

Civil Society

WHAT IS A WORLD CLASS CITY?



The Hazards Centre team



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COVER STORY



IT'S EVERYONE'S WORLD CLASS CITY

Dunu Roy and the Hazards Centre held Shehar.com at the Habitat Centre to give Delhi's slum-dwellers a voice. This is the story of their many concerns.

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Civil Society

The urban riddle

CITIES are India's engines of growth and modernisation. So, people turn up in them for a better life. They hope to find employment, shelter, education and health care. They get all this, but only by scratching around. After years of having migrated to a city, people remain usurers. Governments have no idea of how to provide quality services. Politicians and bureaucrats show little innovation in taking cities to their true potential and using the creativity and enterprise of the millions that are drawn to them. It does not matter which part of the country you may be in or which political party may be in power. There is only one national approach to cities and that is to strip them of value for a select few, extract cheap services and treat migrants as trespassers.

On the other hand, there is ample evidence now that people in the unorganised sector in cities make good borrowers. Those vendors and rickshaw-pullers are known to repay loans and actually have a rather good credit rating. They also pay for medical treatment, education, water, electricity and so on. The only difference is that what they get is invariably through illegal channels. It is, therefore, a failure of governance that they haven't been formally included in the economy and given their place as creative drivers of growth.

It is also a failure of governance that alternative centres of growth have not been created in the rural areas from where migration takes place. The agricultural sector is in decline. Information technology needed to have been put to greater use to make rural areas competitive and link them to the overall growth of the economy.

Reporting on Delhi today one is reminded of the Calcutta of the Eighties. There were the same problems and the Marxist regime showed as little sensitivity to the needs of ordinary people. Builders swung all kinds of sweetheart deals in the Calcutta of those days even as slums continued to proliferate. There was garbage and malaria and naked bottoms defecating into open drains right next to those wonderful high-rise buildings. All this and more under a regime whose mandate it should primarily have been to find solutions for the poor. Now Kolkata too wants to be a world class city, attract foreign investment and so on. It is terribly proud of its flyovers. But in so many decades of being in government the pious Marxists have not solved any of Kolkata's real problems.

Delhi's preparations for world class status and the Commonwealth Games brings it face to face with its own backlog. Decades of neglect have resulted in the city having grown way beyond the limited vision of its administrators. People have had to get on with their lives. In the absence of housing slums have come up. So have small businesses of various kinds.

Now world class status to the state government seems to mean pushing people out and wiping the slate clean. But what about the government's own failure? Our decision to do this cover story has been prompted not by the presumption that we have any clear answers, but by the belief that an honest dialogue is needed. Dunu Roy and the young team at Hazards Centre have been doing interesting work. They deserve to be heard.

We also have in this issue the Pratham report on education, which shows that children may be going to school but even in the more advanced states in the south they are learning little. Our Insight section seeks to provide an overview of much needed police reforms.

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'How long does it take to teach *Pratham* report shows youngsters in school,

Vidya Viswanathan
New Delhi

IN mid-January, Pratham, a Mumbai based non-profit, published its Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2006) that covered 600,000 children across the country. The results were contrary to popular belief. School enrolments were high except in a few districts in some states. Only 3.7 per cent of all children surveyed in the age group six to 14 had never enrolled in school. In Bihar more than 20 percent of children were not enrolled in several districts while enrolment in Tamil Nadu is in the high nineties in most districts.

Teachers were also present in a very high percentage of schools. Yet reading and arithmetic fared poorly. About 51.9 percent of children in the seven to 11 age group cannot read a simple paragraph of Class 2 level in the local language. About 65.5 per cent of children in the seven to 11 age group cannot divide a three digit number by a single digit number.

In some southern states, where enrolment is very high and infrastructure is in place, student performance is bad. Fifty percent of children enrolled in Class 5 cannot read Class 2 level texts in Tamil Nadu while the corresponding figure is 28.7 percent in Bihar where the dropout rate is higher.

The annual report has a lot of detailed district level data on performance that Pratham is analysing. This will be used for advocacy. **Madhav Chavan**, director programmes of Pratham, spoke to *Civil Society* about the results of the survey and their future course of action.

Enrolment in schools is quite high. That is not commonly known.

Infrastructure is definitely being put in place. By next year we will see UP and Bihar also gearing up. Why children are not reading, writing and doing arithmetic is because we tend to believe that if children go to school there will be results. There is no focus on reading, writing and arithmetic. That is absolutely clear.

In Bihar, children who manage to go to school are doing better than in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu...

What is happening, I think, is that there is this thing called a textbook. And the entire focus of the education department is on finishing the textbook. You can eat it if you want but you must finish it. So



what is happening is that in a number of places teachers are giving dictation and asking children to copy from the blackboard. I have just put a note together on what can be done in different states.

We have recently completed a campaign in Madhya Pradesh to increase reading and writing abilities with the help of the state government. Madhya Pradesh came off very badly in the survey. What I'm hearing now from tests conducted in late January is that the state can improve hugely in reading and writing ability in a short span of time. This is not rocket science. In Madhya Pradesh the jump is 30 to 40 percent in 45 days.

You are saying it is a matter of finding the problem...

Forty-nine percent of children in Karnataka don't know alphabets when they come to Class 1. How long does it take to teach a child alphabets? The focus in Class 1 should be on ensuring that every child knows the alphabets

and can read simple words. If they can do this they will catch up. Look at data. Fifty percent of children who have learnt to read alphabets in Class 1 have learnt to read by Class 5.

How do you make sure of that?

Every teacher has to do that. Right now the focus is not the child. Why do they have to finish a book if 49 percent of children can't read? Make sure that every child knows the alphabets and is playing the alphabet game. That takes just three months. You can tell them stories to keep them engaged.

My solution would be that till Class 3 do not use textbooks. Give children storybooks. There are a hundred thousand stories in this country. Children in Class 1 want to see nice pictures of birds, nice colourful things - engage them. Give them enough library books to read. Instead of giving them 40 textbooks give them 40 different books. Now you have taught them alphabets. They will start reading. Make sure there is a reading class. Make sure children talk about what they read, write about it and critique it.

How do you do this nationwide? Are teachers trained to do this?

What kind of training does this need? It is so trivial. Which mother is trained? How do they get their children to behave? So our note to all the states is that can you make sure that all children in Class 1 know alphabets and can form simple words.



"What is happening, I think, is that there is this thing called a textbook. And the entire focus of the education department is on finishing the textbook."

Madhav Chavan

a child alphabets?' *but learning little*



Photographs by LAKSHMAN ANAND

You send the note to states and what happens? Who and how will they implement it?

Different states will work differently. We will work with people at every level and we will talk to anyone who wants to listen. In some states the IAS officials will not listen. That is fine by us. Our attitude is: we are citizens of this country. These are our children and we will do the right thing.

Where is it working?

In Uttar Pradesh. It has come a long way in the last five years. So have most other states. Enrolment drives to get children into school and the appointment of teachers has happened. It is not true that government officers are just sitting there. When we started talking to government officers two years ago that children can't read, they listened. Maharashtra is doing something on its own. In Madhya Pradesh we are working with them. There are other initiatives. For example, the Azim Premji Foundation has a learning guarantee programme. So quality consciousness is slowly creeping into the system. In Bihar we trained 6000 master trainers who in turn train other teachers.

So you are doing training...

We did a different kind of training. We asked them to work with children and we see and help. For example we take a child who cannot read fluently, give her a book and tell her to try reading by herself. Fifteen days later she comes back with a

bright smile and says, "I can read". This happens because she has applied her mind. If you do this kind of demonstration and they see it, they begin to believe. The typical training that is going on is in the form of lectures. We let the teacher explore. They in turn have to get children to explore. So it is my conviction that the situation across the country can be changed in two years. We will set the agenda for skill levels in education.

How does it work with government?

In Maharashtra the minister said we have a huge system and so we will implement. We asked them if they would like us to do consultation but the government officers said no. So we voluntarily decided to promote their programme. We recruited volunteers or *Satyagrahis* and told them, these are your villages and your children. The government is spending money and you make sure that the programme works. The Maharashtra numbers are looking good because of these programmes.

Do the Satyagrahis know what to do?

We give them 15 days and tell them to play alphabet games with these children, so when they see 'ka' they know what it is. We distribute alphabet cards and ask them to identify with pictures. Fortunately our languages are phonetic. In 15 days if they know about 15 to 20 alphabets that is more than enough. Then we start showing them words. Then they start taking interest. There is a whole methodology. Tell children stories. Then give them storybooks to read. We give the *Satyagrahis* things to do for 10 days or 15 days. In addition, we create a social environment.

We do a public group reading so people know there is a problem. We have to create an environment where children get to school every day. It cannot be done silently. If we get a few young people in that village interested enough to help out, it catches up. It works more in certain places and a little less in others. But that is the characteristic of any movement.

You say you want teachers to give children interesting storybooks. That means that you want teachers to maintain a small library in school. Where are these books going to come from and how will the library be funded?

You have to create them. That is what we are doing with Pratham books. There were not enough books. There are not enough books because there is no market. We can create a market for books if the government decides that every village or every cluster of villages must have a really good library. Instead of increasing teachers' salaries all the time spend a couple of lakhs in building a good library for every 10 villages. We need to create a knowledge culture.

Can this be implemented? What about funds?

Every year if you want to set up a library worth a lakh of rupees of books and you say you are going to spend a hundred crores every year, how many libraries do you get? It works out to 10,000 libraries a year. In 10 years you will have 100,000 libraries. We only have 600,000 villages. There is enough money. The planning commission is talking about spending Rs 11,000 crores for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan next year.

Jamshedpur awaits court decision

Anuj Kumar Sinha
Jamshedpur

THE Jharkhand state government has gone silent on the issue of constituting a municipal corporation in Jamshedpur as the matter has gone to the High Court.

Earlier, for weeks together, people took to the streets and filed 600,000 objections in writing with the district administration against the setting up of a municipal corporation. Most of these applications were rejected because the administration said that they did not cite specific objections to the corporation proposal.

Thereafter, the Citizens' Forum moved the High Court. Tata Steel went to the court subsequently. As the municipal corporation would include the scheduled areas where tribals live, the tribal population opposed the move. They did not want to lose the money that comes to their panchayats. The tribal leader, Salkhan Murmu, moved a petition in the High Court.

In the meanwhile, the government has filed an affidavit in the court clarifying that it wants to constitute the corporation by the end of March and intends to hold elections by November.

It is only Ranchi in Jharkhand that has a municipal corporation. Apart from Jamshedpur, the state government plans to constitute corporations in Dhanbad, Hazaribagh and Bokaro. It has run into opposition only in Jamshedpur.

The massive opposition to inclusion of the scheduled area in the proposed corporation brought the government under tremendous pressure. Urban Development Minister of Jharkhand, Raghbar Das, has hinted that the government can review its decision to include the scheduled area in the proposed corporation. The statement also implies that the government is firm on its move to form a municipal corporation in Jamshedpur and it is waiting only for the court to announce its verdict.

The hint regarding excluding the scheduled area has apparently been dropped to keep the tribals and others in the rural areas outside the movement by Jamshedpur citizens. The government believes that by doing so, it can divide and weaken the movement.

The government doesn't want any confrontation from the tribal population as it has to keep in mind the panchayat elections as well.

As the matter rests in court, Jamshedpur has gone placid. Demonstrations have stopped. But summer is setting in and the non-Tata Steel areas are again threatened with a water crisis. This will sharpen the divide between these areas and those managed by Tata Steel's JUSCO or Jamshedpur Utilities and Services Company. There is no water or power crisis in the areas served by JUSCO. The big question is whether this will weaken the movement against the setting up of a corporation.

Punjabis honour theatre hero

Daljit Ami
Chandigarh

IN Kussa, a remote village of Punjab in district Moga, some 25,000 people gathered to honour septuagenarian theatre artiste, Gursharan Singh. He was taken by them in a joyous procession. The sound of the *Nagara* and slogans of Gursharan Singh *Jug Jug Jiveh* (May Gursharan Singh live for ages) and *Inqilab Zindabad* filled the air.

The Gursharan Singh *Inqilabi Sanman Samaroh* Committee, Punjab (Revolutionary Honour Programme Committee for Gursharan Singh) organised the event to celebrate the life and ideals of this respected theatre personality.

Accolades are not new to Gursharan Singh, whose work spans four decades. He has received awards like the Sahitya Akademi and the Kalidas Samman. But this unique gathering must have been special for him because it was his audience, the people of Punjab turning up in droves to honor him.

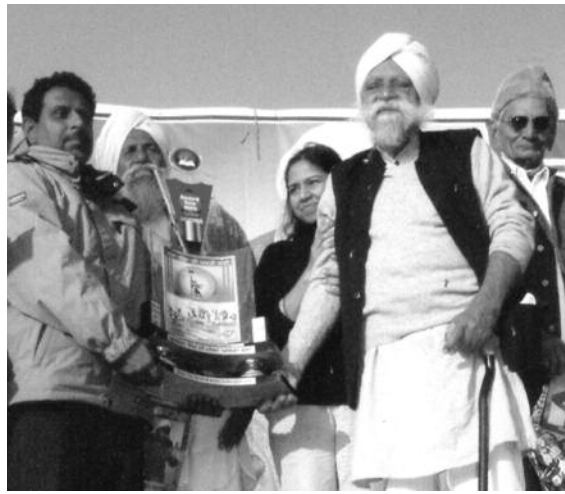
It spoke volumes for the life Gursharan Singh has led, his love for theatre, his concern for the common man and his identification with revolu-

tionary and social movements.

It was this concern that inspired him to evolve his own style of theatre, called *Thara* (platform). In *Thara* the dependence on a formal stage is minimal. Gursharan is known to have performed on cots joined together or on carts or wooden planks placed over drums. In fact, on anything which could be readily constructed to make a platform.

He was born into an educated and well-off family in Multan. As a young lad he was most upset when he found one of his schoolmates, Badhwa, working as a sweeper. When Gursharan asked him why Badhwa said, "How can we poor study?"

This filled young Gursharan with determination to serve the underprivileged. His mission put him in touch with freedom fighters like Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, Sohan Singh Josh and Teja Singh Sutantar from whom he learnt much. "They gave me the direction and vision of my life. I joined the Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1944," he says.



Gursharan Singh (right) receiving the citation

dark period. He remained sympathetic to the Naxalite movement.

"Nazam Hussain had written a play called *Takht Lahore*' against Ayub's dictatorship in Pakistan. We staged this play in Amritsar on 9 September, 1975 and I was dismissed from my job two days later. I was arrested a week after and sent to prison for 45 days," he recalls.

Gursharan Singh has motivated women to join theatre and made gender issues an integral part of his plays. His work and ideals are shared by his wife Kailash Kaur who performs in his plays. Their daughters, Navsharan and Areet follow the tradition.

The occasion ended with a presentation of a memento accompanied with a framed citation entitled *Salam, Sanman Ate Ahed* (Salute, Honour and Pledge).

Burdwan school gets children off fields

Rina Mukherji
Burdwan

HOW do you attract seven-year-old children, happy to herd cows round the village, to a school? The Vikramshila Education Resource Society (VERS) at Bigha, a small village in Burdwan district of West Bengal, crafted a curriculum that caught the attention of children, their siblings and parents. The average school attendance in the district, till middle school, has risen to around 72 per cent.

Bigha is located in the farming heartland of Burdwan. While the richer upper castes attended the government school at Putsudi, at a distance of a few kilometres, poorer people stayed away, tending to their small farms and cattle. They didn't perceive education as important to earn a living.

Shubhra Chatterji, Vikramshila's director, decided to introduce a curriculum that would be of relevance to a rural community. Drawing on her long experience as an academician and researcher in several elite schools, Chatterji put together a syllabus that would help students learn from their environment. That was how the Vikramshila experiment started in 1995.

At the pre-primary level, each student is taught hygiene through rhymes and play-acting. As students grow up, they are introduced to caring for the environment - water bodies, trees and the neighborhood. Each child has his or her own little tree in the school compound that he or she looks after as a friend. Students are taught to handle earthworms and make manure by vermicomposting

Every child learns to draw up a biodiversity chart

listing the animals, plants, birds and fish found in the village and its vicinity. Students study history by charting the history of the village. Geography is learnt by understanding the place of small Bigha in the larger world: in the district, the country and the world.

The local water body is used to teach children the concept of pH and its value in determining acidity, alkalinity and neutrality. Students also learn how to feed and care for fish and keep a water body healthy. At middle school level, children are organised into eco-clubs, which carry out environment-related activities within the community and the neighborhood. Children learn how to assess the quality of soil for farming on the basis of its acidity or alkalinity. They are also taught how to improve soil fertility.

Children of Class IV are given vocational guidance. They visit the village goldsmith, blacksmith, carpenter, shoemaker or tailor to understand those jobs. When they get older they are encouraged to become part of a Saathi Group. This is a community welfare committee that handles natural and man-made disasters like floods, earthquakes and riots.

This activity-based curriculum has enthused students so much that many first generation learners have brought their siblings to the school to be enrolled. Bashir Sheikh's sister, Hussanara Khatun, was the first of five siblings to attend the Vikramshila school. She brought along her two younger brothers - one of them was Bashir - to join her in school. Hussanara was the first in the family to appear for the Madhyamik exam this year.

Anwarul Sheikh is a first generation learner too. He is the sixth child in his family and the first to go

to school. Anwarul loves drawing maps and is very enthusiastic about learning how to tend to the soil.

The parents of these children are very impressed. They learn from their children. "My five-year old picks up everything in school through song and dance. She then teaches me. It is wonderful learning about hygiene and the environment from her," says Mujibur Rahman Sheikh about his little daughter, Santana Khatun.

There was a time when Jhontu Bag, Sahai Mondol and Asfar Sheikh were content to herd cows all over the village. "I had to drag them to school," recalls Vikramshila's coordinator, Arun Sain. Interestingly, these three first generation learners appeared for the Madhyamik this year.

The school is only up to middle level, but students continue to visit it for remedial coaching and other activities. Zeenatunissa Khatun says she achieved the distinction of being the first female student to complete Madhyamik from the village in 2003 thanks to the coaching she received at Vikramshila. She continues her association with the school and is part of the Adolescent Girls Group. They learn yoga, discuss throwing, high jump and long jump all of which she enjoys 'immensely'.

The Vikramshila school is now a recognised resource centre for teachers in the district. The school is taking part in the Shiksha Satra Community Education Programme run in Burdwan to check school dropouts. They have been holding holiday camps for the students of nine government schools in the district, and they are conducting teacher orientation programmes on a regular basis.

Perhaps, there is a valuable lesson to be learnt here for the rest of rural India. (Charkha Features)

Arunachal women want to lead

Madhu Gurung
Itanagar

A three-day follow-up meeting of a women's leadership workshop was organised recently by The Hunger Project (THP) for the elected women representatives (EWRs) of Papum Pare district in Arunachal Pradesh.

Three months ago these women had attended THP's workshop on leadership training. Twenty one of them returned to speak of the work they have been able to do in their *bastis*. Dressed in colourfully woven 'galle', the women, belonging to Arunachal's Adi and Nishi tribes, are gradually donning the mantle of leadership, which in tribal tradition has so far belonged to the men.

Of the 21 EWRs, one is an Anchal Samiti member and another an Anchal Samiti chairperson. Eleven are gram panchayat members and four gram panchayat presidents. Reservations for women in Panchayati Raj became a reality in Arunachal Pradesh only in 2003.

Today out of 8260 elected panchayat members, 3183 are women, making up 38.54 percent of their state's grassroots leadership.

All the women have been elected for the first time. They use common sense and native courage to move ahead. There is an old Nishi saying: "The house that has sons will be poor, but the house that has girls will be rich."

This makes most outsiders believe women in Arunachal Pradesh enjoy more freedom and a higher social status than their counterparts in the rest of India. But much has changed in traditional tribal society because of the influx of a dominant culture from the plains, globalisation and an overwhelming cable network. Erosion of tribal ways

and customs is the biggest threat faced by the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

"The gender disparity in tribal society is subtle and unseen," says Jarjum Ete, chairperson of THP's Arunachal Chapter. "It surfaces as age old tribal traditions. Children are named from the last two syllables of their father's name. Women cannot pass on their names and if the man has no son this ancient legacy dies with him, so men want sons. Women cannot inherit property. Women were never included in the village council. Tribal laws



Elected women representatives taking an oath to work as effective leaders

permit polygamy that in today's world undermines a woman's social status. As elected women representatives, women have to surmount this tribal mindset, before they can make their mark as leaders."

Chukusat is unlettered, but when reservation elevated her to the position of the Kirgam *basti* leader, she was shy and reticent, afraid to take decisions. She attended two workshops where she learnt how to run the gram sabha, and talk forcefully about the woes of her village to government

officials. After returning home from THP's first workshop she told her husband: "For the past three years you have been attending meetings in my name, now I will do it on my own as I am ready to take responsibility."

Yarjum Ete is the Anchal Samiti chairperson of Pubu Yombu Anchal. A graduate, she has decided to make all dealings in her panchayat transparent. She has begun to get the people of her village attend meetings. She informs them about various schemes and involves them in making collective decisions.

The EWRs have together identified five problems they would work for in their villages. The first is the reproductive health of women who live in far flung mountain areas with little access to emergency medical help.

Says Topu Ete, "Women are prone to being anaemic and that itself causes problems especially during childbirth and while bringing up children. Malnutrition is another problem we have decided to tackle by making *anganwadis* functional. Third, is getting potable piped water to the villages. Besides constant rain creates havoc with our *kuccha* village tracks which become slushy and treacherous. We intend to make cobbled steps. Equally important is ensuring disabled people get benefits."

Unwittingly the 21 EWRs have made a road map for reform. They believe that their plans can be achieved. They have each other to lean on. They also plan to visit one another to see how far each of them has progressed. Although all of them have completed over three years in their post they finally feel empowered. They feel like leaders.

"Being uneducated does not help," admits Chukusat, "The women of my village are insisting that we should have a night school. I too will join them. I am now eager to learn everything."

Dal Lake residents protest relocation

Tanveen Kawoosa
Srinagar

S RINAGAR'S famous Dal Lake is fading with each passing day. The lake, which sustains the livelihood of more than 50,000 people has shrunk from 75sq km in 1200 AD to 10.5 sq km in 2006.

Dal dwellers are at loggerheads with government officials over relocation and restoration of the lake has become a complex mess.

"Recent population estimates show that 50,000 people live within the lake either in hamlets or houseboats. Every month sewage and raw effluents from the immediate catchment area is estimated at 8.877 metric tonnes of nitrogen and 5.353 metric tonnes of phosphorus which results in luxuriant weed growth," says Dr Rashiduddin, a noted environmental scientist.

In addition illegal encroachments, floating gardens, land reclamation, massive constructions and unchecked siltation and weeds, have converted this aquatic glory to an environmental

nuisance.

The Jammu and Kashmir Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) claims that it has taken some steps like shifting of colonies, de-weeding and removing floating gardens from important stretches.

"Financial constraints are hampering work," says LAWDA vice chairperson Tanveer Jahan.

Sources in the state government say huge finances are needed to relocate and rehabilitate Dal dwellers. They blame the central government for not releasing adequate funds. The central government blames the state authorities for mismanaging money and going slow.

Recently the High Court ordered LAWDA to take strong measures to dismantle illegal structures along the banks of the Dal Lake.

LAWDA claims that 1,145 kanals of encroached land have been retrieved and 1,106 families of Dal dwellers rehabilitated in housing colonies.

Dal dwellers on the other hand assert that displacement is an assault on their identity.

"Water means for us what land means to you. Our centuries old lifestyle is threatened owing to relocation. We do not desire land and colonies. Water is life for us," says Jabbar Koli, houseboat owner.

This Hanji community is being forced to shift to an alien lifestyle on land. Fear of displacement and an uncertain future have thrown them into dire straits.

"We are not against beautification of Dal Lake," says Majid, a member of the Shikara Association. "If we are displaced we will lose control over our resources. There is widespread unemployment. What options do we have? For us relocation spells doom."

In the absence of a sewage system, it is alleged that the Hanji community pollutes the lake. The community is quick to deny allegations. According to them structures like the Centaur Hotel and others spread across Boulevard Road have been assaults on the lake.

"Sprawling illegal hotels spoil our habitations and the lake. The government must face this hard fact and catch the real culprits," says Majid.



Photographs by LAKSHMAN ANAND

IT'S EVERYONE'S WORLD CLASS CITY

Dunu Roy and the Hazards Centre held Shehar.com at the Habitat Centre to give Delhi's slum-dwellers a voice

Civil Society News
New Delhi

FEBRUARY 4 was like any other busy Saturday at the India Habitat Centre in Delhi. The auditoriums were all booked. Out on the lawn and its adjoining cemented spaces there was serious lunchtime eating on the agenda. The mild winter sun offered just the right warmth – as it always does at the height of the conference season in the capital.

But round the corner from the spotless white tables and umbrellas and the glinting steel dishes put out for the buffet, the Habitat was also playing host to something not quite so measured. At its compact amphitheatre, which is sunk out of sight between buildings, rough and ready troupes were performing plays

about life in Delhi's slums. There were messages of squalor and disease, inequality and failed aspirations. The performing slum-dwellers had also brought along their audience of ragpickers and daily wage earners – perhaps because they were unsure of how big an audience they would get or may be just to do some sightseeing. The Habitat, though the hub of so many NGO offices, would normally be out of bounds for them.

The plays told the stories of construction labour, water shortages, garbage disposal, eviction, police harassment, migration from rural areas and the lack of housing. The players were children and young men and women. They tried to capture the urban divide between the manicured surpluses of the posh heart of Delhi and the wretched shortages experienced in the squalor on the capital's fringes.

Called Shehar.com, the event was organised by the Hazards Centre whose

guiding light is the gentle Dunu Roy, all of 61, but in jeans and sneakers with white hair flowing down to his shoulders.

The Hazards Centre has been working in the slums of Delhi for the past seven years. It was set up by the Sanchal Foundation to provide professional support to social action groups and organisations on anything that is dangerous to the survival of the community. In Hindi it calls itself Khatra Kendra.

With other urban grassroot groups it forms the Sajha Manch. Together they have been trying to build a dialogue between planners and people who live and work in Delhi, but whose voices aren't heard and whose legal status as residents is perpetually challenged. Shehar.com was one more new move on this chessboard. It was in response to the robust celebrations by the Delhi government of plans to become a world class city in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2010.

"What is a world class city?" was the question that the Hazards Centre and the slum-dwellers were asking. Through their plays about their lives, the slum-dwellers, who constitute perhaps 30 per cent of Delhi, were providing a range of answers. By doing so at the Habitat they were asserting their right to be heard. They were asking for a place at the tables of the Habitat.

So, the play from Bhalaswa, a resettlement colony in a distant northwestern corner of Delhi, told of how eviction from the city had meant children having to leave school and the loss of livelihoods for the adults. Shifting out of a slum in the city hadn't resulted in a better life because Bhalaswa was just as bad in civic terms. And much worse in many other ways because of the absence of a wider city infrastructure.

Similarly, the Toli group's offering was all about water and the disputes that arise over it. It expressed concerns over the privatisation of supply. Ashray Adhikar Abhiyan brought the homeless along. Jigar, a group of children living on the streets, staged a play on how children drift from their homes in rural areas and lose themselves in the city.

There were also performances from groups who have never lived in a slum and wouldn't know how to survive in one, but are concerned about the future of Indian cities. Steps for Change did *Kahani har ghar ki* on environment and waste management.

There were campus offerings as well from Kirori Mal College, Hans Raj College and Jawaharlal Nehru University. The Kirori Mal and Hansraj performances - on labour and livelihoods - were vibrant and vigorous. By comparison, Jawaharlal Nehru University staged a dreary monologue on working class realities called Hamlet in Faridabad. If the white tables round the corner seemed far removed from the spontaneity and freshness of Shehar.com, so did JNU's Hamlet seem to belong to some exclusive enclave.

But it is in the contrasts, the zones of grey that answers perhaps lie.

Says Dunu Roy: "I think contrasts are very educative. We were doing our plays and performances on one side and an NGO was doing a meeting on sustainable development on the other side. And people could see the difference. Not only in the poor, but in the messages that were coming across envisioning the city."

"Equally, even among our performers, when the first play came up people saw the contrast-how an intellectual sees Hamlet in Faridabad. And how the workers in Faridabad see Faridabad. Contrasts lead to questions, they lead to ideas. This is something everybody should be able to see. We are not saying we have all the answers. What we are saying is at least start questioning what is around. If you can provoke that process, you begin to ask the right questions."

It is also important for people who may not have property rights in Delhi but contribute to its economy to have the confidence to be seen and heard in places which are at the heart of the new world class vision for Delhi. "They must say, Don't look at us only as being poor. We are talented and have ideas," says Roy.

The Habitat management's permission for staging Shehar.com itself came as a part of a process, which began when Hazards Centre was asked to present at Habitat its views on the master plan for Delhi the year before last.

"Instead of saying here are our experts, we said here are our people and they would also like to participate-rickshaw-pullers, slum-dwellers children from the street, ragpickers," explains Roy.

The first thing the slum-dwellers said - and Hazards Centre encouraged them - was that they didn't understand a word of what was being said because it was all in English.

"We said then you demand that whatever is said should be said in a language you can understand otherwise how can you participate," recalls Roy. "So very timidly they asked people to please speak in Hindi. But the moment the speakers began using Hindi they stumbled because their mode of articulation is English. The idiom changed and with it collapsed their ability to sell and their ideas."

In fact, by being able to change the medium, a different set of ideas was allowed to surface and find temporary currency.

"People should be able to go into these centres of intellectual and economic power, the offices of the DDA, the Delhi Secretariat and so on and make their voices heard. Just as much as they should be able to make their voices heard in



Through their plays about their lives, the slum-dwellers who constitute perhaps 30 per cent of Delhi, were providing a range of answers. By doing so at the Habitat they were asserting their right to be heard. They were asking for a place at the tables of Habitat.

their own localities," says Roy.

The Shehar.com performances at the Habitat underlined the need for speeding up the process. The campaign for Delhi as a world class city has been strident and has excluded people in the unorganised sector, their rights as citizens and their role in the economy.

"There is a very media driven, corporate driven and administration driven idea of a world class city. It has gripped the imagination of a particular class. Nobody seems to go back to facts and figures. The idea itself is problematic. If you look at the master plan it says three things: sports, tourism and conventions," says Roy.

So, how does the Hazards Centre see a world class city?

First of all the Hazards Centre believes in articulating needs more democratically. The present vision of being world class as it now exists may not be the best or the most sustainable. In the absence of consultation and discussion, it could be defined wholly by the profligacy and surpluses of the rich whose idea of urbanisation may be crafted only by the defining of their own needs.

"So if people in *bustees* are saying today they are getting 10 litres of water and what they need is 40 litres and the norm on the other hand is 270 litres we consider this as sustainable use of water. It's a good way of looking at the city," explains Roy. "For Delhi to be a world class city it should be sustainable, it should fulfil everybody's needs and it should be humane."

Governance, governance, governance...

We asked a cross section of people to define a world class city. This is what we got.

Develop villages

Harivansh, Chief Editor, Prabhat Khabar, Ranchi

THERE should be a change in the current strategy which sees only cities as engines of growth. You need to create alternative centres of growth to stop migration to cities. There should be gram swaraj with fibre optics.

It's not good enough to evict people. They must be provided with alternative housing. The example of Mumbai is a good one where builders have been given incentives to build low-cost housing. This may have spawned some corruption but it is better than what other cities have done.

There is no escape from better governance. Practical zoning laws have to be created and implemented. Public transport is essential. Every city should have a vision document.

Political will

Sanjay Kaul, People's Action, Gurgaon

A world class city in the Indian context is a contradiction in terms and an unnecessary deviation. If it has to be a world class city it has to adhere to an international benchmark and that would necessarily mean surrendering the context.

But to prioritise: First: Quality of governance, therefore governors, therefore politics. Without a political vision and will, nothing is possible. Singapore was a 'plan' initiated and implemented by a fertile government, not a sterile political dispensation.

Second: A practical, time bound, holistic 'plan'.

Third: An over-arching, single-focus implementing body which has public and political support with powers to match.

Delhi's Metro is a good example: But a city is not a metro project and so it will require all the three items in the precise configuration and priority as mentioned above to even come close to attempting to create a world class city.

Livability is the key

Ashish Ganju, Architect, New Delhi

The first factor is livability. A city must be livable for all its residents, not just the privileged. The character of a city is not made only by its physical infrastructure but also by its social and economic equality. When there is inequality it produces a level of discomfort which diminishes the city's livability.

Delhi is threatened by lack of good public health facilities—sewerage, drainage and water supply. These happen to be below the ground and are therefore invisible to the eye. But they are very important for comfort and well being. This lack of facilities causes the proliferation of slums which affect the well being of everybody.

On the positive side Delhi does have a great history expressed in its monuments and classical and modern forms of art and dance. These need to be promoted so as to underline the city's identity.

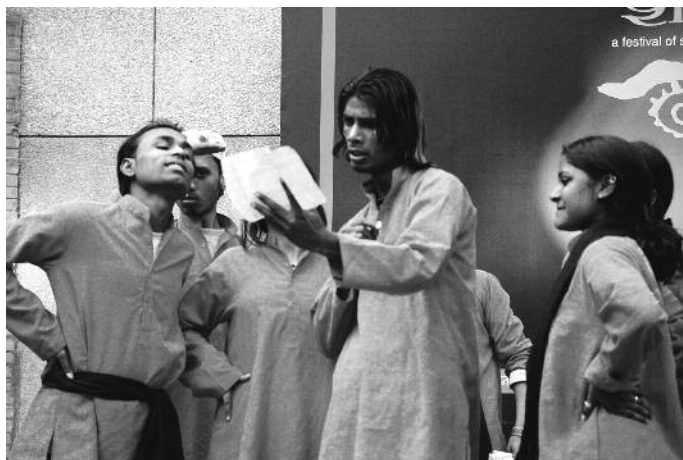
Flyovers are very visible but don't provide benefits to all citizens. A good public transport system is essential.

Buildings in Delhi are being glamourised but these are not world class. They use materials which are not at the cutting edge of industrial products. An energy balance should be maintained with nature. Glitter and shine wears off. An overload of the energy grid for a smaller section of society leads to environmental trauma. Social justice is very important. People who come to the city are uncomfortable when they see huge differences—like slums next to glamourised buildings.

Livelihoods

Meena Menon, Focus on the Global South, Mumbai

Whether in India or anywhere, a world class city must cater to the needs of all, including the poor, the sick, the old and the young. It should make livelihood,



affordable housing, health and environment, education, entertainment, and all kinds of basic services accessible to all its citizens. It is barbaric to leave this access to the paying capacity of the consumer. All this implies a concept of urban development that is based on people and not profit.

Infrastructure

Sanjiv Paul, Managing Director JUSCO, Jamshedpur

A world class city should first of all have good infrastructure: roads, bridges etc. Secondly it should have water, electricity, education and healthcare facilities. It should also be safe and secure for all the people. This implies proper law and order.

Tech plus values

Ravi Agarwal, Director, Toxics Link, New Delhi

Indian cities of the future must combine hi-tech infrastructure with 'old fashioned' values!

How human is it? Today glitzy new malls, shops stacked with goodies, often built at the expense of forest and green areas, are everywhere. However while our investments in the cities are going up, so is alienation. Delhi for example is commonly

known as a 'rude' city, where people do not care about its environment and where one has to keep to oneself to avoid being bristled. The cities we remember are those where people were nice to us, where they smile at strangers and where they make you feel welcome.

How socially inclusive is it? Cities are throwing out the poor, onto its margins. 'Slums' are being 'relocated,' but the cities live off the sweat and labour of the marginalised. While we throw the hawkers out, most of the city feeds off street food. A future city should be socially inclusive.

How equally law abiding is it? Is the law the same for all? A modern society cannot be built on feudal values, where 'who' one knows becomes the route to grab and steal and destroy the cities commons like parks and playgrounds. The waste bins of the rich are cleared but the poor live in filth. Ironically today slums are considered water polluters, but cars can be washed with clean drinking water!

Homes, water, sanitation

Bharati Chaturvedi, Director, Chintan, New Delhi

A world class city? That's the one that is able to provide all those who live in it, particularly the relatively poor, with the essentials: sanitation that they want to use and can afford to use, clean water for drinking and washing, security of tenure that enables them to get a home of their own, and of course, these homes should be near where they work. Equally, every city owes those who live and work in it the right to a clean environment and the right to safety. These sound cliched perhaps, really old-fashioned, but they are the pillars upon which a healthy society is created. What a pity we've not been able to give these to the poor anywhere yet!

The whole point of a world class city is that it allows even the poorest of the poor to access the kind of resources that the world now knows are basic. That's why the world now agrees on the Millennium Development Goals. When a city plans in the 21st century, it has to ensure that these criterion over-ride all other concerns. There is no other world class that's acceptable.

Empower local govt

V. Ravichandar, ideasforgov.org, Bangalore

THE urban governance structure needs to be changed. Empower the 3rd tier of city governments so that it can determine and achieve their desired destiny. The city plan needs to be drawn up through a consultative process with citizens across all sections of society. Make the city government accountable to its citizens through citizen participation mechanisms.

There is also the question of how money is spent. For instance, is the Rs 15,000 crores invested in the Metro the best use of such huge resources?

"If you look at sports every city in the last 30 years which has organised either the Commonwealth games, the Asian Games or the Olympic Games, is today in debt. Organising events like this creates problems for the city in the long run," says Roy.

The question is of opportunity cost. If you have Rs 15,000 crores should it be put into a Metro or something which gives a much higher social and economic return. "This is one question we should ask. Are we spending money for the long-term benefit of the city? That should be the notion of a world class city."

Hazards Centre went to the communities it works with and asked them what they wanted. There were suggestions for schools, community centres and hubs

'I think contrasts are very educative. We were doing our plays and performances on one side and an NGO was doing a meeting on sustainable development on the other side. And people could see the difference. Not only in the poor, but in the messages that were coming across envisioning the city.'



Dunu Roy with Shehar.com being staged in the background at the Habitat Centre.



A section of the audience and a performer in full flow

from where skilled workers could offer their services. But when the Hazards Centre went to the authorities with these suggestions there was no question of giving land for such facilities because that would mean recognition of the rights of slum-dwellers.

"We did a workshop with 400 women. We asked them how they would like their settlement to look. We asked them to make a plan," recalls Roy. "It was a very interesting plan. They wanted the school in the centre. So we asked why. They said because it will be safe and secure. It's logical. You put the school in the centre of the community so that they can look at it. The concept is of protecting the future."

In another community where there are many construction workers the Hazards Centre asked what they regarded as important to their future. They said they valued regular work more than anything.

"They told us they had seasonal incomes. There was the insecurity of work. However, the contractor who employed them always had work. They never saw him standing in the labour market. This meant that there was work available. They said they needed regularity to ensure they could look at tomorrow with a certain degree of comfort," says Roy.

"They said there were so many people in the slum – carpenters, masons, plumbers – and could they offer their skills directly without the contractor coming in? Then the idea developed to have a register with who does what. And from that came the need for an office at which they could be contacted with a phone and an STD booth to generate some additional revenue."

Everyone said a school could be put on top of the office so that it would be possible to keep an eye on the children and ensure that the teacher was actually working with the children. A common kitchen could provide lunch packets.

The structure could also work as a community hall.

"According to us, this is privatisation of a different kind which works," says Roy. "It is a vision of a world class city which can be applied across communities. Our exercise was done in Vikaspuri. The problem is when we took it to the municipal authorities they said it's a good idea but we can't give space because the moment we give you land for a Basti Vikas Kendra we are giving you legality."

The Hazards Centre's concerns are with the master plan drafted by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). The vision of world class in this plan is one of a city "free from the malaise of the working poor."

The DDA therefore seeks to remove people through eviction and dump them out of sight on the peripheries of the city with little or nothing to speak of by way of housing, drainage, water, schools or health care.

It doesn't solve the problem of migration, nor does it define the role the city is expected to play.

Roy observes that though the government is quick to declare squatters as illegal and court's order the demolition of illegal constructions, no attempt is made to address the "acts of omission" by the government.

Targets for providing affordable housing, commercial district centres and so on have not been met. Under such circumstances, what are people expected to do? The crisis is one of governance.

Similarly, though much is made of flyovers and the spanking new Metro, there seems to be no attempt to address the need for cheap public transportation in buses or to factor in cycle lanes though this is how most people need to travel.

Worrisome are the contradictions in the master plan. For instance, the working population is expected to inflate by 7.9 million in 2021. The plan expects 1.7 million of them to find employment in non-household manufacturing and 2.4 million in trade and commerce. But simultaneously the plan's avowed goal is to avoid major economic activities that may result in large-scale employment. Where then will the new jobs be found?

The staging of Shehar.com was an attempt to connect on these issues. In the songs, dances and plays that slum-dwellers brought to Lodi Road were messages that don't seem to get included in the vision for Delhi's future. The question therefore is whether a Delhi which chooses to live in denial can ever hope to be world class.

Last straw on the camel's back

DURING the early days of his Prophet-hood, before being forced to flee for his life to Medina, Prophet Mohammed and his companions used to be pilloried and persecuted on a constant basis by his fellow tribesmen, the Quraish, in Mecca. It is said that he used to traverse a narrow alley overlooking an old woman's window and would be regularly pelted with her garbage. One day while warily passing under her window he was surprised not to have received the usual showering of refuse. Worried that something was amiss with her he knocked on her door and enquired about her welfare. Confronted with such compassion the old woman instantly converted to Islam.

The irony of those claiming to fly the flag of Islam today and protest the denigration of this very same Prophet, is that they know so little of the true spirit of this great religion. They use it merely when and as they see fit – and in doing so besmirch it's very name.

Violence, except in defence, is strictly forbidden in Islam. Honouring treaties and agreements is sacrosanct in Islam. Embassies and diplomats (to those who

LETTER FROM EUROPE



Riaz Quadir in Versailles

now famous book, *The Clash of Civilizations* – and the *Remaking of the World Order*, what would become the working philosophy of the neo-conservatives that control the current US administration and a twisted basis for its War on Terror: "There can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are. These are the old truths we are painfully rediscovering after a century and more of sentimental cant. Those who deny them deny their family, their heritage, their culture, their birthright, their very selves! They will not lightly be forgiven".

One evening over drinks in 1990, Salman Akhtar, an eminent American psychiatrist and poet of Indian origin, pretty much predicted the events that have since followed, saying that after the fall of the communist East the USA would now be in search of a new enemy. The options were limited. The subsequent choice of Islam seemed logical and in accordance with history and a thousand-year-old tradition. We are now living the consequences of that choice. It is not merely the vilification of Mohammed that Muslims are protesting in the cartoon controversy. It is an amalgam of myriad injustices that have been meted out to them in recent history – and history rarely forgets. It is recorded in our psychés and must inevitably play itself out.

My favourite saying of Prophet Mohammed is, "actions will be judged by intentions". Were we to apply this Hadith to the much heralded dictum of "free speech" (which, as a writer, I value immeasurably) to this case, one would come up with several conundrums: If the exercise of such free speech was 'to provoke' as has been claimed, then where is the problem? The objective was accomplished. The 'Muslims' have been sufficiently provoked. If the proponents of 'free speech' would defend it to death, why then have they all changed their tune halfway and are now apologising for the provocation?

On Monday, 30 January, Peter Mandelson, the EU trade commissioner, bravely spoke through Johannes Laitenberger, EU Commission spokesman, saying: "The exercise of these freedoms must be respected. It is the public debate on the pros and on the cons of the views expressed that is the right form of reaction in a democratic and pluralistic society, and pressure not to exercise these freedoms is unacceptable."

On Monday 13, February, Javier Solana, the head of EU foreign policy, in Saudi Arabia said: "Be sure we are going to do our utmost for this not to happen again, because we need each other ... I don't think honestly it will happen again."

True believers in the right to free speech do not use it gratuitously to hurt and denigrate people. No right is absolute and unaccompanied by obligations. The proof that the original publishers were not stating their true intentions is in the actions that followed. "Jyllands-Posten, the Danish daily that published the controversial Muhammad drawings, has made a dramatic U-turn on comments an executive made about using Holocaust caricatures. The paper said it would under no circumstances publish the Holocaust cartoons that an Iranian newspaper, Hamshari, is planning to commission". (The Guardian, 9 February).

It has been further revealed that the same newspaper rejected cartoons lampooning Jesus three years ago on the grounds that it would offend their readers. And why is David Irving, the British historian who denies that the Holocaust happened, sitting in an Austrian jail? Who can fault the Muslims for claiming double standards are consistently used against them by the European people?

Like the Muslims, the Euro-centric nations need to spend a long moment taking a very hard look at themselves and their irresponsible behaviour during their period of supremacy in the last few centuries. The fear that is currently gripping them at the unprecedented rise of both China and India is an unconscious sign of an expected backlash. One has nothing to fear if one has done no wrong. Moreover, there is still time to make amends for past mistakes. While it is true that much that is considered good in the modern world from the Charter of Human Rights to the due process of law has come from the workings of democracy in Europe, we must not however forget the darkness that preceded it and how they persecuted a people because of their religious beliefs and what barbarity it had led to only 60 years ago. If lessons are not learnt with a modicum of humility, mistakes of the past may be repeated – and the cartoon controversy may be the last straw on the camel's back and a stark warning to any arrogance that underlie the claim to civilizational superiority.



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have gone burning and hurting them) fall within this category. While Islam extols knowledge as the highest of earthly virtues 'Muslims' today are among the least educated of the world population. True *jihad* is a battle between 'good and evil', fought within one's own heart, yet a brand of today's Muslims think of it merely as fighting the 'enemy'. Little wonder that 'Muslims' today have reached such a low point in their history. Before another Saladin appears on their horizon Muslims have to spend much more time introspecting and rediscovering the true spirit of Islam – the kind that made it possible for early Muslims to rule such a vast stretch of the known world in the 9th century.

While much of the world watches in despair at the cartoon controversy that seemingly appeared out of the blue, it is now providing fodder to the Samuel P Huntingtons of the world to further polarise the already divided planet.

With the following quote Huntington sets out in the very first chapter of his

Business

BEYOND PROFIT

Rethink money with us. What should the entrepreneur of the future be like? How can you get rich and still serve society? Do causes need bottom lines?

Is Ubuntu the desktop's future?

Vidya Viswanathan
New Delhi

OPEN source free software is the answer for affordable computing. But it is still used only by geeks and on backend applications like servers. It is not yet popular on the desktop because it is tough to install and difficult to use. Mark Shuttleworth, a South African billionaire who made his money selling his proprietary software company to Verisign, wants to change that and put Linux on as many desktops as possible. Canonical, his software company, puts Linux plus any other common software (in open source) that is required on a desktop on one CD and distributes it free under the name – Ubuntu. Canonical programmers, who work from wherever they are in the world, glue the best of open source software in each category so that users can access it as effortlessly as they do Windows now.

They also build and use collaborative tools so that open source projects that normally take their own course can be managed with predictable versions being released in time so that different open source projects can then coordinate accordingly.

Shuttleworth, who is a cult figure among Linux converts, is funding Canonical till it becomes sustainable. Convinced it is the tipping point for Linux to get popular for common use, he toured Asia to understand how it has spread here. He also addressed Linux Asia, the open source conference held in New Delhi. Civil Society spoke to him about Ubuntu and open source free software.

What does Ubuntu mean?

It means humanity to others. It also means "I am what I am because of who we all are". It is interesting because it means the same in all African languages.

What is your business model?

We don't have a licensing fee and that is important to us. We do offer services. For example if you want to manage 10,000 desktops efficiently we provide the infrastructure. I believe that those services will make up for the cost of free distribution.

How many developers does Ubuntu have?

Four or five are involved and then a further 100 are involved and then hundreds more

who are connected. The most we have are from Germany. The others are spread out all over the world. We have infrastructure to bring everybody together.

What is the future of free software development?

Project management needs to be professionalised. But the interesting thing is we can professionalise free software without losing its intrinsic features. What you saw in the first phase is that people were trying to sell free software using the same language as the old technology. This has happened in every major change. In the beginning when film came, people would shoot stage plays and send the film across the country so that you could see the play without the actors being present. But then they began to take the camera outside and see interesting things happen. When websites came along people wrote websites

using the same tools. So they looked like printed brochures.

The natural thing to do in free software is to package it like proprietary software and sell it in a box like Redhat. That is not how you deliver the best of free software.

How are you different?

There are a couple of key things. The traditional idea in open source is to have a free edition and a commercial edition with a few extra features. We don't do that. Our very best work is what we make freely available. Why? Because the more widely available it is, the more users there are... And the more users there are, the more open source developers there are. The more developers there are, the better the product becomes. We come up with a new version of Ubuntu every six months and security patches every 18 months.

But you still have a version of Linux...

That is one way in which we are different from Redhat and Suse linux. We actually encourage people to modify Ubuntu and create their own versions customised to their need.

How do you see the market potential for Linux in India?

I am not sure that I do. I am just here to have a look. I see a far lower penetration of free software here in India than I expected. The industry in India is focused on offshoring projects that were done in the eighties and the nineties when Windows was the plat-

(Continued on page 14)



'Ubuntu means humanity to others. It also means, I am what I am because of who we all are. It is interesting because it means the same in all African languages.'

“Big companies like Infosys, Wipro and TCS are going to use more and more free software to reduce costs. There are Ubuntu users everywhere in the world. These companies are using it on the servers but more on the desktop.”

(Continued from page 13)

form of use. So institutional expertise is kind of backward looking. Well, that is starting to change now because big companies like Infosys, Wipro and TCS are going to use more and more free software for their infrastructure to reduce costs.

You mean these large companies are using Ubuntu? On the desktop or their servers?

There are Ubuntu users everywhere in the world. These companies are using it on the servers but more on the desktop, because we really want to solve the desktop problem.

Does Ubuntu have all desktop features that Windows based applications have? For example, a PDF reader?

Yes it has software for web browsing, word processing, a PDF reader and a writer. We put together the best of breed of these applications in free software and write the glue code so that they work seamlessly with our Linux. The focus is on simplicity. Make it easy to install, for example. Today free software is like opening your fridge and finding ten kinds of butter and ten kinds of flour. And everybody's experience with a recipe is different.

So the key things are that the Core platform should be absolutely free not just of cost but free to modify. They should create their own version of Linux for their university or a city.

How many Indian companies use Ubuntu?

That is hard to tell. But we have shipped 140,000 CDs to India in the last two months. That includes everyone - individuals, companies, small and large.

We started this project because of the foundation that I fund to install technology in schools. The guys came to me and said we can do a hundred schools with Windows or we can do 180 with Linux. The reason for that is not the OS because for education, you can get it free from Microsoft. It is because we use all the hardware and we can store all desktop software on one server and use it from there for all computers. If you want to update you do it at one place. You can manage the network far more efficiently. We have a version of Ubuntu called Edubuntu for primary schools which works this way. So it makes a lot of economic sense.

What drives you to do this?

Well, this is not going to make big money. I'm doing it because I can afford to. It is the right thing to do and a lot of people I care about are using this infrastructure. I would however like it to pay for itself but that is going to be a challenge. I think I can do it.

Google pays me to make sure that we create an effective version of Ubuntu that they can

use on their own desktops. Intel pays me to make sure that it works well on their hardware and so does IBM. HP does the same thing. Creating distribution is easier. Microsoft has to write a single line of code. Ninety-nine percent of our stuff is written by someone in the free software world. I just want to make Ubuntu sustainable so that it can reinvest.

What about documentation? You were talking about making help and documentation collaborative and open source....

Where do you get help from? A cousin, or friend or a guy in the neighbourhood? People have a network of people around them. When people say Linux is not supported, basically they mean that the network is not big enough. There is a tipping point. In three years this network will know Linux as much as Windows.

We will provide high-level corporate support. A guy in the field is not going to call us. He is going to call his buddy. He doesn't call Microsoft. At some point of time the guy you call will know Linux. He may even say that if you install Linux instead of Windows, you will not have as many problems.

Do your employees work from anywhere?

Absolutely. That is the way free software people work because traditionally they would be working during their free time, their coffee breaks or into the night. We pay our people to work on this full time but they work the same way and use IRC chat to communicate with each other or with a hundred other people listening in. Our employees are also distributed. So people think that we look like a free software project instead of looking like a project that is being developed by a private company where people talk over the cubicle because it is more efficient

You said you want to make Ubuntu sustainable? What does that mean? Do you think business is moving in this direction? You made money in a world where there are deep pockets and you can get away with as high a margin as you can make...

I have no interest in joining the proprietary software or hardware world. I don't know any proprietary software company that was started in the last two years that makes money. Microsoft makes money. When I said sustainable I meant covering its cost. So it costs a couple of million dollars a year to pay the developers, go to conferences... When it grows I can do something else and someone else will take over. But the team knows that they have a job.

Do the software developers that work on Ubuntu get paid well?

Yeah and they should. They are very smart people. They can work anywhere.

“This is not going to make big money. I'm doing it because I can afford to. It is the right thing to do. A lot of people I care about are using this... I would like it to pay for itself.”

“Civil Society is a worthy magazine for grass
We are regularly enriching ourselves by reading

-Usha Cho

THE MAGAZINE EVERYONE LIKES

Junior Tiger Task Force in full flow

Shailey Hingorani
New Delhi

ON a warm Wednesday morning on 8 February, Shri Ram School, Vasant Vihar, resonated with voices of children calling for an SOS. No, there were no grave dangers lurking around. SOS meant Save Our Stripes and the children were asking for tigers to be protected. To get their message across, a lively inter-school tiger festival was being held at Shri Ram school.

Organised with the help of Kids for Tigers, Sanctuary magazine's environmental educational school programme, in association with some companies, the festival brought together students from Delhi, Ramnagar and Sawai Madhopur. The children had their own take on how the magnificent tiger and its habitat could be saved.

Bittu Sehgal, the editor of Sanctuary magazine was at the forefront of the tiger fest along with wildlife expert Bikram Grewal. Special guests included Vakeel Mohammad and Chinni Mohammad who have helped arrest poachers and tiger skin dealers.

"The tiger is much more than just our national animal. It represents our future hope for natural India. The fate of this animal is completely tied with our kids and this fest is an attempt to get India's future leaders to help the tiger," said Bittu Sehgal.

Around 30 schools showed solidarity. There were students from Ryan International, DPS Mathura Road, Modern School Barakhamba, St Columbas and USR Indu High School, Ramnagar. Some of the organisations that took part included WWF, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Toxics Link.

The festival was an amalgamation of serious business and good fun. Numerous events and competitions took place simultaneously.

The fest stressed the need to bring tigers back to Sariska and stop Ranthambore treading the Sariska path. The message was conveyed through skits and a play by the children from Ramnagar. There were face painting and poster making competitions plus clay modeling. There was also a film show on Kanha.

The first skit took children back to an era when spotting a tiger wasn't that hard. The skit employed a storyteller's format with lots of music.

There was also an oath taking ceremony. All the students along with Bittu Sahgal, Juhi Chaudhary, coordinator, Kids for Tigers, Kirat Singh, the Delhi



Members of the Junior Tiger Task Force (left to right) Devanshu Sood, Kirat Singh and Ikram Singh

Tiger ambassador pledged "Aapna Farz Nibhaenge Tiger Ko bachhaenge" (We will do our duty and save the tiger). Students enthusiastically took this pledge.

Devika and Devyani of Shri Ram School read out an article they had written which was published in the Indian Express. Their logic for saving the tiger and its natural habitat was simple. "Save the forests. They hold rainwater for us. If there is no water then there will be no life," explained Devika.

Students from USR Indu High School, Ramnagar, staged a play, which was easily the highlight of the day. Through song and dance they told other students why tigers should be saved.

Their self-composed song 'Tiger toh jungle ki shaan hai' (the tiger is the glory of the forest) was a big hit with the audience.

"This year many kids have been made aware about how saving the tiger saves our water resources and ultimately ourselves," said Juhi. "This fest brings out the efforts of the Junior Tiger Task Force (JTTF) children who have been trying to protect the Ranthambhore forest and see Kaziranga as a success story. It will also reinforce concepts of wildlife con-

servation and environmental protection."

The student members of the JTTF have travelled to Ranthambore to gain first hand experience and see what they can do to help. *Civil Society* spoke with three members of the JTTF, Kirat Singh, Devanshu Sood and Ikram Singh from Shri Ram School.

"The tribals who were being employed by mafia gangs to kill tigers didn't have any other means of sustenance. So, they readily agreed to kill tigers for Rs15,000 to Rs 16,000," said a concerned Kirat Singh. "We have started by educating one family. We have also tried to provide them alternative livelihood options."

When they go to Ranthambore they take along baskets that local villagers can sell and earn some money. "We also take with us money that we earn at other school fests and give it to them," said Kirat.

The JTTF's work doesn't stop here. They also spread awareness of the need to protect the tiger. They go to different schools every Friday to educate other students and encourage them to join their efforts.

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Perspectives

CATCHING TRENDS

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From Davos to Sundernagari

ARUN MAIRA



Let's Talk

ON 29th January, I was slipping on icy roads in the ritzy resort of Davos. On 30th January, Mahatma Gandhi's anniversary, I was sitting on the floor of a room in the poor tenements of Sundernagari. In Davos I had been dancing with the tuxedoed and gowned participants of the WEF (World Economic Forum) into the wee hours of the morning to the rhythm of Shamak Davar and his troupe of young Indian dancers. We were celebrating the arrival of India on the world economic scene.

In Sundernagari, the slum rehabilitation colony across the Yamuna, I heard the stories of the young volunteers of Parivartan who are empowering the poor of India to democratically obtain their rightful

dues. In Davos, Davar's dancers were a wonderful exhibition of the spirited youth of India. As I returned to my hotel on the icy streets of Davos, I was full of pride in my country. My faith in my country grew and my pride swelled further when I listened to the spirit of the young Indians in Sundernagari.

While Davos was a story of arrival on a stage, Parivartan is a story of transformation in action. "India, the world's fastest growing, large, free market democracy" is India's new advertisement. And whereas the bash at Davos was a celebration of India as a free and fast growing market, Parivartan is a celebration of the power of people building a grassroots democracy. The beauty of India is that the nation is determined to have both.

"Peacocks Strutting, and Little Birds Scrambling" is the scenario of the free market. It is the process of 'cumulative causation' in the growth of economies.

Wherein those who have the means—the wealth, the property, the education, or the connections—will get more. As they get more, the economy grows and there will be a 'trickle down' to the scrambling birds some day. Is this process morally right? Is this process sustainable? These were questions addressed in many sessions in Davos.

Back in Delhi, the big news was that MG1 was being demolished. The mecca of fashion designers who clothed the peacocks in their fineries was being knocked down by bulldozers. The building had been illegal. The unauthorised buildings of the rich must be treated in the same way as those of the poor who are being evicted from their hovels in the slums, said a political leader. That is democracy. The designers reacted. They complained they had been victims of corruption! And they sought sympathy in their plight. One had to display her wares to some foreign buyers. Where would she do it now? Meanwhile, the poor families wonder where their children will sleep at night when their hovel is demolished. There is an inequality in plight too. Whereas inequality may concern free market econo-

mists only as an element of risk within their model of growth, it is the human and moral issues that should be the primary concern. Adam Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations*, which with its assertion of the inherent selfishness of man, is the bible of free marketers. But he also wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* which has been almost forgotten.

Parivartan is fighting corruption in the system. The corruption they are fighting is the corruption of need—corruption that affects those struggling for their basic needs of education, water, and subsidised food. The corruption that the MG1 wallahs are enmeshed in is the corruption of greed—the corruption to get even more by those who have quite a lot already.

The latter's corruption can be vicious and breed violence. In Parivartan's office in Sundernagari hangs a portrait of Satyendra Dubey who lost his life for exposing the corruption of big contractors in highway construction. Sitting beneath it, recounting what she was doing to help the poor get their dues was Santosh, who had her throat slit by goons when she bravely exposed the racket in ration sales

to the poor. "Wolves Prowling and Little Animals Cowering" is a scenario that often goes along with "Peacocks Strutting and Little Birds Scrambling". The fear is that the violence can become a cancer and society begin to disintegrate if violence gets organised into gangs looking for loot and Naxalites looking for power.

Good Governance

How should society be governed to prevent the potential instability within and keep the momentum for growth? When we think of 'governance', we instinctively think of 'someone at the top', and of 'government'. Strong leadership 'at the top' is the solution that often comes to mind when governance breaks down. A single cohesive political party. Or a benign dictatorship.

The problem with this solution is that our wish may be granted and we may regret the loss of our cherished democracy. A more practical problem with this solution is how this single party or dictator will emerge. Indian politics is expanding its breadth. More interests are finding their voices. There is a centrifugal movement towards more regional parties, and more factions, and therefore to coalitions as the way to come together. Which complicates decision-making and ham-strings progress if the model of governance is top-down. "Buffaloes Wallowing While the People Are Waiting" is this scenario. The various parties squabble. The mandarins debate. And petty bureaucrats make people wait and pay for facilitation of their rightful dues. Some say the corruption is to provide funds for political parties. Others say that it is to feed the greed of those higher up.

Whatever be corruption's causes, people are now rising to claim their rightful dues. They are using the emerging instruments of democracy to expose the vested interests and corrupted processes of decision-making. Governance is not

(Continued on page 18)



Parivartan team in Sundernagari

(Continued from page 17)

The unauthorised buildings of the rich must be treated in the same way as those of the poor who are being evicted. That is democracy. The designers reacted. They complained they had been victims of corruption! And they sought sympathy in their plight.

Government. Governance may not even require a Governor. Governance is the process by which decisions are made in a society and within an organisation. How decisions are made, in whose interests they are made, and who participates in the decision-making process, are three central questions of governance.

Parivartan is teaching the people of Sundernagari to use their rights under the new Right to Information Act, to expose the decision-making processes in government, to obtain their dues of education, food and roads, and to expose the wastage and leakage of resources. The young people of Parivartan are a visionary scenario of democratic change. They, and many others like them, are "Fireflies Arising" who will change India and can make it the country that all Indians will be happy and proud to live in.

These Fireflies are leaders in the truest sense of the word. They are taking steps towards what they deeply care about and in ways that others feel like following. They have no money to compensate those whose support they need. And they have no physical power to coerce others. Yet people are joining the movement, all over the country.

It is important that people should not have to join a particular organisation to join the movement, says Arvind Kejriwal, who is the principal force of Parivartan in Sundernagari. His answer to the question how Parivartan will be institutionalised and 'scaled up' is startling. It exposes our deeply held mental model of how growth is organised and what an institution is. He says that, unlike most NGOs, Parivartan does not ask for nor will accept funds from any donor agencies, though many may like to support such wonderful work. Parivartan accepts money to pay for its expenses only from the people in the community that are benefited by its work. Thus, 'customer satisfaction' has to be built into its work or the contributions will dry up. Parivartan is assisted by lawyers, engineers, and consultants. They all work for free. Their motivation is the cause, and not the money. While Parivartan supports many similar initiatives in Delhi and elsewhere, it has no franchises. Indeed Parivartan learns from others, just as they learn from Parivartan.

The purpose of this article is not to praise Arvind and his Parivartan, though I honour them highly. I write to provide an insight into the broader scenario of 'parivartan' (transformation) of India. There are many 'Fireflies' arising across the country. They are connected with each other in networks and not by hierarchies. Many networks are emerging motivated by different causes. Parivartan's cause is empowerment of the poor to obtain their dues and to prevent corruption using the Right to Information. Others are devoted to provision of water, education, micro-lending, and women's issues, etc. These are expanding 'communities of practice' with which India will change bottom up. They will 'spread across' the country and not 'scale up' into pyramidal organizations.

Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize winner in economics, has pointed out that development must be concerned with the spread of freedom and not merely the pursuit of economic growth. Douglass North, an earlier Nobel Prize winner, said that 'institutions' should not be confused with 'organisations'. Institutions in societies encompass norms and values, as well as the rules of the game—both written as well as unwritten rules. Arvind Kejriwal, Santosh and other such Fireflies are changing the rules of the game, even without building a formal organisation in the traditional form.

Perhaps, counter-intuitive though it may seem, it is not the building of a formal hierarchical organisation that will enable the movement to spread. The question that leaders in government who are granted formal powers and leaders in business who have resources to help should be asking is, what is the nature of the supportive frameworks they can build that will enable many more Fireflies to rise in India. Because that is the only way that India can democratically accelerate its growth within a free market.

Perhaps there are no precedents for this course in the histories of other large, poor nations that have grown their economies in modern times. China has taken a different course emerging from its history. Just as our course must emerge from our history. The clock cannot be turned back. We must go forward and find our way to accelerate the development and growth of a large free market democracy. Coming from Davos to Sundernagari, I believe we are.

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

Farmers need a b

MILINDO CHAKRABARTI



Reforms Report

THE budget session began with the President's address to the joint session of Parliament. He underscored the need to shift from "jobless" growth to a "job-led" one. By the time you read this piece, the budget documents will have been presented to Parliament. An idea about the road map the UPA government intends to follow in the coming fiscal year will be known to us all.

Let's hazard a guess about some of the contents of the budget speech. Any guesswork is significantly laden with the value judgment of the one who makes it. This exercise is no exception to it. I place my wish list before you.

India has been on a high growth path for the last few years. However, areas of concern are not very difficult to identify. Perhaps the most

significant concern is the gradual and rapid decline of the share of the agricultural sector in India's GDP, without a corresponding fall in the share of the population making their living out of this sector. As a result, "Rural India" fails to join hands with "Shining India". We are on a path that was termed a long time back by none other than Prof. VKRV Rao as "Structural Retrogression". It is therefore rightly signalled by many in the government that this budget will give a direction to sustained growth in Indian agriculture and help siphon off some of the idle human resources into sectors that have been growing over the last couple of decades. My guess is obviously based on such signals.

The agricultural sector is important from three perspectives.

- It provides food security out of domestic production to the community in question and resolves a political question in an increasingly

A tryst with Indian 'Fireflies'

GRAHAM LEICESTER

NOTHING in India is identifiable. The mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or to merge in something else... E M Forster A Passage to India 1924.

After only a week in India I feel obliged to open with E M Forster's caveat. For this is just one story of the International Futures Forum's (IFF) rich experience meeting in Delhi and Varanasi in the first week of February. It is one story among many that could be told, and will be told, by the various overseas participants in our meeting: seventeen of us in all from seven different countries. And it is a story based on what we were able to see – not on what we missed.

First an introduction. IFF is an international group of individuals from diverse disciplines, countries and experience formed in early 2001 to explore a growing realisation that our actions in the face of complex modern challenges are largely ineffective because they are based on old notions of how the world works. IFF's mission is to break through to new ways of making sense of the contemporary world that will restore the capacity for wise action.

We hold at least one plenary session a year in differing locations. This year we came to India – invited by our friend and IFF member Arun Maira. We came with no special agenda, no problem to solve, no intervention to make. Arun had simply invited a group of respected peers to share an 'open-minded and empathetic engagement in the circumstances I care about', with specific reference to the issues of governance, leadership and the process of social change. So we came to learn – in India and with India. As one member of the Vidya

Boost this budget

unipolar global order.

- It provides direction to the sustainable management of the overall renewable natural resource base of the nation and takes care of our environmental concerns.

- In highly populous countries like India and China it also provides gainful employment to a disproportionately larger percentage of the population and reduces the possibility of a social crisis.

The first two concerns about the role played by the agricultural sector are important enough for the developed countries – EU and USA in particular – to accept unfettered 'free trade' in agricultural products. Their domestic products are not competitively produced and free trade will undermine their food security, as they will become dependent on imports of food from other, read tropical developing, countries. Environmental concerns are no less important. Under the present dispensation, a rich country can encourage its farmers to produce without putting much stress on the natural productive capacity of land. The losses, thus suffered by the farmers, are compensated for by subsidies. In effect, non-farming communities pay up for maintenance of environmental qualities.

I wish the budget document presents programmes that will provide incentives to our farmers to provide us food security from domestic production. The Finance Minister may announce schemes that

- Encourage a "farmer-to-lab" research process in place of the present "lab-to-farm" schemes;

- Increase scope for diversification in horticultural, fisheries and animal husbandry products through a conscious effort at brand building with the ownership of brands vested in the farmers a la Amul.

- Help develop higher value addition to the products in the hands of the farmers through proper human capital enrichment and provision of complementary inputs like credit and market channels – both backward and forward. Elite organisations of the country like the IITs and the IIMs should develop and offer training programmes to farmers at minimum costs – their contribution to national development. The credit margin of apex credit organ-

isations like NABARD should be reduced and SHGs with proven track record must be eligible to receive funds directly from the government at the rate of interest offered to NABARD.

Such programmes should be designed with the active participation of not only panchayati raj institutions but also Indian corporates. A share of the incremental value addition should be passed on to panchayats and they will be at liberty to use such financial resources for further developmental programmes. Companies should get tax relief not on the basis of the investments made but in tune with the incremental value addition generated through their efforts. Outcome budget for every scheme thus becomes mandatory.

I would also look forward to a compendium of schemes that acknowledge the potential balancing role that agricultural activities can play in the sustainable use of renewable natural resources. The Finance Minister may like to declare programmes that acknowledge the production of environmental services in agriculture. Such schemes will

- Provide incentives to rotation of crops on a particular plot of land over time.
- Encourage agro-forestry on less fertile and/or barren lands.
- Facilitate water efficient agricultural practices and rainwater harvesting.
- Help extensive growth of organic farming.

Needless to say, in an economy characterised by rapid growth of monetisation the incentives will be monetised as well. Farmers will receive a pre-determined amount of money per hectare depending on the location and soil fertility for taking up these schemes. The incentive structure may be reviewed periodically, say, every five years. Keeping up with the budgetary principles of redistribution of financial resources from non-farming communities to the farmers, all the programmes are to be backed by a strong monitoring mechanism leading to a Social Audit.

These schemes, coupled with the recently introduced programme on National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme will go hand in hand in not only increasing the employment potential in rural India in the short run but also taking off towards a diversified employment generation matrix for the country in the longer term.

Thank you, dear reader, for giving me an opportunity to share my dreams with you. Hope they are realised, if not today, at least tomorrow.

(The piece is the outcome of some intensive discussions with Prof. Samar K Datta of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad)

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

Ashram in Varanasi put it, 'we are all struggling to find our roots in this storm'.

The first day of our meeting was given over to a series of learning journeys in and around Delhi, meeting with remarkable people in their local settings. Each of three groups met an artist, a government official and a community project – and each was accompanied by a small number of Indian guests who joined the IFF for the first four days of our meeting to contribute to and participate in our learning.

We met some of the 'Fireflies' Arun has described – running social entrepreneurial innovations like Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS) and Parivartan. These are well known names to *Civil Society* – but IFF was encountering them for the first time. What we found were inspiring examples, in government and in communities, of civic action that is improving the system for some of the most pressed people in Delhi. The Right to Information Act, for example, has clearly opened a channel for effective action that a number of brave and vigilant groups are beginning to exploit to bring about real improvements.

Aspects of the implied governance models in these success stories provoked deeper discussion. First, none of these projects yet has a ready answer to how to roll out effective action at greater scale across the city, let alone across the nation. In fact, quite the opposite. Parivartan, for example, eschews growth, as it eschews money. So long as 'growth' means getting bigger, turning over more revenues, becoming a successful 'business' that in practice relies on the problem of desperate poverty remaining in existence, then that is not the road to take. Beware the professional firefly. Yet real fireflies have a lifespan of only 48 hours, and burn brightest just before their death. Is that really the alternative model we want?

Second, for the most part what we witnessed were correctives to a democratic system that is clearly failing adequately to balance the diverse and rapidly changing interests of different parts of the population. Might it not be true that without an adequate sense of social cohesion across geography and across class any democratic system is likely to lapse into crude power politics and ever more elaborate means of redress to accommodate the losers (one way to read the pervasiveness of corruption)? Should we not also consider how to reintroduce an ethical dimension and a common set of human values into the democratic system to balance the forces of materialism, and improve the quality of India's democracy?

Which is where the governance discussion converged with another strand prompted by the artists we met, and also by the impossibly happy, gracious and

resilient character of the slum dwellers we encountered. Painter and sculptor Shakti Maira praised the contemporary relevance of the virtues of Indian aesthetics: balance, harmony, proportionality, rhythm and vitality. And we heard plenty about the Gandhian ethic of happiness with minimal material possessions. These truths, we were told, might yet save India – and the world – from the corrosive and divisive forces of materialistic modernity, and might deepen the quality of India's democracy.

So it is encouraging that IFF leave with a glimpse of a hopeful new initiative, a realisation of immense hidden resources and with the first inkling of a new direction to explore over the months ahead. The initiative lies in the NGOs we met in Varanasi adopting and adapting some of the practice we saw in Delhi in order to draw the collapsing system back from the brink. I think we are seeing that great things can happen when fireflies mate! The hidden resources we discovered lie in the quality of resilience and beauty in the human spirit we saw here in India, whether in the slums of New Delhi, in the generosity of the people we met, or in the exquisite sensibility of the Dalai Lama's weavers in the backstreets of Varanasi. 'Turn wounds into capacities, ugliness to beauty' says one of the IFF prompts for effective action in today's contemporary mess. I have never seen a deeper capacity for this than we experienced in India. It is a huge asset.

And the direction for future exploration? It involves recognising the pain of change, acknowledging the difficulties, but learning and growing through them to new insight and new capacities. We all have experience of this in our own lives – and we were reminded on our journey that both aesthetic and spiritual experience is transformational. So certainly let's deal with GDP and development economics, with infrastructure and improved governance, with selling the story and putting the gloss on 'Brand India'. These are necessary issues of concern.

But they may not be central. We may be missing a critical quality that, in practice, motivates and energises all of the fireflies we met and which must be rekindled across the nation if India is to realise its aspirations. This is the capacity to care for each other, even when the extent of the pain and chaos around us threatens to overwhelm. So the question I am left musing on is: can India rediscover its heart? I hope so. For it is at the root of all wise action; and a week in this extraordinary country has helped us all to rediscover ours.

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Policing communities with consent

RAM GIDOOMAL



Through NR Eyes

POLICE reform is high on the political agenda in the UK. During the General Election campaign in 1997 one of the Labour Party's key manifesto promises was 'to fight crime and the causes of crime'. A mantra that they continued to chant as they went on to win again in 2005.

But, "You can't be tough on crime unless you're tough on police reform," said Mr Cameron, the newly elected opposition Conservative Party leader, in a keynote speech in London earlier this year.

It is not surprising that the issue of police reform is always highly politically charged, since it affects every voter's (and every citizen's) sense of security as well as the British tradition of communities policing themselves.

The origins of the British Police Service (and for that matter the police services of many Commonwealth countries given our shared history) and the underlying tradition of 'policing by consent' can be traced to the Napoleonic wars from which thousands returned to an environment of poverty and lawlessness. A raft of new legislation on Larceny (theft) Offences and Disorder was brought in, resulting in the setting up of local police forces. The Metropolitan Police was formed in 1829 and other cities and counties followed suit.

It is interesting to note that police constables in the UK, then and now, are citizens locally appointed but having authority under the crown to protect communities and enforce the law. So police officers are not employees but Crown Appointees with discretion on using their powers which is unfettered – no one can order constables to exercise their powers. And so developed the concept of local men (now women as well) policing their own communities with the consent of those communities. There is no tradition of a national force or service being an arm of the state, unlike some of the forces of the colonial period. 'Policing with consent' in communities remains a key driver of UK policing and is linked to a criminal justice system administered by local magistrates and for serious offences trial by juries comprised of "12 good men and true" i.e. a local peer group

Police as law enforcers are mandated to ensure that the rule of law is implemented in letter and in spirit equally for all citizens. They have been entrusted with the right to defend and protect citizens.

They have certainly been stretched to their limits as violence has erupted in capitals across the globe following the publications of cartoons of Prophet Muhammad last September in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten.

Initial responses in Britain ranged from outright condemnation of the cartoons by Foreign Secretary Jack Straw to those who insisted on the right to free speech, whatever the consequences. Reactions changed after two rallies outside the Danish Embassy in London. One of the most provocative protests was a demonstrator dressed as a suicide bomber, wearing a fake explosive belt. Others carried placards calling for the killing and beheading of those who insulted Islam. There was a growing sense that people were responding to Islam out of fear and that this trend would continue unless checked. A much larger peaceful rally a week later indicated that moderate Muslims had seen the need to express their views.

The police response was in the spotlight. Senior politicians called for them to prosecute demonstrators who had incited violence. Some called for Sir Ian Blair, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, to explain if officers were ordered to adopt a softly-softly approach in dealing with the earlier rallies. The police response to these stinging criticisms is the setting up of a special squad to investigate the extremists.

By contrast, in India, the police often face accusations of not only being derelict in their duty to uphold the law, but of directly violating the human rights of citizens and suspects, through discrimination or harassment or excessive use of force. Police accountability and reform are inextricably linked to issues concerning human rights and good governance. Dr Doel Mukherjee of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, commenting on the communal riots in February 2002 in Gujarat said that 'police complicity and connivance with the (Gujarat) government was apparent'. Prashant Chandra Pande, the Police Commissioner for Ahmedabad, admitted that 'where the whole society has opted for a certain colour in a particular issue, it's very difficult to expect the policemen to be totally isolated and unaffected.'

But police can neither be a tool of the state nor a tool of the majority. They have to keep human rights in mind if 'policing by consent' is to be effective. Transparency and clear accountability, with appropriate checks and balances, must be integrated into any framework that governs community policing – as

in the UK where policing is still run on a tripartite basis. The Home Secretary is responsible for policing but not police forces. The Home Office provides grants to local Police Authorities. Their accountability is enforced by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary whose job it is to certify if they are efficient and effective. But the job of recruiting and maintaining these forces belongs to local Police Authorities who appoint local Chief Constables with operational independence in running their forces.

However there is increasing pressure on the police system to be reshaped to meet the challenges of the 21st century world in

which criminals, terrorists and money can move across continents with ease and where drugs are becoming ever more widely available.

One of the reform measures that the Home Secretary Charles Clarke is currently pushing through are mergers of police forces that will create regional police superforces and reduce their number in England and Wales from 43 to 33.

The plans were announced after a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) said that forces with fewer than 4,000 officers were not equipped to fight sophisticated modern crime. It concluded that the current structure of policing is "no longer fit for purpose" and that "strategic forces offered the best solution".

But the merger plans have provoked a strong reaction from the Opposition Conservative Party who argued that, 'Regional forces covering up to 6000 square miles will erode local accountability, and most of the £175 million cost will be met by local people, adding £33 to council tax bills.'

While the politicians continue to debate it is imperative that any reform programme results in a reinvigorated police service with the tools and community links needed to meet the diverse crime-fighting challenges of the 21st century.

That can only happen if local officers are trained and motivated to serve and work with local communities to tackle local problems, leaving specialists to tackle the major regional, national and international challenges of crime.

(Ram Gidoomal CBE, Chairman, South Asian Development Partnership)



A demonstration against the Danish cartoons

Imagine, fountains for a slum!

ARVIND KEJRIWAL



The Right To Know

INFORMATION about the money spent on various civil works carried out by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in three areas of Delhi, obtained under the Right to Information Act, is quite revealing. These three areas are: Defence Colony, Rajinder Nagar and Sundernagari. Defence Colony is an upper class colony, Rajinder Nagar is a middle class colony and Sundernagari is a slum in East Delhi. Strangely, the findings are the same in all areas.

First, public funds are spent on things that are not needed by the people. And when people demand a particular work, the government claims shortage of funds. The following example could throw some light. The government constructed some fountains in totally decrepit parks in Sundernagari for Rs 60 lakhs. The fountains

didn't work for a day. The people did not need them at all. They had been demanding sewerage, better sanitation, a post office and a secondary school for the past several years. Their demands were ignored and the government spent money on fountains not needed by the people.

In Defence Colony, the people obtained a list of all the works that the government proposes to do during the current year. Several streets in this list proposed to be rebuilt are in good condition and do not need any repairs. Then why is the government wasting money on these streets? Why can't it put this money to better use?

Secondly the more obvious finding is that hardly a fraction of the money, on whatever projects, is actually spent. The proportion of corruption is roughly the same in all three areas. The incidence of corruption has no correlation to the income levels of the people staying in that area. Several instances of ghost works were found when the records were verified. Some works were half done. In others, the quality was so bad that they crumbled within a few days of construction. One street was made with fly ash bricks in Defence Colony. The quality of the bricks used was so bad the bricks became powder within a few days. Several streets in Rajinder Nagar are shown to have been made thrice within a span of a few months. Payments have been made for non-existing handpumps and electric motors in Sundernagari.

The third finding is that when people reported such large scale corruption to various government authorities, no action was taken. The Defence Colony people personally met the Deputy Commissioner, who promised strict action. The Rajinder Nagar Resident Welfare Association wrote to the MCD Commissioner, the police, State Vigilance Department and the vigilance wing of MCD. The Sundernagari corruption was reported to the Chief Minister, Municipal Commissioner and the police. Either no action was taken or they tried to cover it up.

Therefore, the myth that the government is short of funds was conclusively broken. There could be shortages, but they are not crippling as projected by the government. For instance, during the FY 2001-02, the MCD spent more than Rs 2 crores on repairs of roads, public toilets, parks, handpumps and construction of fountains in a small slum like Sundernagari. Around Rs 1.5 crores were spent, mostly for repair of roads in Defence Colony in 2002-03. These are not small amounts. These are roughly the levels of expenditures made every year by just the engineering wing of the MCD. The horticulture, sanitation, street lighting wings have separate allocations.

Who decides where the public money should be spent? In rural areas, these decisions are taken (or supposed to be taken) by a body called the gram sabha, which is the general body of all adults of that village. However, in urban areas, there are no such platforms. Therefore, these decisions are taken either by the MLA or the Municipal Councillor or the Deputy Commissioner of that area or some local official like the Junior Engineer etc. A panchayat is a small area typically consisting of 1500 people. It is, therefore, possible for the people in a panchayat to meet and discuss the affairs of their village. But the constituency of an MLA, with an average population of 2 lakh people and the ward of a Municipal Councillor, with an average population of 1 lakh people, are so big that it is practically impossible to have regular meetings of people in a ward or a constituency. Therefore, the decisions of an MLA or a Municipal Councillor, even when taken with the best intentions, do not

reflect people's aspirations.

What is the way out? Give three powers to the Resident Welfare Associations (RWA). The power to decide the list of works where the money would be spent in any area, should vest with the RWA. Payment should not be made to a contractor unless an RWA certifies it as satisfactory. The power to initiate disciplinary action against local officials for any wrongdoings should also vest with the RWAs. These decisions should be taken by RWAs in their General Body Meetings, which should compulsorily take place at regular intervals.

For this, RWAs would need to be restructured and given statutory status. The State Election Commission should hold elections to RWAs like it does for Panchayats in rural areas. And the people should have the power to replace any RWA representative during his/her tenure, if found deficient.

Representative democracy has failed us. Only direct democracy can provide solutions to people's problems.

The government constructed some fountains in totally decrepit parks in Sundernagari for Rs 60 lakhs. The fountains didn't work for a day. The people did not need them at all. They had been demanding sewerage, better sanitation, a post office and a secondary school for the past several years.



A child holding up a right to information poster in Sundernagari

Insight

EXPOSE HYPE

How deep do you go in search of facts? What new news do you bring back from the field? Are government programmes and projects really what they are cracked up to be?

The forgotten police agenda

MANDEEP TIWANA

AT the plenary session of the Congress party held in January this year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, spoke of creating a new India with hard work, determination, selflessness and commitment. He underlined the need to secure a bright future for farmers, workers, weavers, minorities and weaker sections.

But economic opportunity is meaningless if physical safety and security are not assured to ordinary people, particularly the vulnerable. Recently, in Orissa, twelve people from a tribal community were gunned down while protesting the loss of their lands and livelihoods to big corporations. In Meerut, the police roughed up college students in a public park in full view of journalists' cameras. In New Delhi, the rising number of rape cases each year is a serious cause for concern especially to women who commute daily to work. The accountability of the police is at a new low.

Currently there is considerable talk about replacing the archaic Police Act of 1861. A Police Act Drafting Committee, comprising jurists, police officers and administrators, has been set up by the union government to replace the existing law. In addition, the Parliamentary Affairs Committee on Home Affairs is looking at police reforms as an important area. The Administrative Reforms Commission has also evinced similar interest.

Police forces across India are facing a serious crisis of credibility. Reports of endemic corruption, bias, brutality and a general failure to respect the rights of citizens have undermined public confidence in the police and in the rule of law. Over the years, routine and unconscionable failures by the police establishment to account for acts of omission and commission have led to the proliferation of private armies, conflict, vigilantism, and systemic outbreaks of violence. Habits of impunity and patronage have become so deep rooted in the police, that the opinion in many quarters is that the only way to reform is to disband the existing state police forces and restructure them with a freshly drawn pool of officers.

At international forums the performance of the police and their abysmal human rights record is a consistent source of embarrassment for the government. Within the country, too, the courts have indicated their displeasure with the functioning of the police at every level and laid down standards that are followed more in breach than in obedience. Detection rates are seriously low and cases often fail in court because of shoddy investigation and poor record keeping when extraneous considerations are not involved. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the state human rights commissions are overwhelmed with complaints against the police.

Recent events highlight the need for police reform through multiple levels of accountability. This begs the question, what do we make the police accountable for?

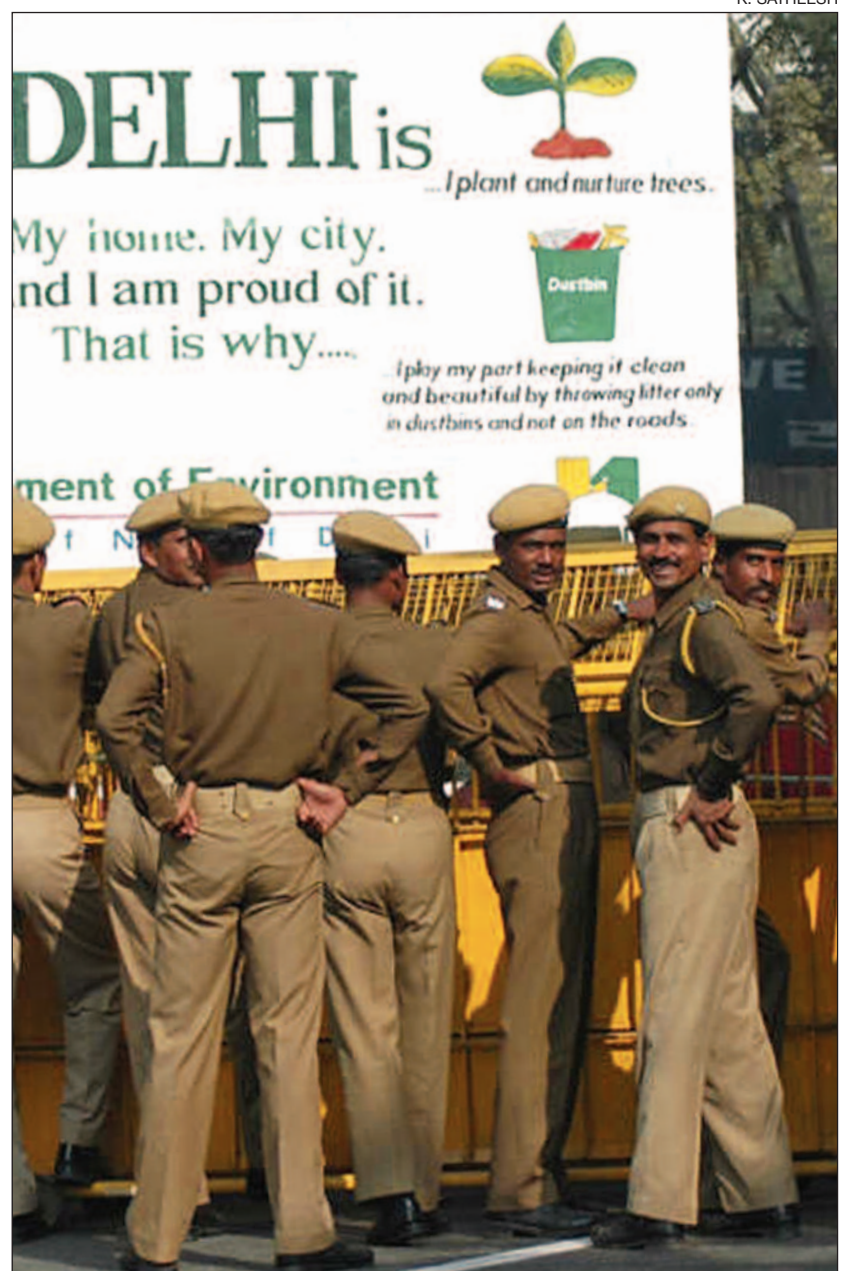
The police must be accountable both at an individual and organisational level for:

Acts of misconduct: The types and degrees of acts of misconduct – many of which happen to be criminal offences – vary. The most serious types are extra judicial killings, custodial rape, torture, and excess of force in a given situation, causing physical injury to the victim. In certain instances, misconduct may involve impairment of individual freedom through illegal detention or unwarranted arrest. In yet other situations, misconduct could involve rights viola-

tions through extortion and intimidation, registration of false cases, failure to register genuine complaints, improper or biased investigations, unnecessary surveillance and failure to protect life and property. Then there are instances of general misbehaviour such as abrasive conduct or use of derogatory language.

Disregard of legal standards and operating procedures: Standard operating procedures to handle different kinds of situations are laid out in the law, court directives, police manuals, departmental rules and regulations. These are fol-

K. SATHEESH



lowed more in breach than obedience. For instance, the procedure for the use of force to deal with unlawful assemblies is meticulously laid down in all state police manuals. They state that use of force must be progressive and firing should be carried out only as a last resort and in controlled circumstances. Yet instances of the excess use of force in dealing with public protests stare us in the face every other day. The Supreme Court has laid down procedures, which have the force of law for registering First Information Reports, carrying out arrests, handcuffing suspects, granting bail, which are routinely disregarded by the rank and file of the police.

Failure to assure public safety and security: The primary task of the police in a democracy is to create an enabling environment for the unhindered exercise of rights. Rising crime levels and perceptions of increasing criminality in society indicate a failure of the police to perform its core duty. Too often, the police are blamed for inadequately responding to crime situations and of being insensitive to the plight of victims. It is essential to make the police accountable not only for the results it is delivering but also for the manner in which it is delivering. Low public perceptions of safety and security point towards serious professional incompetence for which the police must be held accountable.

Failure to adhere to government policy: Democratically elected governments are required to frame policies in public interest. Just like any other agency of the state, the police are also bound by government policies as long as they are lawful and within the constitutional framework of rights. Depending on particular situations, governments decide policing priorities from time to time. For instance, the government may, as a policy matter, decide to lay greater thrust on curbing crime against women. Failure of the police to follow government policy indicates a serious lack of accountability. But the ruse of allegiance to government policy cannot be used to undermine the rule of law and the police's duty to uphold the rights and physical safety of all.

While demands for police accountability may be fuelled by non-state actors such as the media, civil society, political parties, religious and social groups, local communities, the intelligentsia or ordinary citizens, the responsibility for making the police accountable lies with the state. In a democratic framework, the police are made accountable for misconduct and failure to perform by a variety of state structures and through multiple mechanisms. The institutional mechanisms by which police accountability is enforced are:

Internal departmental inquiries: The most commonly used mechanism to address individual acts of police misconduct is a departmental inquiry conducted by senior police officers. An internal inquiry may be conducted on receiving a complaint from the public or by the police department on its own volition. Departmental inquiries follow the principles of natural justice. It allows officers under inquiry adequate opportunity to defend the charges against them. If guilt is established, inquiry officers can make a recommendation for punishment with censure, loss of service, reduction in pay and allowances, suspension and even dismissal.

Though internal disciplinary inquiries are swifter and cheaper than other accountability mechanisms, they inspire little public confidence. The reasons for the lack of public faith in internal inquiries by the police are: an innate desire within the department to protect its image; some questionable practices finding widespread acceptance in the department; apprehension that strict action may demoralise the force; camaraderie within the department; and the likelihood of the officer inquired into being personally acquainted with the inquiry officer/s.

Courts: Police officers are liable to punishment by the courts for violating the law. Breaches of law invite punishment under criminal law and suits for compensation under civil law. Even under criminal law, fines may be imposed on offenders at the time of conviction. In addition to general legal provisions, perhaps because the police are vested with extraordinary coercive powers, certain provisions of the Indian Penal Code provide punishment for specific acts of police misconduct such as custodial rape, causing hurt to extort a confession; compel restoration of property; and malicious arrest.

In practice, however the task of holding officers to account is beset with problems. The greatest impediment before the courts is Section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC). This provision prevents prosecution of public servants without prior sanction of the appointing authority for any offence alleged to have been committed in the discharge of official duty. Quite often this sanction is not forthcoming or significantly delayed, thereby defeating the ends of justice. Despite recommendations by the Law Commission and the National Police Commission to repeal this section, it continues to be retained.

Commissions of inquiry: Commissions of Inquiry are set up on a resolution

by the legislature to ascertain facts surrounding a matter of public importance and to make relevant recommendations. In the past Commissions of Inquiry headed by serving and retired judges have been appointed to look into a particular incident or a series of incidents involving allegations of police misconduct like the Kannur firing in Kerala, torture chambers in Punjab, Delhi riots, Mumbai riots, Gujarat riots, Gurgaon *lathi* charge and the Kalinga Nagar police firing. Commissions are vested, by law, with the powers of a civil court to summon witnesses and documents but they do not have the power to enforce action on their recommendations. In many instances, where Commissions have indicted police officers for misconduct, governments have been slack in taking action because of political compulsions. On the other hand, despite outstanding examples of judicial conscientiousness, several Commissions of Inquiry have been manipulated by governments to deflect blame from their own complicity in sanctioning police misconduct.

Human Rights Commissions: Established for the "better protection and promotion of human rights", there are sixteen state human rights commissions apart from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) which is situated in New Delhi. Though human rights commissions have a wide remit, the maximum complaints received by them are against the police. After scrutinising individual complaints, commissions make recommendations to the govern-

ment for registration of criminal cases against individual officers; immediate compensation for victims, to be recovered from salary and other dues of guilty officers; and initiation of disciplinary proceedings.

Commissions also analyse patterns of police misconduct and lay down guidelines to enhance accountability of the police. The NHRC has issued guidelines for encounter deaths; administration of lie detector tests; arrest; police-public relations; and mandatory reporting of custodial death and rape. The national and state human rights commissions are required by law to have their annual

reports tabled in parliament and state legislatures. These reports contain statistics of complaints of police misconduct, including custody deaths, summaries of illustrative/significant complaints and some times, prescriptions for systemic improvement in policing.

In practice, human rights commissions often face resistance in their efforts to make the police accountable. Because they are vested only with powers of recommendation, state governments are often tardy in taking action recommended by the commissions against errant police officers. Additionally, the capacity of commissions to fully tackle police misconduct is restricted by their bureaucratic style of functioning and close links with the executive branch of government. A persistent criticism against human rights commissions is that the appointment of commissioners reflects political patronage rather than suitability of candidates for the job. Many state commissions are functioning below the prescribed strength and are facing a resource crunch.

The state government: The Police Act of 1861, which governs most police forces in India, vests the superintendence of the police in the hands of the state government. This means that the police organisation of a state is placed under the control and supervision of the home ministry usually headed by the chief minister who sets policy directions for the police and holds the state police chief in whose hands the administration of the police rests, accountable for failure to perform.

Under the Police Act of 1861, police chiefs can be appointed and removed at the discretion of the chief minister who heads the government. The instability of tenure and lack of merit based appointment procedure for the police chief has eroded police accountability and contributed to the police being utilised to fulfill the political agenda of the ruling party.

Concerned that the police's investigative and law and order functions were being marred by illegitimate political interference, the National Police Commission (1979-81) noted that its object was "to devise a system in which the police will have professional and operational independence, particularly in matters in which their duties and responsibilities are categorically specified in law with little or no room for discretion and at the same time their overall performance can be monitored and kept within the framework of law by an agency which will involve the government also."

Sadly, the National Police Commission's recommendation to set up a specialised body – called the State Security Commission – for overseeing the police, remains unimplemented to date. Nor has its recommendation of a fixed tenure of four years for the police chief and to make him/her ineligible for further public appointments been paid heed to.

Parliament/ state legislatures: The most significant accountability function of the legislature is that of law making. New laws or amendments to existing laws

(Continued on page 24)

The idea that the police are part of the community and therefore accountable to it has not taken root largely due to the colonial origins of the Police Act of 1861, which is conspicuously silent.

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that increase penalties for misconduct or reduce the scope for arbitrary exercise of power or establish institutions to oversee the police, set both the standards and the direction of accountability. In addition, the minister in charge of the police is required to answer to the people's representatives in the house questions in respect of police performance; acts of misconduct, systemic abuse of power, and use of allocated resources. Many times, the reports of commissions of inquiry indicting the police are debated and action demanded on their recommendations by the house.

Yet endemic patterns of misconduct, occurring with the complicity of political forces are often ignored or pursued to the extent of achieving political objectives and no more. There is persistent criticism that reports of human rights commissions which do point out patterns of police misconduct are rarely discussed in parliament and in legislatures of states which have human rights commissions.

Police misconduct and mal-performance continue to plague all corners of the country despite multiple forums of accountability. It is undisputable that the failing of the existing institutions to fully address police accountability have contributed to the present state of affairs. However, the lack of effective accountability also stems from the fact that certain vital elements are missing from the accountability structure. The missing elements in institutional accountability are:

Direct accountability to local communities:

There is no institutional responsibility on police forces to be accountable to local communities. The idea that the police are part of the community and therefore accountable to it has not taken root largely due to the colonial origins of the Police Act of 1861, which is conspicuously silent on the issue. Nowhere in the Act is it written that the police must work in partnership with communities, take them into confidence while developing local policing strategies, and account to them for failure to perform. Because of this vital omission in the law, policing in India has largely remained a one sided affair with communities having little or no say in an activity that affects them the most. This contrasts sharply with progressive police legislation in other countries.

The South African Police Act mandates the establishment of community police forums, broadly representative of the local community at the police station level. The law also sets up community police boards at area and provincial levels. The area police boards consist of representatives of community police forums in each area, while provincial community police boards include representatives of all community police boards in the province. The avowed objectives of the police forums and boards are to establish and maintain community-police partnerships; promote communication and co-operation; improve the rendering of services by the police in the community; increase transparency in police functioning and strengthen accountability to the local community; and promote joint problem identification and problem solving.

In England and Wales, Police Authorities, consisting of local magistrates, councillors and members of the community have been set up to help maintain effective and efficient police forces. The Authorities, which set objectives for policing in consultation with the chief constable, are required by law to find out the views of local people about matters concerning the police and to enlist their cooperation in preventing crime.

Scientific evaluation of police performance: Standard setting and scientific monitoring of performance on a recurring basis are missing elements from Indian policing. The sole indicator used to judge police performance are crime statistics, which often lead to undesirable practices such as non-registration of First Information Reports and carrying out of indiscriminate preventive arrests. Police response to criminality, victim satisfaction and public perceptions of safety, security and integrity of the police are notably absent from any kind of performance evaluation by police departments. The rising public dissatisfaction with the quality of policing and the dismal performance on crime control and human rights highlight the necessity of institutional evaluation of performance.

The National Police Commission (NPC) had called for the establishment of a State Security Commission to oversee police functioning in each state. Its functions would include evaluating and review of police functioning. It would also submit an annual report on the performance of the police and the work done by it. The NPC also recommended the creation of a directorate of police inspection in each state to assist in evaluating performance. Successive commissions and committees on police reforms, most notably the Ribeiro Committee and Padmanabhaiah Committee have also reiterated the need for performance evaluation. Except for a nascent initiative in Kerala where the state government set up a time-bound Police Performance & Accountability Commission, there has

been no progress towards institutional evaluation of police performance.

In Northern Ireland, the Policing Board which is an independent public body made up of legislators and members of the public selected on merit, sets objectives and targets for police performance following a consultation with the police chief and uses these to monitor progress. The Board established the Police Act and publishes an annual report of performance against these objectives. In addition, the Board monitors trends and patterns in crime and devises ways for the public to cooperate with the police to prevent crime.

In England and Wales, the performance of different forces is measured and compared by a Police Standards Unit, which grounds its evaluation in the Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) prepared each year by the Home Office. The PPAF assesses police performance on a number of factors, including: satisfaction of victims with police handling of their cases; people's perception about their local police doing a good job; satisfaction of victims of racist

incidents to the service provided by the police; representation of women and minorities in the force; delivery of internal efficiency targets; time lost due to sickness of police officers; and the incidence of crime among other things.

Dedicated police complaints authorities :

Despite the growing number of complaints against the police, there is no specialised agency to exclusively address police related complaints and to make recommendations for systemic improvements. In the absence of police complaints agencies/ authorities, human rights commissions have assumed the role of exercising civilian oversight but they are beset with their own problems as discussed earlier. There is an urgent need to set up accessible institutions to address public

complaints of police misconduct both at the district and state level.

The National Police Commission (NPC) in its very first report had recommended that an Additional Sessions Judge designated as the District Inquiry Authority should conduct a mandatory judicial inquiry into complaints of rape, death or grievous hurt in police custody; and death of two or more persons in police firing to disperse unlawful assemblies. The NPC recommended that the District Inquiry Authority should oversee disposal of complaints against police officers that are dealt with departmentally. In addition, the NPC recommended the setting up of a Police Complaints Board at the state level to oversee satisfactory implementation of the entire scheme. To examine complaints of police excesses, arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly where the complainant is dissatisfied by the action taken by the police, the Padmanabhaiah Committee on Police Reforms recommended the creation of a non-statutory District Police Complaints Authority.

While the need to put in place independent police complaints authorities at the district and state level cannot be over emphasised, it is equally important for such authorities to enjoy public confidence through a transparent and streamlined process of appointment that gives due weight to integrity, experience and diversity. To be effective, the authorities must be vested with powers to call for documents and records; summon witnesses; take evidence; and oversee internal police investigations into public complaints. Effective redressal of complaints can be ensured by making the government duty bound to implement their findings. An independent budget and requisite investigation staff are vital for their success. It is essential that complaints authorities are grounded in the Police Act. The Independent Police Complaints Commission in the UK, the Independent Complaints Directorate in South Africa and the Police Integrity Commission of New South Wales, Australia have their basis in law.

Police misconduct and mal-performance are rife in India because of structural deficiencies in the system. The law governing the police is antiquated and colonial in its approach. By not recognising the value of accountability to local communities, the need to improve performance on public safety and to have accessible forums to redress public complaints, the Police Act of 1861 contributes to widespread police-public alienation. It is vital that missing elements from the existing accountability structure are put in place at the earliest.

For too long, well-entrenched power structures within the political elite and the bureaucracy, have ensured that calls to widen the web of police accountability remain a pipe dream. The argument that the existing accountability framework is wide enough and simply needs to be tuned to perform better, cannot be used any longer to discount demands for setting up additional institutions and mechanisms in accordance with international best practice. Countries where police reform efforts have been made, offer invaluable lessons for replication in the Indian context. Let's hope we learn and adapt from these experiences before people lose faith in the state completely.



LAKSHMAN ANAND

Drumstick leaves and honey for BP

Dr GG GANGADHARAN



ABOUT 2000 years ago a disciple of the great physician, Maharshi Charaka, asked: *Hey! Master, how to treat new diseases, new conditions and symptoms that appear in the body and mind in a changing time and space?*

The answer was clear. Do not count the number of diseases. They are innumerable and infinite. What a physician has to see is the equilibrium of the body that is made out of its structural and functional units. All diseases are the result of imbalance in the permutation and combination of the *doshas* (functional units of the body) with *dhatus* (structural units of the body).

Hypertension, a seemingly new disease of this century, was understood by practitioners of Ayurveda by using their own methods. They believed that the *vyana vayu*, one of the five functional components of *vatha*, gets disturbed and vitiates *rasa* and *raktha* (plasma and blood which flow together as a single unit). *Vyana* can also get disturbed by *ragadi doshas* of the mind, like anxiety and agitation. Such mental conditions can cause temporary and permanent hypertension.

Ayurveda perceives hypertension, from the treatment point of view, as *kaphavrittha vatha*. Or *vatha* surrounded by *kapha* which is supported by *rasa* and *rakta* (blood tissue). This explains the Ayurvedic pathology of hypertension.

There are a few things that can help in the initial stages of hypertension. If you are taking blood pressure pills, DO NOT stop them without consulting your physician and explaining what you intend to do and why. Under your doctor's guidance, you can

try the following advice:

- Walking for 30 minutes daily in the morning is very useful to prevent hypertension.
- Deep breathing as done in *Pranayama* every day is also beneficial. Take guidance from a good Yoga teacher. It can help you immensely.
- Swimming is a good exercise especially to correct the *vatha* in the blood system. During swimming



the whole body is continuously placed under different types of pressure and the body tries to adjust. Like the pupils of the eyes open completely when light is dim, body fluids also react to the changing environment and, in the process, help correct bodily imbalances that cause hypertension.

● Another important activity is clearing the bowels. If bowel movements are good, (twice a day, morning and evening) then health will also improve.

Diet

Cereals: Barley, ragi, red rice, wheat.

Pulses: *Moong* (green gram), *masoor* (lentil), *matki*.

Vegetables: Radish, bitter gourd, spinach, pumpkin, drumstick, carrot, beans, green leafy vegetables.

Fruits: *Amalaki* (gooseberry), watermelons, orange,



banana, black grapes, pomegranate, almonds.

Garlic has been shown to reduce blood pressure. It decreases systolic pressure by 20-30 mm Hg, and diastolic pressure by 10-20 mm Hg in people suffering from hypertension.

To be avoided

- Oily and fried food.
- Excessive intake of salt.
- Yogurt.
- Excessive ghee. However, a small amount of cow's ghee warmed – one tablespoon with warm food – is always good for all age groups.
- Meat and frozen food articles.
- Alcohol, tea, coffee.
- Smoking.
- Incompatible diet.
- Vigorous exercise.

Simple remedies

● Take three tablespoons of fresh juice of drumstick leaves. Add one tablespoon of honey and take it early morning on an empty stomach. Do not take anything for 30 minutes. Many of my patients have found this useful.

● *Dasamoolam Kashayam* 15 ml with 45 ml of water and two *Dhanwantharam Gulika* crushed and mixed with *Kashayam* twice a day on an empty stomach for 41 days can be tried. These medicines are available at outlets of Arya Vaidya Pharmacy (Coimbatore) and Arya Vaidya Sala (Kottakkal).

Since blood pressure (BP) influences the functioning of the heart muscles, one should not allow it to be high. When you try this advice make sure that your BP readings are noted every day. The best thing to do is to keep a notebook handy and mark your BP readings on a daily basis. When you switchover, please remember all three -- diet, lifestyle and medicines -- are important and not merely medicines.

(vaidya.ganga@frlht.org.in)

Recipes for diabetics

Aavalavade

Ingredients:

- Rice flour: 1 cup ● Amla (Indian gooseberry) juice: 1 cup
- Sesame seeds: 1/2 teaspoon
- Asafoetida: a pinch ● Salt: to taste ● Plantain leaves: A few

Method:

Wash the gooseberry fruit and wipe it dry. Cut the fruits into small pieces and crush to form a fine paste. Now squeeze the juice from the paste. Place a deep pan over medium flame. Add the rice flour, sesame seeds, asafoetida and salt to it and mix well. Now add the juice and keep stirring. Cook the paste until it forms a soft dough like consistency. Remove the vessel from flame.

Now take a small ball of tennis ball size of the mixture prepared and place it over small pieces of approximately 5-inch diameter of plantain leaf. Pat it lightly to spread evenly in a round shape of approximately 4-inch diameter. Steam cook for about 10 minutes over a medium flame along with the plantain leaves.

Note: The rice flour and other ingredients should have a consistency and should be steam cooked. One can also add a little pepper powder for taste. This dish is easy to digest and beneficial for those having diabetes. It is also good for the eyes.

Pakwa Takra

Ingredients:

- Fat free buttermilk: about 500 ml.
- Asafoetida powder: a pinch ● Cumin seeds: 1/4 teaspoon
- Pepper powder: to taste ● Dried ginger powder: to taste
- Saidhava (a kind of rock salt): to taste

Method:

Add all the above said ingredients to the buttermilk and boil over moderate flame. Allow it to boil for about five to ten minutes.

Note: Buttermilk should be fat free. This recipe should be cooked over a moderate flame. One can garnish with chopped fresh coriander leaves. These would enhance taste. This dish is very tasty and good for digestion. It is a good diet to follow for people suffering from diarrhoea (with mucus), flatulence, cough, etc. It is beneficial for those suffering from diabetes.

Shahi paneer with amaranth gravy

Ingredients:

- Paneer - 200gm ● Popped amaranth (Ramdana) - 50gm
- Medium onions - 2 ● Cashew nuts- 4-5 ● Cardamom -3
- Cloves - 2 ● Cinnamon - 1 stick ● Bay leaf - 1 ● Chopped green chilli - 2 ● Red chili - 1 ● Coriander seeds - 1 tsp
- Fresh curd - 1 small cup ● Coriander - ¾ cup finely chopped
- Sugar - ½ tsp ● Ghee - 2tbsp ● Salt - to taste

Method:

- Cut paneer into small cubes. Then cut onions into big pieces, add ¾ cup of water and boil.
- Blend onions in a mixer with the amaranth and cashew nut pieces.
- Heat the ghee and fry cardamoms, cloves, cinnamon and bay leaf for ½ min.
- Add the ground onion and amaranth mixture and fry for a while.
- Add the green chillies and fry for a while.
- Add the red chilli and coriander seeds to the gravy. Fry again for a few seconds. Take the vessel off the fire.
- Churn the curd and add to the mixture. Add salt and cook on a slow flame until the ghee comes on top.
- Add the green coriander and cook for ½ minute.
- Finally, add paneer and sugar and cook for a minute.
- Serve hot with gehun roti.

Mix vegetables

Ingredients:

- Cabbage - 100 gm ● Carrot - 50gm ● Peas - 50gm ● Potato - 50gm ● Tomato - 50 gm ● Ginger- garlic paste - ¼ tsp
- Turmeric powder - ½ tsp ● Red chili - 1
- Coriander seeds - 1 tsp ● Coriander - 1tsp finely chopped
- Ghee - 2tsp ● Salt - to taste

Method:

- Wash and cut all the vegetables into symmetrical pieces.
- Put 2 tsp of oil in a karahi. Put ginger- garlic paste and sauté for one minute and then add turmeric, coriander seeds, red chili and again sauté for a minute.
- Add chopped tomato and salt and sauté for 2-3 minutes till the tomatoes get soft.
- Add chopped vegetables and mix well. Sprinkle some water and cook on a slow flame covered with lid, till all the vegetables get soft.
- When the vegetables get cooked, sprinkle coriander leaves and served hot with roti.



Paneer in amaranth gravy, mix vegetable, curd, rice, roti, salad

Recipes by:



A touch of Rajasthan fare

Hari mirch ka achar

Ingredients:

- Whole green chillies: 500 gm
- Mustard seeds: 200 gm
- Aniseed: 50 gm
- Fenugreek: 50 gm
- Salt to taste

Method: Soak chillies in hot water till little tender. Grind mustard, aniseed and fenugreek. Add salt to mixture. Slit chillies and fill with mixture. Store in glass container with ½ glass water, previously boiled and cooled. This is a pickle minus oil. It lasts for months!

Sangri ki sabzi

Ingredients:

- Sangri 300 gm
- Onion: 2, chopped
- Garlic flakes: 8-10, chopped
- Red chilli powder: 5gm
- Amchoor powder: 20 gm
- Coriander powder: 20 gm
- Whole red chillies: 5
- A pinch of asafoetida
- Coriander leaves: chopped
- Oil: 50 gm
- Salt to taste

Method: Boil sangri till tender. Heat oil in pan. Add asafoetida, whole chillies, onion and garlic. Then put in powdered masalas. Add amchoor powder. Some prefer tomato instead. Cook till done. Add sangri and cook well. Garnish with coriander.

Gond ke laddoo

Ingredients:

- Wheat flour: ½ kg
- Ghee: 400 gm
- Gum (khejri source preferred): 100 gm
- Powdered sugar: ½ kg
- Pepper: 50 gm, coarsely ground
- Cashew, almond: 100 gm, coarsely ground
- Melon seeds: 50 gm

Method: Heat ghee in thick-bottom kadai. Fry gum and keep aside. Grind when cool. Add flour to remaining ghee. Sauté till colour changes to light brown. Add pepper. Mix well and remove from fire. Add ground gum, sugar, dry fruits and melon seeds. Mix well and form small balls while mixture is still warm. Can be stored for months.

Raabdi

Ingredients:

- Curd: 1 glass
- Water: 1 + ½ glass
- 1 cup bajra flour
- ½ cup salt

Method: Churn curd, water, bajra and salt together. Leave it out in the sun for 6-7 hours. After sedimentation, carefully remove water and boil it. Add residue. Mix and consume hot or cold.

Purba Kalita

Jodhpur

FOOD in the land of princes spells grandeur. It is meant to be rich and lip-smacking. Clarified butter or *ghee* is almost synonymous with Rajasthani cuisine. Milk, buttermilk, lassi and curd are generously consumed. Lentils, cereals and millet (*bajra*) are used regularly. But this is just part of the fare(y) tale.

Arid conditions have encouraged people to experiment with food that lasts long. Though greens are available these days, traditional food is still very much a way of life. It is interesting to note how people have thrived on sparse vegetation, thanks to the art of preservation. Every bit of vegetation serves more than one purpose.

Gwarpatha or aloe vera is used to make ladoos. They are a delicacy and also a remedy for body ache and stomach problems. *Sangri* is the fruit from the ubiquitous *khejri* 'fencing' tree. When unripe or preserved, the fruit is used as a vegetable. The pod, known as *lasson*, of the shrub *phog* is also a vegetable. *Kaer*, a kind of berry, is enjoyed as a vegetable and pickle. *Papri*, the succulent leaf of the fence-plant *thor* is boiled and cooked as any other vegetable. *Kachri*, of the cucumber family, is used to make tangy curries. *Gwarphali*, a bean, is another popular long-lasting vegetable.

Well-known dishes include *daal-baati* (cooked lentils with roasted balls of wheat flour dough steeped in ghee), *gatte ka sabzi* (gram flour rolls in yohurt cooked with masalas), *ker-sangri sabzi*, *kadhi* (a curd dish with *pakodas*) and *papad ki sabzi* - an unusual but tantalising way of relishing *papad*.

When it comes of sweets, Rajasthanis can give Bengalis a run for their money. Their desserts are rich in taste and ingredients. *Churma* (sweetened ground *roti*) is easy to make and nutritious. A variety of *halwas* are made using cereals and powdered lentils. *Laapsi* is made from broken wheat. *Gond ke laddoo* is made from wheat flour and gum while *Mawa kachori* is a stuffed patty dipped in sugar syrup. *Ghevar* is a delicacy where cakes made of flour are soaked in ghee, milk and garnished with sliced almonds. *Malpuas* or pancakes in saffron-sugar syrup, topped with *rabdi* are a specialty of this region.

Kolkata catches Pinter fever

Shuktara Lal
Kolkata

WINNING a prestigious prize invariably triggers off a spurt of frenetic interest in the person who has been honoured. This post-prize frenzy is often amusing especially in the case of writers and artistes. Right now, an excellent example is Harold Pinter.

Before Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, only four of his plays (one was a Bengali adaptation) had been staged in Kolkata since the last 20 years.

In contrast, last month Pinter's works were showcased in two events. And on the 23rd of this month, Kolkatans will get a chance to watch one of Pinter's best plays – *The Homecoming*. In the months to follow there is one more tentative production of a Pinter play in the pipeline. That adds up to at least three Pinter performances in two months.

Being a Nobel Laureate sure makes a difference. City bookshops are cashing in on the hype. In the past, anthologies of Pinter's plays were difficult to locate. Now you can find them in nearly every humdrum bookstore round the corner.

The first sign heralding Pinter's arrival on the Kolkata stage was a panel discussion held on 3 February at Oxford Bookstore. The discussion was called "Pinter: Who? What?"

The irony was, perhaps, unintended. Theatreclan – an English language theatre group in Kolkata – conceptualised the event. Before the discussion began, the group staged a short play by Pinter called *Victoria Station*.

Though the play is funny it also has shades of menace – a word synonymous with Pinter's plays. The panelists featured Vinay Sharma, a Hindi theatre director associated for long with the theatre group, Padatik, Ananda Lal, a professor of English and a drama critic and Maina Bhagat, a self-proclaimed book lover and an event consultant at Oxford Bookstore. There was also Trina Nileena Banerjee, Dhruv Mookerji and Tathagata Singha all

of whom are young actors and directors.

The session was moderated by Tathagata Chowdhury, the founder of Theatreclan. Dhruv, who had directed *The Birthday Party* (one of the few texts by Pinter staged in Kolkata before he was awarded the Nobel Prize), spoke about the power of language in his works. "Pinter's pauses add to the gravity of his words," he elaborated.

Chowdhury asked the speakers about the challenges they faced while directing a Pinter play.

Being a Nobel Laureate sure makes a difference. City bookshops are cashing in on the hype. In the past, anthologies of Pinter's plays were difficult to locate. Now you can find them in nearly every humdrum bookstore.

Trina - who recently won the best actress award for her role in the Bengali film *Nishabdo* at the Osian Cinefan Asian Film Festival at New Delhi – raised a disputable point. She said, "I am a bit wary of directing Pinter's plays, because I sometimes get the feeling that he has a negative bias towards women. The female characters in his plays are rarely at the centre of the action, and always seem to be judged by Pinter." Trina's views were contested by Singha, who is directing the upcoming rendition of *The Homecoming*. In this play, Pinter takes a close look at murky sexual relations within the family. By doing this he rips apart complacent notions of domesticity and exposes facets of the family structure that we choose to overlook.

Bhagat agreed that the Nobel Prize had increased people's curiosity about Pinter. She said for a person not familiar with his themes, his use of language and style, might be putting off. "Pinter was an author of our times. We hope this recognition will encourage more people to research his works further," she said.

"Just because Pinter has won the Nobel Prize does not mean we should place him on a pedestal and blindly idolise him. We must ensure that we objectively criticise him and keep a sense of perspective," said Sharma.

On 19 February, Srijan, a Kolkata based organisation that promotes the arts tied up with Kolkata's popular English theatre group The Red Curtain to present an assorted collection of Pinter's shorter plays. This event was very interesting because the actors also read Pinter's poetry. Many of Pinter's poems have explicitly criticised American government policies – a characteristic that defines his more recent plays as well. His poem, *American Football*, is a scathing attack on the Gulf War.

"I have always been in love with Pinter's poems," said Basant Rungta, director of Srijan. "He is very different from other poets. Everyone knows about his dramas, but people may not necessarily comprehend the kind of language he uses in his plays. However, if you read his poems, you are able to grasp his style better."

Both these events have served as a prelude to the production of *The Homecoming*, a play directors tend to shy away from because of its bold content. "When I first read the script, I couldn't understand the protagonist, Ruth, at all. But I wanted to figure out how her mind worked. This is what initially drew me to the play. I could also relate to what Pinter was saying. Many of us are attracted to our relatives, but we never talk about it. There are a lot of similarities between the family in *The Homecoming* and Indian families," said Singha. As Kolkata awaits the presentation of *The Homecoming*, it remains to be seen whether this current fixation with Pinter will endure or just fade away.

Daksh delivers rural messages

Civil Society News
New Delhi

A group of men idly kept a game of cards going, squatting on the dusty ground at Bharkal village on the outskirts of Delhi. It was a Sunday morning. The place was virtually deserted till the Daksh street theatre group alighted from a Maruti van.

With a drum and tambourine they invited one and all to watch their play. "No money needed. This is for free. We are volunteers who do street plays. Come. We have something to say," called out Nadeem, who is a television professional and does this in his free time.

Children came scampering out of narrow, twisted lanes chased by their grannies. Women surfaced and stood around to watch. Others peeped down from their balconies.

The Daksh group was sent by Literacy India, an NGO, which works on education and livelihoods in Gurgaon and outer Delhi.

"We have planned to send the Daksh group every weekend to neighbouring villages. We want to spread community awareness on education, gender equality, cleanliness and alcohol," says Satya Prakash, Literacy India's project head. UPS, an American courier company, is sponsoring the performances.

This energetic street theatre group of young actors first attracted an audience. They did this easily by carefully choosing the right spot in the village (which was invariably the square), calling out to villagers and singing reworked Hindi film songs.

Spiked with rustic humour, their script was imbued with social messages. Different scenarios unfolded, each with something to teach the villagers. A director disillusioned with his film. An absent-minded cameraman who loses his camera. A film producer tending to his sick buffalo.

"We don't forget our old habits easily," says the film director, played by Ashish.

The film director decides to make a realistic film and goes with his cameraman to a school where

children are playing. One of the children has *gajar ka halwa* in a plastic packet. "Say no to plastic bags," is the message conveyed.

Cut to the next scene. A wedding is to take place. The *baraat* arrives but the horse refuses to budge because the lane is so dirty. The girl is uneducated. The father-in-law angrily refuses to go ahead with the marriage rituals. But the groom intervenes and says we can give her a year to get an education. Get her admitted at once, yells the father.

The audience giggled, sang and clapped along. In the second village, Bamnoli where the group performed, children joined the *baraat*.

Nadeem asked the children how many went to school. Many raised their hands. A few didn't. But everybody nodded and said children should go to school. In Bamnoli village Literacy India runs tuition and tailoring classes, which have got a good response.

A full fledged school has now been planned, four km from Chouma village in Palam Vihar, Gurgaon, Literacy India's headquarters.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

1 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
Kathak Recital
By Gunjan Khare from Lucknow, disciple of Pt. Arjun Mishra

1 March

Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm
Discussion: Sri Lanka on the edge
Speakers: MR Narayanswamy, author and journalist and MK Tikku, journalist
Chair: Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Ashok Mehta

2nd March

Lecture room (Annexe) at 6:30 pm
Meet Marija Sreš
Introduction: Myron J. Pereira SJ
Welcome address by H.E. M. Borštnik, Chargé d'Affaires of Slovenia
Followed by: In Conversation Marija Sreš writer and development worker in conversation with Sonalben Shukla, Director, Vacha Women's Resource Centre, Mumbai
Screening of a 20 minute film The Adivasi Cultural Festival Film on Marija Sreš' heritage work in Sabarkantha
Mrija Sreš has worked with rural women in Gujarat for over 30 years. A development worker with the Dugri Garasiya Adivasis in Sabarkantha district in North Gujarat, she holds a degree in Gujarati literature and her experiences over the years have found expression through her writing. Her first book in *Gujarati Girasma ek Dugri* (To Survive and to Prevail) was awarded the second prize by Gujarat Sahitya Akademi in 1974 and a special edition of the book was republished in 2005 by the Gujarat Sahitya Parishad as part of the "hundred most significant books in Gujarati literature"

2-4 March

Auditorium
Hybrid Forms
New Trends in the Documentary Film
A Festival: 2 - 4 March

3 March

CONFERENCE ROOM - I at 6:30 pm
Budget 2006 - Analysis
Speaker: Bishwajit Bhattacharyya, Advocate, Supreme Court of India

4-6 March

Art Gallery (Annexe) 11:00 am - 7 pm
Artists of India
An exhibition of studio and traditional pottery, and paintings by renowned artists. On view will be works by Jatinder Das, Satish Gujral, Serjeet Singh, Arpana Caur, Kalicharan, Yuriko Lochan etc. and upcoming studio potters like Keshari Nandan Prasad, Rajesh Kumar Srivastava, Prithviraj Singhdeo and others.
Traditional potters from Khurja and stoneware from Agra
Inauguration by Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan MP on Friday, 3rd March at 6:30 pm

4 March

Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm
Panel discussion on: Corruption in Public life - Ways and Means of Eradication
Keynote address by Justice JS Verma, former Chief

Justice of India and Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission
Panelists: P Shankar, Central Vigilance Commissioner, N Gopalaswamy, Election Commissioner, Ved Marwah, former Governor, Nirmala Deshpande, Gandhian; Shekhar Singh, Convenor, NCPRI, Kuldip Nayyar, senior journalist; and Prashant Bhushan, Advocate

5 March

Auditorium at 10:00 am
Carnatic Classical Music - Vocal Recital
By Vasantha Krishnan and Lalita Anand from Delhi who will present a concert of compositions by composers from Karnataka and others
Accompanied by RS Krishnan (violin) and KN Padmanabhan (*mridangam*)

6 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
Film: Naina Jogin - The Ascetic Eye (59 min; dvcam; 2005; English sub-titles)
Directed by Praveen Kumar who will introduce the film
The vitality of the Madhubani style of paintings has enchanted people across the world. The international market for this art form is as much a fact as the enigmatic beliefs and cultural practices of the artists. The film travels through the region of Madhubani, looking at the lives of these artists who struggle against trying circumstances, juxtaposing the frugality of their means with the richness of their work
Screening will be followed by a discussion

6 March

Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm
Independent India
The Environment Debate
Speaker: Dr Mahesh Rangarajan, well-known historian of ecological change, commentator on Indian politics and author and editor of several books

7-8 March

Auditorium
Women, Media and Society Transformations - Asian Women's Festival
(Organised by IIC-Asia Project in collaboration with the International Association of Women in Radio and Television)

7 March

Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm
Book Discussion Group
Sona Khan, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India; Shahid Mehdi, former Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia; and Dr Zafrul Islam, will discuss. *Islam: Maker of the Muslim Mind* by Sheshrao More (Pune: Rajhans Prakashan, 2004)

8 March

Lecture Room (Annexe) at 6:30 pm
To Serve: Responding to the Inner Calling - Taking Education to the Oppressed People
Speaker: Amit from Adharshila Shikshana Kendra Adharshila Shikshana Kendra is an alternative school for Adivasi children in Madhya Pradesh. Founders Amit and Jayashree who have been working with the Adivasis for more than 20 years have titled it a "learning centre" to get away from the rigid, didactic stereotype of mainstream

schools with a curriculum that combines academics, world issues, practical skills and cultural heritage with a lot of fun.

8 March

Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm
Babur Nama (Journal of Babur): Its Relevance to Contemporary India and Pakistan
Speaker: Dilip Hiro, writer, journalist and commentator who has recently translated Babur's 16th century classic

9 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
10th Barsi of Pt. Amarnath Inauguration
By Ashok Vajpeyi
Followed by Hindustani Vocal Recital
By Mahendra Toke
Hindustani Vocal Recital
By Gajendra Baxi

10 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
Lecture Series on Governance Politicians, Civil Servants and Governance
Speaker: Prof. Rajni Kothari, eminent Social Scientist
First in an annual series of lectures on governance that will address current issues on governance by some of the most distinguished minds in India and abroad

10 March

Fountain Lawns at 6:30 pm
Concert: By the Hohenlohe Brass Quintet from Germany - Joachim Spieth (trumpet); Martin Jacob (trumpet); Nadja Heble (horn); Christof Schmidt (trombone); and Tobias Ragle (tuba & brass trombone)
The Quintet will present a programme of baroque dance suites, classical pieces as well as jazz, spirituals and film music

11 March

Fountain Lawns at 7:00 pm
War of Kalinga - A Story of Ashoka (45 min)
Dance presented by girls and boys from the shelter homes of Salaam Balaak Trust
Choreography: Avinash Yadav
Music composed by Indraneel Hariharan
The dance incorporates chhau, modern and traditional dance forms to delineate the transformation of Ashoka from a great warrior to an ambassador of peace.

13 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
In memory of Ustad Vilayat Khan
In Conversation: Uma Vasudev in conversation with Ustad R Fahimuddin Dagar, who will share his thoughts and memories about the life and times of musicians of the 20th century
Followed by: Dhrupad Recital by Ustad R. Fahimuddin Dagar
Accompanied by Dal Chand Sharma on the *pakhawaj*

14 March

Gandhi - King Plaza at 7:30 pm
Basant Ritu - Songs of Holi
Presented by Madhup Mudgal
Accompanied by the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Choir

16 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
To Remember Bela Bartok (1881-1945)
Concert - Vocal and

Instrumental Folk Music
Presented by members of the Hungarian Folk Ensemble - Istvan Pal (violin & head of orchestra); Gyula Karacs (viola); Robert Door (double bass); Attila Gera (wind instruments); and Agnes Herczku (vocal)
The artists will present a concert adapted from authentic and original Hungarian folk music collected by Bela Bartok

17 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
Carnatic Classical Music - Vocal Recital
By Gopal Arvind from Chennai, disciple of O.S. Thiagarajan

18-24 March

Art Gallery (Annexe) 11:00 am - 7:00 pm
An exhibition of graphics presenting works by outstanding Hungarian artists who have been influenced by the music of Bela Bartok. Some of the works on display are illustrations to particular Bartok compositions, others, abstract reflections of the musical universe of the composer.
Artists whose works will be exhibited include Victor Vasarely, Imre Szemethi, Gabor Pasztor, Karoly Raszler, Huba Balvanyos and Zoltan Lenkey
Opening on Friday, 17 March at 6:30 pm

18 March

Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm
Films on Wildlife and Environment

18-20 March

Auditorium and Fountain Lawns at 6:30 pm
A Festival of Sufi Music
Details of the programme to be announced later
Organised on the occasion of the 'International Conference on Sufism: Sufi Traditions, Philosophy and Poetry'

20 March

Conference Room - I at 6:30 pm
Ethiopia, Africa's India
An illustrated lecture by Come Carpentier, Editor
Mr Carpentier will make a presentation on the history and culture of Ethiopia with special reference to her relations with India over the centuries. For the ancient Greeks and medieval geographers and mythologists, Ethiopia was a part of India and the two countries were often regarded as indistinguishable

21 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
Independent India
Urban Crisis in Contemporary Bombay Cinema
Speaker: Dr Ranjani Mazumdar, School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University

23 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
Women and Her Womanhood
Presented by artists of Bhoomika Creative Dance Centre
Direction and choreography: Narendra Sharma

24 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
Concert
By Laura Goldberg

of Arts Ahimsa on the violin and Stephen Masi on the piano

The artists will present a concert that will include Beethoven's Spring Sonata and variations on "Abide with Me" amongst others

25 March

Auditorium at 7 pm
Film: Dance with Hands Held Tight (62 min; 2005; dvd; English sub-titles)
Directed by Krishnendu Bose who will introduce the film
A film on women's livelihoods and natural resources. Eighty percent of rural women are engaged in livelihoods dependant on natural resources in India. This intense relationship, throws up a range of issues and questions. The film tries to explore these through four focused engagements - the fishermen off the coast of Karnataka, the fish paddy agriculturists - Apatani women of Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh; the hillbroom collecting Adivasi & Dalit women of Kashipur, Orissa; and the women of Sone-bhadra, Uttar Pradesh who are fighting for their lost lands.

29 March

Auditorium at 6:30 pm
Is the United States a Southern Nation?
Speaker: Prof. Ira Katznelson, Ruggles Professor of Political Science & History, President, Columbia University, New York and American Political Science Association
Prof. Katznelson will discuss the impact on race, regionalism and poverty on American politics, putting the Bush presidency in that larger context.

30 March

Auditorium at 6 pm
Chameli Devi Jain Award 2006. Presentation of awards to outstanding women journalist.
Followed by a panel discussion on: Six months into the Right to Information Act
Lead presentation by Wajahat Habibullah, Govt. of India's Chief Information Commissioner under the Right to Information Act

MAX MUELLER BHAVAN

2-4th March

Hybrid Forms
New Trends in Documentary Film

6th March at 9 pm

EU-Film Festival
Kebab Connection at Siri Fort Auditorium
Kebab Connection is a comedy of two fast food stands (one Turkish, the other Greek), a frustrated filmmaker, the coolest commercial of all time, intercultural love, forbidden romance and centuries-old Aegean rivalry. And we mustn't forget the local mafia, either!

9 March at 6 pm

Lecture: Civil society - historical and comparative perspectives
This talk will embed the concept of civil society in its cultural and historical moorings and show how it aimed not only at developing a form of social interaction, but also at excluding certain groups from participation. By Margrit Pernau

10 March at 6 pm

Lecture: Civilising Subjects in Europe
The beginning of European Modernity is closely linked with the development of specific notions of civility, encompassing new norms of self-control and self-restraint as well as a new concept of the body. The talk will discuss some theories developed to understand this growth. By Alois Hahn

9-11 March

Workshop: Historical and comparative perspectives on civil society

16-17 March

Seminar "SPIRIT-2006": Sustainable & Participative Initiative for Rural Infrastructure Technologies

24-26 March at 6.30 pm

Exploring Media Art
Series of artists' presentations, talks and discussions
Performance by Maya Rao

KRITI

17 March at 5.30 pm

Documentary screening
Crossing the Lines: Kashmir, India, Pakistan by Eqbal Ahmad Foundation.

All events are subject to change. Ph: India International Centre: 24619431

Letters and listings can be sent to:
shailey@civilsocietyonline.com
shaileyhingorani@gmail.com

WEBWATCH

www.dignityfoundation.com
Fight stress, hostility, rejection, loneliness and learn to live with dignity. Click **www.dignityfoundation.com** and you will realise life can be beautiful, irrespective of age and circumstances. The Dignity Foundation aims at helping people overcome age-related problems and give them a sense of security.

www.rhinocampaign.net Save the Rhino International has been working since 1991 to save the rhinos of Africa and Asia. This charity spreads awareness about the dwindling numbers of rhinoceros species in the world. It helps raise funds for NGOs and communities working on projects to save the rhino. The EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) Rhino Campaign has joined hands with the charity to mobilise efforts, funds and inspire people to help in the animal's survival. Click **www.rhinocampaign.net** to discover more.

Promote palliative care

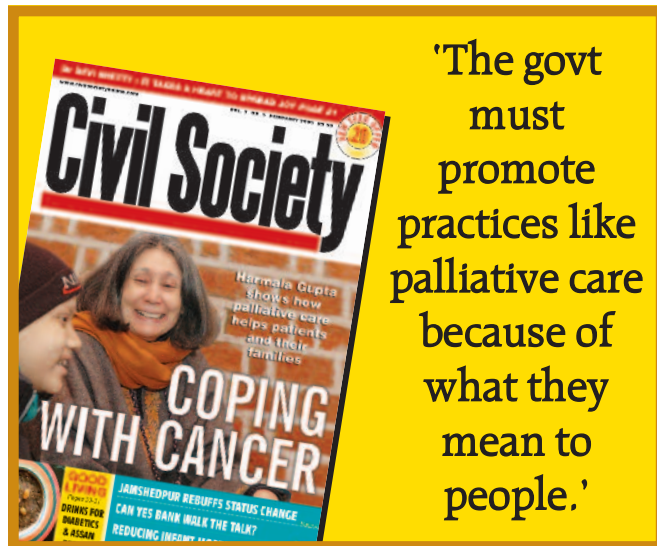
I liked your story on Harmala and palliative cancer care. We must ask ourselves why so little ever appears in the media on patient friendly approaches to medicine. It is also the responsibility of the government to promote such practices in palliative care because of what they mean to ordinary people. There is too much emphasis on medicine as a business when it should really be a service.

Karan Chandra

The net is fun

Internet has indeed come to play a very significant role in our lives. We turn to it for all kinds of information and amusement. It is here, I think, lies the relevance of a column like 'Webwatch'. On one of my wild expeditions on the net, I logged onto www.BookCrossing.com, and stumbled on the most amusing and superlatively funny books. Reading these books made me lose my inhibitions of sharing a short story that I had written in the past but wasn't able to reveal to anybody for fear of ridicule. Now, I have embarked on a new journey of discovery and I am enjoying it immensely.

R Kumar



Indo-Pak friendship

This is in relation to the story entitled 'Friendship at Wagah'. The India-Pakistan debate has been done to death. I understand that for the peace process to have far-reaching consequences it has to be covered on a sustained basis. But to make it interesting some freshness has to be infused into it. A straightforward story like this makes very dull reading. I wonder whether the space devoted to the story could have been put to better use.

M.K.Upadhyaya

Theatre's mass appeal

Our country has a very rich tradition of folk culture. Street theatre and folk dances

have been used for ages to sensitise the public about a host of issues. This form of sensitisation is particularly useful because it is very close to the people and respects the sensibilities of the communities it comes into contact with. The work that banglanatak.com seeks to do, as illustrated in the story, 'Theatre with a mass message' deserves all the support they can get. But is the state listening?

Ravi Ranjan

Be more hard hitting

I am quite disappointed with the kind of stories that got mention and space in this month's edition of *Civil Society*. What we really need are hard-hitting stories. Any

medical journal, any newspaper can tell me how fatal a disease cancer is. But nobody else will tell me how NGOs really work, or whether there is a direct correlation between globalisation and the rise of the NGO sector in this country. We need such stories to be able to successfully wean away the tabloid junkie from page 3 news and arouse his/her interest in serious development issues.

Ankita Khara

More stories please

There is a serious dearth of reportage in your magazine. Perspectives are all right. But we need good, serious reporting to really know our 'Bharat' well. The two Indias are de-linked. Stories of change are often overlooked by mainstream newspapers and we rely on *Civil Society* for our monthly quota. So please include more reportage.

Sunita Kumari

Water woes

Lado Sarai, DDA flats, consists of 320 Janata flats. It was allotted by DDA to Economic Weaker Sections (EWS) in 1988. This colony has more than 2,500 residents.

Each small flat consists of one room, a bath, toilet, kitchen and balcony. The flats were allotted in 1988. But we are still not supplied clean drinking water. Residents depend totally on groundwater that is not of good quality. In fact, groundwater in the entire Mehrauli area, where we are located, is not fit for drinking.

After many representations and protests, the area councillor, Satbir Singh sanctioned and provided us with one half inch DJB pipeline which is installed near a park close to the DJB booster pump house. Residents now get five to 10 litres every day after much fighting and pushing. Women, senior citizens and aged widows are the worst sufferers.

Do we not have the basic right to clear and clean drinking water in this 21st century and that too in the capital city? Recently the Supreme Court gave a verdict that says every citizen of India has the basic right to clean drinking water. Can some action be taken to give relief to the residents of Lado Sarai DDA flats?

K Vijaya Raghaven
President - Resident Welfare Association
Ladosarai

WHERE TO VOLUNTEER

CanSupport India

Kanak Durga Basti Vikas Kendra, Sector 12 R.K. Puram Near DPS School New Delhi-110022
Tel: 26102851, 26102859, 26102869
E-mail: cansup_india@hotmail.com

Rahi

Rahi is a support centre for urban middle class women suffering from the trauma of incest. It provides information, individual support, group support and referrals. Through workshops and peer educators they help survivors and spread awareness.
Contact: H-49 A, Second floor, Kalkaji, New Delhi-3
Phone: 26227647

Association for India's Development(AID) – Delhi Chapter

AID works for the environment, children, women's issues, education, and health. They also undertake fund raising.
Contact: Anuj Grover B-121, MIG Flats, Phase-IV, Ashok Vihar Delhi- 110052
Phone: 9818248459
E-mail: anuj.grover@gmail.com

Youthreach

A volunteer team at Youthreach helps to match your skills and interests with the needs of their partner organisations. This exchange is monitored and

facilitated from beginning to end by the volunteer team. The team also partners other non-profit organisations that are working with children, women and the environment.

Contact: Anubha or Ria
11 Community Centre, Saket, New Delhi - 110 017
Phone/Fax: (011) 2653 3520/25/30
Email: yrd@youthreachindia.org

Deepalaya

They work with economically, socially deprived, physically and mentally challenged children. They believe in helping children become self reliant and lead a healthy life. Deepalaya works on education, health, skill training and income enhancement.
Contact: Deepalaya 46, Institutional Area, D Block Janakpuri New Delhi - 110 058
Phone: 25548263, 25590347
Website: www.deepalaya.org

Mobile Crèches

Mobile Crèches pioneered intervention into the lives of migrant construction workers by introducing the mobile crèche where working parents can leave their children. They work in the following areas: health, education, community outreach, networking and advocacy, resource mobilisation and communication. You can volunteer by filling out a simple form online.
Contact: DIZ Area, Raja Bazaar, Sector IV New Delhi -110 001

Phone: 91-11-23347635 / 23363271
Website: www.mobilecreches.org

The Arpana Trust

Arpana is a charitable, religious and spiritual organisation headquartered in Karnal, Haryana. They work with rural communities in Himachal Pradesh and with slum dwellers in Delhi. Arpana is well known for its work on health. They have helped organise women into self-help groups. These SHGs make beautiful and intricate items which are marketed by Arpana.
For more details:
Arpana Community Centre, NS-5, Munirka Marg Street F/9, Next to MTNL, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057.
Phone: (Office) 26151136 and (Resi) 26154964

HelpAge India

HelpAge India needs volunteers from doctors to lay people in all our locations. Older people love to talk to younger people and need emotional support. We require volunteers in Delhi and Chennai to survey older people staying alone in homes, who could use our Helpline for senior citizens. If you wish to volunteer please email Pawan Solanki, manager at pawan.s@helpageindia.org or write to Vikas, volunteer coordinator, HelpAge India.

WHERE TO DONATE

Indian Red Cross Society

The society provides relief, hospital services, maternity and child welfare, family welfare, nursing and community services.

Contact: Red Cross Bhavan Golf Links New Delhi-110003
Phone: 24618915, 24617531

Child Relief and You (CRY)

CRY, a premier child rights organisation, believes that every child is entitled to survival, protection, development and participation. You can sponsor a child's education, healthcare, or a health worker and a teacher.
Website: www.cry.org

Community Aid and Sponsorship Program (CASP)

CASP enhances the capacities of children, families and communities through participation and advocacy leading to sustainable development and empowerment. You can help by sponsoring underprivileged child/children from any work area where CASP implements its programmes. These include building old-age homes, projects relating to AIDS etc.
Website: www.caspindia.org

ActionAid

ActionAid is an international development organisation which works with poor and marginalised women, men, girls and boys to eradicate poverty, injustice and inequity. You can become a part of their Karma Mitra loyalty program, which is based on the concept

'When you do good things you should get good things in return.' As a member of this program you can avail various tangible benefits.

Contact: ActionAid India C-88, South Extension - II New Delhi-110 049
Website: www.actionaidindia.org

CanSupport India

Kanak Durga Basti Vikas Kendra, Sector 12 R.K. Puram Near DPS School New Delhi-110022
Tel: 26102851, 26102859, 26102869
E-mail: cansup_india@hotmail.com

HelpAge India

HelpAge India is involved in the care of the poor and disadvantaged elderly in 55 locations across the country. They organise primary health care at village and slum level through 53 mobile medical vans, care of the destitute elderly through Adopt a Gran programme with 222 voluntary agencies, Helplines and income generation for the elderly. Their recent programmes are in the tsunami affected regions and in Kashmir for the rehabilitation of the elderly affected by the earthquake disaster. HelpAge serve more than a million elderly in India. If you wish to donate or adopt a granny, please donate online on our site www.helpageindia.org or send an email to helpage@nde.vsnl.net.in
Address: HelpAge India C-14 Qutub Institutional Area New Delhi- 110016
Chief Executive: Mathew Cherian - mathew.cherian@helpageindia.org





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