's Tomb garden restoration, morning walkers from the neighbouring Nizamuddin area took a keen interest and have ensured that the site is well maintained even four years after the project's completion.

To ensure that conservation efforts are successful and capable of exciting the public, 'experts' need to begin to understand the aspirations of the Indian public. Heritage sites such as the Taj Mahal, Humayun's Tomb, Qutub Minar, if properly managed and integrated into the city planning and development process, have the capability of improving the living conditions of thousands who inhabit their neighbourhoods.

Our popular culture does not seem to accept 'fenced off' sites and we need to ensure that the conservation efforts have components for local employment generation, education/awareness programmes, improved access to urban facilities such as micro-finance, health, education and vocational training, provision of street furniture, drinking water, electricity and enhanced maintenance of open spaces through public participation. Until benefits of heritage conservation are visible, government policy needs to give incentives to private owners and neighbourhoods with change in land use, transferable development rights, tax incentives, larger investments in maintenance of streets, parks, garbage disposal, coupled with severe penalties for damage to heritage components, public or privately held.

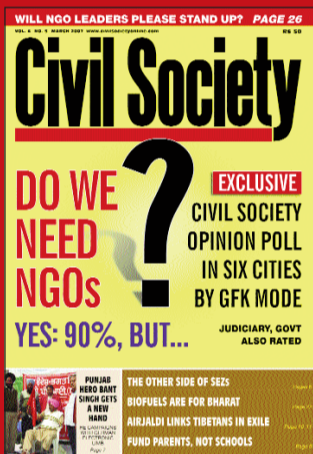
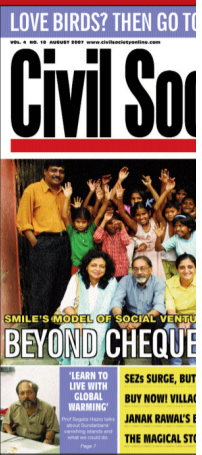
Conservation is a multi-disciplinary activity and just as environmental concerns are today shared by millions as a result of appropriate awareness campaigns we need to focus on creating a public mindset that would allow us to capitalise on a resource even while passing on to future generations what we have inherited in a far better condition.

Ratish Nanda, conservation architect, has, for the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, been the project manager for the Humayun's Tomb garden restoration and Baghe Babur restoration in Kabul, Afghanistan. Awards received by him include the Eisenhower Fellowship and the Sanskriti Award for Social and Cultural Achievement.

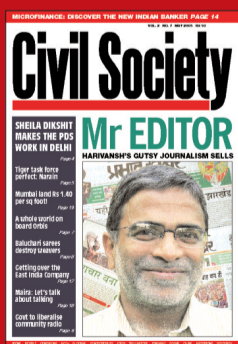
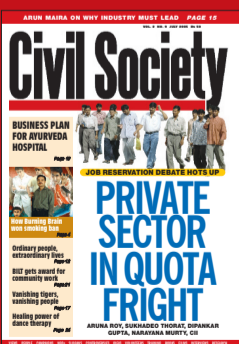
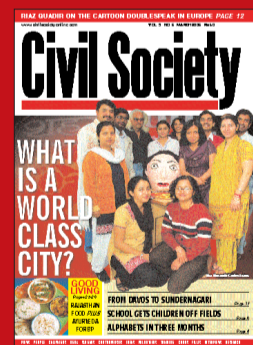
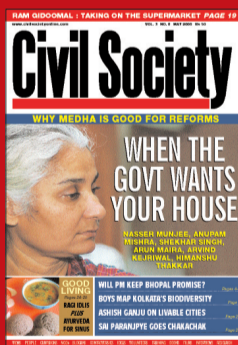
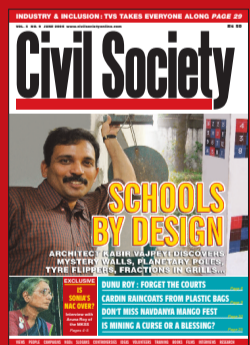
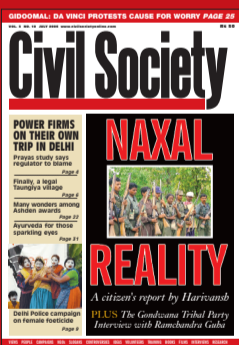


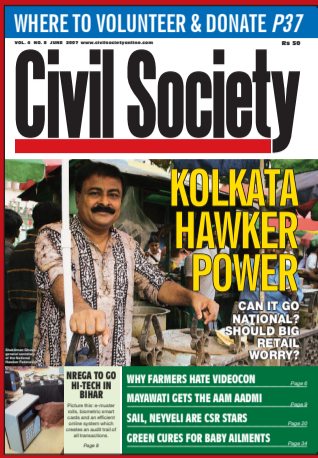
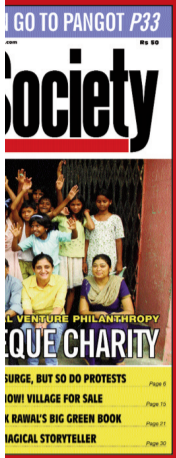
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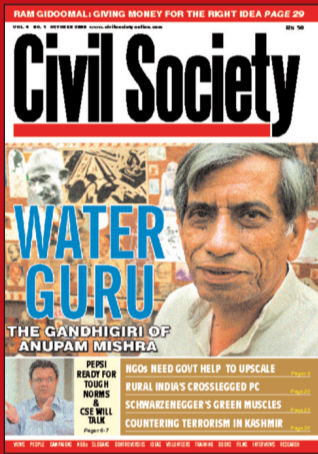
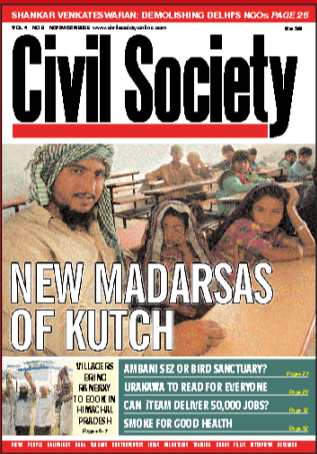


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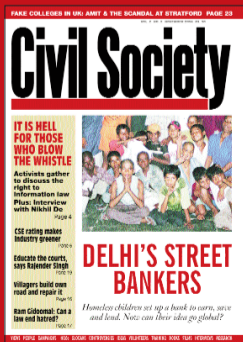
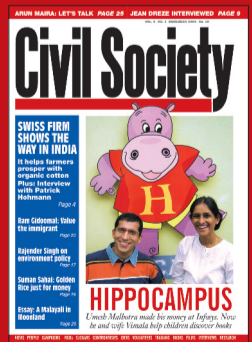
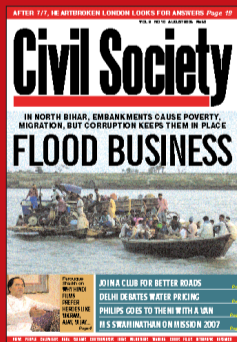
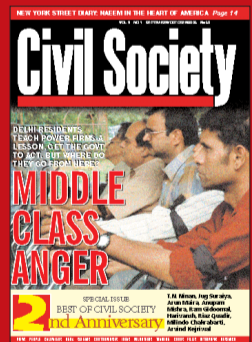
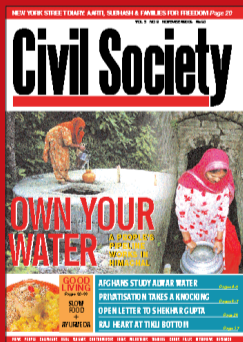
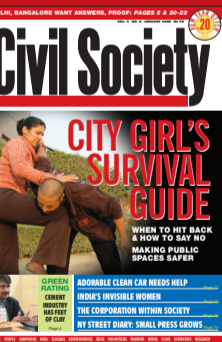




SOCIETY



great stories of change



Organic Uprising

Janhit finds the right path for the small farmer

Civil Society News

Meerut

KANTI Tyagi, a middle-aged farmer at Khandrawali village in Meerut district, is saying a tearful good bye to his beloved mango trees. They have been rendered useless by a combination of pests and chemicals. But even as Tyagi mourns the demise of his trees he celebrates a newfound freedom from the Green Revolution type of intensive farming. Along with 100 small farmers from 25 villages in Meerut district, he has turned to organic agriculture with the assistance of the Janhit Foundation, an NGO that works from Meerut.

For the first time farmers like Tyagi are seeing natural methods of agriculture succeed. More significantly, they are realising that there is money in going organic. They spend less on inputs since they don't have to buy chemicals that keep getting costlier as the soil loses its nutrients and pests become immune. Tyagi, for instance, says he saves Rs 22,050 per acre every year and he gets 25 per cent more for his organic produce.

Janhit sampled local demand and found it to be strong. "Meerut has a big cantonment, two medical colleges, residential schools and institutions. It has a population of 1.5 million. There should not be any problem in marketing organic products. So far consumers had to get their supplies from Delhi," said Anil Rana, director of the Janhit Foundation.

On June 12, Janhit inaugurated OrganiC AaharaM, Meerut and UP's first organic outlet. Farmers can now see the market. They are face to face with the urban consumer. There is no middle man and no tension about what the government's minimum support price will be. "Till date marketing organic produce was a Herculean task," says 86-year-old Ramchandra Singh a farmer at Kaleena village.

The products are all certified. You can buy organic flour, mustard oil, honey, turmeric, porridge, lentils and wheat. Processing is being done by Janhit. After one year, cereals, vegetables, fruits and other spices will be added.

Farmers are getting certification under the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), which is especially suited to the needs of small farmers. It is inexpensive and valid and will help them reach India's burgeoning domestic market for organic produce. For the first time, farmers who are transiting from chemical to organic farming can get certification under PGS. They get a different coloured label and, yes, more money as well.

"The biggest benefit is the increase in the income of farmers. If the government price for a quintal of wheat is Rs 700, the price for organic uncertified wheat is Rs 1,400 a quintal. As certification improves, the price goes up," says Rana.

As a hand-holder, the Janhit Foundation is playing a crucial role. The switch from chemicals is full of uncertainties for farmers because it means leaving a known system behind and opting for another one. Farmers depend on what they grow from one season to the next and live on fragile finances. They don't welcome failure. There is also the problem of removing chemicals from the soil.

The bridge years are invariably full of fears. Tyagi, for instance, is growing wheat, mustard and potatoes on two acres. In the beginning he wasn't sure what the results would be but Janhit provided encouragement by showing them success stories.

Janhit has built its case on hard facts. The farmers are aware chemicals rob the land of its yield. Across Meerut district you will see topsoil excavated and dumped along fields as farmers experiment with desperate ways of dealing with infertility.

But getting farmers to shift to organic agriculture meant showing them that it works and finding a market for their produce. When Janhit paid Tyagi a 25 per cent premium for his produce by cheque, other farmers got enthused.



LAKSHMAN ANAND



Anil Rana

Janhit's project is being supported by the Ford Foundation. Its focus is "income enhancement of the farming community by supporting select farmers to complete the circle of farming from seed to market." It is one of FAO's 14 pilot projects in India.

Ask farmers why they ruin their environment, health and bank balance by doing chemical farming and they will reply: this is what the government ordered. "The shift from organic farming to chemicals was one of compulsion and not choice," remarks Rana.

In the early 60s, farmers in this region of Western UP known as the Doab dutifully cultivated their crops organically. Nobody had heard of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and nobody was interested. There was no earthly reason to be. The land was fertile. Soil was rich and moist. There was plenty of water. The Ganga, Yamuna, Kali, Hindon and many canals flowed through.

Along came the Green Revolution. The government wanted farmers to switch to chemical agriculture and sent its emissaries to them. But farmers here were disinclined.

They saw no reason to oblige. Sarkari officers failed to impress Meerut's farmers with their new fangled methods. So in desperation at night the officials would sneak into fields and throw around urea from bags. Deed done they would disappear. The farmer thought fine, since it was already there why not give it a try?

Close on the heels of the government's emissaries arrived representatives of chemical companies, laden with pesticides, fertilisers and urea. They offered the farmer tempting deals. All he had to do was buy the stuff and throw it on his fields. In the early days the chemicals did improve yields. The farmer got hooked. Soon, tractors made their appearance. Farming became readymade.

All around factories producing sugar, paper and distilleries sprang up. They dumped all their effluents into rivers and canals. Farmers added in urea, pesticides and fertilisers.

Samples of this region's soil and water, collected by Janhit and analysed by the People's Science Institute in Dehradun revealed that both were suffused with pesticides and persistent organic pollutants like DDT, Eldrin and Dieldrin, which are really supposed to be banned.

The honeymoon with the Green Revolution agriculture did not last long. Over the years farming became unviable. The price of chemicals rose. The soil lost its nutrients. Pests attacked crops. The farmer bought sacks of chemicals and threw it around his fields. The cost of farming kept increasing. Whenever a farmer needed money he marched off his cows to the slaughterhouse. Gradually, the cow became an extinct species here. All you can see are buffaloes.

Quick and easy money led to petty jealousies and rivalries. Every farm family wanted to keep up with the next. Meerut's law courts are full of petty cases filed by squabbling farmers. Polluted soil and water led to diseases unheard of in the district like cancer, skin infections, stomach problems and neurological diseases. Nursing homes and hospitals sprang up to cater to rising demand. The farmer became sick and broke.

It took Janhit Foundation's workers quite some time to convince farmers to



give up their addiction to chemical farming and go back to organic agriculture. Farmers did not want to bestir themselves. Some had college degrees and were not interested. Agricultural universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras did not subscribe to the organic way.

One reason for this apathy was that farmers did not analyse their problems. Since they did not have access to soil testing labs they did not realise how bad their soil had become. Representatives of chemical companies were always there at hand to give them credit and egg them on with this poison or that. Besides, argued farmers, where was the market for organic food?

Janhit organised small meetings in villages. Two agricultural scientists, Lalit and Devpal, talked to farmers about the harmful effects of chemical farming. A few volunteered. The two scientists started training workshops on organic farming for them. "The main problem is lack of knowledge," says Lalit. "Farmers have

irrational fears about lower yields. They need an education."

Lalit and Devpal sat with pen and paper and did a cost-benefit analysis showing farmers why and where they were making losses. Since livestock had vanished farmers had trouble making compost or natural pesticides. Lalit and Devpal came up with a range of alternative methods. Sugarcane residues, leaves, sand and cow dung could be used for making liquid manure. They put on the table less labour intensive methods. Plant boosters can be made simply from weeds. The farmers named their most popular compost after its inventors Lalit and Devpal. It is called Ladep (Lalit and Devpal). Now manuals have been published in Hindi on organic manures and bio pesticides.

In about three months farmers found their soil's pH improving. Less water was now needed. On an average each farmer saved at least Rs 5,000 per acre every month by not buying fertilisers, pesticides or urea. Tyagi says he used to spend Rs 22,050 per acre every year on chemicals. And there was no guarantee his crop would fetch him good returns. "If a farmer paid rent for the land he was really sunk," he says. "Some of us had stopped farming and were selling buffalo milk to survive."

Best of all no pests have attacked his field since. "If the soil is rich, then plants are strong and can ward off attacks," says Devpal.

Janhit also took farmers on a study tour. The NGO contacted the Maharashtra Organic Farmer Federation (MOFF). Its president, Claude Alvares, advised them to visit a region where similar farming was done. So from January 15 to 21, a group of Meerut farmers met their counterparts in Maharashtra to study methods of organic farming.

At Khakti village feisty farmers recall with wonder all that they learnt. They watched Power Point presentations and heard lectures by experts. "Their sugarcane was really fat and eight feet high," says Amar Singh a farmer with 10 acres. "Here we plant 25 quintals on one acre. Those farmers would plant just

one quintal on an acre with a gap of four to eight feet. Yet their yield was higher than ours and their sugarcane sweeter. In between, they grew crops like turmeric, lady fingers, wheat and coriander. Those farmers used much less water than us. I learnt that flooding the field takes away nutrients from the soil. I finally understood that less is more."

The Meerut farmers were especially impressed with two technological inventions, the Rain Gun and the Cutter. The Rain Gun gently sprinkled water on crops. The Cutter scooped out the eye or seed of the sugarcane to make cultivars. "In this way," says Amar Singh, "we can save on diesel, fertilisers, seeds, water and pesticides."

But the Meerut belt is thick with pollution. How do farmers deal with that? "It's easy," they reply. "We invoke the gods." The environment can be cleansed through Agnihotra methods. This is an ancient technique that dates back to the Vedas and is now being revived. At sunrise or sunset a copper urn is filled with cow dung and ghee. It is burnt in the field. The farmer sits on the ground and recites special mantras. Smoke from the urn purifies the air and gets rid of bacteria and pathogens. "It's absolutely true," says Ram Kishan Giri. "The pests have vanished."

The Janhit Foundation wants to set up a unit to manufacture bio pesticides on a commercial basis. A business plan has been prepared by Somya Das and Bhaskar Jyoti Borah from the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. While farmers would be their main customers, the bio pesticides would also be sold through Organix AaharaM.

Farmers now want their cows back. "Farmers are interested in local species like Sahiwal, Gir and Thakarpar," says Rana. "We all know cows matter a lot in organic farming. We have drawn up a list of 25 cows which will help farmers convert."

One enthusiastic farmer, Sudesh, has already got himself a traditional plough. He takes it to his small field and gives a demonstration grinning away while the other farmers look on respectfully.

"No more tractors for me," he says. The Meerut farmer has come full circle.

In Khatki village fields are lush with crops. Rambeer Giri admires the green coriander. Amar Singh holds up a bunch of brinjals, joy on his face. He then displays his lentils, chest swelling with pride. "Just put this in a pressure cooker and see the difference. The chemical lentils are like stones. But the organic one just melts with one whistle. It tastes terrific too." With a gleam in his eye he produces freshly dug out turmeric "Look at its colour," he says admiringly. "This can fetch good money."

But none of the farmers are in a rush to get to the market. "First we will feed our families organic food," says Amar Singh as the other farmers nod in unison, "only after that will we sell our crops in the market."

Farmers here go from lane to lane sniffing their neighbours compost pits. Earthworms are examined affectionately like pets. Tips are readily exchanged. Squabbling farmers have become friends. There is no competition. And so knowledge is spreading.

"Almost everyone here knows about making compost now, though they may not be part of our team yet," says Rambeer Giri. The farmers say more money can be made by selling compost or by making gur and honey.

Janhit Foundation supplied farmers with traditional seeds. The NGO is planning to set up a seed bank so that farmers don't have to buy costly seeds. Instead every farmer will return to the bank double the quantity he takes so that the bank is flush with seeds.

Janhit Foundation also organised a cultural festival on organic farming. There were full throated songs on going organic. Accompanied by a tabla and a sing song harmonium, composer Dharmender Puthi urged *veer* farmers to save mother earth from chemicals. He reminded them about its ruinous effect on their water, soil and health.

Kamal, Babloo and Ramesh entertained farmers with organic folk songs.

Documentary films were also shown. The event was much appreciated and demand is pouring in from neighbouring villages.

The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) that farmers have opted for, is in use in US, Brazil, Philippines and New Zealand. "Any respectable NGO, accredited agency or agricultural university can give this certification after following standard procedure. It is based on trust and the costs are negligible. It will have a logo and legal entity. The PGS will be cleared by the Union government since it is keen to remove the high cost of certification," says Rana.

The PGS supports farmers through a network consisting of the Farm Family, the Local Group, a Regional Council and a National Committee. Farm inspection is done by the Local Group and certificates issued by the Regional Council. Inspection is thorough. Data on each Local Group and farm will be put on the Internet.

Before the government dismisses the small farmer as a dead loss, it should take a look at how simple steps can make agriculture lucrative for him. *E-mail: info@janhitfoundation.org*



Lalit (extreme right) and Devpal demonstrating use of the Cutter to farmer Kanti Tyagi (left)

LAKSHMAN ANAND



Yohei Sasakawa

Sasakawa's second leprosy battle

Civil Society News
New Delhi

YOU can be cured of leprosy, but still be a leper. Millions of Indians have been rescued from the scourge of the disease, but they remain outcasts. It is tough for them to earn a living. Banks don't give them funding for small businesses. They can't find schools that take their children. Socially spurned, they continue to inhabit anonymous, shifting leper colonies. Fleeing recognition, those in the north go south and vice versa. Invariably, you will find them on the streets, begging to keep body and soul together.

But for all the ostracism they face, leprosy patients in India have one good reason to smile. It is a Japanese reason. Yohei Sasakawa has been their guardian angel for several years now. A very wealthy man, Sasakawa, 67, stopped running his businesses when he was in his early forties and decided instead to devote himself to the work of his Nippon Foundation. He has also been the World Health Organisation (WHO) goodwill ambassador for the elimination of leprosy.

Sasakawa, with his sustained efforts, can take credit for elimination of the disease. However, he has found to his surprise that a medical cure is not enough. Social remedies are needed because cured leprosy patients continue to live in the fringes even after they have been medically treated. It is with this in mind that he has set up the Nippon-India Leprosy

Foundation, which will look at rehabilitation and absorbing of afflicted people into the mainstream of the economy.

Sasakawa has brought leprosy patients together nationally in the hope of making them more assertive and society at large more accepting. He has conducted a survey and found that there are 1,000 colonies of former leprosy patients. Sasakawa plans to launch a major campaign, involving local leaders and grassroots groups, to upgrade the colonies.

On January 29, Sasakawa and 11 others, including five Nobel Peace Prize laureates and the presidents of two countries, were to jointly issue a "global appeal to end stigma and discrimination against



Yohei Sasakawa with leprosy patients

people affected by leprosy." They want the U.N. Commission on Human Rights to take up this matter as an item on its agenda and issue principles and guidelines for governments to follow.

"Five years ago, most people were sceptical about the eradication," said Sasakawa, who last year assumed the chairmanship of the foundation that his father, Ryoichi Sasakawa, set up.

Now the world is coming very close to conquering a disease that has afflicted societies in most parts of the globe for centuries. Worldwide 14 million people have been cured and of them 11 million are in India.

The number of countries where leprosy is endemic has plummeted from 122 in 1985 to seven – Nepal, Mozambique, Madagascar, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazil and Central Africa.

India, which accounted for most of the patients in the past, in January declared its success in conquering the disease while Brazil is expected to issue a 'conquer declaration' soon.

The 'conquer declaration' is issued, as per World Health Organisation standards, when a leprosy-plagued country with a population of 1 million or more has reduced the number of patients to one in 10,000 of the population.

Leprosy treatment was speeded up by the development in the early 1980s of multi-drug therapy (MDT). The Nippon Foundation has delivered MDT free since 1995 and has so far spent approximately 30 billion yen since 1975 on helping to eradicate the disease.

Sasakawa is a simple man. He wears cotton kurtas and comes from a tradition which believes in caring for humanity. Asked why he took up the cause of people with leprosy, he says it is because the number of people affected by the disease and their families in turn runs into tens of million. Someone has to speak up for such a large part of the world's population.

Sasakawa's spirit of service and his attitude to money come from his father. He recalls a rich entrepreneur going on and on about how many assets he had acquired and his father looking more and more bored with the monologue. Finally when he had finished, the elder Sasakawa said to the entrepreneur: "Now that you have created all this, I hope you have made arrangements for taking your wealth with you when you go to heaven."

Sasakawa belongs to a tradition of giving. Private ownership appears to bore him. "Although we are private people, we are entrusted with using a large amount of public money," he says.

He spends about one-third of the year (134 days last year) abroad, mostly in developing or underdeveloped countries, to promote foundation programmes, deliver speeches and meet leaders and people. Last year, he visited India seven times mainly for the crusade against leprosy.

He has met top leaders of many countries and persuaded them to cooperate in defeating leprosy. "No one can deny the importance of the cause. If the President gives an instruction, the administration starts to work. I visit colonies of leprosy patients and talk to them. If you want to promote important and worthwhile programmes, and accomplish something, it is better to address the issue both from the administration side and from the grassroots level."

The mobile AIDs game

Vidya Viswanathan

New Delhi

SUBHI and Hilmi Quraishi run an e-learning company called ZMQ Software. Named after the initials of their father, the company has a 27-member team. It had a turnover of about Rs 7 crore this year. The Quraishis have recently shifted their offices from Delhi's Pitampura area to Manesar, a city on the Delhi-Jaipur Highway.

The Quraishis meet this correspondent at the United Coffee House in Connaught Place and Hilmi, the chief learning technology officer, is sporting a fine white bead badge with a red ribbon. The bead badge was made in Kibera, a slum in Nairobi, where Hilmi has spent three days. Around 75 per cent of Nairobi lives in slums where nearly 60 per cent of inhabitants are infected with HIV.

ZMQ has built a football game and a quiz into which are woven messages about HIV/AIDS. "We tested our games in Nairobi. When people first played the game, they had vague knowledge. At the end of three days, after playing the game repeatedly, 40 per cent of players had got 80 per cent of the message," says Hilmi.

ZMQ's business is producing e-learning material and 80 per cent of their turnover comes from this source. They create well researched e-learning material for the University of Texas Arlington, Aligarh Muslim University, Malaysian University, Institute of Mauritius and University of Doha in Qatar.

The Quraishis are convinced that mobile phones are the technology of the future. "A rickshawallah uses the mobile phone as a radio and a TV. This will be the medium through which people will access most infotainment and education. Personal computers will become a development platform," says Subhi Quraishi, the ZMQ's CEO. The company spends a lot of time building gaming content for mobiles even though their current revenue from this source is less than a crore.

The Quraishis use 20 per cent of all their net profits in their non-profit initiative called www.house-of-learning.org. "This idea of giving back comes from our father who was a socialist by thought," explains Hilmi. "He was a professor in Delhi University and an expert in West Asian studies. Our mother has also retired from Delhi University. She is a sociologist turned political scientist and is an expert on Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. She can speak Swahili," he points out.

The Quraishis first started developing content on AIDS in 2004. The brothers were reading an article written by Nelson Mandela in 2003. They realised the effect of HIV/AIDS on the economies of African countries. "We read that corporates in South Africa did not face up to AIDS initially, and suffered later because their employees could not deliver due to illness. We then found that India has 5.3 million infected people, and our economy could be affected drastically if companies did not come forward and put in an effort to prevent the spread," explains Subhi.

Then ZMQ, along with CARE, made a short film called 'Save your village' with a game and distributed it to some schools in Uttar Pradesh. ZMQ wasn't too happy with the results. It felt that working with partners at the conception stage was difficult as the partners did not understand gaming and wanted linear content.

So the Quraishis went ahead and developed four games under an initiative called freedomfromhiv.in. Hilmi himself did all the initial research on the content, which was validated by UNAIDS and NACO. "I run an e-forum. We put them on to experts based on their need. For example, If they want expertise on pediatric HIV, I know exactly whom to contact," says Mohammed Rafique of UNAIDS.

There was also a mobile version of the games which targeted different mindsets and psychology of mobile users. The four mobile games were given away to mobile content aggregators across the world without any charge. Reliance put it up in its R-World portal free of cost. It did not charge for downloads or communications cost. Since it was free, the mobile operators did not give ZMQ statistics on downloads, but the brothers from the informal information collected from the operators estimate that there are nine million downloads across the world.

"We were the first operator in India and possibly the world to attempt the inclusion of social messages. We appreciated ZMQ's effort and we put it up for free. We have 170 million customers and we have to reach that last guy there. This is on our charter and the HIV/AIDS games were a good experiment," says Krishna Dhruva, business development and marketing head of Value-Added Services at Reliance Infocom. The telecom company had earlier hosted Mobile Mahatma, an interactive film and a game on Mahatma Gandhi launched by ZMQ on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti in 2005. "They had recreated the scene at the Sabarmati Ashram and we carried the game and created publicity. The download of both games was average. Social messaging has to become a lot more



Hilmi Quraishi

The Quraishis started developing content on AIDS in 2004. The brothers were reading an article written by Nelson Mandela in 2003. They realised the effect of HIV/AIDS on the economies of African countries.

sophisticated," he adds.

After that effort ZMQ worked with the John Hopkins Research Centre in Mumbai to create games for the youth in Maharashtra. ZMQ collected all the creative material developed by children as part of a programme run by non-profit organisation PLAN and developed games based on those characters.

Now the software company is developing games for Africa using football as the theme. Their second product will be modeled on Bantumi, a game similar to checkers popular in East Africa. They are going to work in six African countries including Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Malawi, Mozambique and Namibia along with the Dutch non-profit Hivos. Hivos is funding and helping them capture backend data on how many times the games were played by each player and their knowledge before and after playing the game. So this time they will measure the impact of the games.

ZMQ got noticed for all these innovations by the Global Business Council (GBC) on HIV/AIDS awareness. GBC is a council with 220 large corporate members including the Tatas and Ranbaxy from India. GBC and the German development agency GTZ have now funded them to develop a monitoring and evaluation tool. A part of this will be an e-learning tool for corporate managers to understand the problems and issues around HIV/AIDS. "If a large corporate like the Indian Railways wants to get its management team to understand how the spread of HIV/AIDS could affect its employees and what measures they should undertake in different parts of the country, this could help. In some places they may need an information centre and in yet another place they may have to set up treatment centres," says Subhi.

They are also building a tool which is being piloted in Delhi and Kenya for health centres to monitor patients with chronic illness. It will first be used for AIDs and then for all chronic ailments.

While the brothers have spent nearly Rs 50 lakh, including manpower resources from the company, this is not the only social initiative that they are working on. They are convinced that the mobile phone will become a medium for learning in the future and are proactively developing content and working on distribution.

Airjaldi links Tibetans in exile

Vidya Viswanathan

New Delhi

THE most important question being debated endlessly at several forums today is how to provide last-mile connectivity to rural India. A cost effective way of connecting rural communities, as recognised globally, is through inexpensive decentralised wireless networks where the air spectrum is not licensed by using a technology popularly called Wi-fi.

One community in India has shown the way. A team of four to five volunteer hackers have created a state-of-the-art wireless mesh network servicing the Tibetan exiled community. The network, called Airjaldi, services schools, non-profit organisations and offices in Dharamsala, located in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh. They have adapted existing technology and tweaked available open-source software for creating an essentially free broadband network for the community. Their technology has now received worldwide recognition. Dharamsala was even host to the World Society for Free Information Infrastructure (WSFII) meet in October 2006.

Civil Society spoke to a self-taught technologist, Phuntsok Dorjee, managing director of the Tibetan Technology Centre.

How did this project come up?

This is a very hilly area. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited's broadband connection (BSNL ADSL) covers an area of only 2 km around the telephone exchange. Most of Dharamsala does not have good Internet connectivity. So schools suffer. Connectivity is a problem without wireless. This network is easy to deploy and can be replicated.

Where do you get bandwidth for the network to reach the Internet?

We have two BSNL ADSL connections of 2mbps which costs us Rs 10,000 each every month. The network members share this as well as the maintenance costs. We balance the load on our server and distribute this bandwidth to the mesh members. The routers balance the traffic; if a node has many computers attached, it gets more bandwidth compared to a node with just one. There are now 35 nodes in our network. Each node has an antenna, a router and power supply. In three places, the node is powered by using solar panels. Each node needs just 4 watts of power and so we have battery back-ups in other places. The average cost of each node is Rs 10,000. This connects more than 750 computers.

You have developed a lot of technology yourselves...

By using the existing technology and available open-source software we make modifications according to our needs. Yahel Bin David, an Israeli who now lives here, started the network and has also modified the routers. He took the Cisco Linksys routers, which are single-board computers, and put them in our own firmware. We used OPENWRT that is available in the open-source and modified it to make our network a self-healing one. This means that each node tries to communicate with the nearest node. If one of the nodes is down it will be ignored, and the focus would be on another node which is close by. So any node will not affect the whole network. We have also removed the original casing of the routers and made them weatherproof.

Who are your network members? What applications do you offer them?

All broadband applications include video. We have an intranet within the community. We also have Asterisk, the open-source digital PBX server software. So



Airjaldi is a state-of-the-art wireless mesh network.

if you use a Linksys Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) box you can connect to a normal telephone. Phone calls to the network members within the community are free. We don't connect to the public network because that is illegal.

So far we have only connected institutions and not individual members. Our members include the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) which hosts the Tibetan Technology Centre, Norbulingka Institute, the Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute, the Centre for Tibetan Higher Studies, Louisiana Himalayan Association and the TCV School in Gopalpur, which is 32 km from our office here. On the cards is connecting individuals to telephony.

Our charter at the Tibetan Technology Centre is to train Tibetan youth in IT skills so that they remain within the community and make it self-reliant. We take interns (both Tibetans and others) and train them about networking as it is not like programming which you can learn from home. You need a live network and experts. Tibetan youth are trained in IT skills in a vocational training centre in Dehradun.

Can your members repair a node if it goes down?

Our computer teachers in schools have been trained to tackle small problems. The nodes have been tested vigorously. They are on three pipes about 20 feet high, and can take rough weather in their stride. In two locations, they are on houses which have sloped roofs. However, one major problem we face is that of attacks by monkeys.



Phuntsok Dorjee

Is membership to your network open to the people outside the Tibetan community?

Very much. We have set up a node at the Indrunath Temple. There is a Japanese priest at this Hindu temple who owns a laptop. He allows school children to access the Internet. Schools from Indian communities have approached us for this technology. We are awaiting permission from the municipal authorities. In Himachal Pradesh, most hilltops have temples, which are the best places to locate repeaters. The network could expand this way.

At the summit you announced that you will set up a centre to train people.

Training is our next step. We want to replicate this network in other Tibetan communities in rural South India. We also want to set up a development centre here, where we can train people from various communities in the developing countries across the world on how to set up and run these networks.

Azad delivers, but Delhi Govt?

LAKSHMAN ANAND

Jauymini Barkatky

Lal Kuan (New Delhi)

FOR eight years now, SA Azad, a former school teacher, has been fighting for the rights of the dying victims of silicosis, cast away in Lal Kuan on the southern fringes of Delhi. He went to court, appealed to the state government, ran after doctors and talked to the media. No stone was left unturned.

Finally, Azad has achieved significant victories for India's mine-workers. On May 27, the Supreme Court issued an order to the ministries of labour, health, company and law and state governments to form a central committee and lay down guidelines to prevent dust exposure in stone crushing units and quarries all over India.

On 24 October last, Delhi's chief minister, Sheila Dikshit called a meeting to discuss the demands of the silicosis victims. Present with her were the health minister and senior bureaucrats, representatives from Azad's NGO, Prasar and some people from Lal Kuan.

It was decided to conduct a survey at Lal Kuan and provide victims with health facilities, livelihood skills, Antodaya ration cards and pension schemes for widows and the disabled. It was also agreed that a multipurpose community centre would be set up.

The survey to identify victims was done under the guidance of Dr TK Joshi, Centre for Occupational Environment and Health. Out of 98 people, 41 had silicosis.

Then on January 24, a health centre was inaugurated by the state health minister at Tajpur, two km from Lal Kuan. It has two floors, with the first yet to be completed. On the ground floor there are five rooms for a pharmacy, consultation and so on. A radiological unit is yet to be installed. There are three doctors, three pharmacists, a dresser and two nurses. Livelihood programmes are underway.

"We would like other state governments to follow the good example of the Delhi government and set up victim rehabilitation villages where alternative livelihood, education, health, an anganwadi, mid-day meal scheme, pensions and all government schemes are implemented," says Azad.

However, he soon realised that getting officials to carry out their own programmes is like trying to push an elephant uphill. Implementation has been patchy. Success here, defeat there. The government's humungous departments, like that of social welfare, have become addicted to fobbing off their work to NGOs.

It remains to be seen whether the newly inaugurated health centre will be able to alleviate the suffering of silicosis victims or merely function as another government facility.

The opening of a dispensary in Lal Kuan was dropped on the grounds that it is an illegal colony. The Directorate of Health Services (DHS) dumped the responsibility on Azad's small NGO Prasar to find suitable land for it. A mobile health clinic does come four days a week for two hours. "At first the mobile



SA Azad with widows and silicosis victims at Lal Kuan

Implementation has been patchy. Success here, defeat there. The government's departments have become addicted to fobbing off their work to NGOs.

team was very irregular," says Azad. "People would wait for hours. Their behavior towards the people also left much to be desired. That changed once the deputy director of the DHS came over to check."

Silicosis survivors are now into sheep rearing, stitching, welding, computers and STD booths. Some victims have got ration cards and widow pension.

Time and again Azad has been given 'friendly' advice that he should draw up a project and do the government's work. But Azad is clear. He will not do so. "We want direct involvement of the people through cooperatives. There are 20 NGOs working in Lal Kuan on diverse issues. How much change have they made? Bringing in an NGO will only muck up the issue."

Open drains, festering garbage and broken roads are what you will find in Lal Kuan. However, silicosis is an even bigger problem. There are hardly any men left. Their frail, emaciated wives may well die too, leaving behind sad faced malnourished children. "I lost my husband and six sons. Will anything change?" asks Gulab Devi, who worked in the quarry for almost 30 years.

The Lal Kuan quarries were closed in 1992. The Supreme Court ordered their closure after environment lawyer MC Mehta argued that such industries were polluting Delhi's environment. The quarries shifted to Pali in Haryana. But workers lost their

work and health.

Silicosis is an incurable lung disease caused by inhaling silica dust which is released when rock, sand, concrete and ores are crushed. It leads to lung fibrosis and emphysema. The disease has no cure.

In 1999, Azad was working with Pratham, the education NGO, when he came across innumerable cases of people falling ill and dying in spite of taking medicines. "I realised that something was not right and decided to do something about it."

Azad says: "We went to many doctors but none could help us. They (the doctors) would tell the workers to have honey or bananas. Imagine! Then we started writing letters to the government, in kilos. We wanted to establish the presence of silicosis at AIIMS but even there the doctors did not have the know-how or the facilities for diagnosis."

Eventually, Dr Anand Jaiswal, chest surgeon at the Lala Ram Swarup

Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases came to their aid, and with the guidance of a team of Israeli doctors did the first positive confirmation of silicosis in 2002.

It is difficult to distinguish between TB and silicosis. On X-ray, it is easily mistaken for TB. When Narayani Devi, a quarry worker, first started vomiting blood the doctors diagnosed her ailment as tuberculosis. For 20 years she took TB medicine till it was finally discovered that she had silicosis.

"Once we had four or five confirmed cases we started to challenge the government. Then the media also began to pay attention," says Azad.

He wrote endless letters to the labour department. It wrote back saying silicosis was 'outside its purview'.

A committed activist, Azad put together the demands of the quarry workers. These were: proper measures to detect and prevent silicosis, adequate compensation and rehabilitation facilities, alternative employment and a local dispensary. With this they filed a Public Interest Litigation in the Delhi High Court in May 2004.

"If the labour and pollution departments of the government had insisted safety laws and guidelines be followed in quarries, workers would not have died like this," says Azad. "Why did they allow so much dust to be emitted? Why were there no facilities for water sprinkling?"

"Almost all these hazards can be prevented with the right approach," says Dr Joshi. "But in our country this responsibility has been delegated to the labour ministry. Why? In the entire health policy of the health ministry, there is just one paragraph on occupational hazard."

"It is the responsibility of the employer to take care of his employees. Now if a worker gets sick he is fired. For his treatment he goes to a government hospital which in turn is funded by the taxpayer. It means that the employer profits in every way."

While MC Mehta won the Magsaysay for his activism it has been left to people like Azad to pick up the pieces.

Farmers bring Ranbaxy to



Villagers of Batamandi celebrate their victory outside Ranbaxy's factory

Rajendra Bansal and Ayan Biswas
Paonta Sahib (HP)

FERMENTATION is just like making curd, explained Ramesh Parekh, then Vice-President (Manufacturing) at Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited, when local villagers met him in June 2004 to express their concern about the expansion of Ranbaxy's fermentation plant in Ganguwala village of Paonta Sahib tehsil in Himachal Pradesh. The villagers felt that the new unit would cause serious environmental pollution that would threaten their health, crops, livelihoods and the area's scenic beauty. They were not convinced by Parekh's reassurances.

On July 21, 2004 four local citizens filed a public interest petition in the Himachal Pradesh High Court against the construction of Ranbaxy's fermentation plant at Ganguwala and a formulation unit in the neighbouring Batamandi village. They achieved a major success recently when a division bench of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, headed by Chief Justice, VK Gupta, ordered Ranbaxy to stop construction activities for expanding its fermentation unit.

Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited is India's largest pharmaceutical company, ranking among the world's top 100 pharmaceutical makers. In 1994, it

established a bulk drugs manufacturing plant near the town of Paonta Sahib, a pilgrimage place for Sikhs, on the banks of a pristine Yamuna river emerging from the Himalayan range. Here it manufactures Lovastatin and Pravastatin, which are prescribed for the control of cholesterol. In February 2004, Ranbaxy sought permission from the Himachal Pradesh State Environment and Pollution Board (HPSEP and PCB) to expand the capacity of its fermentation plant in Ganguwala from 8 TPA to 120 TPA. The expansion is a part of the company's strategy to gain a major share of the lucrative international market for statins.

Environmental impact: "It was the 15 times expansion proposed by Ranbaxy that first rang warning bells in the minds of local people who expressed fears of a Bhopal-like situation developing in the area," said Subodh Abbhi, an IIT-Mumbai educated engineer and a small entrepreneur-turned-organic farmer based in Batamandi. Abbhi and the petitioners contended that Ranbaxy's expansion activities were in violation of the HP Tenancy & Land Reforms Act (1972) and HP Ceiling on Land Holdings Act (1972), the Factories Act, the Explosives Act, the Development Plan of Paonta Sahib and the Pollution Control Board's Zoning Atlas guidelines. They feared that extraction of

over one million litres of water per day by the new units would deplete the groundwater table, release poisonous effluents into the Yamuna river, leach toxins into the groundwater and affect local agriculture.

On April 1, 2005 after several detailed hearings the Court established a three-member Committee of senior state officials to study the various charges relating to the violation of environmental and other laws in setting up the two units by Ranbaxy, and to assess the potential pollution impact of the proposed plants as well as the availability of remedial measures for them. It also allowed Ranbaxy to resume its construction activities at its own risk and responsibility.

Realising that the case against Ranbaxy could be a long one, involving hard scientific data and analysis, Subodh Abbhi contacted IIT-Mumbai acquaintances, Dunu Roy, director of the Hazards Centre in New Delhi, and Dr Ravi Chopra, director, Peoples' Science Institute (PSI), for technical support. The Hazards Centre and PSI are sister public-interest research organisations.

PSI's scientists analysed the Rapid EIA Report submitted by Ranbaxy. They realised that Ranbaxy had not prepared a comprehensive EIA Report for the new plants as required for pharmaceutical units by the EIA Notification (1994). "A compre-

book in Himachal Pradesh

hensive EIA Report had been prepared in 1994 for the existing plant. But that was for making Cephalosporins whereas the company was mainly manufacturing statins. Thus, even the existing plant is illegal. The Rapid EIA Report for the new plants was also seriously flawed," explained Dr Chopra.

Attempts made by PSI's scientists to seek permission from Ranbaxy to inspect the plant and collect samples of effluents and solid-wastes for analysis were turned down. Consequently they collected a few water samples from storm water outlets of the Ranbaxy plant and the adjacent Yamuna and Bata rivers. Tests conducted at PSI's environmental quality monitoring laboratory showed that the effluents from Ranbaxy and the Yamuna river samples downstream from the Ranbaxy plant were highly polluted. Toxicity tests revealed that they were also toxic for rice, the main crop of the area. "The results of the different tests performed by PSI were consistent. They lent credence to the local people's apprehensions that the Ranbaxy plant was discharging toxic, non-biodegradable chemicals into the rivers and the surrounding environment," said Dunu Roy.

The petitioners forwarded these results to the High Court Committee. The latter did not formally accept them, claiming that PSI's lab was not a certified one. The Committee then commissioned three certified laboratories – Industrial Toxicology Research Centre (ITRC), Lucknow, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), New Delhi and National Productivity Council (NPC), New Delhi – to examine pollution caused by the Ranbaxy plant.

Their results, however, varied significantly from each other. ITRC and NPC reported high values of chromium, copper, nickel, lead and zinc in different soil samples and in the Yamuna river downstream from the plant. Samples of the incinerator emissions were sent to SGS Laboratories in Belgium for analysis. The analyses revealed carcinogenic dioxins and furans 2.69 times above the standard set by CPCB. Based on these findings and its deliberations, the Committee submitted its report to the High Court in January 2006.

A review of the Committee's report written by Dr GD Agrawal, a former member-secretary of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and one of India's most respected pollution experts, forwarded to the Court by the petitioners, was very critical. Dr Agrawal wrote: "At no point whatsoever the Committee attempts to even consider the likely impact on environment (degradation of water/air quality), damage to crops (direct damage as also the impoverishment of soil productivity and suitability for agriculture) on health of plants, birds, animals and human beings....It acted essentially as a Government Departmental Enquiry trying to regularise and legalise any violations rather than as a court committee examining environmental issues

with the Precautionary Principle laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in mind."

The verdict: In its judgment, the Court held that since the fermentation plant at Ganguwala had not been approved by a Site Appraisals Committee, in violation of Section 41 of the Factories Act, Ranbaxy should "be dealt with strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Factories Act." Under this Act, the occupier and manager of the factory can be punished with "imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to one lakh rupees or with both." The judges ruled that Ranbaxy had violated

litres of water per day would severely affect the groundwater table in the neighbourhood of the plant. It, however, ordered Ranbaxy to install two stage reverse osmosis plants with at least 80 per cent efficiency in the units at Ganguwala and Batamandi to prevent the release of contaminated effluents.

The judges expressed serious concern about the presence of dioxins and furans above permissible limits in the incinerator emissions. They directed the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to prescribe norms for these gases within eight weeks. They ruled that their levels be reduced below the limits recommended by the Central Pollution Control Board before the plant is set up. Scientific data would have to be cited in the EIA to show how the emissions of dioxins and furans would be brought within the specified limits.

Public Pressure: The Ranbaxy example shows that governments, their agencies and industrial enterprises cannot be trusted to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and guidelines. Fortunately, there are people who care about the environment. Their pressure forces governments and state agencies to publish documents like the Development Plan of Paonta Sahib or the Zoning Atlas and even notify them. It is also true that corrupt *netas* and officials often use the regulatory frameworks to harass entrepreneurs and enrich themselves in the bargain. Environmentally conscious citizens and their organisations, therefore, have to remain vigilant to ensure that the environmental safeguards highlighted in these documents are adhered to.

Two years ago, when a few villages in Paonta Sahib tehsil decided to oppose Ranbaxy's expansion plans, nobody thought that they would bring the pharmaceutical giant to its knees. Their struggle is reminiscent of earlier battles in the 1980s when ordinary villagers supported by Samaj Parivartana Samudaya ensured that the Harihar Polyfibres factory stopped polluting the Tungabhadra river, or the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad compelled Grasim to treat its effluents before releasing them into the Chaliyar river, or the successful fight against limestone mining in the Doon valley by Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra.

Even if Ranbaxy does eventually expand its fermentation unit, its operation will be safer because of the people's campaign. If they can maintain their vigilance, it is quite possible that Ranbaxy will be forced to control its damage to the environment and that the Yamuna will flow cleaner. As Bhima Nand, a local villager who has been in the forefront of the movement says: "Following the court's verdict, other pharmaceutical projects coming up in the area will also be forced to behave themselves so that Bata river and the sacred Yamuna are not heavily polluted."

The Case Ranbaxy sought to expand its fermentation unit without an adequate EIA. Farmers were worried about the effects Ranbaxy's effluents would have on water bodies and farm lands.



Subodh Abbhi, organic farmer

The Verdict Expansion put on hold. High Court said Ranbaxy violated Section 41 of the Factories Act. Development plan also violated. Expansion of Ranbaxy's units required a comprehensive EIA. The company would have to identify the pollutants to which the local people would be exposed and spell out remedial steps.

the Development Plan which clearly mentioned that Ranbaxy could not expand its plant. They also found that Ranbaxy had violated land laws in letter and in spirit, the TCP Act and the Explosives Act, but did not consider them to be serious violations.

The Court agreed with the petitioners that Ranbaxy had to get a comprehensive EIA prepared and approved before further construction could be permitted. It said that the new EIA report would have to give details regarding the expected effects of environmental pollution and the remedial measures to be taken by Ranbaxy. The judges took note of the toxicity tests performed by People's Science Institute and directed that bioassay tests be done to show the effects of the effluents on the aquatic life and agriculture of the surrounding area. They also ordered the company to make adequate provisions for safe disposal of its solid wastes for a period of at least 35 years.

The Court, relying on arguments presented by the Central Ground Water Board before the High Court Committee, did not accept the petitioners' contention that the extraction of over one million

Village paper grows in stature

Jauymini Barkatky
Chitrakoot (UP)

IN June 2003, a group of Dalit women decided to start a newspaper in Karvi village in Chitrakoot district on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. They had worked for a grassroots newspaper called *Mahila Dakiya*, published with help from Nirantar, an NGO in Delhi and the Mahila Sakhya, a local resource group. In 1999, the newspaper had closed down. But the women wanted to carry on with the support of local people. And so,



Meera, Editor, *Khabar Lehariya* on assignment

with Nirantar's help, they founded *Khabar Lehariya*. "Villagers wanted a newspaper," says Meera, editor of *Khabar Lehariya*. "So did girls studying in a school run by the Mahila Shiksha Kendra. We took the name *Khabar Lehariya* to symbolise news and information flowing like waves."

In 2004, *Khabar Lehariya* won the Chameli Devi Jain award for being an 'Outstanding Media Collective'. The award was presented by the then Prime Minister, IK Gujral.

Khabar Lehariya's first issue was 1,000 copies. Four years later, circulation has gone up to 3,000. Recently, a Banda edition was launched. It sells around 1,000 copies. Now *Khabar Lehariya* is read in Manikpur, Khovamandi, Jhansi, Lalitpur and Allahabad. Some copies are sent to Delhi, Kolkata, Bhopal and Chhattisgarh. From being a monthly, it has become a fortnightly.

"In 2003, we did a survey among our readers and found that there was overwhelming demand for a fortnightly," says Meera. "We would like to become a weekly. But for that we need to increase circulation and funds." The paper is priced at Rs 2, but there is no advertising.

Khabar Lehariya has an editorial team of seven: Meera, the editor, along with Shanti, Meena, Kavita, Krishna, Sonia and Mithilesh. Vishnu makes the pages. The *Khabar Lehariya* office has a front room, a computer room, a store room and a meeting room. There are mattresses on the floor. The walls

have several boards. Details of the newspaper's next issue are scribbled on one. On another board the layout for each page is drawn and the number of words for each article indicated. From the assignments listed it is evident that stories on the coming elections are a priority. There is also a picture of Pandita Ramabai, the great woman activist.

When *Khabar Lehariya* started its main focus was women's empowerment. But now space is given to local news, national news and even international news. There is an editorial page too. "Our first few issues consisted of four pages.

Thereafter we expanded to eight pages and we will continue to increase content," says Shanti.

Earlier it took them eight days to bring out an issue. The journalists found it hard to get news, and had problems writing. The team would wait for Nirantar to help. Five years later Meera and her team bring out the newspaper on their own in three days.

Says Shanti: "We took it as a challenge. We never lost heart. We cannot say that difficulties have all gone away. But they have definitely lessened over time."

"At first we used to stand for hours just to get a few words from the police or from other authorities," recalls Meera. "But now relations with the police and officials have improved remarkably. Nowadays if we need any information, a mere phone call suffices."

On the 7th and 21st of each month the seven journalists have an editorial meeting to discuss the next issue. Each journalist has to collect information on stories discussed from their region. Most of them are computer literate.

Khabar Lehariya is proud of its honest journalism. Meera says: "We always tell people to be careful about what they say to us because we will print their words exactly. We thoroughly investigate our stories. There was this incident when a well known newspaper stated that children of a nearby village were dying of malnutrition. We checked each house but did not find a single case

of malnutrition. We never print news without listening to all sides of the story. If there are 10 angles, we will cover all of them."

The journalists use dictaphones to record conversations. They take their own pictures and even get signed testimonies for foolproof news coverage. They have learnt their journalism the hard way. On an average each journalist walks at least five to 20 km in search of stories or to distribute copies of the newspaper.

"Local people usually pick up their copies from the office. Otherwise we go and give it to them. Now my elder daughter has started selling the newspaper and taken over my beat," says Shanti. "In the beginning we used to spend a lot of time explaining our paper to people."

The stories and information that *Khabar Lehariya* provides would never be made available to villagers from any mainstream newspaper. There are stories on child labour, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, ration cards, infrastructure, education, dowry, violence against women, health, local politics, crime and farmer's problems. There are also jokes, letters and helpful hints.

Khabar Lehariya's layout and typeface make it very reader friendly. It is written in local dialect. Shanti explained that dialects between their region and Banda differ in a subtle way. There are two boards in their meeting room – one for the Bundeli dialect and the other for the Banda dialect. "We use these when we write our columns," explained Meera.

The paper has started giving ordinary villagers the courage to confront injustice. "Recently there was this incident when a visiting SP raped a girl from a nearby village. When local people came to know, they caught the SP, informed the police and the media. This is a big change. It shows people are getting the courage to stand up. Until recently they used to quail before the law."

The newspaper goes to local government officials. "An official from the Social Welfare Board admitted that it was only through *Khabar Lehariya* that he came to know about the state of widow and old age pensions in his area. We have also been instrumental in helping declare many areas afflicted by drought."

Meera and Shanti say circulation and sale need to pick up. They have hired agents. Shortage of staff is another bottleneck. They have put ads in the paper and even spread the word. Recruitment is limited to women but agents for sale and circulation can be men or women.

Khabar Lehariya is printed in Allahabad. Meera said, "We have approached a number of local printing establishments but they all refused. One of the primary reasons is the size of the paper. It is not available locally. We chose such a size because we wanted it to be eye-catching."

The editorial team has come a long way. Family support helped. Meera's husband, for instance, is an LIC agent and he helped her. "We both work in the fields and share the time we spend with the children. At first our kids found it a little strange that their mother was out of home most of the time. But now my girls are proud of me." Meera is from Mau district.



Dr Anoop Misra

Fighting diabetes in schools

Civil Society News

New Delhi

Do you think puppy fat is cute and tubby kids are cuddly? Do you measure your affection for your family in the number of spoons of sugar you add to those milkshakes and the *paranthas* and *pooris* that you serve up? Have you turned a blind eye to the bread *pakor*as and colas that get consumed as lunch in the school canteen? Are you so completely protective that a car and driver are always on call for your young ones so that they don't have to walk or take buses?

Chances are that you will say a carefree 'yes' to all of the above. After all, what is the big deal about a few extra kilos on a young frame? And which happy family table is complete without *paranthas* and more?

But hold on. Notions of good parenting are changing. Disturbing information on new lifestyles in the past two decades indicates that a whole generation could be at risk of becoming unhealthy in a deep-seated and irreversible way. Diabetes is taking a hold of young lives and with it come fears of heart disease and other illnesses at ages when people in generations gone by were full of vitality and purpose.

For a great many Indian youngsters, particularly those whose families have earned well and acquired many comforts, the future is full of foreboding about their physical well being. Many of these youngsters have access to education and the opportunities to draw on the best in the world. Ideally, they should be in leadership roles when they get into their twenties and thirties. But will their bodies be letting them down just when those important years arrive?

Dr Anoop Misra and his colleagues at the Diabetes Foundation of India (DFI) have begun working with schools in Delhi, Agra and Jaipur to propagate among children newer and cleaner ways of living and eating.

The schools are being encouraged to examine what their canteens serve. Is it possible, for instance, to replace those burgers and *pakor*as with steamed meals? The colas with fruit juices? The packets of chips with apples and oranges?

More importantly, the DFI is working with teachers so that the message about diabetes and the need for better eating habits is not delivered in isolation but along with other lessons and becomes part of a general consciousness.

Right now DFI enters schools in a reformist mode. But if it is to truly succeed, schools have to internalise the change. Teachers will have to take over, parents will need to become more demanding and school managements will have to aspire to a different set of standards.

Dr Priyali Shah, a nutritionist and chief programme coordinator, points out that schools take time in understanding that the health of children should be a

part of the whole effort of educating them. Often DFI has a difficult time getting teaching staff to find time in the daily routine for its health messages. Similarly, schools prefer to be academically driven and don't see the importance of allocating time for games and physical activity, especially so in the exam season.

The biggest challenge however remains the school canteen. Schools mostly outsource the running of the canteen. A contractor moves in on certain commercial assumptions. He will only stock food items that sell. Big offenders are bread *pakor*as, *samosas*, greasy burgers and pizza slices.

Often fried items are fried once and then put into boiling oil twice over to keep them hot when children run into the canteen for a bite. There are also the soft drinks that are full of sugar and continued to be gulped down cold in summer months.

"A contractor running a canteen will only keep the things that sell and have long shelf-life. So they prefer deeply fried items. Even if we persuade canteens to offer fruits, they take them off when the students don't go for them," says Dr Shah.

But why all this high voltage concern over schools and children?

Dr Misra set up the Diabetes Foundation of India after studies he took up with funding from the Department of Science and Technology (DST). His research showed that the young were very vulnerable because of their eating habits and sedentary lifestyles.

The studies showed children were consuming more and more junk food and doing less and less by way of physical activity. The TV remote is a symbol of the new inertia. Many hours are spent before computers while surfing the Internet. The deep frying of foods in typical Indian homes, together with the wider exposure to fast foods and processed products, have similarly made a whole generation especially vulnerable to diabetes.

Earlier studies in slums by Dr Misra revealed that the poor too were affected. This was the first time people in slums were studied for diabetes, high cholesterol and so on.

"Clearly the important thing was to begin a movement in schools," says Dr Misra. He first found support from Rotary and started a programme called Chetna. Next came financial assistance from the World Diabetes Foundation. Both programmes run concurrently.

Dr Misra's team reaches out to 15 private schools and 15 Kendra Vidyalayas run by the government. The progress at individual schools varies, but as word gets around and the ideas gain currency the interest in what Dr Misra's team is offering grows. For instance, the entire Delhi Public School (DPS) network seems to ready to enrol. Tagore International has been keenly interested, so has St. Paul's in the Safdarjung Development Area, DPS International and DPS RK Puram. Work at the Kendriya Vidyalayas will begin in April.

In a school the first step is to assess the students: their eating habits, body weight, levels of physical activity and so on. This has so far only confirmed fears that the children don't have the right nutrition and together with inadequate exercise they are strong candidates for becoming diabetic in coming years.

The next stage in a school is creation of awareness for which the DFI has several posters and other publicity materials that go up on notice boards. Talking to the students is an important part of awareness building.

The challenge is always how to involve children and hold their attention. Speaking to them about obesity and diabetes is not easy. Dr Misra says he uses cartoons, Garfield the lazy cat for instance, and rock music.

In fact, DFI is constantly searching for relevant communication tools that would help it send home its message to the young. It has also appealed to the creators of Garfield to make the laidback cat more health conscious.

But these are early days in the DFI campaign. It has already caught the imagination of some schools and teachers. Dr Misra's research projects have thrown up information that has been highlighted. The realisation is gaining ground that dia-

betes is a huge and growing problem across income levels in India. Requests from schools are trickling in and teachers and administrators realise the need to act.

But finally, a much larger frame of reference is needed. Dr Misra admits that there is a big role for the government. It could mandate that soft drinks should not be sold or that fruits should be propagated – as has been done in California. It is also essential to put health messages into curricula. For instance, there is need for a better understanding of the dangers associated with cooking mediums.

Dr Misra's team is playing a big part in debunking the notion that only western fast foods are bad for the health. Deep-fried *pooris* and *paranthas* are as bad. Dr Shah points out that even a good oil like mustard is overheated to the point where it becomes injurious. Similarly *samosas* and other snacks are full of trans fats. Biscuits and cookies come laden with calories. Roadside eateries use vegetable cooking mediums that are harmful.

Changing the way people eat really means helping them think differently about food. The real dividends are in beginning with the young.

LAKSHMAN ANAND

DFI are working with schools to propagate to children newer and cleaner ways of living and eating.

Amazing Hospital!

Surgeons save lives and redefine the cost of reliable healthcare

Rita and Umesh Anand
New Delhi

THE life of Sunita, 25, was saved by a series of coincidences the other day. She was very ill with a foetus festering in one of her fallopian tubes and blood collecting by the litre in her abdomen. Left like that, she would have died, like so many women do in remote parts of Uttar Pradesh because they can't find affordable medical help. Sunita's family had all but given up hope of saving her when chance encounters delivered her to the Rural Medicare Centre at Village Saidulajaib, on the outskirts of Saket in South Delhi.

Once an ultrasound confirmed her complicated condition, the physicians at the centre were quick to act. The gynaecologist, Dr Seema Mehrotra, said that she would operate. Blood was needed, for which Sunita's husband and some well-wishers went to the White Cross blood bank in East of Kailash. By the time they returned, braving Delhi's deadly evening traffic, Dr Mehrotra was in her surgeon's gear and waiting to begin the operation. A statement in Hindi was ready for Sunita's husband to sign. It said that her condition was very delicate and she could die on the table.

The operation went on for more than two hours. Internal bleeding had resulted in the intestines and adjacent organs in the abdomen getting affected. Bleeding makes tissues friable and difficult to handle and suture. Halfway through, Dr DPS Toor, director of the centre, arrived on a routine visit and decided to help Dr Mehrotra in the operation theatre. Together they worked dexterously to clean up Sunita and completed a surgery that might just never have been performed.

In her delicate condition, Sunita would probably have been shut out by most private hospitals in Delhi. On the other hand, if a good hospital took her in the fees would have been way beyond her means. In a government hospital she would have had to await her turn and then, too, it is unlikely that the doctors would have taken the risk of opening her up. Government doctors know there is hell to pay for cases that go wrong.

Sunita is back in her village some 40 km from Agra. She and her husband live on a few acres of farmland. They have two children. The family survives on what they grow and sell.

Most women in Sunita's situation aren't so lucky. They rarely reach the city from their villages and the city mostly does not reach them. It is even more unlikely that they will make it to a "rural" medical centre that can access the sophistications of urban healthcare.

The Rural Medicare Centre's team, of course, goes much beyond medical competence. They add soul to their professional skills and keep their centre going in order to serve the needy. Dr Mehrotra's fee for the operation was an unbelievable Rs 1,200. The charge for the first examination in the OPD was Rs 20. All in all, Sunita's life was saved for just Rs 12,000, which includes the cost of blood, a reliable ultrasound at a nearby facility, taxi fare and five days spent at the centre after the surgery. If she had gone to a private hospital in Delhi, she would have spent at least Rs 60,000.

But for Dr Toor and his 20-odd colleagues, this is no act of charity. They don't flit in and out of the Rural Medicare Centre merely to cleanse their consciences. They do have their own practices where they earn more, but the Rural Medicare Centre functions as a professional establishment in its own right. For instance, Dr Mehrotra is one of four gynaecologists who serve there. Three days in the



week she performs surgeries and on three days she attends the OPD. The doctors take turns to be on Sunday duty, and on two days of the month each one is on standby for 24 hours.

If a surgeon sees a patient in the OPD and a surgery has to be performed at short notice, then the operation is that surgeon's responsibility. So it was with Dr Mehrotra after she had seen Sunita for the first time. It wasn't her day to operate, but she had to come in. In fact, on that night the son of one of the anaesthetists was getting married. Dr Toor and Dr Mehrotra should normally have been at the wedding.

The Rural Medicare Centre has taken aid for some of its capital investments. But it runs on what it earns. It isn't a funded institution propped up by remote munificence. However, it does get the odd free gift of blankets or cloth for making OT uniforms. Grateful patients turn up with heaters and desert coolers. It also has a poor fund drawn from interest on Rs 5 lakhs given to it by some generous individual a decade ago.

But the centre's mission is to treat people by charging reasonable fees. Its business model is aimed at demystifying the cost of reliable healthcare. What this really means is that though its fees seem paltry they are enough to provide professional services. The centre's doctors earn on an average Rs 25,000 a month. That is not much and they all supplement it with their own practices. But the decision to spend time here involves forgoing a substantially larger income. These doctors have raised an ethical question: When millions need healthcare should doctors remain wedded to a system that makes them obscenely rich or should they redefine the paradigm by which they serve and earn?

The Rural Medicare Centre was born out of such introspection. It was set up in the seventies by Dr JK Banerjee and his wife, Shipra, in a ramshackle godown in Mehrauli. Dr Banerjee had trained in England and returned to work in the Ramakrishna Mission hospital in Haridwar. He is a great admirer of Vivekananda. After working for the hospital for six years, he decided to make his personal contribution to taking quality healthcare to the masses at an affordable cost.

"In England I saw that what defined a developed economy was equality in access to facilities," says Dr Banerjee. "In India on the other hand there are facilities only for a few with the vast majority being forgotten and having to fend for themselves."

It is necessary in such a situation for the privileged few to reach out and share the benefits of progress. "We have eight and nine per cent GDP growth these days, but it is only for 20 per cent of the population. What does that 20 per cent of the population do to enable the others to share in its prosperity?" asks Dr Banerjee.

When he set up a medical centre in a godown in Mehrauli in the seventies, he found that there were other doctors ready to join him. Similarly, he found some support for his ideas among members of the Association of Surgeons of India.

They tried to get the association to endorse rural surgery as a specialisation, but met with serious opposition, not just from within the association but from the teaching fraternity as well. Finally, they walked out and set up the Association of Rural Surgeons.

At the age of 69 and with a stroke behind him, Dr Banerjee now lives in Dehradun where he helps the Ramakrishna Mission. But the work he began has been carried forward. The Association of Rural Surgeons has some 400 adherents across the country.

The rural surgeons' movement is based on the belief that science and technology must be used as tools for inclusion. Doctors must seek out their social relevance. Specialised and expensive hospitals have their own roles to play. But an entire country cannot remain focussed on tertiary care. Rural surgeons are needed to cater to the periphery, which in a poor country like India is burgeoning and mostly neglected. If all doctors work at top-notch hospitals who will be around to use modern science to save the lives of people like Sunita?

Rural surgeons don't do heart and brain surgeries. They take care of the everyday cases for which there is no reliable medical infrastructure in the country. Where, for instance, can someone with limited means go to have a hernia repaired or gall stones removed? Which doctor is on call to pluck out a poor person's infected appendix just in time?

Last year, thousands of patients visited the Rural Medicare Centre. There were 171 surgeries to remove gall bladder stones. There were 86 operations to fix hernias and 15 to remove kidney stones. Five cases of enlarged prostate were dealt with surgically. There were 138 ENT operations, 61 cataract removal cases, 189 normal deliveries, 223 caesarean sections, 135 hysterectomies.

These figures are not exhaustive, but are intended to provide a quick picture of what an important role the Rural Medicare Centre plays in the lives of people.

At a time when a career in medicine is equated with fat earnings and super specialisations, the rural surgeons prefer to get down to basics. It isn't easy to buck the trend and so many of the physicians who get drawn to the Rural Medicare Centre are initially enthused but then begin to fade out. However, those who stay would have it no other way.

Dr Mehrotra, for instance, first turned up as a replacement for a friend gynaecologist who was going on leave. That was a year ago. She has opted to work at the centre on a regular basis. "There is mental and academic satisfaction at providing service at a minimum cost," she says. She studied at Rohtak Medical College and completed her senior residency at AIIMS. Her husband is a very senior physician and she could, given her qualifications and professional contacts, quite easily be anywhere else.

Dr Mehrotra's story holds true for all the other doctors who bring their professional expertise to the Rural Medicare Centre. If her case finds repeated mention it is because we watched her work on Sunita's case.

Dr Toor has a clinic at Khan Market, but it is at the centre that he spends all his time. A short, energetic and jovial Sardar, he says: "I tell people that I spend the day in Bharat and come to India in the evening."

He is at the centre on all days till afternoon and then back again in the evening for some unfinished work. He attends his clinic for a couple of hours on Sundays as well because for many poor people it is the only day they can get off to see a doctor. Hawkers and others who live on the streets around the centre go there for treatment. A peanut vendor will have his cataract removed at the centre shortly. There are others who come with common ailments to see the general physicians in the OPD.

"A centre like this depends on teamwork," says Dr Toor. "You need everyone feeling involved and working together. Above all, this applies to the centre's employees who are not doctors. After all, we doctors perform the surgery and go away. It is the others who look after the patient – checking the temperature, blood pressure, administering blood, saline, and drugs. A medical centre has to run round the clock and for that it needs dedicated and happy people."

People flock to the Rural Medicare Centre because the doctors there are their only hope.

Dr Toor points out that the role of the general surgeon is often not fully understood. For many ailments and diseases a patient can go to one doctor or the other. The medication can change as indeed can the diagnosis. But when surgery is needed nothing less than a surgeon will do.

So, the finger that needs to be stitched back or the appendix that must be plucked out or that corrosive ectopic pregnancy in a festering fallopian tube, all

need to be immediately attended to by a surgeon.

It is this role that the rural surgeons fulfil. Dr Toor does three operations on his surgery days and so do the other surgeons at the centre and their work is just a drop in the ocean considering the vast number of Indians who have no access to healthcare.

"When I go to conferences I always say that we are all needed. We need Max, Fortis, AIIMS, Escorts and our Rural Medicare Centre. You need a strong core but you also need to reach the periphery. If doctors serve only the rich, who will treat the poor and the needy? In fact the importance of serving the periphery keeps increasing. The government hospitals are overburdened and the doctors there struggle with inefficient and inadequate systems," says Dr Toor.

Moreover, with an increasing number of people leaving rural areas to come to the city, the majority of them in slums and on the streets, there will be an exponentially bigger need for affordable services of the kind the Rural Medicare

LAKSHMAN ANAND



Some of the team members of the Rural Medicare Centre. Dr Toor (extreme right).

Centre provides. "Soon 50 per cent of India will be living in its cities, and where are the facilities for them," Dr Toor points out.

One way forward, according to Dr Toor and his colleagues, is to hand over primary health centres to voluntary organisations of doctors who want to serve the needy both in cities and villages. The government clearly cannot fulfil this role.

There is also the need to recognise the role of rural surgeons. A big step has been taken with the Union Health Ministry deciding to introduce a course in rural surgery. It will give physicians a DNB or Diplomate of the National Board in rural surgery. The idea is to give physicians basic skills in surgery so that they can work at remote locations.

But finally it is the spirit and not official recognition that drives the rural surgeon. Recalls Dr SK Basu, one of the founders of the Rural Medicare Society: "Its very foundation was the dream to cater to the healthcare needs of the economically less privileged people and enable them to buy expertise with dignity across the counter."

In the Mehrauli godown where it began in 1976, the Rural Medicare Centre had just three beds. The front of the godown was converted into the OPD where barely three patients could sit. The consultation fee was Rs 5.

"I still remember the thrill of performing the first caesarean section on a diabetic mother in a 6 ft x 9 ft operation theatre," says Dr Basu. "I must admit that the act was not without a sense of trepidation as infrastructure at that time was virtually non-existent. Neither did we have the requisite number of colleagues to give us the much required encouragement and moral support."

The building went up as a simple red brick structure, quite unique in its architecture. It now has 30 beds, a modern operation theatre, 22 serving doctors, 66 paramedical staff and four resident doctors. There is a pharmacy and a canteen. There are two ambulances which are frequently pressed into service.

In search of the Indian wheelchair

Satya Sivaraman

New Delhi

WHAT should a wheelchair have to operate in Indian conditions? 'A good horn'. An outrageous joke, isn't it, but one which helps sum up dismal Indian traffic conditions.

Jokes apart, for Dr Jon Pearlman, a researcher from the University of Pittsburgh, USA, what is more important is designing a wheelchair for India's large and growing population of people with disabilities. Clearly it would have to be a wheelchair which would be easy to manoeuvre on India's rugged terrain.

"Unfortunate is how I would describe the situation in India," says Pearlman, who is currently working at the Delhi-based Indian Spinal Injuries Center (ISIC) on designing an electric wheelchair. He points out that the country has everything that is needed to design appropriate wheelchairs - sufficient engineering talent, the required manufacturing capabilities and a large customer base. Yet there is a severe dearth of good quality wheelchairs.

To buttress his argument Pearlman refers to the shocking conclusions of a paper published last year titled, 'Wheelchair charity: a useless benevolence in community-based rehabilitation' which looked at the fate of manually-operated wheelchairs donated to users in West Bengal. Of the 167 wheelchairs studied, the results demonstrate that the majority went unused (57.4 per cent) and many were sold (14.2 per cent). Only 7.4 per cent were used regularly; the remaining were used occasionally (10.5 per cent) or were attendant-propelled (10.5 per cent).

Rejection of the wheelchairs was attributed to lack of habitat adaptability (34 per cent), pain, fatigue and discomfort (28.6 per cent), frequent damage (15 per cent), upper limb issues (11.6 per cent), and inability to drive (10.7 per cent). It was also found that the cardio-respiratory response was higher in occasional users than regular users, while wheelchairs used for locomotive tasks were highly energy demanding and contributed to physiological strain.

"The problem essentially lies in the fact that patients themselves are rarely consulted while designing wheelchairs and there is a 'one size fits all' approach that simply does not work in practice," Pearlman says. For example, standard wheelchairs used in many Indian hospitals are not adjustable and cannot be adapted to suit the needs of individual patients.

The prototype of an electric wheelchair that Pearlman is developing hopes to overcome many of the typical problems that such assistive devices face. Started two years ago as part of a collaboration between the US Department of Education and the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), Kanpur, a major government-run company, the project involves designing a manual chair, a paediatric chair and a power wheelchair appropriate for Indian users. Students from the Indian Institute of Technology (Kanpur) were also involved in the designing of these prototypes.

The prototype of the power wheelchair developed so far weighs a good 80 kg runs on a battery that is commonly used in most automobiles and has a steering wheel similar to that of a two-wheeler. Its special features are that its armrests can be moved



Dr Jon Pearlman

up and down so that users can slide into the seat from the sides of the chair and its seat is adjustable to various angles.

The device has five wheels – two in the front, two at the back and one in the middle – to give it maximum manoeuvrability and traction in offroad conditions. Further, the wheelchair has a braking system designed to be always on when there is no power supply in order to prevent accidental motion.

"Our goal is to get these wheelchairs produced

India has everything needed to design appropriate wheelchairs—talent, capabilities and customers. Yet there is a severe dearth of good quality wheelchairs.

and sold at a retail price of around Rs 40,000 or even less," says Pearlman, who is in touch with several Indian manufacturers interested in taking up production and to whom the design will be given free of cost. The cheapest electric wheelchair currently available in the Indian market is priced at around Rs 60,000.

Though both the electronic controller and motor for the power wheelchair are imported from the United Kingdom and China respectively, Pearlman hopes to find indigenous substitutes soon. An important consideration in the designing of the wheelchair is that it should be easy to repair and have parts that are locally replaceable.

Pearlman is also carrying out research on under-

standing the various needs and behaviour patterns of wheelchair users in order to develop the design further. Currently, the prototype design is being fine tuned through consultations with patients at the ISIC, which has recently set up a Department of Assistive Technology (DAT) in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh on its campus in New Delhi.

Though Pearlman is diplomatic about the situation of people living with disabilities in India, the fact is that there is simply not enough social or government concern for this section.

To begin with, till the 2001 Census, there was no accurate figure for the number of disabled people in the country. Coverage of disabled people was included in the Census only after repeated appeals and a massive campaign, which included huge *dharanas* and a deluge of letters and faxed messages to the Prime Minister's Office.

Till the latest census the Government of India, based on a 1991 survey, put the figure of the number of disabled at 1.9 per cent of the Indian population. The recent Census report points to a disability percentage of 2.13 per cent, which means the number of people with disabilities is 2.19 crore.

According to the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), however, the percentage of people with disabilities in developing countries stands at 10 per cent, and the Asia-Pacific average is 5-6 per cent. If this is true then the real figure for people with disabilities in India should be around 70 million.

Government figures put the number of those with disabilities in employment at a meagre one per cent while according to an independent study Indians spend Rs 72,000 crore per annum in caring for disabled family members. The government bears only a fraction of this cost.

"More than anything else it is the degree of concern for each individual user that lies at the heart of good designing," says Pearlman.

The Formula One ambulance

Vidya Viswanathan

New Delhi

DIAL 1298 from any phone in Mumbai and Ziqitza will track one of its nearest ambulances through the Global Positioning System (GPS) for you. A yellow air-conditioned ambulance with a broad green and yellow chequered band fitted with all emergency medical equipment will arrive and take you to any city hospital. If you are caught in traffic, you or the person who is ill will be taken care of by a trained doctor in the ambulance.

Ziqitza, an NGO, runs 24 such ambulances and in three years it plans to take the number to 70. Acumen Fund, the organisation which was started to fund social entrepreneurs, has invested in the project recently.

Ziqitza, which launched the ambulance service in April 2005, was started by five friends, who quit cushy corporate jobs. Shaffi Mather, who brought the four together for this project, was responsible for the roll-out of the Reliance Webworld outlets in his previous assignment. Mather and his friends have taken on Ziqitza as a three-year project during which they draw no salary and bear their own personal expenses. *Civil Society* caught up with Mather to talk about how they started Ziqitza.

How did the idea of this service occur? How do you know each other?

I was a regular management graduate from the University of Pittsburg. In 2002, my mom choked in her sleep in our house in Cochin. I drove my mother like crazy to the hospital in our car. Fortunately, she survived. Ravi Krishna, one of our group members, witnessed how timely intervention by an ambulance in New York saved his mother, who had collapsed due to septic shock. Ravi, Manish Sacheti, Naresh Jain and I were students in the US, and wanted to work in India. Shwetha, our fifth partner, worked with me in an organisation here. We decided to study the ambulance system, and each of us contributed Rs 10,000 for the study.

How did you study the system and what was the result?

We hired some college students in Mumbai. We looked at the details of the trips of individual ambulance drivers. We informally hung around the emergency arrival area in five private and five government hospitals to see how patients arrived. Ninety per cent of the ambulance revenues came from transporting dead bodies. Less than six per cent of the emergency arrivals came in a hospital ambulance. In private hospitals they came in their own car or in the neighbour's car. In the case of government hospitals, they came in a taxi or an auto. That is when we realised that the first Rs 1,000 or Rs 2,000 is not a problem for people to pay in urban India.

When did you launch the service? What were the hitches initially?

We decided that our service would be sustainable and world-class. Inability to pay would not be a barrier to access the service. We then worked backwards.

We invested Rs 20 lakh from our own money and launched our first ambulance designed according to the London Ambulance Service (LAS) standards in April 2004 while we were still working. The ambulance was designed by Ravi and a fabricator in Chennai. We told the medical fraternity and to our surprise we got no calls. We then realised that a kick-back system operates between the ambulance system and the medical fraternity. The telephone operator, receptionist, a floor superintendent and the senior ward boy are all gate keepers. A patient requests them and they pass on the request to an operator. We aggressively marketed ourselves after that to housing societies and doctors.

Pricing was our second problem. We said anyone who could afford would pay our rates. We found that even people who were going to posh hospitals like Leelavati, Jaslok or Breach Candy were not paying for the service. Either that or our drivers were pocketing the money. We launched our second ambulance in September 2004.



Shaffi Mather

“We decided that our service would be sustainable and world-class. Inability to pay would not be a barrier to access the service.”

When did you all get into the project fulltime?

In September 2004, I went to London on a Chevening Fellowship. I took the ambulance service as my project and worked with LAS. I spent all my time there. They were shocked that Mumbai had no ambulance service. This was instrumental in us signing an MoU with them for training. They gave us all their software processes, protocols and training material at no cost. In fact, they even gave me their ambulance service plan, part of London's disaster management service. When I called Ravi, he told me, "when you get to Heathrow they are going to send you to Guantanamo Bay. Please don't tell them you know me," (laughs).

This support gave us confidence. We approached Arya Omnitalk, a wireless software company in Pune and got ambulance management software developed. In March 2005, I stepped out of Reliance. I had the support of the chairman to work on this project even while I worked there. We then raised Rs 1.8 crore from family and friends.

Are your prices profitable? Do you have any other revenue sources?

We have been cash flow positive from the first year. We now have 10 of our ambulances, while 12 in Mumbai belong to associates. Another 12 are in the process of fabrication and we are going to launch our service in

Kerala next month.

We charge Rs 1,500 up to 20 km for the first hour if we drive somebody to a private hospital. We charge Rs 500 if we drive to a government hospital and for BPL (below poverty line) patients the service is free. About 22 to 32 per cent of patients do not pay in a month. But we cross subsidise. About 50 per cent of our revenues come from the user charges. Nearly 30 per cent comes from advertising, and the remaining 20 per cent from training. We have now started training in emergency healthcare and the courses are accredited by the American Heart Association (AHA). When we first approached people for ads they asked us if we were running ambulances or formula one cars. We said 'Formula One ambulances'. Last year our primary advertiser were the Tatas in addition to SBI, Zee and Hindustan Petroleum. This year ICICI bank offered to pay more than the Tatas. We pay all our staff market salaries now.

In Kerala, we are going with a different model of raising funds. CII is helping us raise resources for 10 ambulances.

Do the Mumbai government and police recognise you?

When bird flu broke out we were stationed in Navapur for two weeks. They wanted ambulances with ventilators. We carried medicines to 32,000 families in the slums post the Mumbai floods. We rescued 29 people from two railway stations after the 7/11 serial blasts in Mumbai. Our own radio service supported us in providing medical duties.

Makaibari's wonderful tea forest



Anjali Pathak
Kurseong

WHAT does an enchanting forest have to do with a cup of exquisite tea? Visit the Makaibari tea estate in Kurseong on the way to Darjeeling and find out. Giant bamboos, Himalayan oaks, ferns and orchids envelope the estate. Over 70 per cent of this amazing tea plantation is covered by dense forest, a feat accomplished by dedicated local self-governance and an enlightened tea garden management. Out of 1,574 acres at Makaibari, 1,100 are forest and the remainder is under tea cultivation.

Seven villages with a population of 1,731 are spread over the Makaibari terrain. Around 636 adults are fulltime employees at the Makaibari tea estate. Rajah Banerjee, the owner of the estate, understands the need to preserve the forest in order to maintain the productivity of the tea garden and protect water resources. Seven Himalayan springs flow through Makaibari.

Rajah inspired local villagers, who were also his employees, to help Makaibari flourish. He knew that the forest belonged neither to the government nor the proprietor, but to the people who lived in surrounding villages. They were the beneficiaries of the forest and their love for it had to be nurtured.

Each village has a panchayat called '*samaj*' by the villagers who are mostly Nepalese.

In 1994 the General Body Meeting (GMB) was instituted by the Makaibari tea estate to regulate the activity of the *samaj* and take up developmental work. The GMB has its own corpus. The money came from premiums received under the Fair Trade Labelling Organisation (FTLO) from tea sales in Europe and the US. This fund and the GMB came into existence in 1994 when Makaibari joined the FTLO.

Every village has an elected representative in the GMB. The villagers take their problems to the *samaj* and the elected representative takes it to the GMB. Women have played a very active role in local self-governance. Jamuni Devi, a supervisor at Makaibari, heads the GMB at present. The GMB usually meets every six weeks.



Women play an active role in governance (above); Seventy per cent of the tea plantation has forest (top); Rajah Banerjee (below)



The Makaibari forest, which attracts botanists, zoologists and tourists, thrives because of this local self-governance. To protect the forest against intruders and poachers, 18 fulltime community rangers patrol the forest area. Project Leopard was initiated 40 years ago and over time the population of leopards has increased from two to 11. The community rangers meet every Monday and report animal sightings as well as changes they have observed over the past week.

Kurseong means "Land of the White Orchid", and the villagers sell forest orchids as potted plants to tourists. Bamboo is used for making baskets and some village artists bring beautiful abstract figures to life from discarded tea bushes. Young villagers act as tourist guides for birdwatchers.

A forest nursery has been set up to prepare saplings for afforestation of denuded patches. Villagers are also encouraged to plant 50 saplings of indigenous

trees in their backyards. The management usually buys the saplings from the villagers and men are deputed to plant on bare patches for some money. Remuneration is perhaps the secret behind the success of Makaibari's afforestation programme.

Similarly, when villagers started making compost heaps after the introduction of bio-dynamic methods in 1990, the management bought the compost from them for use in the tea gardens. Some villagers use the compost to grow fresh fruits and vegetables, which supplements their income. It was apparent that the success of local self-initiative was based on the healthy respect which the Makaibari tea estate management showed for the villagers.

In Makaibari, vegetation is a six-tiered system. It's forest has leguminous permanent shade trees (albizzias), temporary leguminous shade trees (crotonaria, indigofera, African medolia), indigenous fruit trees, big grasses such as citronella, napier grass and Guatemala grass, tea bushes, and weeds, creepers and ground vegetation.

Some of these plants were deliberately introduced, some imported from abroad. This form of integrated forest management is usually termed permaculture which is supposed to have four tiers. But with its six tiers, Makaibari has surpassed this model.

About three hundred species of birds are found in the Makaibari forest. The villagers live in harmony with the birds and animals.

The GBM has helped set up bio-gas plants as a source of domestic fuel. Initially, 20 bio-gas plants were set up by the garden management. New ones are being set up by the villagers with funds received from the GBM.

The GBM also provides interest-free loans to the villagers and helps with marriages and unforeseen medical expenses. Eleven girls have been trained in primary health care at the Kurseong Civil Hospital. Computer training is being imparted to 78 children by two full-time teachers. There are three crèches for workers' children till the age of two. A government-aided primary school from nursery to Class 4 has 150 students.

In 2005, it was decided that to accommodate the constant flow of visitors to Makaibari some villagers would open up their homes to them as paying guests. The 13 families who initiated the home-stay programme formed a group called Hum Terah. The villagers took the decision to install western style toilets in their homes to facilitate the home-stays. As many as 75 such toilets were installed in four months. The raw materials were provided by the GBM and the fitting was done by skilled masons. Each toilet cost about Rs 5,000-6,000. Hygiene improved dramatically. At present 21 families are offering home-stays at Rs 800 per day for a couple, all meals included.

All seven villages have electricity which has been made possible through funds provided by the GBM. Each village has a dish antenna. Almost every home has a TV set. Micro-enterprises are flourishing in Makaibari with several villagers selling milk, eggs and vegetables in the Kurseong market and to visitors. Some have even set up tea and refreshment stalls in Makaibari. All this exudes a feeling of participation and belonging.

Those wishing to visit the Makaibari forest and tea gardens may contact Rajah Banerjee at 09733004577, or send an e-mail to slg_rajah@sancharnet.in

PRASANTA BISWAS



Hotline for Kolkata's vulnerable elderly

Rina Mukherji
Kolkata

THOUGH modern medicine and improved health facilities have contributed to better life expectancy and a huge increase in India's elderly population in the past 50 years, geriatric medicine and social security measures have failed to keep pace.

Consequently, increased longevity, breaking up of the joint family and lack of geriatric care have left the elderly helpless in most cities and towns, this despite the declaration of the National Policy for Older Persons by the Government of India in 1999. Currently, 35 per cent of India's urban population and 32 per cent of its rural population is made up of the elderly. Yet, financial and other constraints prevent geriatric wards from being set up in rural and urban centre by the government.

To address these problems, a Kolkata-based NGO Banchbo, has recently introduced eastern India's first 24-hour helpline to cater to the medical problems of senior citizens as part of its Project Banchbo Healing Touch.

An offshoot of Banchbo that has been working over a decade with underprivileged children in education and health in south Kolkata and Patharpratima in South 24-Parganas, Banchbo Healing Touch is an initiative by several doctors and laypersons in and around Garia to provide emergency and preventive services to the elderly.

"As an attending doctor, I found the elderly in need of not just medical help but love and care. Nuclear families and the hectic pace of life in urban India have isolated the old. We thought of an organisation that would provide medical attention at the patients' homes, while monitoring their progress on a regular basis," explains Dr Dhires Chowdhury who founded Banchbo when he was a medical student about 10 years ago with friends in Garia, and with the patronage of Dr Sudipto Sen, then the director of

Woodlands Hospital and Nursing Home. On call are doctors Arijit Das, Nilanjana Majumdar and gynaecologist Roma Guha.

Several eminent medical professionals serve on Banchbo's Board including the head of the WHO International Reference Centre and well-known specialist in medicine, Dr J Sil, gynaecologist Dr Pranab Dastidar and chest specialist Dr A K Roy Chowdhury. Also on the board are the CEO of CMRI, and former vice president of Peerless Hospital, Rupak Barua and ex-vice chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University, Dr Pabitra Sarkar.

Often, senior citizens tend to neglect problems that have been dormant for years. Says Nilima Roy, "I had been prone to colds as a child, but once I reached adolescence, I grew physically fit and had always remained so until last year. It was the changing season that started causing frequent colds and coughs ever since I crossed 60. But last year, I started experiencing severe breathing problems while climbing up the stairs during the Pujas in October." Her condition worsened, and Mrs Roy was diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) requiring hospitalisation. Hers was a case of mild COPD which grew severe due to neglect.

Renuka Chowdhury fell and had a femoral fracture. Since her sister's husband was a Banchbo member, her family rushed the 71-year old to hospital as an emergency case and availed of prompt medical attention.

Bharati Das is a 60-year-old housewife who is suffering from chronic hypertension since the past 20 years. She also suffers from acute amoebiasis. A couple of months ago, her hypertension worsened so she had to be hospitalised. "Domestic matters prevented me from visiting my physician for a regular check-up. Probably this caused a flare-up and an attack. My blood pressure rose so much, that I nearly passed out with discomfort." Her husband,

retired academician Dr Ranjit Ranjan Das, is a life-long vertigo patient with severe hypertension. Similarly, Prof Sourin Bhattacharje has hernia and haemorrhoids while his wife Reba is a COPD patient.

Seabrata Majumdar too needs constant monitoring. He suffered two massive heart attacks and had a urethra blockage that caused urine retention. He had to be hospitalised. With his son abroad, and a brother who is constantly ill with geriatric problems, Banchbo is the ideal organisation for him.

Says JM Kar, who has aching limbs and hypertension at 73 years of age: "Getting to be part of a group of positive friends and a community of people in the same age group is working wonders physically."

Banchbo Healing Initiative provides a package of medical services for the elderly in and around Garia for an annual membership fee of Rs 1,800. When there are two members of the same family the fee is Rs 1,500 for one and Rs 1,200 for the other. The annual fee drops from Rs 1,800 and Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,200 after the first year.

Members are provided a detailed medical history and identity card indicating the salient features of their medical condition, three mandatory medical visits at home per year, along with one specialist check-up at a chamber and a comprehensive laboratory test per year.

All emergency calls are attended by a nurse, and an on-call doctor with an ambulance equipped with basic medicine and medical facilities against a payment of Rs 350 during the day, and Rs 500 between 10 pm and 7am.

In case of hospitalisation, a member gets a 5-10 per cent discount on bed charges, 20 per cent discount on pathological tests, and 15 per cent on machine tests at diagnostic centers that Banchbo has tie-ups with.

Banchbo has five doctors on call to attend to its members at their residence. Several specialist senior doctors are also empanelled for their services, and a patient can avail of a 25-50 per cent discount on every consultation with these doctors in their chambers.

Although the services are not free, many senior citizens have opted for them mainly because geriatric problems are rarely catered to so holistically in India.

As Dr A K Roychowdhury, senior chest physician and an empanelled doctor with Banchbo who has been actively involved in the organisation's health camps in the Sundarbans concedes, "In the West, where I have lived and worked all my life, every senior citizen enjoys the advantages of social security. In the absence of such measures here, we are trying to provide a much-needed service at affordable rates."

Besides, even when patients have medical insurance, the right medical advice and follow-up is not available. As Dr Ranjit Ranjan Das explains, "My wife and I have medical insurance cover. But in an emergency, reliable medical advice to see the right specialist is hard to come by. This is what got us to opt for Banchbo's project."

With six major diagnostic centres in south Kolkata Banchbo members can get discounts. Besides, several hospitals and nursing homes are on their list.

Currently, Banchbo caters to members in Garia, Santoshpur, Jadavpur, Banskroni, Naktala, Baishnabghata Patuli. These are all places that can be reached in 30 minutes if there is an emergency.

However, of late, there is a demand from residents in Behala and New Alipore too.

Bodhshalas bridge the learning

Amit Sengupta
Jaipur

Village education in Rajasthan is undergoing a transformation through a community approach to learning. The Bodh Shiksha Samiti, set up in 1987, has been setting up bodhshalas (community resource schools) and working with government schools of four districts in the state: Jodhpur, Ajmer, Jaipur and Bharatpur next to Deeg.

Its motto is, 'To participate in the formation of an egalitarian, progressive and enlightened society by contributing in the evolution of a system of equitable and quality education and development for all children.'

The Samiti's work in Alwar is significant because the Thanagazi and Umren areas are extremely poor and inaccessible. Located close to the forest range of the Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary, amid the hard rocky terrain of the Aravallis, livelihood here depends on agriculture and cattle rearing. The population comprises Dalits, tribals, nomadic communities like the Banjaras, Nats, Lohars, Bawariyas, other backward castes, as well as Meo Muslims.

The Bodh Shiksha Samiti currently works in 52 urban and educationally deprived localities of Jaipur and 43 panchayats of Thanagazi and Umren blocks of Alwar. Its bodhshalas operate in seven locations in Jaipur and 40 locations in Thanagazi and Umren blocks. Its outreach programme touches 200 mainstream government schools, in several slum clusters of Jaipur and in Alwar district. It supplies to them "pedagogic and managerial support directly and indirectly by providing them resource teachers and academic support".

The Bodh Shiksha Samiti's story was related by its director and secretary, Yogendra Bhushan at the 'National Seminar on Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Universalisation of Quality School Education', organised by the Aga Khan Foundation in Jaipur in April.

The Foundation promotes and protects quality school education in the most deprived sections of the country by providing support to many groups like the Bodh Shiksha Samiti.

Dayaram, senior programme officer said, "Most often we delude ourselves by statistics, examinations, grades and white paper. The real quality of school education must transform the social psychology of children and their community. It should also transform history and society at the micro level. This is no less a creative revolution." Dayaram has been a key person in this initiative for several years.

Yogendraji said, "We cannot eternally wait for a revolution. It has to happen every day. We have to be constantly working with the people, so that they can define their own destinies. What better way than to work for school education?"

That is why panchayats are important. Education should be integrated with home, community, gender justice, social and political empowerment and people's direct participation in local governance and nation-building. If the child has to go to school, then the parents should also be intellectually empowered. Most crucially, the men and women who control the panchayats need to be sensitised.



The Bodh Samiti helped with teacher training and villagers collected money. Months later, 200 children from the private school returned.

Said veteran sarpanch Yadhuvir Singh of Deeg, located in the backward Mewat region of Rajasthan, "We spend money to fight panchayati elections, but this is not a business to make money, we are not going to make more money to compensate for the money we spent. This is social service, community work, and nation-building. We are not driven by self-interest or political greed."

No wonder, despite owing allegiance to various political parties like the BJP and Congress, the panchayat leaders in Mewat have been unanimous in ushering quality school education with the help of 'Bodh' and the Society for All Round Development (SARD).

"It was initially impossible. Convincing the people and getting the children around took great effort; the schools were located far away, there was no transport, girls were not allowed, the dropout rate was high, plus the poverty and backwardness of the region was a big obstacle," said Jawahar Singh, ex-pradhan of the panchayat in the Mewat region. "But once we were convinced, it was like a dream come true."

Said Surjan Singh of Alwar, "There is total lack of awareness among pradhans, sarpanches, and locals. There is no 'bhagidari'. Women's representatives are still way behind in terms of leadership; the caste factor is still an obstacle. It took almost six to eight months to convince people that education is critical for the child's holistic development. The very thought that community schools could be established in partnership with Bodh, did not go down well with the local community. They were doubtful about the role of the NGOs. They would argue that you people are out here to make money and then will slip away. In retrospect I can say that our convictions about what we were doing and our ability to patiently build trust helped these communities to change their opinion and encouraged us to move forward."

Describing the 'Jan Pahal' programme, activist Shubhra said, "The bottoms-up approach is an excellent example. Gradually, all panchayat representatives came up and said that this is the kind of collective initiative that they would want. This was small, but in a big scale."

divide

Indeed, the Govdi village experiment since 2001 is an eye-opener. The sarpanch of Govdi, Rameshwar, happened to visit the Indauk village Bodhshala next to the Sariska sanctuary and was deeply impressed with the way the kids were actually enjoying the fruits of education. "So why not Govdi too?"

The government school in his village was in decay; only 60 children were left, over 150 children had joined a private school. Hence, with parents, community leaders and panchayati raj institutions, the Govdi experiment started. The people created a playground using 200 tractor-loads of mud. The Bodh Samiti helped with teacher-training workshops, the locals collected money, and there were renewed initiatives within the community. Months later, 200 children from the private school returned.

The classroom environment and the attendance improved while the dropout rate fell. There was 100 per cent enrolment in the government school of Govdi.

The district administration and the local MLA were witness to the success story, which is now getting repeated in village after village. This was due to the creative symbiosis between a sensitive administration, proactive panchayats and a deeply committed civil society group.

But there are deep-rooted, visible and invisible problems. Said a veteran pradhan of Alwar district, Suryadeb Barat, "We are panchayats with no powers. The state doesn't provide funds or resources. The local administration makes you wait for hours, refuses to cooperate, and makes simple things difficult."

"How can there be quality in school education when poverty, hunger and injustice mark every dimension of life in the villages of the poor?" asked Barat. "Panchayati Raj has no power, truth, and quality. It is the Aga Khan Foundation which has come to our rescue, but isn't it a shame that our own governments have betrayed us."

"The state is like a lazy elephant, and the NGOs are like rabbits, jumping at it, pushing it. But the NGOs can't pull the huge wooden logs. You will have to live with the state and push the elephant," said former chief secretary, Rajasthan, ML Mehta.

Yogendraji's solution is simple: "Why depend on the state? Let civil society create its own creative, liberating institutions, our own worlds of enlightenment, justice, equality and freedom. Let us transform this world. That's our fundamental right and we must have it."

E-mail: bodh_ss@rediffmail.com



Zakia Jowhar

An Indian Muslim women's union

Amit Sengupta

New Delhi

It might take years to make another world possible, but such is the indomitable spirit of human beings, especially women in the peripheries of metros, small towns and villages of 'invisible India' that they don't really need a morbid, profit-driven reality show to prove their point. Last week, 100 women's organisations, from the remotest parts of 'reality India', sat together and made a resolve, which, even if it partially comes true, might change the political, social and cultural landscape of the feminist question in India, especially when it comes to the oppressive twilight zones of Muslim women.

"The idea of Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan was born out of the necessity for Muslim women to speak for themselves and demand social, economic, political, civil, legal and religious rights for the realisation of equal citizenship," said Zakia Jowhar of Action Aid, the organisers of the event. "This platform aims to propagate a positive and liberal interpretation of religion which buttress the values of justice, equality and human rights enshrined in the Constitution of India," she added.

But why Muslim women, why not all women, and does it not sound apparently sectarian? Explains Zakia, the catalyst behind the dream, who has relentlessly worked among the survivors of the Gujarat genocide while being hounded by the Narendra Modi regime with threats of false cases, physical intimidation and, consistent local level 'VHP terror': "Gujarat has taught us many lessons. Women are often the first victims of male, fascist mobs. We want to assert that Muslim women can be Muslim, and yet believe in secularism and women's empowerment, demanding their political, social space and human rights under the Indian Constitution. We don't have to follow the diktats of the mullahs and the sectarian, patriarchal Muslim bodies to reaffirm our independent identities

as secular, progressive Muslim women."

This reflects in the resolution passed unanimously by women representing 12 states of India. Said young Shital from Mumbai, who works with the poor, "You can check out, 30 per cent of the delegates here are non-Muslims. While pushing for enlightened liberation among Muslim women specifically, we are striking a bigger alliance with Dalit, Adivasi, working class and other women's groups. Finally, it is a collective struggle; but in the same way as women in domestic spaces or Dalit women face historically conditioned problems in a patriarchal society, Muslim women too go through this vicious cycle."

Sitara Begum, in a burqa, works with Muslim women in the interiors of Orissa; she is based in Cuttack with the Muslim Women's Welfare Organisation. "It's not easy. If we want to study or work or reinterpret Islam within the positive frameworks of religion, the men don't like it. It's tough to push the idea that Muslim women are also mothers, that they sustain society, that they nourish family, nature and civilisation, that they too deserve dignity as per religious texts. But once men are convinced, it's a wonderful miracle." She smiles, and you know that she is not going to give up so easily. "I come here and meet other women, Muslim, non-Muslim, feminists, women who are staking their lives for justice in Gujarat and elsewhere. And I go back from here with the knowledge of civilisation, leadership qualities and the will to change the world."

Other eminent intellectuals too contributed to this enrichment of a new idea: Muslim women's empowerment with other feminist and subaltern alliances. Said reformer and Islamic studies scholar, Asghar Ali Engineer, "The basic core of the Quranic message was that of justice, a comprehensive concept that included gender justice as well. Injustice to women goes completely against the grain of Quran's teachings."

Dr Hameeda Nayeem from Kashmir University said, "The status of Muslims was better vis-à-vis Muslim women in India or Pakistan because of reforms in the Islamic laws as early as mid-20th century. The campaign needs to create an alliance of Muslim women across the nation but in the larger context it will also benefit from alliances with women from other communities."

To enable the Muslim community attain full citizenship the final resolution of the national conference of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan demanded the following:

- To provide an enabling socio-economic and political environment to achieve full human potential.
- To enable participation of the Muslim community in mainstream education to ensure their right to education.
- Immediate halt to the persecution of the Muslim community on the pretext of curbing terrorism.
- Initiation of reforms and a humanistic approach in personal laws with community participation and justice for women.
- And that economic policies should be reviewed to account for the loss of livelihood of marginalised classes owing to the impact of globalisation, privatisation, imperialism and capitalism.

"This is perhaps for the first time that so many woman representatives from various groups came together on the Muslim empowerment platform from 12 states. By 2007 we plan to set up our units in all the districts and wards of these and other states; we want to build a 10,000 strong women's force in the country by next year. If you don't believe me, we shall meet again in 2007," says Zakia and laughs.

Indeed, all those who know Zakia, and her incredible work, will not dare to disbelieve her incredible dream. She might be quiet, polite, non-dogmatic and low profile, but in her pink cotton saree and relentless energy, she can be a formidable dreamer and doer. Like Sitara Begum and Sheetal, and all those, preparing to carve a special niche of freedom and dignity outside the clichéd male domain of invisible India's reality show.

Fly a little with TC

Samita Rathor

New Delhi

I consider myself a Buddhist. Interdependence is one of the salient components of Buddhist philosophy and it has greatly influenced my life. I cannot function in this world without other people. If there are no seekers, there will be no providers. I am thankful to all those who have given me an opportunity to provide," says Tenzin Chogyal (TC to everyone), a Tibetan Buddhist monk. TC is a successful entrepreneur. He has also been part of movies with Brad Pitt and worked with Jean-Jacques Annaud, Heinrich Harrer and Mohsen Makhmalbaf.

TC is an expert in the architectural construction of sand mandalas and a producer of shows on Buddhism and philosophical issues for German and Swiss TV. He organises exclusive chartered flights for people coming from the US, Europe, and Sri Lanka to see Dharamsala. TC runs spiritual Buddhist tours for his international and domestic patrons. He is also a restaurateur.

At five feet TC stands tall with his extraordinary awareness of surroundings. Just back from a Buddhist pilgrimage with a group of 20 Europeans, Tenzin smiles and says, "We went to Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Sarnath, Ajanta and Ellora caves, Nagarjunakonda and Nagarjuna Sagar, Amravati, Tibetan monasteries, Kushinagar, Vaisali, Lumbini and Sravasti. Indians who have not encountered the magnificence of these places are really missing something in life. We are off again with a larger group to more Buddhist pilgrimage sites."

TC was born in Shimla in 1964. His parents like thousands of others escaped from Tibet in 1959. At eight years of age he was put in the Hunsur monastery in south India. In the 70's unlike the current scenario, the monasteries had no modern educational facilities. For a child, studying scriptures and working in the fields were the only options. TC had never seen a classroom in his life. The only form of education known to him was the *guru-shishya parampara*. Soon with the help of his teachers and friends he picked up English. Very few Tibetans in those days could speak the language, and Tenzin took the initiative since that was the only other way to communicate with the outside world.

As he grew up he got involved with raising funds for the monasteries. Tenzin explains, "We were the first group of Tibetans who were invited internationally to exhibit Tibet's sacred art of mandala construction. The idea was to evoke interest in a 2,500-year-old Tibetan tradition and culture to raise funds primarily for our monasteries."

At that moment TC realised how uncomfortable it made him feel asking people for money. At the same time he realised how much the human race respected the endangered Buddhist cultural heritage and he was glad to help preserve it. "I have never been able to leave India because culture is so strong and fascinating here. Buddhism originated in India. I was serious about showcasing Buddhist culture to mankind. I know how much it is cherished. I do not want it to fade away from the world. In that way I am encouraged to toil on it."

TC started Clear Path Tours in 1992. "I saw it as a valuable resource," he says. "Rather than do something without deep significance, I felt that providing groups with an opportunity to experience this culture would be more relevant. I got a very good response and people were very happy after experiencing these pilgrimages. I want people to have a better quality of life through these pilgrimages and become better human beings. This is what the world needs today."

He continues, "Politically it's tough for the Tibetans. In the meantime if we lose our culture, I don't see the point of getting the land. Land is everywhere; it's the same. Tibet is only good to have when the culture remains."

TC's love for India makes him describe the country as a 'Live Life'. He feels that India is a cultural and spiritual live wire. His guided pilgrimages are only a means of preserving this heritage.

"We started Clear Path Tours more than a decade ago and have extended hospitality to thousands of pilgrims and tourists who have visited India in groups ranging from 10 to 500 people. We have been sought after because we go the extra mile. We make their stay and travel in India, a memorable experience. We don't



Buddhist monks design a mandala

treat our patrons as just tourists but guests to our home and country. Care is taken in every minute detail to ensure total comfort. We don't just show them the monuments around India, we narrate history, mythology, and folk tales... we make their trip to India, meaningful. Today you can study Buddhism in universities all over the world. But the truth is Buddhism was born in India and hearing is different from feeling and touching."

Tenzin offers two different tours to his patrons. One is 'Footsteps of the Buddha', a unique, guided tour to the famous places of Buddhist pilgrimage. It aims to create within the traveller an atmosphere of peace, tranquility and a sense of connectedness with fellow beings and environments, precisely the essence of the Buddha's teachings. The second, 'A Tribute to Nagarjuna', is a tour with a Tibetan monk to important but little known places of Buddhist pilgrimage in southern India. It combines the ancient Buddhist sites in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh with Tibetan monasteries and temples in Karnataka.

The patrons are accompanied by an English speaking Tibetan monk, who gives guided tours to all the sacred places and also organises the logistics. Meditation and puja at the main sites are led by the guided monk. A lecture on the basics of Mahayana Buddhism and meditation by a learned Tibetan master in a Tibetan monastery in south India are a unique part of the tour. Good hotel accommodation, clean and hygienic food at an economical price is another tour highlight.

"The current generation is the future of the country," says TC. He provides international students, who are interested in living and working in the monasteries and villages, a direct

feel of not only Buddhist but also Indian culture. Just being in India learning and living with the bare minimum is a unique experience for these students, says TC.

TC is also a painter, with a keen interest in Indian art and culture. He loves driving long distance, enjoys theatre and meeting free and open-minded people. In Bodhgaya, he produced a film on the life of Buddha. It was scripted and directed by Bubbles Sabharwal and Lushin Dubey. Tucked away in the outer circle of Connaught Place, his restaurant Tibet Kitchen serves up Tibetan cuisine.

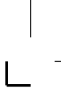
The sacred art of sand mandala construction is his favourite. "It is an art of impermanence, like everything else in life," he explains. TC has taken part in creating an intricate five feet mandala, internationally.

Tenzin summarises his objective. "I follow my dreams. Yes, sometimes I know it can be risky business. I have no backing or support, but I am confident."

And what does Clear Path mean to him? "It's simple, if you want to travel you need a path and my path is that of logic and simplicity. Logic and simplicity provide clarity. Clarity makes us positive. A positive cause produces positive results. If we are positive then we are happy and internal happiness can provide a clear path for all the future travels of our lifetime."



TC with Hollywood hero, Brad Pitt



TATA MOTORS AD



PRODUCTS

4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Devotion offers an incredible range of exquisitely hand embroidered garments and household linen crafted by rural women.

This project is the Arpana Trust's endeavour to empower women. We have beautiful hand embroidered bed covers, bed sheets, table cloths, towels, baby dresses, night wear, kurtas and lots more all lovingly made by village women.



Hand towel : Rs 292 ▲



Baby frock : Rs 250 ▲

Table cloth : Rs 243 ▲



Double bed cover : Rs 1,655 ▲



Cushion cover : Rs 233 ▲

Do come and shop at:

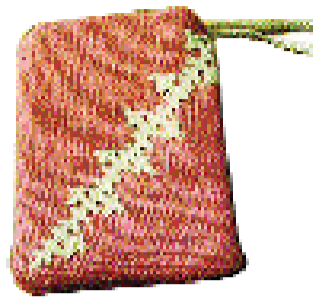
Devotion, Arpana Community Welfare Centre, NS-5, Street F-9, Munirka Marg (Next to MTNL), Vasant Vihar, New Delhi 110 057 Tel: (011) 2615 1136, Fax: (011) 2615 4974 E-mail: devotion@arpana.org, Website: www.arpana.org **Contact:** Neeta Tandon, Tel: 9871284847

Literacy India, an NGO which works in Gurgaon and Delhi, is producing and marketing products made by rural women in Haryana and Delhi under the brand name Indha. Indha is a round base rural women place on their heads on which they balance many pots. Products like fashion accessories, block printed cloth, hand made paper, batik material, paintings, bags and purses are currently being produced. Indha products follow the latest global fashion trends and have attracted buyers in the US and Singapore. About 100 women in village Daulatabad in Gurgaon are part of Project Indha which is expanding rapidly due to its success.

Wine bottle cover: Rs 80-100 ▼



Mobile pouch: Rs 50 ▲



Sankalp Saksharta Samiti is an NGO based in Noida, UP. Started by a school teacher, Meena Nijhawan, it provides education and livelihood training to underprivileged children. Sankalp means a vow, a determination to reach out to children and bring some light into their lives. Over the years the school's popularity has increased hugely because of the quality education it provides. The handicrafts displayed below are made by the children and funds generated help the NGO to continue doing its good work. There are pretty greeting cards, rakhis, attractive paper bags, envelopes, mobile pouches and bookmarks. So do come and shop.

Mobile case: Rs 35 ▲



Paper bag: Rs 35 ▼



Malnutrition is India's silent killer. The Dangoria Charitable Trust's Mahila Udyog offers a range of low cost nutritious foods which are tasty too. It runs a small food processing cum training centre which makes good use of surplus farm produce, improves diets and fetches an income for local women.

Solar driers, which preserve nutrition, are used. The foods are marketed in rural areas and in Hyderabad.

Dr Mahtab Bamji, a scientist from the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, runs this programme which not only invents good food products but also creates

Curry Leaves Powder : Rs 7 for 50 gm ▼



Tomato Pickle : Rs 20 for 250 gm ▼



PRODUCTS

4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Hand made papers products: Rs 5-250



Party bag ring handle : Rs 350



Cushion covers: Rs 90-135

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Book mark: Rs 35



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awareness of nutrition and makes food available to all at the right price.

There is a range of products to choose from. Poshana is an iron rich food which makes delicious upma, kheer, dosa, idli and even an eggless cake in minutes.

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papad and ragi laddu. You can also get solar dried green leafy vegetables like curry leaves, mint, drumstick and gongura which can be blended into chutneys or put into a sandwich.

There are solar dried pickles like tomato, mango, lime, cucumber. Dried ginger, sambhar and rasam powder, amla supari are available too. So, go ahead, choose some healthy, inexpensive foods for your family.

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Mahtab S Bamji, Dangoria Charitable Trust
211, Sri Dattasai Apartments, RTC Cross Rds,
Hyderabad- 500020
E- mail: mbamji@sancharnet.in;
mahtabbamji@yahoo.com
Phone: 040 27615148, Mobile: 09246886442
Or: Dangoria Charitable Trust Hospital, Village
Narsapur, Medak District, Andhra Pradesh
Phone: 08458-287841, 08458-286241,
Mobile: 09247269305 (Mr Murthy)

Buy these beautiful eco-friendly products handcrafted by two self-help groups: the Thendral Magalir Kootamaipu (TMK) and the Kanamalai Integrated Tribal Women Development Society (KIDS). There are table mats, tea trays, fruit baskets, paper bins, lunch bags and lots more all deftly woven by tribal and scheduled caste women of Padavedu, a remote village in the Thiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu.

Lunch Bag: Rs 250

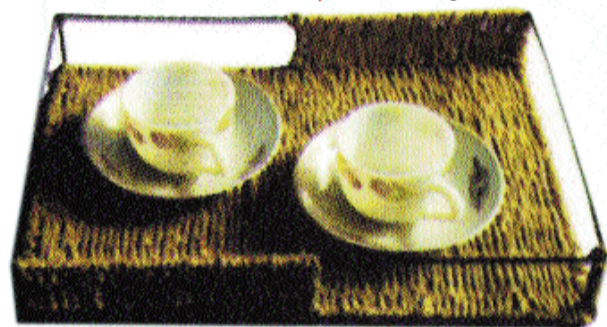


Set of Boxes: Rs 350

Laundry Basket: Rs 450



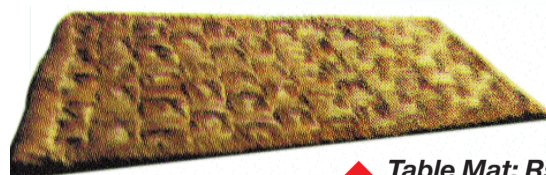
Tea Tray: Rs 155



Fruit Basket: Rs 130



Table Mat: Rs 65



The two SHGs are being given all support by the Srinivasan Services Trust, set up by Sundaram Clayton Ltd and TVS Motor Company Ltd.
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Ph: 04181 248279/248246
E-mail: sst@scl.co.in sponvaithy@yahoo.co.in
Website: www.tvssst.org

VOLUNTEER & DONATE

4th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) is an 80-year-old international NGO which provides specialist financial services to other charities and their supporters.

Its vision is: 'A world in which giving in a committed and effective way is a recognised part of everyday life.'

CAF's network spreads over six continents. It has network offices in UK (head office), India, Australia, Bulgaria, Russia, South Africa, USA, Brazil.

CAF's business model is based on receiving and then grantmaking funds on behalf of donors.

We offer donors choice of how to give, whom to give to and when to give.

We are neutral to a cause. The causes we support are:

- Children ● Education ● Care for the Disabled ● Health Care
- Community Development ● Animal Care ● Special Needs
- Livelihood promotion ● Advocacy ● Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation

In India, CAF started in 1998 and is registered as a charitable trust. CAF India has a list of validated charities for each of the causes it supports and raises funds from individuals and companies to support the non-profit sector.

CAF conducts a Due Diligence for charities it supports to ensure the funds are only disbursed to validated NGOs who comply with all the fiscal, legal and regulatory norms of the due diligence procedure. CAF's approach is to support the causes and issues most close to our donors' hearts by providing advice, offering tax effective solutions and creating programs wherever their chosen causes reside. CAF also provides reports on all grants received from the donors.

CAF'S PRODUCTS:

For companies: Corporate account, Give As You Earn, Matched Giving

For individuals: One time donation, Donor Advised Fund Thematic Funds (for Education, for Livelihood, for Chronic Health Care)

CAF has consulted with a number of its validated charities for health, education, children, livelihood promotion, special needs and animal care to put together options for the readers of *Civil Society*. If you are working with a company and would like your organisation to be involved with the community, do contact CAF India.

Action for Autism (AFA)

Focus: Support and shelter to street and working children.

Supporting the rights of people with autism and multiple disabilities.

Since its inception in 1991, Action for Autism (AFA) has pioneered the autism movement in the 1990s, autism was virtually unheard of in India and a majority of children with autism received a diagnosis of mental retardation.

In 1991, AFA started as a parent support group with the aim of raising awareness about autism in India. In 1994, AFA moved to counseling, specialised education and training, and in March of the same year, 'Open Door', the first specialised school for children with autism was started by AFA. Today, as the National Autism Organisation in the country, AFA actively supports several fledgling autism societies in India and South Asia. The organisation focuses on developing, testing and tailoring new teaching strategies and methodology for children with autism.

AFA works throughout the country and has a range of activities and programmes: ● Diagnosis and assessment of children ● Open Door School for education of special children. ● Teacher training programme ● Family and parent skill building through counseling and early intervention. ● Advocacy and awareness

Programme areas that require funding:

- Rs 3,500 a month to train and employ a caregiver who can assist in training in homes and schools.
- Rs 5,500 annually to sponsor a family hands on training in the mother child programme.

Volunteering opportunities:

AFA always welcomes volunteers. The volunteers work with and alongside other members of staff and are given the necessary training and guidance. Supervision is provided through discussions and extensive resource material is available in the organisation. In order to learn about the children, the cause and the organisation itself, AFA requires a minimum commitment of three months in the organisation.

Volunteer willing to help with our financial management and develop HR policies. Background in the development sector will be helpful but not essential.

Art & crafts assistant who would be responsible for a 'crafts hour' with a group of about 5-7 children, in which he/she would help children paint and make saleable items such as greeting cards, wrapping paper, etc. The volunteer may also be involved in marketing of the items created by children with autism.

CHRONIC CARE FOUNDATION

Chronic diseases, also known as non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a hidden epidemic in India. NCDs are the top ten causes of death today and have reached alarming proportions. Globally 388 million people will die in the next ten years due to chronic diseases. The majority of deaths will occur in the most productive age groups. Chronic diseases are depleting the quality and quantity of the labour force in many countries resulting in lower national output (GDP and GNI)

The high and increasing incidence of cardio vascular, diabetes and kidney diseases has led to the formation of The Chronic Care Foundation with the primary aim being preventive health care for these diseases in India.

Location: New Delhi/ NCR

Focus: The Chronic Care Foundation (CCF) is a registered non-profit that is committed to strengthening and creating an enabling environment for the prevention and management of chronic diseases and improving the care and outcomes of patients with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic kidney disease in India. CCF achieves this through professional services, capacity building, research, data and information, coordination, collaboration and integration of initiatives at the community level.

Key objectives

To identify and build scale on tools and methods for early detection, prevention and management of the disease especially for the poor and disadvantaged populations

Resource centre for information on chronic diseases in India

Provide a platform for professionals, patients and other stakeholders to evolve best practices through knowledge sharing and capacity building

Spearhead awareness and advocacy to build scale on information sharing and availability to the common person at grass root levels.

Facilitate institutional and community based strategies & programmes for improving the quality of life for chronically ill people in the community

Support and funding needed:

Partner and provide support to our projects, initiatives and activities – financial and non-financial. CCF invites support in funding and other resources for our advocacy programmes, public health education campaigns, community health camps, counseling centres, research project in 2007-2008 and for the development of tools for promoting awareness amongst children and the marginalised sections of society.

We also invite Volunteers and Health care workers in NCR to contact us.

Dr SHROFF'S CHARITY EYE HOSPITAL (SCEH)

Did you know?

There are 12- 15 million blind people in India

Every 20 seconds one person goes blind in India

Every 4 minutes a child goes blind in India

Cataract contributes 62 per cent of blindness

80 per cent of blindness is avoidable

Focus: Eradication of blindness among the poor through quality medical care.

The corner stone of community work at Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH) is the desire to provide quality eye care services to all economic sections of the society. The principle is to create awareness and develop self-sustainable eye care models focusing on Community-based Rehabilitation. In all its adopted areas, instead of following a 'Camp based approach', SCEH either reaches out to communities through 'Vision Centres' or regular clinics at permanent locations. The objective is comprehensive ophthalmology

Today, SCEH reaches out to disadvantaged communities in: ● Alwar District (Rajasthan) ● Faridabad District (Haryana) ● Gurgaon District (Haryana) ● Bagpat District (Uttar Pradesh) ● Rewari district (Haryana)

Programme areas that require funding: Rs.5000 to support the Cataract/Squint/Glaucoma surgery for 1 child below 6 years of age) Rs.2500 to support one cataract surgery for a child (above 6 years)

■■■ committed to effective giving

CAF

- Name of Donor:
- Address of Donor:
- Name of Charity: Program:
- Donation Amount:
- Payment by: Cheque/DD/Money Order
- Cheque/DD Number:
- Dated: (dd/mm/yy)
- Cheque/DD Drawn on:

Note: All cheques to be drawn in favour of 'Charities Aid Foundation, India'.
Full information on CAF and other charity matters may be found on our - website: www.cafonline.org
Postal Address : CAF India, A-85, First Floor, East Of Kailash, New Delhi 110 065
Tel.: 011-41689100, Fax: 011-41689104

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