

# Civil Society

AHIMSA MUSINGS

## NON-VIOLENCE IN A VIOLENT WORLD

Peace as a natural human response



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# ORIGINAL JOURNALISM

*Great stories of change across India  
from a magazine built on trust*



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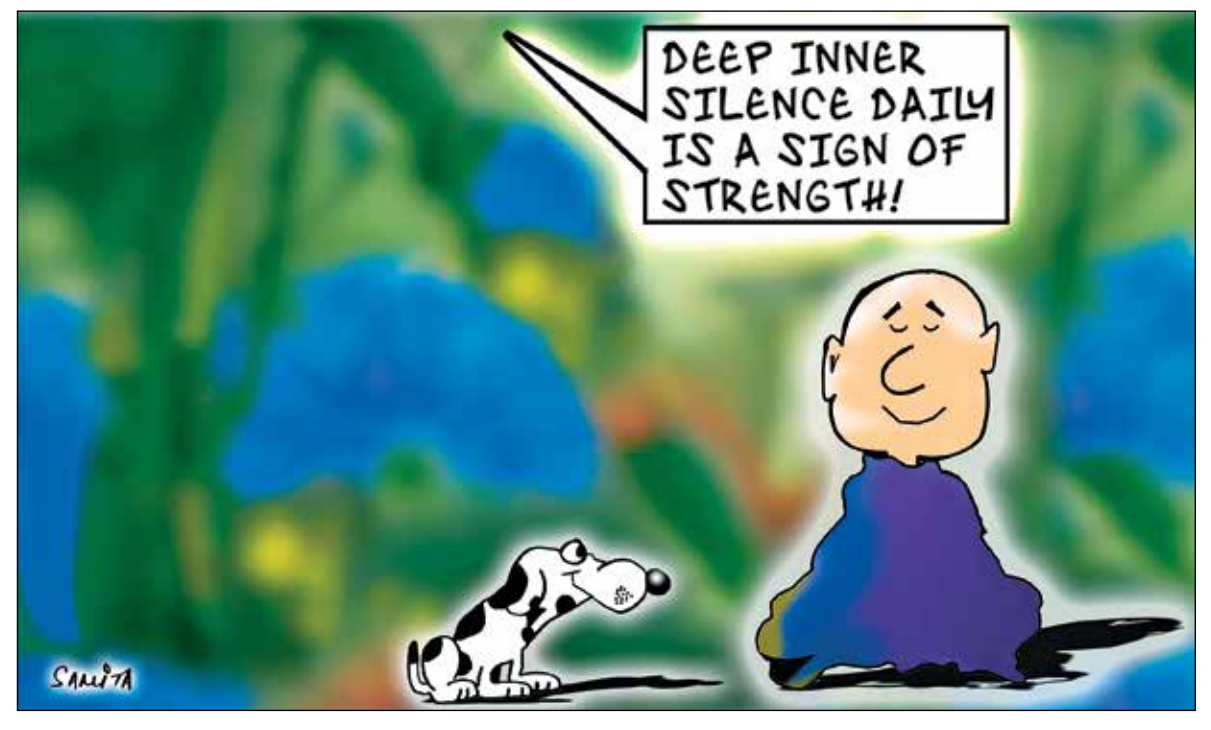
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IN THE LIGHT

SAMITA RATHOR



LETTERS



Boat saga

Your story, 'Get the drift: The saga of Bengal's ancient boats', was very interesting. Swarup is keeping Bengal's rich boat tradition alive. He has worked hard to achieve perfection and accuracy in carving detailed structures of traditional boats. I truly appreciate his works of art. Best wishes to Swarup and thanks to Subir Roy for writing this excellent article on a genius researcher.

**Subhra Bhattacharyya**

Swarup Bhattacharya's work is extraordinary. His boats are excellent with appropriate designs and descriptions. In fact, his research is a wonderful presentation of the socio-cultural evolution of civilization and water transportation mediums. He deserves strong patronage and sincerest appreciation.

**Sanjay Basu**

A very engaging read. So much

can be gleaned from the history of boats. Hats off to Swarup Bhattacharya's passion and dedication.

**Rajita Agarwal**

Swarup Bhattacharya has been pursuing the study of traditional water transportation and boats with exceptional zeal for years now. It is high time his work gains appropriate recognition and gets showcased in a museum. That will serve coming generations by making knowledge and models available and will also support the boat-making tradition of Bengal.

**Anis Raychaudhuri**

Swarup Bhattacharya is a very endearing and erudite person. He has an impeccable storytelling style. I have witnessed his growing passion to study Bengal's traditional boats and river systems since his youth and his zest to walk the uncharted road. His contributions are many and include national and international research areas in anthropology related to rivers and boats.

**Parag Ray**

Small hospitals

Thank you for your interview, 'Fund small hospitals for their potential impact'. It is doctors like Dr Vijay Anand Ismavel and his wife, Dr Annie, who are the real heroes of our times. Their

commitment and persistence in the face of challenges is very inspiring. May their tribe increase.

**Evita Fernandez**

Happy to see our doctors featured in your magazine. I went to visit them as a student. It was an amazing experience. I learnt a lot from them. I would like to take part in their service to the people. If God wills it will happen soon. Right now I'm working as a nurse in the UAE thanks to the knowledge and confidence I got working with Dr Mary and Dr Raj.

**Akila Jeyasingh Chandrabose**

Bird watch

The "State of India's Birds" report is an extremely important one. It has been carefully researched and evaluates the decline in biodiversity and species loss. Pesticides have been the biggest cause of this decline. We need to curb hunting of birds, poisoning through pesticides, pollution and habitat loss.

**Dr Narasimha Reddy Donthi**

This was a very interesting and informative article. The pictures are also great.

**Madhavan Nambiar**

River saviour

Thanks for your story, 'Col Gill brings back a forest to save a river

in Ludhiana'. Amazing work by Colonel Gill. He is a role model for the country. We need to highlight his amazing work.

**Baljit Singh**

Rice wise

Thank you so much for bringing this ancient wisdom of traditional rice to our notice. We now know that there are extraordinary varieties of rice that can actually provide us nutrition, immunity, minerals and flavours. Rice has been wrongly given a bad name and blamed heavily for diabetes and weight gain.

Hats off to the farmers who take the risk of growing these varieties painstakingly. They are our nutritionists. We will definitely order some packs of traditional rice.

**Dr Anita Patil-Deshmukh**

Kodava fest

Susheela Nair's article, 'Keilpodh: A Kodava festival of arms', was well written, as always! Thank you for providing us a glimpse of the fascinating Keilpodh festival. Nair's account of the Kodava people's customs, attire, and culinary traditions brings a personal touch to the narrative, making it all the more captivating.

**Shiju Sugunan**

A very informative article and written simply in a language that everyone will be able to comprehend.

**Jyothi Balachandran**

Dog blues

Your article, 'Deadly strays? Or docile 'community dogs?' was excellent. Stray dogs are a threat not only to humans but to wildlife as well.

**Dr Prashant Singh**

Totally agree with the article.

**B.S. Vasudev**

The stray dog problem has gotten out of hand. As it is, our cities are filthy. Don't make it worse. Strays are dangerous. Will dog activists pick up the tab for injections when people get bitten? You can't build cities of international standards with garbage and stray dogs lying around.

**Damien**



COVER STORY

NON-VIOLENCE IN A VIOLENT WORLD

What do the recent developments in Gaza tell us about ourselves? Do war and aggression come naturally to human beings or can we train ourselves to respond with peace and forgiveness?

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The cry for peace

As brutality in Gaza reaches a crescendo, a cry for peace goes out in street protests across the world. Ordinary people are raising their voices against aggression and violence. What brings them out? There seems to be an outpouring of disgust with the war machines that run the world.

Our cover story this month asks the question whether non-violence can be a natural human response as opposed to war and conflict which are planned and staged and are therefore social and political constructs.

Rajni Bakshi, whose *Ahimsa Musings* column appears in *Civil Society* every month, has done the cover. She cites examples of people in conflict zones who, despite the loss of loved ones, choose forgiveness and peace over retaliation. But ours is a world hardwired for violence. Voices of peace get drowned out. Yet, there is hope because research suggests that non-violence is a natural human response and people can be trained for peace in the way they are conditioned for war.

What do we know about Indian villages? Very little, actually, though 70 percent of the population continues to live in them. Surinder S. Jodhka debunks many myths about rural India, particularly the view that villages are static and backward as compared to cities. Prof. Jodhka's book, *The Indian Village: Rural Lives in the 21st Century*, happened to land with us and we tracked him down for an interview. An unassuming scholar and teacher, Prof. Jodhka has done his research, travelling extensively in rural India. The urban-rural binary, he says, doesn't do justice to the Indian village which is as much part of a changing world as the Indian city. Villages deserve to be better understood for their potential and their quest to prosper sustainably.

Farming abounds with stories. We find them all the time waiting to be written. We have in this issue the revival of wild oranges by who else but the Friends of Local Mangoes! India's fabulous biodiversity is a valuable asset. Farmers understand this all too well, but would benefit much more if policymakers were to be more aware and farsighted. It all begins, as Prof. Jodhka points out in his book, by changing the way the village is perceived.

We have been covering art by people with disabilities over the years. While doing so we have seen talent flower and find recognition. The Family of the Disabled holds an exhibition, *Beyond Limits*, every year to showcase the work of such artists and make them known so that they find buyers. We feature the exhibition and the artists once again.

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**SURINDER S. JODHKA ON RURAL LIVES IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Photo: Civil Society/Umesh Anand



Prof. Jodhka: 'Colonial powers produced theories of society that placed Europe at the centre of their experience and others had to follow'

# 'The Indian village has always been changing, never static'

Civil Society News  
Gurugram

STIMULATING rural areas should be part of any script for economic growth in India. Even as younger generations seek to move on, agriculture deserves to be made more rewarding and sustainable and linked to national strategies for better nutrition. Much value awaits to be unlocked by promoting livelihoods aligned to agriculture.

Getting people off the land and out of agriculture has been shown up as being easier said than done — especially when those in rural areas account for 70 percent of the country's population. There aren't the cities to absorb them efficiently or the industries to provide jobs.

But a robust vision of villages begins with an understanding of what they are all about. It means going beyond the entrenched view of a rural-urban divide. Among many deleterious consequences, it has led to rural areas being environmentally exploited to serve the cause of development. Escaping from such regression is not just costly, but is mostly impossible.

So much better to see rural and urban as being interconnected in a single mosaic, transforming and prospering in tandem and to a collective

advantage. Surinder S. Jodhka's book, *The Indian Village: Rural Lives in the 21st Century*, encourages such fresh thinking.

Prof. Jodhka teaches sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He is a scholar and researcher who travels extensively in rural India. His book puts many myths to rest.

Villages have never been static, he argues. Historically villages and cities were dynamic, globally connected and not backward. They have been changing and continue to do so. The city-village binary is therefore a false one thrust upon the Global South by European colonizers to assert their worldview. *Civil Society* spoke to Prof. Jodhka about his book and his understanding of rural India's aspirations based on his research. An edited version of our conversation:

**Q: You have said in your book that colonial powers deliberately, to a strategy, as it were, portrayed villages as being static and backward whereas cities were positioned as being forward-looking and symbols of development. Could you explain this a little?**

There were many things happening at that time. With the development of capitalism in Europe and colonization of the rest of the world, Europe,

in some sense, took charge of defining the world. It built narratives of what is good, what is bad, what is the future, what is the past, what is Europe and what is the rest.

India was colonized by Europe along with many countries of the Global South. The colonial powers produced theories of society which placed Europe in an advantageous position, as a region that had already developed and the rest of the world had to follow. Social theories were constructed with Europe as the centre of their experience. And then they treated all this as history.

Well, the fact is that before the 17th and 18th centuries, when Europe underwent the Industrial Revolution, the world existed in different forms. And Europe was not really ahead of other regions. China, India, the Middle East and many other regions were very advanced civilizations with a lot of wealth.

Colonial powers came to India for its wealth, which they wanted to acquire. Most of the riches of India were not being generated in Bangalore or in Hyderabad. They were being generated in villages. Just take spices as one example.

But, according to the narratives of the capitalist bourgeoisie, created by the Industrial Revolution, cities were sites of production. Orientalism, attached with the white man's burden, generated narratives that the Global South — India, China and Africa — consisted of primitive places or traditional societies and cultures which didn't have the capability of growing on their own.

So India got conceptualized as a land of villages, as if there were no cities here. The Indian village was shown to be kind of stuck in time and incapable of growing on its own. It needed to be disintegrated and connected with the city.

Our own nationalists bought these theories. They were mostly urban, middle-class Indians who kind of replaced the colonial elite. They felt that they now had the responsibility of developing everyone else. They regarded themselves as knowing everything because they were 'educated' and others were illiterate and living in primitive times or less developed.

Well, the reality is that the world was always integrated in some way or the other. And so were villages. It didn't happen in the 21st century. Population flows were always there. There were kinship connections, people travelled from villages to cities and beyond.

Cities flourished in India. There was Agra, Delhi, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Jalandhar, Amritsar. Every 100 miles there was a city, these were also centres of culture, villages were closely integrated, there were pilgrimage centres. Populations were always mobile. Obviously, there were poor people. There have always been poor people in cities.

**Q: In fact, as you say in your book, at one point, India had more people living in urban spaces than Europe had, right? So, in a sense, India was more advanced. Remnants of efficient urban systems are proof. But this was not asserted, taken forward. Why?**

The urban middle class began to see itself in a 'we-know-it-all' kind of category, that we know what is good for you. That's what provoked me into writing this book. I started thinking about it in 2020, when farmers were sitting on the borders of Delhi. They were speaking a very cosmopolitan language. They were talking about the entire world. They were talking about the dynamics of corporate capital. They were talking about their own internal livelihood patterns and what would happen once corporations came in.

On the other hand, middle-class Indians were condescending. They had no idea what these farm laws were. People were not even looking at the texts. They were just passing judgement publicly on television channels and amongst themselves that farmers have gheraoed us and they don't understand anything.

When I went to the farmer protests, I saw they were holding classes. They had set up libraries on the borders. They were talking about not just their agriculture, but about the world, about jurisprudence, how global flows would function after 50 years and what is happening to infrastructure. They were very sophisticated and very knowledgeable.

Urban folks just assume that they know better. Privilege is hard to shed.

**Q: You've been travelling to villages in Punjab and across the cow belt. Villages must have evolved over time?**

We now have plenty of historical work. And I have a whole chapter on this in the book which talks about actually existing villages. All these agrarian economies were constantly under transformation. You know, there were surpluses being produced. Villages were connected to cities and villages were connected to the world. There was a process of change happening all the time.

There were new communities coming in. For example, in northwest India, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan you have flows of Jats coming in. South India was undergoing a complete change. You have canal irrigation coming in. New technologies and new crops. Potatoes, tomatoes perhaps from Brazil, Latin America. New kinds of spices too.

These were not localized economies. They were integrated into the larger world. Things were going from here to elsewhere and coming from elsewhere to here. Villages were always changing in every sense of the term.

If you look at power hierarchies, once you have new land and new systems, new rulers come, there's a drought, people will move from one place to the other, just for the sake of livelihood. Then they have to negotiate with a new terrain. So, villages were always changing.

**'The reality is that the world was always integrated in some way or the other. And so were villages. Population flows were always there. People travelled from villages to cities and beyond.'**

Secondly, in the past 100 years, particularly after Independence, villages were integrated into the systems of the nation state and democratic politics. We didn't have that earlier. That makes a lot of difference because with democratic politics you have a representational system which didn't exist before.

We have people voting. Votes made a lot of difference even to people who were completely marginalized whether it was in the cow belt or Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand or down South or the interiors of northeast India. There was a process of national integration in a very political sense of the term.

A new bureaucracy comes in, a developmental bureaucracy, with development programmes and electoral processes. The Green Revolution brings in a certain kind of development in some pockets. The Green Revolution was not confined to Punjab, Haryana or Western UP or parts of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

You also have population flows. In the 1970s itself, labour begins to migrate from Bihar to Punjab. I have done field work in Bihar. You go to Madhubani district and villagers will tell you that when they began to migrate for work to Punjab they felt liberated — they were not dependent on the local landlords anymore. It gave them alternative possibilities of livelihood.

And then you have the rise of OBC politics. It played a very significant role in creating further democratic aspirations. People began to go wherever employment was available. You have taxi drivers from Punjab working in Calcutta or Bombay, early on. Security guards from all over the country. And tribal labour migrating.

But along with migration flows, there are commodity flows and a new kind of consumption culture. Take ATMs which play an important role

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in the lives of migrant labour and their families. Or mobile phones — you can stay in the village and work in the city. If you are, say, an electrician you don't have to stay in a slum if your village is 10 km away.

Rural livelihoods have changed. Agriculture does not give livelihoods to more than 15 to 40 percent of rural households across the country. The remaining livelihoods come from the non-farm economy, a very generic term.

Democratic politics has played a very important role. It has produced a new local elite, which is connected, knowledgeable and linked to the developmental bureaucracy. It also then produces a kind of clientele politics where the regional political elite also develops connections with the village and forms an electoral constituency.

People don't vote on the basis of caste identities alone. Caste is also an urban process, right? These identities are being mobilized from cities, and then you have associational formations of caste. We think of caste as a village reality. But villages also get integrated through those new caste elites, which are actually elites of our modern-day democracy.

**Q: You point out in your book that the rural population has actually increased. This is contrary to what economists find desirable. Can you explain this?**

Economists know this. In India, we obviously have many more people living in urban areas now than we did 100 years back. The proportion of the urban population has gone up from, say, around 10 to 11 percent in the early 20th century to perhaps 35 to 37 percent — we don't have figures of the last Census. It's only in relative terms that the urban population has increased. It's still very large. I mean, India's urban population is more than the total population of any country in the world other than India and China, right? We have nearly 400 million people living in India's urban centres, which is larger than the total population of the United States.

But the rural population has also increased to nearly four times what it was 100 years ago. So, the absolute size of the rural population is perhaps, you know, 850 to 900 million people living in rural areas, which is obviously more than double the urban population of India. It's a huge number.

That's why I keep emphasizing, look at the facts, at the ground realities. Unless you are constantly engaging with those, you will end up producing narratives and prescriptions. Not only do such narratives not work, they also create problems. They create more inequalities. We unnecessarily lose out on skills that are there in this large 70 percent of our population.

We don't consider them worth anything. We think they're a lag on us, the urban middle class, because we pay taxes and they don't. Everyone pays taxes indirectly, right? They are part of the consumer economy. Also, they're skilled people. They are knowledgeable. You need to visualize your population demographics very differently, more regionally.

**Q: With connectivity, migration, Panchayati Raj, surely caste equations must have undergone change in villages? Don't women have more agency with Panchayati Raj?**

Absolutely. Caste equations have changed but caste has not disappeared. Earlier structures of hierarchy that integrated everyone are not required any longer. Rural economies are quite mechanized. People are quite mobile. Agriculture doesn't need too many people. And not too many people work in agriculture any longer.

In some contexts, women have agency, but mostly it is nominal. It is a complicated question. My own theory is that women have been given reservations in panchayats because the erstwhile dominant sections of the village have moved out so they don't have too much stake in rural panchayats.

Panchayats have become delivery systems of state-led development. They are not the kind of panchayats that Gandhi had visualized. These

are more like bureaucratic channels to disperse developmental schemes.

That kind of representation is required but the structure of relations needs to change. There is very little discussion in villages on patriarchy, on male dominance. It varies from region to region. So Kerala is very different from Gujarat which is different from western UP. They also vary vertically. Dalit communities have a different kind of patriarchal arrangement or structure from, say, the Jats or Rajputs.

Take what happens to rural families when men move out. If you go to a village in Bihar, 75 percent of households have at least one to four persons working outside. And most of these men are actually married. Their wives stay back and run the household. What kind of empowerment does that bring to women there? Obviously, things are changing when men are not around.

Earlier, it used to be only in Kerala when men went to the Gulf. Those dynamics are also interesting. Empirically, there are varieties of processes across social stratum. We need to map those and that can happen only by taking the village seriously.

**Q: We have also had NGOs working in Rajasthan, MP, and UP telling us very bitterly that governments have deliberately not spent on rural infrastructure across the cow belt to force distress migration. How far is this true?**

Absolutely true. Both infrastructure and also in imagining rural livelihoods. Post the 1990s everything is led by corporate interests. If companies like some areas to be developed, it happens. Companies are also willing to develop infrastructure, storage facilities, provided you hand over agrarian economies to them. In parts of South India, agriculture is very well integrated because farming interests have shrunk.

I went to do field work in Bihar and travelled from Patna to Madhubani. This is a wonderful place. I mean, agriculturally this land in the Gangetic plains is one of the most fertile in the world. But there is no infrastructure and no irrigation.

There is water, it causes floods, but there's no canalization. And it did not happen partly because the dominant agrarian interests did not want development in Bihar. And after that there was simply State neglect.

Who is going to develop this kind of infrastructure in Bihar? These are all small holdings. Why should you invest in developing irrigational networks? There is no thinking, no investment, in such regions. And agrarian plans have to be region-specific, ecology-sensitive.

**Q: Why has rural India lost political heft?**

Historically and sociologically, in the 1970s and post the 1980s, the local rural elite, because of democracy and the new Green Revolution technology, became prosperous. They used those channels of mobility to move out of the village. They sent their children to schools and colleges. The aspirations of their children changed. Some became MLAs or got into other political positions, which took them out of the village to the local capital city.

Even in Jharkhand you will find half the population in urban areas are new migrants from villages. Some would be poor, but many would be the erstwhile rural elite. So who will speak for the village in a loud enough voice to be heard in Parliament? You don't have a Charan Singh or a Devi Lal any longer. You have farmer lobbies only in regions like Punjab which had relatively larger holdings.

In some sense, land reforms also made agriculture a politically unviable voice. The farmer lobby, farmer movements were very active in the 1980s. After that their children began to move out and diversified into urban occupations.

With new liberal development, the middle class began to reproduce itself in the urban corporate economy. Earlier, the Nehruvian middle class still felt it had the onus of taking everyone along. But that is not 'in' anymore. Villages have become unfashionable, even for academics like us. They think it is a waste of time. Why do you want to study villages, they ask, who reads about villages these days? ■

# Dogs, people and the courts

## A Pune housing society cries its heart out

Civil Society News

New Delhi/Pune

IMAGINE the scene. It is around 2 am. A van with 25-odd stray dogs turns up at the gates of the Brahma Suncity Housing Society in Pune. They are accompanied by a busload of policemen. At that early hour, the dogs are released in the apartment complex without any intimation to the residents. The dogs have no collars, no vaccination records.

This happens on May 13 some three months after a child, residents say, was brutally mauled by a pack of stray dogs in the society's premises. That attack came on top of cases of dog bite and residents feeling unsafe.

The injuries to the child were recorded as category three bites, which means they were severe, and he needed treatment in hospital. The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) responded by taking away around 50 dogs from the premises of the housing complex.

But on May 13 the dogs were back because under the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules dogs, even if they bite and attack people, cannot be removed from an area.

When the dogs were taken away, the residents breathed a sigh of relief. There had been long-standing complaints about the dogs roaming free in the common areas and being fed randomly. People felt they were at risk going for walks, getting out of their cars or even accessing the swimming pool.

But after the PMC action, an animal activist, who was not from among the residents, filed a case in the Bombay High Court seeking the return of the dogs to the society's premises and implementation of the ABC Rules.

As a result of this case, the high court ruled that the PMC put back the dogs including the ones that attacked the child. Before the court order came, the Animal Welfare Board (AWB) had also set up an Animal Welfare Committee under the same ABC Rules for a "fair evaluation" of the events that had occurred for a "proper understanding of human-animal dynamics and challenges present on the ground" and to "analyze past interventions and plan suitable action" so that "human and animal safety is adequately in adherence with the law."

The committee recorded a list of complaints. The residents said they lived in constant fear, pregnant women were especially worried about the possibility of being bitten, sterilization and vaccination records did not exist, the maintenance and housekeeping staff had their own concerns.

However, when the court issued its order putting back the dogs none of these concerns seem to have been taken into account. The brief of the committee was to ensure that the safety of both human beings and animals were addressed. But the court's order only related to the rights of the dogs under the ABC Rules.

To stop implementation of the high court's order, the residents went to the Supreme Court, which issued a stay. The residents informed the PMC Commissioner of the stay and requested him to wait for the Supreme Court's decision. They also suggested that the interim period could be used for sterilizing and vaccinating the dogs and tagging them.

But instead, despite the Supreme Court's stay, the PMC brought the dogs back surreptitiously in the early hours of May 13 and then brought

in yet more stray dogs, again at the dead of night, the residents say.

The ABC Rules are meant to protect stray animals from being ill-treated. They were recently amended to include the term 'community dog'. But what happens if the community at large does not want to keep stray dogs in its midst? Whose responsibility do they become?

The residents of the Brahma Suncity Housing Society say under Article 21 of the Constitution they have the right to personal safety, freedom of movement and a disease and pollution free environment. Having stray dogs around deprives them of these rights.

The residents have a video which they circulate in which they narrate how their lives have been upended. Children say they can't play freely. A cancer patient often finds it challenging to step out, even to go for treatment. The elderly can't go for their walks.

"We used to have six or seven stray dogs in this society a decade ago.

Now we have 60 to 70. We have about 5,000 residents and just a handful of people feed dogs. And they feed the dogs irresponsibly," says Nagendra Rampuria, who speaks for the majority of residents.

He says the dog-feeders are doughty and unreasonable. They are also propped up by animal activists outside the housing society. They cite the ABC Rules, which the courts uphold. But the rules are lopsidedly enforced without taking into account the safety of the residents and the fact that the majority don't want dogs invading common areas.

Rampuria says he personally led an initiative to find common ground. One suggestion was that the dogs be kept in a large sequestered area where they could be fed and looked after. The possibility of adoption and transfer to animal shelters outside was explored. But such discussions finally failed.

"After the attack on the child in February this year, when the dogs were picked up by the PMC, they were kept in shelters outside where they were well looked after. Where was

the need to bring them back?" he asks.

As the imbroglio continues, there have been more instances of attacks, the most recent being of a child going from the school bus stop to the park being bitten.

Says Rampuria, expressing the sentiments of fellow residents: "Currently stray dogs seem to have the right to live in their territories, right to remain where they are even if they maul or kill citizens or choose private property as their territory. Stray dog feeders, via the ABC Rules, also have the right to litter food anywhere and take no responsibility for the actions of the dogs they feed."

It is because of the feeding that the dogs develop territories that they see as their own and attack anyone they consider an "intruder" including "human residents who actually own that territory," says Rampuria.

The residents are particularly disappointed by a comment by the judge in the high court that "a stray dog bite is not the end of the world". The residents say in response: "For those of who have suffered, it has very much been the end of the world. For people, especially children who have been savaged, or those who have to live next to the constant danger or fear of attack the trauma remains." ■



Stray dogs make it difficult to walk or sit out

# Wild oranges make a comeback thanks to Friends of Mangoes

Shree Padre  
Kasaragod

TWO months ago, Natesh Konanakatte, a young graftsman from Sagara taluk, posted online that he had identified a wild orange tree called *illi hannu* in the Mavinasara forest nearby. He also wrote that four years ago, he had planted a graft of a wild orange he had identified. “This year I got 500 oranges from that tree. They are sweet and tasty when they are fully ripe.”

Konanakatte hardly expected the nostalgic response he got. There is a revival of interest in vanishing varieties of wild oranges in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. Ask elders about *illi hannu*, also known as *kadu kittale*, a wild cousin of the orange, and they will say they enjoyed the fruit during their childhood but these plants have now vanished.

A recently formed conservationist group in Sullia called Nada Mavina Mitraru or NaMaMi which means Friends of Local Mangoes, embarked on a search for wild orange varieties and unearthed a series of endangered ones.

The *illi hannu* is not the only forgotten fruit. There are many more wild cousins of citrus and orange on the verge of extinction. Fruits like *sihi kanchi*, *hadagina kittale* in Kodagu, and *nayi kittale* in Dakshina Kannada face a similar fate.

Wild orange trees were never planted. The trees that survive are from seeds which germinated naturally and survived in garden corners or nearby forests. The only time people went near these trees was to harvest their fruit.

Scientists are now keen to identify wild oranges and their cousins. Both the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) in Thrissur and the Citrus Research Institute, Nagpur, are keen to identify the best of the lot. The NBPGR advocates registering rare varieties in the names of the farmers who have saved them.

**SWEET OR SOUR?** Those familiar with these fruits say they are quite sour and cannot be eaten. They are not wrong. But a search now reveals that sweeter variants exist and can serve as table fruit too. The difference is that they are smaller and have many more seeds.

Take, for example, *kodakittale*, a wild orange

variety found in Kodagu. Koda means monkey. Everyone knows this is a very sour fruit. It is used as rootstock for grafting oranges. But, the Central Horticultural Experiment Station (CHES) in Chettally, which comes under the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) in Bengaluru, has a variant of *kodakittale* that is very sweet.

Hoodlumane Lakshminarayana Hegde in Siddaour taluk of Uttara Kannada district has a 20-year-old *illi hannu* tree which bears fruit twice a year. Though a little sour, it is tasty and can be eaten.



Wild oranges at Ajay Valthaje's farm in Sullia taluk

In Chikmagalur district, two farmers have flourishing *kadu kittale* trees. Ten kilometres away from Kalsasa town, the Puranika brothers — Balakrishna and Ramakrishna — used to have many *kadu kittale* trees on their estate. “Now we have only a few. No one bothers to cultivate these plants since they have no commercial value,” says Ramakrishna Puranika.

“You can consider the fruit ripe when its colour changes to orange,” says Balakrishna. “It has more seeds but children relish these oranges. Taste-wise, such oranges are better than the ones we buy from the market.”

K.J. Sachin of Kichabby in N.R. Pura taluk of Chikmagalur district has a 75-year-old *kadu kittale* tree, planted by his grandfather,

on his farm. “We have two trees which yield thousands of oranges that aren't very sweet. But they are okay as a table fruit,” he says.

**UNIQUE GENE POOL** The Forestry College of Sirsi, under the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad, developed an *illi hannu* gene pool nine years ago, thanks to the farsightedness of its present dean, Dr R. Vasudeva. “*Illi hannu* trees were dying on the betta lands. We wanted to know why these trees were dying and decided to start a gene pool. We collected 22 cultivars which have now started fruiting,” he says. Betta lands are forest tracts that were granted to local farmers during British rule.

These 22 cultivars were collected from three taluks of the upper ghats of Uttara Kannada district — Sirsi, Yallapur and Siddapur. Vivek Hegde, a post-graduate student, shouldered the responsibility of identifying and collecting such cultivars. He now works as a forestry expert in Bengaluru.

“Between 2015 and 2016, I visited 60 farmers to search for cultivars. It's not as if farmers have felled these trees. The trees have dwindled due to fungal diseases like dye-back and stem borer attacks,” says Hegde.

“*Kadu kittale* or *illi hannu* is almost half the size of an average orange. Most are sour. Even the sweet ones have a certain level of sourness. They also have more seeds though I did find some with less seeds. These cultivars are less productive. In Chavadi Jaddigadde in Hulekal road I got a cultivar that was high-yielding.”

When Manjunath Hegde of Taragod Sirsi heard about Konanakatte grafting and growing a good variety of *illi hannu*, he recalled another citrus fruit called *sihi kanchi* that existed as a table fruit decades ago.

“In Malenadu, we had two types of *kanchis* about 30 to 40 years ago. One, called *huli kanchi*, was sour and the other, *sihi kanchi*, was sweet. *Huli kanchi* was used for cooking and for certain household medicines. *Sihi kanchi* was used as a table fruit. We still have some *huli kanchi* trees but *sihi kanchi* trees have vanished,” he says.

A search on social media for the wild cousins of orange yielded encouraging results. Radhakrishna B.L. of Nittoor in Shimoga district has a *sihi kanchi* tree which he has named *mosambi kanchi*. Once it ripens, the fruit's skin becomes thin, yellowish and it is sweeter. The tree yields fruit during the monsoon, from August to September, and in winter from December to January.

Prasanna Khandika of Sagar in Shimoga district has three *sihi kanchi* trees. One is about 50 years old. “*Sihi kanchi* is tastier in winter. Sometimes it is tastier than the *mosambi* we buy from the market,” he says. The younger plants, he says, produce sour fruit in the initial two or three years. After the tree grows bigger, the fruit turns sweeter.



The NaMaMi conservationist group of Sullia at Ajay Valthaje's house after collecting scions from the *nayi kittale* tree

**ON A SHIP FROM AFAR** Meanwhile, Kodagu district has a neglected wild citrus called *hadagina kittale*. *Hadagu* means ship while *kittale* means orange. It is believed that foreigners who came by ship brought this fruit to Kodagu a long time ago. Although it is called an orange, it looks more like a *mosambi* or sweet lime. This fruit is sour but a search reveals it has sweeter variants.

Shivakumar Kukkemane of Madikeri in Kodagu is a civil engineer and a conservationist who has studied *hadagina kittale*. “A few planters in Kodagu have retained *hadagina kittale* trees on their estates,” he says.

In May and June this fruit can be found in weekly markets. “Only those who are familiar with the fruit buy it,” he says. Kukkemane has planted about a hundred plants of this orange on his estate. They are now six years old and yet to start fruiting.

“Kodagu seems to have forgotten this fruit,” says Makkimane Sudhir Kumar of Cheyyandane. “Very few have this tree on their estates. But once we raise the subject of this endangered fruit species, farmers get interested.”

But *hadagina kittale* has one drawback: It is thin-skinned and difficult to peel. So it is difficult to place on the table and serve to guests.

In his search for this variety, Sudhir Kumar has identified two farmers who have sweet *hadagina kittale* trees that can be comfortably peeled. The first is Purushotham Kashyap of Vinayaka estate who says these fruits are tastier than the *mosambi* available in the market.

B.S. Harish of Cheyyandane too has a 50-year-old *hadagina kittale* tree planted by his grandfather. Rajarama Kukkemane, also from Cheyyandane, has a 50-year-old tree as well. Though sweeter, the fruits are not easy to peel. “So we convert it into juice.

Our family loves it,” says Rajaram.

“I would say the fruit is 70 percent sweet and 30 percent sour. It can also be kept for 15 to 20 days outside the fridge,” says Sudhir Kumar.

Neglect, attacks by parasites like *Ioranthus* and disinterest in planting this variety are the main reasons for the decline of *hadagina kittale* in Kodagu.

**Wild orange trees were never planted. The trees that survive are from seeds which germinated naturally and survived.**

NaMaMi fortunately found a few good cultivars in Sullia. The district's wild orange variety is called *nayi kittale* (*nayi* means dog). According to locals, it's a century-old practice in some parts of Karnataka to add this prefix to what villagers consider inferior fruit.

Ajay Valthaje, a farmer in the remote village of Madappady in Sullia taluk, has a *nayi kittale* tree producing delicious fruit. Jayarama Hadikallu, his neighbour, informed NaMaMi about this tree. He had a few trees earlier, but they died. The tree, which is 20 years old, wasn't planted by Valthaje. “The seeds might have come along with flood waters from the rivulet and germinated in my areca garden,” he says.

Ravi Keshava, an areca nut farmer in Duggaladka in Sullia taluk, also has a big *nayi kittale* tree which yields a bumper crop every November. “All my family members like it. The Coorg orange doesn't fruit in our area properly.

In contrast, *nayi kittale* fruits every year. If it is in a place that doesn't get irrigation, the fruit is sweeter.”

NaMaMi, after identifying the two mother trees, acted fast. They collected scions and graft plants that are now ready to be planted by their members. Even urban households can grow this fruit as it comes up nicely in pots.

**INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT** The CHES in Chettally in Kodagu district, one of the sub-centres of IIHR, used to be an exclusive citrus research station with a huge collection of citrus varieties. They were shifted to the Central Citrus Research Institute in Nagpur.

CHES in Chettally now has very few citrus cultivars in its gene pool. Dr Rajendran and Dr B.M. Muralidhar, the scientists in charge of this facility, are keen to identify all the good cultivars belonging to the wild citrus family which are now endangered.

“We have about 40 citrus cultivars in our collection. If farmers inform us of promising endangered types, we will make efforts to conserve them. We look forward to receiving information about rare wild cousins of orange from Kodagu district. For those keen to plant such rare types, we can provide grafts in due course,” says Dr Muralidhar.

At the South Zone sub-centre of the NBPGR in Thrissur, Principal Scientist Dr K. Pradeep says, “We would be very happy if farmer groups can provide us details of such rare wild citrus cultivars. We undertake 30 to 40 plant variety scouting tours every year.”

“We already have 650 citrus cultivars in our gene bank. We can conserve additional cultivars in our gene bank or at CHES, Chettally. We can also study their genetic characters, plant growth, flowering nature and fruit quality,” says Dr Dilip Ghosh, director, Citrus Research Institute, Nagpur.

Dr Pradeep suggests registering rare varieties in the names of farmers who have conserved them. “Farmer groups or organizations need to involve scientists and seriously consider registering such rare varieties so that they get due recognition and whatever benefits that accrue along with it,” he says.

To conserve rare wild citrus varieties, four steps are necessary: Identification of the best cultivars, their evaluation, propagation of short-listed ones, and promotion to create interest among people and raise the status of wild oranges.

Wild orange trees are disappearing because of neglect. But they hardly ask for much — some sunshine, manure, and a little attention to help them blossom. The wild orange must get the space it deserves for it enhances India's genetic biodiversity. ■

Those keen to plant the *illi hannu* grafts of the best cultivars from the Forestry College may contact graftsman Umamaheshwar Hegde at 99027 10038, 94807 71142 between 6 pm and 7 pm. For *kodu kittale* and other wild citrus varieties, contact Dr Muralidhar, CHES, Chettally, at 78928 82351.

# New stars shine at Beyond Limits

Kavita Charanji  
New Delhi

AN array of canvases on multiple themes — nature, plants, social issues and angst — were on display at the Arpana Art Gallery in New Delhi. The exhibition, Beyond Limits, is organized every year by the Family of Disabled, before Diwali.

This year, 103 artworks by 66 artists adorned the walls of the art gallery, attracting visitors and buyers. The works displayed imagination, creativity and sensitivity.

“On an average, we sell around 30 artworks each year at our exhibition,” says Preeti Johar, founder and CEO of Family of Disabled (FoD). “Our intention is that once people buy this kind of artwork and the artists come into the limelight, more people learn about the exhibition and the artists. Our hope is that these artists earn a living through their art.”

FoD was founded by the late Rajinder Johar who became quadriplegic after an accident. His legacy is being carried forward by his daughter, Preeti.

The first Beyond Limits exhibition was held in 2001 with the works of 14 artists. Today it has a network of 300 artists who have either participated in the exhibition or sold their works through the organization.

Some of the artists have become over the years established names like Shreekant Dubey and Fayaz-Ud-Din-Qazi. There is demand for their work and their paintings go for a good price. But its for artists making their debut that one should look out at the Beyond Limits show. This year there were Pankaj Sharma, Smrutirekha Das and 11-year-old Pranav Agarwal.

Sharma, 29, is from Kangra district in Himachal Pradesh. An art teacher at Himachal Pradesh University, his etchings, embossments and collagraphs are a celebration of nature and recreate rural life in the hills.

Sharma is speech and hearing impaired. His canvas, ‘Tulsi Vivaah,’ was a mixed-media creation for which he used coffee, water colour, oil pastel and pencil on paper. He says he was inspired by the *tulsi* plant, known for its medicinal properties and of great religious symbolism.

He says as a child he used to see his mother in prayer before a *tulsi* plant. Later, in his village he

**‘We sell around 30 artworks each year. Our hope is that these artists earn a living from their art.’**

saw a *tulsi vivaah* or wedding and thought of putting it on paper. It took him a week to complete the painting.

Asutosh Panigrahi says it has been a long and lonely struggle for him to gain recognition. He is today the Guinness World Record holder for the world’s largest indoor mural. Panigrahi looks back at his career with emotion. Born with conjoined fingers in both hands, he recalls he had to fight stigma and discrimination right from childhood.

“Everyone taunted me as worthless. I took those words as a challenge. I thought I must do something different from the others. I decided to use my god-gifted fingers as my painting brush. Now my fingers make me different from the others in a positive way,” says Panigrahi. The artist’s oil on canvas work, titled ‘Dream,’ created an imaginary universe of nature, human beings, animals, birds and so on. He teaches art at the Government Boys Senior Secondary School in Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Mehtab Saifi, 27, who suffered polio in the left lower limb, showcased a subtle work titled ‘Prathme Narjita Vidya’. He has a master’s in fine arts from Jamia Millia Islamia. For Saifi, education is the key to

human progress.

Gayatri Gupta is 21-years-old and has Down’s Syndrome. Passionate about art, she is a certified web designer and filmmaker from Bengaluru. Gupta experimented with acrylic colours and digital artwork in her works. ‘A Drop in the Ocean’ shows a creative, perceptive eye. Each drop incorporated all the elements near the ocean, from the beach and sand to the turbulent sea.

Manas Kumar Das’s ‘Cursed Childhood’ brought to light harsh contemporary realities like child labour, air pollution, waste and landfills. A speech-and-hearing-impaired artist, Das is from Odisha.

Sadhana Dhand, a 66-year-old artist, was a first-time participant at Beyond Limits. Dhand, who is from Raipur, Chhattisgarh, has osteogenesis imperfecta, an orthopaedic impairment that has led to 80 fractures. But in art she has found a perfect medium to express herself. Her works on display were of Ganesha.

FoD is now planning an exhibition of artworks by neuro diverse artists, who have autism, dyslexia and ADHD. ■



A drop in the ocean



Life's mysteries



Gayatri Gupta is a qualified web designer and filmmaker



Tulsi Vivaah



Pankaj Sharma is an art teacher from Kangra



Gopis Under Tree



The temple



Water colour work at night



Mehtab Saifi has a master's in fine arts



Asutosh Panigrahi holds the world record for the world's largest indoor mural



Mural painting

# In classroom corner fun with books

Rakesh Agrawal  
Dehradun

SMALL stacks of books in classroom corners in government schools in Uttarakhand are delighting children and winning the hearts of ordinary citizens.

Named Kona Kaksha Ka (Classroom Corner), the project is an initiative by Dhad, an NGO in Dehradun. "We started our mission in 2019 to improve access to reading in government schools. Anyone can, by contributing just ₹1,200 a year, set up a library corner in a primary school or an upper primary school or a secondary government school. Students can use the books during their spare time," says Asha Dobhal of Dhad.

Dipika Rana, a sub-inspector with the state police, has donated for one such corner library in Government Inter College, Senior School in Ajabpurkalan, Dehradun district. Her contribution includes easy-to-read books on crime enforcement. "I thought such books will help students become good citizens, follow traffic rules, honour the law and refrain from violence," she says.

Tulsi, a student of Class 10, picked up a story book about cops catching a veteran thief. "I want to join the police so I chose this book," she explains. Her friend, Chahat, opted for a slim book on traditional hill homes in Uttarakhand. "I want to become an engineer and build my own home," she says.

People who want to set up a library corner can join this mission by sending the name, address, block and district of the school they wish to support with their contribution.

Around 724 such corners have been set up in all 13 districts of Uttarakhand. Dobhal says they are planning to add sports equipment, but this addition hasn't taken off as yet.

Library corners generally stock copies of *Champak*, a fortnightly magazine for children, comics, an assortment of story books, drawing material, copies of a general knowledge magazine, and an edition of Rapidex English Speaking Course to help children learn the language. There are also books on social sciences, maths and science.

"Dhad underlines the importance of public education. It is the very foundation of learning and helps align ordinary people with school education," says Ganesh Uniyal, coordinator, Kona Kaksha Ka.

"We want to develop a reading culture



Children with books at a primary school at Bishanpur in Dehradun

among children, extend to them the opportunity of learning various subjects, build their capacity of thinking and understanding and motivate them to practise good behaviour," says Tanmay Mamgain, secretary of Dhad.

People donate for many reasons. Subodh Kumar Kala of the Indian Forest Service contributed for a books corner in Government Inter College, Kotwar in Pauri Garhwal district in memory of his late maternal grandfather.

**With just ₹1,200 anyone can set up a corner library with books of their choice for students to read in their spare time.**

Beena Mittal, a teacher, set up a library corner in Girls Inter College (Senior Secondary School), Ghamandpur, Pauri Garhwal district, where she had taught for 25 years on October 11 which is International Day for the Girl Child. She says she's given books that emphasize gender equality.

The corner library movement has spread to 80 schools in the Kumaon region as well. In Almora district, the Government Primary School at Bajela village has a stash of more than 100 books in Classes 4 and 5.

Teachers say there is keen interest among children to learn English. By placing story books in English, the mission is improving their language skills, a noticeable achievement.

"My students in Class 5 love to read story books in English," says Sannu Negi, assistant teacher, Government Girls Junior High School, Sidoli village, Chamoli district.

Dhad's literary unit also organizes storytelling events. "We read out stories to

children and begin a discussion on the book. Children share their vision of the country and the world with us," says Kalpana Bahuguna, who is part of Dhad's literary unit. They invite poets and singers in the state to join them and recite poems or sing for the children.

At an event organized by Dhad at the Government Inter College in Kishanpur, Lakshmi Prasad Badoni, a local poet, recited verses, Dr Neelam Prabha Varma retold stories from the *Panchatantra* and folk singer Poonam Naithani sang Garhwali folk songs.

Dhad also promotes local festivals and the folk ethos of the state. Children's Festival or Baal Parv is celebrated; so are Phool Dei, a festival in the harvesting season, and Harella which honours Uttarakhand's ecology.

Often, children return to their villages to celebrate such events with their families. During Phool Dei they collect flowers and bring them to their elders. During Harella, which means Day of Green, they plant saplings around their homes.

"Celebrating festivals encourages people to embrace eco-friendly choices, afforestation, and the protection of natural resources. It acts as a powerful platform to raise awareness about the impact of deforestation, climate change, and the need to safeguard the region's rich flora and fauna," says Mamgain.

The success of the Kona Kaksha Ka mission has inspired Dhad to establish Khel Konas and equip schools with cricket bats, balls, shuttlecocks, carrom boards, football and hockey sticks. "As Nelson Mandela said, sports ignite hope instead of frustration and can change the world. We believe it can unite students of different faiths, classes, castes and gender," says Mamgain.

In Dehradun city, Dhad had selected 20 middle, 10 secondary, and 10 basic and primary government schools in 2018. However, the programme got mired in bureaucratic wrangles. "But we're keen to start as soon as possible," says Dobhal. ■

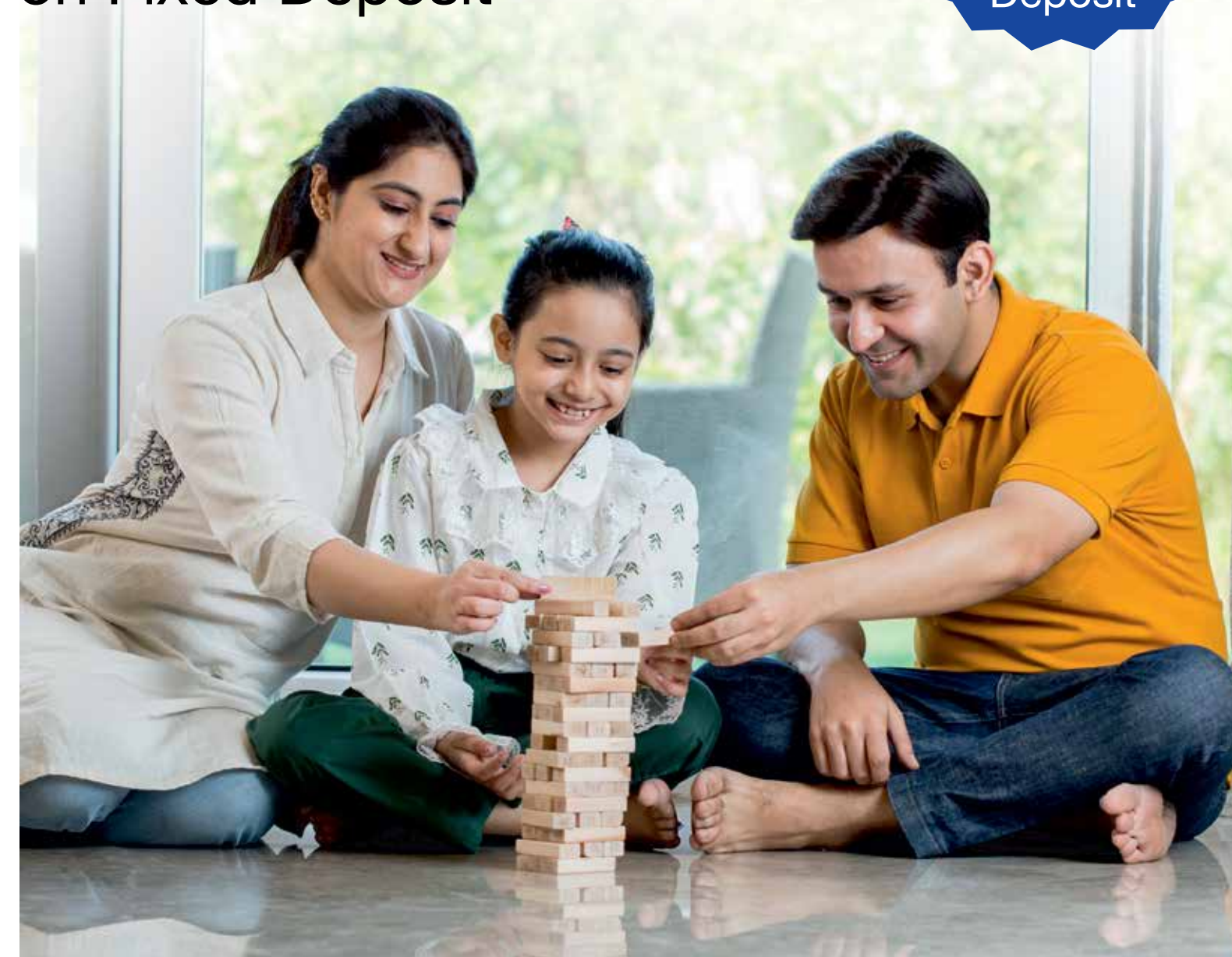
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# NON-VIOLENCE IN A VIOLENT WORLD

Peace as a natural human response

By Rajni Bakshi



ROBI Damelin remembers only the shock and searing pain of that moment when she was told that her son, David, had been killed by the bullet of a Palestinian sniper. It was her family members who later told Robi that she had turned to the Israeli army official who gave her the news of David's death and said: "You may not kill anyone in the name of my child."

Even as she struggled to live with a pain that would never go away, Robi reached out to those on the 'other side' who were suffering, just like her. She found Bassam Aramin, a Palestinian father, whose 10-year-old daughter was shot dead by an Israeli soldier as she walked home from school.

Rajni Bakshi is the founder of YouTube channel Ahimsa Conversations

Against all odds, since it was founded in 1995, The Parents Circle Families Forum — to which both Robi and Bassam belong — has enabled hundreds of bereaved families to harness grief to work for peace. These are people united by the pain of violence that only begets more violence.

Amid the devastation of severely escalated hostilities in that region efforts like this can easily seem to be marginal. It is the most polarizing voices that tend to grab centrestage — even if they do condemn killing of civilians. Across social media the dispute is about which side has a longer history of oppression and is thus more entitled to use violence.

Voices like Robi's and Bassam's are inconvenient to combatants on both sides because they speak aloud a bitter truth — that violence has solved nothing.

But they are often dismissed as being idealistic and foolish. Or, worse still, complicit with oppressors. People and governments long inured to hostility are hardwired for violence as a default response. They find non-violence difficult to comprehend. It is an unknown value they are afraid

to deal with, let alone embrace. But in a world adrift in seemingly endless conflicts, can it be different? The mega unsolved question of our times is: Can nonviolence as a mindset, a perspective, an ideal go beyond the individual to apply to the world at large?

When the venerable Tibetan monk, Samdhong Rinpoche, says that human beings are intrinsically *ahimsak* or non-violent, he draws on his lived experience as well as his deep scholarship of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The Rinpoche, who served as the first prime minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile, belongs to a pre-modern tradition of knowledge about the human mind and spirit.

Over the past half-century, a vast body of multi-disciplinary modern research has also concluded that human beings are not intrinsically violent. Some of this research was brought together by The Seville Statement on Violence, adopted by UNESCO in 1989.

This statement was the work of 20 social and natural scientists, who deliberated for many months before coming to the conclusion that "there is nothing in our biology which is an unsurmountable obstacle to the abolition of war and other institutional violence".

A capacity for violence has been an important aspect of the evolutionary journey of human beings. But without the social conditioning, it is not necessarily the dominant response of human beings in situations of conflict. Thus, the five propositions of the Seville Statement, on why war is a social invention and not a biological phenomenon, deserve closer attention.

One: There is no scientific basis for the claim that war cannot be ended because animals also make war and humans are like animals. Animals can be violent towards each other but they don't in fact make 'war'. In addition, having invented culture, humans are now much more than animals. Therefore: "A culture that has war in one century may change and live at peace with their neighbours in another century."

Two: Even if war is deemed to be part of human nature, that does not mean it cannot be ended. Yes, genes transmitted from parents to children influence how we act but they need not control our actions because humans also have a sense of agency and can make choices.

Three: There is no scientific basis for the claim that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than for other kinds of behaviour. Research shows that "...status within the group is achieved by the ability to cooperate and to fulfil social functions relevant to the structure of that group.... Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes".

Four: Humans do not have a 'violent brain'. We do have the neural apparatus to act violently, but this capacity is not automatically activated: "Like higher primates and unlike other animals, our higher neural processes filter such stimuli before they can be acted upon. How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialized. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to react violently."

Five: War is not caused by an 'instinct'. "The emergence of modern warfare has been a journey from the primacy of emotional and motivational factors, sometimes called 'instincts,' to the primacy of cognitive factors. Modern war involves institutional use of personal characteristics such as obedience, suggestibility, and idealism, social skills such as language, and rational considerations such as cost-calculation, planning, and information processing."

The Seville Statement was endorsed by numerous international scholarly bodies and while some of its details have been contested there is now a broad scientific consensus that humans are not primarily hardwired to be violent. More and more research, on humans and animals, is now focused on understanding how conflicts are avoided or resolved. For instance, Dutch primatologist Frans de Waal, a leading figure in this field, has suggested that empathy resides in parts of the human brain

which are so ancient that we share them with rats.

Once we acknowledge that humans do not have a default tendency or 'need' to be violent then it follows that people can be trained for either violence or non-violence. For instance, it is now known that militaries across the world work hard to create, among their soldiers, a willingness to kill.

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman served in the US Army and went on to write a book, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. "There can be no doubt," wrote Grossman, "that this resistance to killing one's fellow man is there and that it exists as a result of a powerful combination of instinctive, rational, environmental, hereditary, cultural, and social factors. It is there, it is strong, and it gives us cause to believe that there just may be hope for mankind after all."

This confirms why Mahatma Gandhi himself repeatedly insisted that non-violence is an ancient impulse. Since Gandhi's time the concept and practice of non-violence has expanded in diverse ways. Based on the experiences of practitioners in different situations, this is broadly how the dynamic between violence and non-violence is known to operate:

Violence gets immediate results by killing or injuring but often fans fear and hatred in the perpetrator. There is an underlying assumption that the conflict is unresolvable.

Ahimsa is 'pro-active' resistance to evil that dissipates fear and anger, transforming these into trust with the faith that the conflict can be resolved.

A violent approach paints the 'enemy' as evil, as someone to be destroyed.

Ahimsa focuses on stopping evil deeds while seeing the evildoer as a victim who can be redeemed and transformed.

Violence is often a mask to hide fear of injury and death.

By accepting suffering without retaliation, practitioners of Ahimsa become more fearless.

Violence may bring dramatic results by killing or injuring someone, but it leaves scars on the perpetrator as well.

Being rooted in love, Ahimsa strengthens and empowers even though it may not get immediate and direct 'results'.

Since violence saps the positive energies of the perpetrator, it breeds cynicism and kills hope or faith in the possibility of justice — even as it stakes claim to fight for justice.

Ahimsa strengthens faith in the eventual victory of justice. Some draw on faith in a divine cosmic energy of love, others on compassion as an integral feature of the human condition.

Here is one of the most poignant moments from *Ahimsa Conversations*, which illustrates how this translates into action.

David Hartsough participated in the lunch counter sit-ins during the American civil rights movement in the 1950s. It was then illegal for non-

white persons to come to such lunch counters. Though David is himself white, he had joined his African American friends in this act of civil disobedience. As David recalls:

"I heard this guy come up from behind me and he said, 'If you don't get out of this store in two seconds, I'm going to stab this through your heart' and in his hand was a switch-blade and it was shaking half an inch from my heart. I had two seconds to decide, do I really believe in non-violence. Or is there some other way to deal with this guy with so much hatred. We had had a lot of experience and I just looked him in the eye and I said, 'Friend, do what you believe is right,

**Once we agree that humans do not have a default tendency to be violent then it follows people can be trained to be either violent or non-violent.**

but I'll still try to love you.' And it was miraculous. His face that was contorted with hatred changed, his jaw began to drop and his knife, which was right next to my heart, began to fall and he left the store. So, at age 20 that was probably the most important experience of my life in terms of the power of non-violence."

Like the more famous case of Rosa Parks, who peacefully refused to give up her seat on a bus and became an icon of anti-racism struggles, David's action was a result of conviction backed by intensive training. Non-violence training is based on acknowledging that conflict is a fact of life but it need not lead to violence.

Therefore, the premise of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is that if we can organize for war we can organize for peace. NP is a global NGO, inspired by David Hartsough's activism, that works with communities in areas of conflict to interrupt and prevent violence. In her *Ahimsa Conversation* episode, Tiffany Easthom, a peace activist who heads NP, describes how:

"You can be sitting at a table across from — the nickname I use is the 'Genocidal General' — someone who is a state or non-state person in control of a group of armed actors. On paper, from the outside, he is impossible to deal with. And then you have a moment when you really work on connecting with that person and find some basis of commonality — often it is that we both want people in the community to be safe, we just have different ideas about how to get there. And when that happens that creates an opportunity, it's nothing magical ... it doesn't suddenly bring peace across the board but it can shift the dynamic, it can open up space and it can encourage everyone to make different choices."

But, as Tiffany is at pains to point out, such work needs time and patience. On principle, NP only goes into conflict zones on the invitation of local people. In recent years some of its most intense work has been in South Sudan and to some extent in the Ukraine conflict.

Then there is Nisha Anand, CEO of the US-based Dream Corps, who works on conflict resolution within American society. "Hurt people hurt people," says Nisha. "So, I know that although our pain is not equal, I know that the white supremacist has something painful in their past. It's not an excuse, it's just a discovery and I think if we can hang in the conversation and discover that, you can move all sorts of things."

Such work is anchored in the insight that it is impotence and frustration that breed violence. Thus, some of the strongest validation for non-violence activism is in the writings of political philosopher Hannah Arendt — who is not usually counted as an icon of non-violence. Hannah's understanding was sharply precise: "Politically, loss of power tempts men to substitute violence for power... Violence can always destroy power; out of the barrel of a gun grows the most effective command, resulting in the most instant and perfect obedience. What can never grow out of it is power... Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it."

This is what enabled the Iranian dissident, Ramin Jahanbegloo, to survive incarceration and emerge more confident about non-violence. In the face of the violence of being thrown into prison in Iran, Ramin had to make a choice — he could be bitter and choose to favour violence in response. But he chose to follow Nelson Mandela's example of emphatically rejecting bitterness. The outcome, says Ramin, was spiritual, it felt like a liberation.

Such examples are anathema to those who believe that the struggle for justice demands sharpening of the conflict. Then bitterness and anger become essential ingredients of the desired social and political transformation. The fact that most revolutions driven by these emotions have produced a truncated and distorted version of justice, along with causing mass death of their 'own people', is either overlooked or explained away as minor side effects.

But what of the horrendous injustices that persist? What of the unspeakable suffering caused by systemic violence across the planet?

It is true that the answers provided by advocates of non-violence may seem unviable at a macro level — especially in the complicated domain of geo-politics involving conflicts between nations. Ironically, those who



Protesters fill the streets in New York



A cry for Palestine in Israel



Japanese protesters denounce the attack on Gaza



People take to the streets in Egypt

see violence as a necessary evil don't have workable macro answers either — except to keep trying more violence. And, even they tend to acknowledge that most violent geo-political conflicts help no one other than arms manufacturers.

Yet a common impression persists — namely, that those willing and eager to use violence are more serious about justice. This is actually a form of misinformation. From Gandhi to Martin Luther King Jr. and contemporarily, practitioners are clear that non-violence means active, not passive, resistance. Gandhi and King both emphasized that, given a choice between cowardice and violence, the latter is the superior choice.

In a time of polarized societies and cancel culture, non-violence is naturally threatening. When courage is equated with 'calling out' people, it must be disconcerting to instead be invited to 'call in' people — so that we may engage in deep listening and new learning. When seeing the

world through the lens of binary divides constitutes a comfort zone then a capacity for empathy that deliberately rises above context and reaches across lines of conflict is bound to look like betrayal.

And yet no one could remain unmoved by the opening page of the Parents Circle website which in late October 2023 said: "Our hearts are broken." Below that it said: "We express our deepest and heartfelt condemnation of the ongoing violence in the region. It is a time of great sorrow, knowing that countless families now bear the burden of emptiness in their hearts and the heavy weight of grief due to the tragic loss of their loved ones."

Theirs is a determination to keep working for a reconciliation process that must be an integral part of any political future peace agreement that ends the occupation and honours everyone's right to exist with dignity.

It is a resistance against efforts by the Israeli government to ban the

work the Parents Circle does in schools. "We touch a fear in them, of change," says Robi, in an interview she and Bassam gave to *Spectrum News*. As Bassam says, only the "graves and the weapon-sellers" are winning.

"If you are pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian all you are doing is importing our conflict and creating hatred between Jews and Moslems. If you can't be part of the solution, it's better if you leave us alone," pleads Robi.

This tenacity, valour and wisdom may or may not be their own reward. But we can all attempt to honour these qualities by seeking them within. As Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese monk and peace activist, puts it: "If you wait until the time of crisis, it will be too late...even if you know that non-violence is better than violence, if your understanding is only intellectual and not in your whole being, you will not act non-violently. The fear and anger will prevent you." ■

## Business rules, everywhere



### TIME TO LISTEN

ARUN MAIRA

legal rights of governments and the legal rights of limited liability corporations operating across national borders. It is an ideological conflict between the right to own property and trade freely, on the one hand, and on the other, citizens' rights for representation in the governance of their own lives. Its origins lie in the creation of corporations for promoting the rights of their investors with limited liability for other consequences. The first of these was the East India Company.

The East India Company (EIC) was an English joint stock company founded in 1600. At its peak, the company was the largest corporation in the world by various measures. The EIC had its own armed forces in the form of the company's three presidency armies



Companies seem to have higher legal rights than governments in the global economy

totalling about 260,000 soldiers, twice the size of the British Army at the time. The operations of the company had a profound effect on the global balance of trade, almost single-handedly reversing the eastward drain of Western bullion, in effect since Roman times. The governors of the Company met in London, their only responsibility was to ensure that accounts of the profits generated were accurate and that the profits were equitably shared amongst its investors. They were hardly aware of, and were not responsible for, the marauding by the company's officers and armies in India, China, and other Asian countries.

The East India Company was nationalized by the British Crown, but its template has persisted in the designs of 21st-century capitalist corporations. In the 19th century, the anti-slavery and broader labour rights movements curbed the rights of investors over the human rights of workers. In the 21st century, the conflict has shifted to the rights of citizens over

data about their lives, and the indigenous knowledge of their communities, from being converted into resources legally owned by companies for the benefit of their investors.

At the turn of the millennium, the mantra that the "business of business must be only business" had taken over economics and public policy around the world. "Ease of doing business" became the measure of a government's performance, with governments ranked by the World Bank and progress of "deregulation" of business rewarded. The "ease of living" of common citizens, especially those at the bottom of the economic pyramid, became secondary. The theory was that wealth would trickle down. However, wealth has been gushing upwards. Inequalities in monetary wealth have increased obscenely. The richest persons in the world have billions of dollars in their accounts, while the poorest have none. The poorest find it impossible to cross borders, stuffed in boats and trucks, seeking better opportunities for their families, while the money of the rich is given more freedom to flow across borders to make even more money for them.

The economists' mantra driving globalization is "One Economy, One Earth, One Future". India promoted an alternative paradigm at the G20 meet in 2023: "One Family, One Earth, One Future" (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*). India's prime minister appealed for "a shift away from a GDP-centric view of the world to a human-centric world". Sadly, at the same time, his government is touting its own drive to grow India's GDP by trillions of dollars as proof of the country's development.

An economy is composed of consumers, producers, traders, and investors. They transact amongst themselves using the currency of money. A family is composed of human beings who use their different capabilities to give to one another according to their different needs. They do not need to track and record the values of their interactions in money terms. In an economy, transactions amongst its participants must be recorded in a standard, numerically measurable, currency so that their economic value can be computed and added to the GDP. Caring for other human beings has no value in the economy unless it is

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## The status economy



### LOOKING AHEAD

KIRAN KARNIK

WHERE do you live? This question, asked by a fellow guest at a Delhi party, can determine the flow of any further conversation. If the answer is East Delhi or Karol Bagh, it is an instant conversation-stopper, and the guest will immediately gravitate elsewhere. If your response is Golf Links or Chanakyapuri, you will soon be the centre of fawning attention. The areas mentioned in the latter response, for those unfamiliar with Delhi, are up-market areas. And if your response is 'central Delhi', it is indicative of being super-rich or a super-powerful high-level government functionary: in both cases, you will attract people who will stick to you like leeches.

Delhi is quite neatly divided into areas that define class boundaries, which induces people to 'place' others. In a culture which is class-conscious and always looking at how to exploit people and relationships, conversations and links are sought to be built with those who may be of use. This status consciousness seems to be now spreading across the country. No longer limited to social interaction, it is increasingly extending to the market.

An indication of this is the changing behaviour of people as customers or consumers. For long considered a value-for-money market (*sasta, aur tikau bhi* — cheap, and also lasting), the new buzzword among marketeers is 'premiumization'. This recognizes the growing demand for more expensive products and brands. This is starkly visible in the automobile market: the demand for what were called entry-level cars — the least expensive — has decreased compared to more expensive ones. The share of sub-4m compact vehicles, which enjoy a lower tax rate, has shrunk six percentage points in three years to 72 percent, and the 4 to 4.5 m segment has seen its share stagnate at 16-17 percent. In contrast, the share of large-sized SUVs and MPVs (exceeding 4,500 mm in length) has doubled to 11 percent, up from 6 percent three years ago.

Similar trends are seen in other sectors, including packaged goods. There is also a change from generic items to branded products and, within the brands, to those which are more expensive and, therefore, enjoy a higher status.

One fall-out is large-scale counterfeiting and selling of fakes. These, with their false labels, enable one to claim a higher status with lower expenditure.

At the same time, easy loans — spurred by intense competition amongst lending institutions — have further encouraged the trend to buy more expensive brands. A country where any loan was considered avoidable and to be taken only when direly needed, has now moved to the culture of 'buy now, pay later' even for wants (as opposed to needs). With instant credit available without collateral, loans are now used for purchase of otherwise unaffordable products and services. Holiday travel is one example: it has vastly increased (see 'The Leisure Economy', *Civil Society*, November 2023) with easy payment terms and EMIs. Going for a vacation is a status-enhancer, but to stay ahead of one's neighbour, such travel must be to exotic and expensive locations in India or even abroad.



Consumers are enticed by the need to be one up on peers

**'Premiumization' is starkly visible in the automobile market with the demand for entry-level vehicles having decreased.**

Clearly, we are moving to what one may call the 'status economy'. Enticed by the need to be one up on peers and fuelled by easy availability of loans, it is likely to increasingly shape a consumption-driven economy. Amplifying the trend are higher incomes, even a degree of prosperity amongst millions, as borne out by income tax (IT) data. The number of IT returns filed has almost doubled to 74 million as compared to 2013-14, with the income slab of ₹5-10 lakh seeing a huge jump (from 3.70 million to 11 million). More telling are the

increases in higher brackets: from 1.2 million to 4.6 million in the ₹10-20 lakh range, and from 0.4 million to 1.9 million in the ₹20-50 lakh category.

The combination of higher income, easy availability of loans, and repayment through convenient EMIs is the final link in the chain which creates the status economy. Its origin lies in the rapid growth of the communication infrastructure which provides unparalleled connectivity, and the access to devices that enable this: TVs, laptops, and mobile phones. Riding on this is content — advertisements, programmes, videos, and clips of life elsewhere — which exposes people to new products and different lifestyles. Clever marketing then not only creates new wants but, often, also envy and competitiveness or one-upmanship. The resulting social change — from frugality and saving to ostentation and loans — synergizes with higher income, leading to the emergence of the status economy.

The absolute number of Indians who buy luxury brands is already big enough for the globally known brands to be here — in automobiles, fashion, restaurants, and much else. At the same time, the status economy continues to accelerate the trend to premiumization even amongst relatively cheaper brands, leading to growing up-selling. 'Low cost' and 'cheap' probably began to be recognized as brand-killers rather than sales drivers from the time of the then-much-acclaimed Tata Nano.

As one looks at these trends, it is worth noting some other figures. The rural employment guarantee scheme, MGNREGS, which provides subsistence wages to the unemployed, currently has 155 million active workers enrolled. According to a report, 214 million individuals opted for work under MGNREGS in this financial year. Assuming just two dependants for each of them, this means that over 650 million Indians are just above destitution. This tallies with the fact that as part of the right to food programme, 800 million will get free rations. Clearly, they have little or no disposable income and welcome low-cost or cheap products; for them, premiumization can be only a dream.

Looking ahead, one can predict that while those buying luxury brands will remain a minuscule percentage, the trend towards premium brands will mean very large and rapidly growing absolute numbers of consumers. Already here today, the status economy will only become far bigger. ■

Kiran Karnik is a public policy analyst and author. His most recent book is 'Decisive Decade: India 2030, Gazelle or Hippo'

# A force for the river



## LIVING RIVERS

VENKATESH DUTTA

THE Ganga Task Force (GTF) was stationed along the banks of the Ganga with the objective of preventing pollution from both industries and citizens. The GTF is a specialized unit of the Territorial Army established under the public participation component of the Namami Gange programme. The GTF conducts routine patrols of the *ghats* to monitor activities such as the disposal of idols, flowers and other materials into the Ganga. Boat patrols are conducted to observe and safeguard biodiversity, ensuring that fishing activities in the Ganga adhere to approved practices. This proactive approach helps protect the flora, fauna, and aquatic species in the Ganga.

The GTF has established an impressive nursery in the cantonment of Prayagraj, boasting thousands of saplings. The task force is actively engaged in planting trees along the banks of the Ganga. This afforestation initiative is one of the primary tasks undertaken by the GTF to contribute to the conservation and revitalization of the river.

Recently, the GTF carried out plantation work to reduce soil erosion in Kanpur. Vetiver (*khus*) saplings were planted on the banks of the Ganga to prevent soil erosion along with local villagers and schoolchildren.

The Ministry of Defence approved the establishment of four battalions of the Composite Eco Task Force (CETF) named as the Ganga Task Force exclusively for restoration of the Ganga. The first company of the Ganga Task Force Battalion was deployed at Garhmukteshwar in January 2016. Three such companies were deployed at Kanpur, Varanasi and Prayagraj.

The establishment of the first Ecological Task Force (ETF), also known as the Ecological Battalion, took place in 1982. Alarmed by the widespread ecological degradation in the Shivaliks due to mining, Dr Norman Borlaug, the American agronomist who contributed immensely towards the Green Revolution, recommended to the then prime minister, Indira Gandhi, that the Indian Army be engaged to restore the ecological balance on a war footing. The initiative also stemmed from

the insight provided to Mrs Gandhi that unemployment among retired soldiers and deforestation and soil erosion could be tackled simultaneously. The 127 Infantry Battalion was assigned the task of working on the Shivalik hills around Mussoorie, an area severely impacted by rampant mining, causing damage to the local ecosystem. The results were impressive, leading to a thick forest cover in the Shahjahanpur Range where they operated.

Recently, in October 2023, the 51st Executive Committee of the Namami Gange project approved the deployment of one company of the Territorial Army of the GTF for the rejuvenation of the Gomti, a tributary of the Ganga. The Gomti is the first tributary of the Ganga to have its own Ecological Task Force. The task force is entrusted with protecting the



Eco Task Force doing a survey along the Gomti river in Lucknow

river's biodiversity and patrolling riverbanks by boat and on foot, monitoring various public *ghats*, overseeing river pollution, and providing assistance during floods or natural calamities in the region. The task force will also conduct various public awareness campaigns for engaging citizens in river cleaning.

Battalions of the ETF have achieved notable success in the ecological restoration of severely degraded sites, such as the limestone mining areas in the Mussoorie hills and the Bhatti mines in South Delhi. In 2001, the Government of Delhi approved a project for the rehabilitation of 2,100 acres of the abandoned Bhatti mines in the southern ridge area, which includes the Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary. This project was executed through the ETF of the Territorial Army. The ETF effectively safeguarded the forest land from encroachment and illegal mining in the area temporarily assigned to it. Apart from the ETF, separate river police units are being created to address the challenges associated with poor information networks and policing constraints in riverine areas.

River Police Stations were established in

London along the Thames more than 200 years ago. The Thames River Police, established in 1798, holds the distinction of being recognized by UNESCO as the longest continuously serving police force in the world. The river police plays a vital role in checking crime and facilitating swift response at the site of crime near rivers. Improved infrastructure, communication equipment, and dedicated deployment in these areas contribute to effective law enforcement and crime prevention.

In Bangladesh, the river police was established in 2013, as a specialized unit within the police force. It is tasked with the responsibility of policing the internal waterways of Bangladesh. Its duties extend to overseeing and regulating activities such as fishing and ensuring safety and security in riverine areas.

In India, the Assam government established a 'River Police Organization' in 1979. This organization led to the formation of a separate river police district along the mighty Brahmaputra, encompassing Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang districts. The riverine area covers 110 km along the India-Bangladesh border. It comprises four river police stations and six outposts, emphasizing the strategic need for specialized law enforcement along the river to ensure security and safety in the region. Given the challenging terrain of

riverine areas, meticulous patrolling is essential, including accessibility of mechanized motorboats, wireless equipment, and other modern gadgets.

Due to illegal sand mining, there are many hotspots along the Ganga in UP and Bihar with enhanced security challenges. Consequently, the demand for river police stations was raised also to address and prevent crime in the riverine belts adjacent to rivers. A proposal to establish river police in Bhagalpur in Bihar was made in 2009 to check crime and introduce patrolling in difficult riverine areas. In Kashmir, river policing has a longstanding legacy. There was a River Police Chowki at Basant Bagh, Srinagar, that was later closed. Currently, a small team of rescue and recovery river police is deployed along the Dal Lake and the Jhelum river to address accidental drowning incidents and emergencies.

In the Gomti river basin, the task force is well equipped to execute river restoration and ecology-related projects. It needs all the support it can get. ■

Venkatesh Dutta is a Gomti River Waterkeeper and a professor of environmental sciences at Ambedkar University, Lucknow

# Pollution the internal enemy



## THE WAY WE ARE

JYOTI PANDE LAVAKARE

FIRST, let's get this straight. There are no safe levels of air pollution. Experts speak in one voice when they say this, whether it is the World Health Organization (WHO), the National Institutes of Health, the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine or others. Episodic high pollution levels like what happens in north India during peak stubble burning or Diwali may dramatically increase visits to hospital emergency rooms, but even lower pollution levels also cause disease, disability and death.

Nearly 1.7 million people die from air pollution each year — which is more than three times the deaths Covid-19 caused in one year, a disease the government took seriously in its public messaging, something it has never done with equal intensity for pollution.

Second, and equally important, air pollution is not a seasonal problem, it is an invisible, year-round problem in all of India, that usually becomes most visible in the winter. On average, the country's pollution load is usually 10 times higher than the WHO guidelines' safe threshold all year through. It is just insanely — almost 50 times — higher in the winter months in North India, which leads to international headlines and increased attention. However, that doesn't alter the fact that year-round pollution levels are also high; but, sadly, they have been normalized by over a billion people torn between helplessness, resignation and apathy.

Third, over 90 percent of India breathes dirty air, not just northern India or Delhi, though these regions are the most polluted. The Indo-Gangetic plain is home to 40 percent of India's population, which means more than 500 million people are sickening by just breathing. But Mumbai has shown us in three consecutive years that it can beat Delhi's AQI levels, this year even a month before Diwali.

As for southern India, although its geography (high altitude) and weather (rain and wind) ensure most of its particulate matter is washed or blown away, Bengaluru still had the dubious distinction of topping the State of Global Air's list of polluted cities for nitrous oxides in September 2023, followed by neighbouring Hyderabad. NOx exacerbates respiratory diseases, and a recent AIIMS study found it

can lead to an increase in the number of emergency room visits by 53 percent.

Another coastal city, Chennai, in the south has had its moments, with AQI levels crossing Delhi's. And if you thought that only urban India was suffering, not only does research show that pollution is increasing faster in southern and eastern India, it is also increasing faster in rural areas where indoor air pollution (caused by burning biomass for cooking and heating) already contributes nearly 30 percent of outdoor air pollution.

Air pollution doesn't just harm the human respiratory system, it damages every organ in the human body, especially the heart. Peer-reviewed journal *Neurology's* September issue published research that showed a strong and significant correlation between air pollutants and death from strokes.

In fact, Bengaluru has the youngest population of heart patients. The city's Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Science and Research treated 2,200 heart attacks in patients

**Air pollution does not just damage the respiratory system. It damages every organ in the body. Especially the heart.**

under 40 in two years, the youngest being 16 years old. These were mostly software professionals and auto/cab drivers who spent longer than an hour in traffic — but is 16 any age to have a heart attack triggered by just the involuntary act of breathing?

None of this harm is short-term, it is long-term and irreversible damage, which means that you can arrest the harm once you start breathing clean air (like when you stop smoking cigarettes) but you can't reverse it. Those microscopic particles of PM2.5 will remain in your body until you die.

The University of Chicago has created an Air Quality of Life Index tool that calculates how much longer people of a certain region would live on average if that region met WHO guideline limits. A Delhi resident would live nearly 12 years longer, a North India resident nearly seven years. And let me not even get started about how air pollution is a social inequity, because this column just doesn't have enough words for that. But when you are working from home with your air purifier on

during a high pollution day, just spare a thought for the waste-picker or construction worker who won't get her daily wage if she decides to protect her health and stay home, or the traffic policeman who stands among vehicular fumes at intersections, directing traffic, or the autorickshaw driver who won't earn if he doesn't drive that day. These are also people who have less access to healthcare and are often also undernourished.

India's air has been getting filthier over the years. Politicians bring up economic growth as the bogey when urged to act strongly and decisively on pollution. But there is a difference between growth and development — with the latter including a better quality of life through focus on basic needs for all, healthcare, education and well-being. That is the kind of sustainable growth I'd like to see in my country, a place I chose to return to, despite other international options.

Solutions aren't rocket science and instead of wasting precious tax money on unscientific, ineffectual and performative red herrings such as anti-smog towers (the Delhi government recently spent ₹44 crore on setting up two large outdoor air filters, which it admitted in Parliament just months later were useless), the government would do well to focus on a proactive bouquet of medium- and long-term solutions that address all the top sources of pollution.

There is only one way to reduce pollution: reduce emissions at source. Nothing else works. Air pollution is nothing but what we burn. India is working on its liquid fuels policy and has frog-leaped to BS-6 fuels but it burns two billion tonnes of solid material. Of this 1.1 billion tonnes are coal. Another 600 million tonnes are crop residue burnt by farmers — and biomass for cooking. There is simply no cogent action on solid fuel. No country has been able to address pollution without addressing the issue of pollution from solid fuels. As for useless burning like crackers, frankly, that shouldn't even cross our minds.

Covid came from outside, but air pollution is an internal enemy. Both need a war room set-up to fight back. But, unlike Covid, where people could see a direct link between the virus and the disease it caused, air pollution is an invisible enemy. Air pollution in India kills nearly 1.7 million each year. Covid killed less than one-third of that number in one year.

For the Covid pandemic, at least the world got together and discovered a vaccine that limited it. For the hidden pandemic of air pollution, we need a social vaccine. ■

Jyoti Pande Lavakare is a co-founder of clean air non-profit Care For Air and author of *Breathing Here is Injurious to Your Health: The Human Cost of Air Pollution*



Photo: Civil Society/Susheela Nair

Ratnadurg Fort dominates the landscape

## Soaking in the Konkan

SUSHEELA NAIR

OUR Konkan sojourn began with Ratnagiri, which conjures up visions of Hapus or Alphonso mangoes. It is said that here you cannot toss a stone without hitting a tree with a ripening Alphonso hanging from a branch.

Ratnagiri has other claims to fame. This erstwhile trading port town is also the birthplace of many distinguished sons-of-the-soil: poets, politicians and revolutionaries. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Sachin Tendulkar, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak have their roots here. Ratnagiri is also where dethroned Burmese king Thibaw spent his last years in exile.

The charm of this coastal sojourn is that we seldom lost sight of the deep blue sea, golden sands and acres of emerald foliage. The Konkan coast has something for everyone. Its pristine beaches and ancient temples, vibrant culture and historical legacy, spectacular forts and scenic charm continue to draw beach combers and heritage buffs, adventure junkies and nature enthusiasts, the spiritually inclined and solitude chasers.

The drive up the winding road from Ratnagiri that leads to Ganapatipule is a visual treat all the way with the soaring Western Ghats on one side and the pounding Arabian Sea on the other. On the way we passed Aare Ware Beach, a favourite haunt of visiting film crews.

**TEMPLE BY THE SEA** Located at the foot of a hill, the Ganapatipule temple sports beautiful pagoda-style architecture carved out of a single rock. It is a scenic temple, located right on the beach, that has the unending Arabian Sea stretching before it.

The sacred temple and exquisite expanse of water lend a sublime aura to Ganapatipule which is a significant pilgrimage centre for the people of the Konkan coast. I was overwhelmed by the unique ambience, quietude and peace of this temple by the beach.

Legend has it that Lord Ganesha manifested himself on a hillock by the beach, which is why the Ganapati temple was built here. In local parlance, Ganapatipule means *pule* (sand) blessed by Ganesha.

It is also called Swayambhu Ganapatipule as it is believed that the idea of Lord Ganesha manifested itself at the site, without the intervention of man. We learnt that the residents of Ganapatipule have neither the practice of keeping a Ganesha idol in their homes nor do they do *visarjan* during the festival. Instead, they worship the idol at the Ganapatipule temple as their own.

**PRACHIN KONKAN** From Ganapatipule, we proceeded to Malgund, on the road to Jaigarh. Just a hop, skip and jump away is Prachin Konkan, an open-air museum conceptualized by Vaibhav Vasudev Sardesai, a resident of Ratnagiri. Spread over three acres on a hillside, this beautifully

landscaped park offers a fascinating peek into the region's traditional way of life through life-size models. It is a close-to-realistic sculptural journey into the economy, food habits, cultural traditions, religious events, recreation, and living conditions of the Konkan region in yesteryears.

We came across well-curated village themes depicted beautifully through amazingly crafted life-size sculptures. Sardesai has recreated Konkan's rural milieu to preserve the pulse of the past. We experienced a slice of rural India and glimpsed models of tailoring shops, grocery stores, barbershops, toymakers, weavers, oilmen, goldsmiths and carpenters.

In addition, there are displays of ancient implements such as an oil press, kitchen tools like a *modak* cooker and even of Shivaji's first naval vessel, the *Sanghameshwari*. We got a peek into the people's lives, their daily chores, and clothes. For instance, the rural barber visiting doorsteps to offer haircuts, women engaged in household chores, oilmen extracting oil from a mill with an oxen's help, a goldsmith shaping gold ornaments, carefree children playing traditional games and so on.

The Nakshatra Garden with its 135 trees was equally interesting. After the exertion of the walk, we relished a sumptuous Konkani *thali* meal comprising *solkadi*, vegetables and *modak* (a rice, coconut and jaggery sweet).

**KAVI KESHAVSUT SMARAK** Just two km from Ganapatipule, on the road to Jaigarh, we stopped at the memorial to the Marathi poet, Krishnaji Keshav Damla (Keshavsut). Set up in his house, it has a library as well as an auditorium where poetry sessions are held regularly.

**RATNADURG FORT** Sprawling across two hills, the towering Ratnadurg Fort dominates the landscape for miles around. From the top of the fort, there are gorgeous views of a magnificent expanse of blue sea. A fleeting look at the massive ruins was sufficient to get an idea of the grandeur of the fort in its time. It evokes memories of the bygone era of the Bahmani kings, Adil Shah and Chhatrapati Shivaji Rao. Sadly, all that remains today are crumbling walls. Exploring the marvels and mysteries of the fort, we discovered inside the Sri Devi Bhagwati Mandir which gives the fort its other name, Bhagwati Qila.

**THIBAW PALACE** We culminated our Ratnagiri sojourn with Thibaw Palace which marks the decline of a once incredibly opulent royal family. Perched on a promontory overlooking the sea, the palace today wears a forlorn look in spite of its magnificent exteriors. This is where the dethroned Burmese king spent his last years in exile, gazing at the sea with binoculars. Built under the king's supervision, at a minimal cost of ₹1.25 lakh, modest by royal standards, the palace is an amalgamation of Indian, Burmese and colonial architecture with Italian ornamental



Golden beaches

Photo: Civil Society/Susheela Nair



Thibaw Palace, Ratnagiri

windows, wooden roofs, and marble dance floors. It was completed in 1910. Currently, it also houses an archaeological museum of antiquities found in the area. Thibaw Point, a short walk from the palace, has a new watchtower from where one gets a bird's eye view of Ratnagiri. ■

### FACT FILE

**Getting there:** Ratnagiri is 373 km south of Mumbai. Ganapatipule is 43 km away  
**What to buy:** Alphonso mangoes, cashew, mango milkshake powder, tinned mango pulp, kokum syrup, amla squash, and sundried mango, jamun, and jackfruit pulp  
**Where to stay:** Kohinoor Samudra Resort

### Samita's World

by SAMITA RATHOR



# Succeeding with failure

CIVIL SOCIETY REVIEWS

SOME months ago, this magazine published a tally of young students who had taken their lives while preparing for competitive exams in Kota, Rajasthan's coaching-centre city. They had either failed or given up under pressure.

The deaths we added up were for the previous six months and that was depressing enough. It was worse to think that such deaths had been happening for a long time and that their number continues to go up.

Putting the tally together was relatively easy. Each death had been reported in the newspapers and there was a public record staring at us. But the reports were all two and three paragraphs and you would have to look for them in the hierarchy of the day's news.

It is as though there is little space for failure even when it results in the tragic death of a young person. By contrast, toppers in examinations are feted with their pictures published, parents interviewed and life stories elaborately told.

So, what is it about failure that coming to terms with it is difficult? How should success itself be defined?

Is failure part of the journey to success? And given that only a few enjoy meteoric success, and the vast majority among us struggle along in lower orbits, how can we develop a more equanimous attitude to success and failure?

Amit Dasgupta has tried to explore these questions in *Why We Fail*. For an economy caught up in uneven change and growth the book has relevance in present-day India. Some people are getting ahead but there are those who are being left behind. Many may not be able to catch up at all. What's in store for India if it can't temper success and be less discouraging about failure? How can its vast base of human resource be better utilized?

Weighty as these questions are, Dasgupta's is a little book that is easy-paced and almost conversational in tone. It is the kind of read that doesn't tax you, but makes you think.

Dasgupta is mostly in chat mode. He doesn't



Dasgupta with the Dalai Lama

preach and his style is anecdotal. He shares his thoughts on a subject that has clearly interested him for a long time.

Societies that don't evolve to dealing with success and failure pay a complicated price. By focusing narrowly on extreme success, they encourage outliers, but leave out a broad base of talent and potential. The majority turn into a sea of mediocrity, unmotivated and devoid of passion. It should be a goal that people have the opportunity to contribute widely and at their own pace.

But discovering the secret of dealing with life is finally a personal thing. Is it to rise above life itself with a Zen-like acceptance of things as they happen? Or is it about personal ambition and a hard-driving style?

Dasgupta has a vast canvas of examples that he places before us — from Lee Iacocca to Master Hakuin. Iacocca rescued the iconic American car company, Chrysler, and took it to great heights. But then he became so obsessed with himself that he began to believe he was infallible. Finally, the company he had rebuilt so successfully crumbled under his ego. His success proved to be his undoing.

In complete contrast to Iacocca, Master

Hakuin, the Zen monk, takes life as it comes. Accused by a young woman of fathering her illegitimate child, he is at the receiving end of the anger of villagers. They tell him to take the infant and look after him. He responds with equanimity, saying, "Is that so." It is not a question, just plain acceptance of the situation.

He takes the infant and looks after him till one day the girl repents and together with her lover discloses that they had framed the monk. The villagers rush to apologize to Master Hakuin, who hears them out and says, "Is that so" while handing the infant back to them.

The chances are always high of being carried away by success and one's own importance, as happened with Iacocca. Becoming an impassive monk in a material world is a tough number. But can a bit of both come together so that one modulates the other? Perhaps the solution lies in being a little more 'Is that so' — without a question mark.

The reason for failure is the pursuit of success as defined by others. Replace that with a purpose in life and everything changes. The external world doesn't matter and one is secure in oneself. Success and failure are then no longer juxtaposed. It is only the journey that matters. ■

organizations. Care in their own families is neglected, and commercial organizations are formed to provide it. This contributes to the growth of the formal economy and GDP; but does not create a more human-centric world which families are designed to create.

Economic growth driven by capitalist extremism is harming 'People and the Planet.' Nature and human beings are not resources to

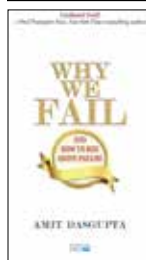
be converted into financial capital. The needs of human beings and respect for Nature must become the driving principles for progress and growth. This requires a new science of economics for the 21st century, the principles for which lie in the organization of families and communities. ■

Arun Maira is the author of 'Shaping the Future: How to Be, Think, and Act in the New World', published in October 2023

## Business rules ...

Continued from page 20

done for monetary compensation. The "work" that humans do in families and communities to support one another, much of it by mothers and women, is of no value in the economy. Therefore, caregivers must be plucked out of their "informal" family and community organizations to work in "formal" economic



Why We Fail  
Amit Dasgupta  
Wisdom Tree  
₹345

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**So you want to do your bit but don't know where to begin? Allow us to help you with a list especially curated for *Civil Society's* readers. These are groups we know to be doing good work. And they are across India. You can volunteer or donate or just spread the word about them.**

## BE A DOCTOR TO THE POOREST



Swasthya Swaraj believes in promoting self-reliance in health. It tries to ensure access to health services for the poorest communities in remote tribal areas. They advocate community-based research on unique health problems in tribal pockets and find solutions for them. The non-profit's Comprehensive Community Health Programme is active in 79 villages in 10 panchayats of Odisha, and covers 4,000 people. It works in Thumal Rampur block of Kalahandi district, one of the most deprived regions in India.

The non-profit runs two health centres which provide 24/7 emergency services, including deliveries, surgical procedures and OPD services. They specifically work on malaria prevention through training, creating awareness, screening and indoor residual spraying.

Swasthya Swaraj appoints nurses from the local population for community engagement. It also offers a Tribal Health Fellowship for young doctors. You can donate to help their efforts or volunteer with them.

swasthyaswaraj@gmail.com | info@  
aahwahan.com | 06670 295476 | 7326874618

## FIGHT ALL FORMS OF DISABILITY



Prabhat works for the welfare and rehabilitation of people with disabilities and people with mental illness. It provides access to cost-effective care and therapy. Along with vocational training it organizes job fairs to help people with disabilities find employment. Prabhat has been working for the last seven years to provide a support system for people with disabilities. Prabhat also organizes awareness programmes to fight stigmatisation of mental health for parents, teachers, students, community leaders and local government

representatives on mental health and disability. Their Abdul Kalam Project is a school on wheels for children with disabilities for skills and activities.

They are currently working on establishing a day care and residential centre in Panchkula, Haryana. You can donate to Prabhat or help them with their job fairs, awareness drives and vocational activities.

www.prabhatngo.com | opasija1940@  
gmail.com | +91 94631 25184

## HELPING HAND FOR ALL DISTRESS



Samarpan Foundation, a charitable non-profit entity, provides support and assistance of any kind wherever there is a humanitarian, ecological, environmental or animal welfare need. Samarpan Foundation runs mobile medical clinics in the Sundarbans for 250 patients of all ages with various medical conditions. It provides emergency medical relief and specialized medical care, including an eye clinic. The foundation runs a women's centre in Guwahati which helps migrant families from Bihar, Bengal and Manipur. They also have two children's homes in Delhi.

You can donate to specific projects run by Samarpan or donate to the foundation. You can also volunteer for their projects in Delhi, Bengaluru, Guwahati, Mumbai, Goa and the Sundarbans.

www.samarpanfoundation.org  
volunteer@samarpanfoundation.org  
donate@samarpanfoundation.org

## ENSURE THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN



HAQ works for the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights of children. The non-profit organizes campaigns against child trafficking, child labour, violence and abuse to actively engage in

public education and advocacy on children's rights.

HAQ also seeks to serve as a resource and support base for individuals and groups dealing with children. They provide training and capacity building for law enforcement agencies and other institutions that come into contact with children on a regular basis.

HAQ supports children in conflict with the law by providing legal aid and counselling to victims of child abuse.

HAQ also undertakes research to mainstream children's concerns into developmental planning and action. They release a Child Rights Index and special reports on child soldiers and children in mining in India. Donate to HAQ to help their efforts. You can also volunteer or intern with them.

www.haqrc.org | training@haqrc.org  
info@haqrc.org | Phone: +91-11-26677412

## HELP THE YOUNG LEARN AND EARN



Deepalaya was started in 1979 to educate underprivileged girl children. It also works for low-income women and youth. Deepalaya has projects in Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana.

Vocational Training & Skill Development Centres (VTCs) provide hands-on skills that enable youngsters to get jobs. Their project, Sambhav, helps people with disabilities access therapies, education and skilling. Project Parivartan supports students studying in government schools in Punjab.

You can volunteer or intern with Deepalaya. You can also donate books to their libraries. Sponsor a child's education with ₹12,000 a year.

Do support their Drive Against Winters by donating ₹1,100 for a

set of woollens or ₹1,400 for blankets and jackets.

www.deepalaya.org | support@deepalaya.org | 011-28520347

## TACKLE ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES



Founded in 1972, Apnalaya started as a day care centre for children of migrant labour at Nariman Point in Mumbai. Apnalaya now helps the urban poor access healthcare, education, livelihoods and civic entitlements through advocacy with the government.

Apnalaya trained residents of Shivaji Nagar in Mumbai to work with urban local bodies on civic issues like lack of access to drinking water.

www.apnalaya.org | admin@apnalaya.org  
+91-22-23539752 / 9833041074

## GIFT A TREE AND HELP SAVE THE EARTH



A pollution-free and green Earth is what everyone wants. But it takes spirited citizens to make it happen. Green Yatra, a Mumbai-based NGO, has set a target to plant 100 million trees by 2025 under their Pedh Lagao campaign. You can support them by gifting a tree to a loved one for their birthday or anniversary.

Green Yatra's Go Green Kids visits schools and sensitizes students on environmental issues. Students are taken on a clean-up drive or to build a birdhouse or plant trees in school premises. Green Yatra partners with companies like McDonald's and Oracle and systematically manages their waste. Since 2012 they have saved 8,000 tonnes of garbage from going to a landfill and 27,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases from being emitted.

You can volunteer your time or support them with a donation.

www.greenyatra.org  
info@greenyatra.org  
+91 99675 38049

## YOU CAN RESCUE SEX WORKERS



How to help survivors of sex trafficking? In Kolkata, Sanlaap India has a shelter home for 150 girls where they undergo psychosocial rehabilitation. They are also helped to find other ways of earning a living. Along with assisting the recovery of sex-trafficking survivors, Sanlaap builds awareness among communities to prevent sex trafficking. The NGO runs a medical programme for sex workers in Kolkata's red light areas and a child protection programme for children who live there.

At Sanlaap's drop-in centres, children can come and attend formal classes for getting an education or for vocational training.

www.sanlaapindia.org | hq@sanlaapindia.org | 033-466-2977

## FROM STREET TO SCHOOL



A child needs an education and street children are no different. In Delhi, CHETNA has contact points where they are taught formal subjects and also take part in sports. When the child is ready, he/she is mainstreamed into government schools.

CHETNA has been around since 2002, working directly with children. It is also a Childline partner, which means that if a child needs to be rescued, they show up. They also conduct workshops with stakeholders. One of their programmes helps make the police child-friendly. There are also two substance harm reduction centres to help children dealing with substance abuse. Your donation can take a child from the street to school.

www.chetnango.org | info@chetnango.org  
91 - 11 - 41644471, 41644470

## LEARNING TO CARE FOR ANIMALS



A sick cat shows up at your door. Or an injured bird falls into your garden. What do you do? Most of us fumble for answers. Stray Relief and Animal Welfare (STRAW) India wants to change that through animal welfare education.

They collaborated with the

Central Board of Secondary Education and other state educational boards and introduced a module on humane education. Their Compassionate Classrooms programme has reached thousands of children across India.

STRAW organizes nature walks to familiarize children with the natural world. There is also an animal helpline to counsel pet owners and coordinate rescue operations of injured animals. You can volunteer or donate.

www.strawindia.org/home.aspx | contact@  
strawindia.org

## DECENT FAREWELL FOR YOUR PET



When a loved pet passes away, it is always a challenge to perform the last rites. In Delhi we discovered Paws to Heaven, a crematorium, which does a wonderfully sensitive job. There is a prayer room and a picture wall too.

Paws to Heaven is on Bund Road in the Chattarpur area of Delhi. It is an electric crematorium where the ashes of your beloved pet can be collected in an urn and given to you the next day.

To keep Paws to Heaven going means using it and donating to it. The original support for this essential service came from BSES Rajdhani, the power company, under its corporate social responsibility (CSR). Now it needs the love of animal lovers.

www.pawsindia.org | paws@pawsindia.org | 011-26895737, 098110036254

## HELP A SURVIVOR OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Survivors of gender and sexual violence need assistance from good samaritans. In South Delhi, Shakti Shalini has a shelter home which can house 10 women. It runs a crisis intervention and counselling centre to help women decide their next course of action. Troubled women are given legal, medical and mental counselling. Some may choose to file a complaint, while others may decide to take legal action against harsh family members.

Shakti Shalini runs community outreach programmes where

women can address their concerns and find solutions. The non-profit also has a skills development and vocational training programme. Shakti Shalini helps women plan their finances.

Since it was founded, Shakti Shalini has supported over 15,000 women. It was founded in 1987 when two women lost their daughters to domestic violence.

www.shaktishalini.org  
mail@shaktishalini.org

## GET A PATIENT OFF THE STREET



Poverty and mental illness are twin challenges. In Kolkata, Iswar Sankalpa, founded in 2006, provides affordable mental healthcare to the urban poor. When a poor person loses his home and income, there is a chance he could be suffering from a mental disorder.

Iswar Sankalpa's two shelters house nearly 1,000 men and women. The NGO also helps rehabilitate mentally ill people by providing vocational training facilities.

It runs Crust & Core, a bakery, and Nayagram, where women do farming to earn a living. Iswar Sankalpa works with the Kolkata Municipal Corporation to integrate mental healthcare into primary health centres in the city.

www.isankalpa.org | info@isankalpa.org  
033-24597451

## A SECOND CHANCE FOR THE HOMELESS



At Ashabari in Kolkata, Joseph Das strives to give street destitutes a second chance at life. People enter his home with injuries or mental illnesses.

There are nearly 200 men and women at any given time. When they leave, they are not only physically healthy but mentally fit and ready to live and earn normally on their own.

Some of the inmates can hardly speak when they come in, but when they recover they are able to say where they are from and go back home. Ashabari also gives them vocational training and helps them find work.

Ashabari's weekly free outdoor clinic for the poor helps 1,000

people every month. Medicines worth ₹50,000 are also distributed free every month.

www.ashabari.org | brpdas@gmail.com  
+919830109428

## BE A FRIEND TO FRIENDICOES



Stray dogs need as much love and care as your household pets. Help stray dogs by helping Friendicoes look after them.

Friendicoes runs a shelter, in New Delhi's Defence Colony, for 200 stray dogs, an out-patient clinic for injured animals and a 24/7 ambulance service for stray dogs in distress.

Friendicoes nurses strays back to health and finds them loving homes through their adoption programme. In Gurugram, their sanctuary houses nearly 1,000 animals who have nowhere else to go.

Friendicoes needs volunteers who can walk dogs, help their staff with the adoption programme or people who can foster an animal for short periods.

You could organize a fundraiser for Friendicoes or donate yourself. You can also donate an old car, old furniture, food and medical supplies, cameras and laptops.

www.friendicoes.org | volunteers.  
friendicoes@gmail.com | 011-2431-4787

## BE A NUTRITION CHAMPION



Matri Sudha works in Delhi's slums to fight malnutrition. Almost 57 percent of children in such areas are anaemic. Matri Sudha has trained local women to be Nutrition Champions. They reach out to pregnant and lactating women with advice on nutrition. They identify children who are malnourished and ensure they receive proper nutrition. The NGO also works with anganwadi centres.

Matri Sudha has been giving needy families Poshan Kits. Each kit costs ₹1,200 and contains 5 kg rice, 5 kg wheat, 2 kg dal, 1 litre cooking oil, 250 gm masala packets and 1 kg salt. Pay ₹1,200 for a kit and ensure that at least one family is hunger-free.

www.matri sudha.com | matri sudha2000@  
yahoo.co.in | +9199101-44337

# PRODUCTS

Small producers find it difficult to sell their wonderful products. Consumers lose out because so much good stuff just doesn't reach them. *Civil Society* happily makes the connection so that everyone benefits. Here are some traditional salty snacks and sweets from Chennai.

## SMART SNACKS AND HEAVENLY SWEETS

DO you begin dreaming of spicy *samosas* and syrupy *jalebis* when you're hungry? Banish the thought. There are delectable alternatives available which are satiating and healthy. Here is a round-up of crunchy, salty snacks and tasty sweets that won't add layers to your middle.

What's more, these are traditional snacks and sweets that have been given a new twist by two Thaligai restaurants in Chennai. They've worked their magic with Sempulam Solutions, a company that helps farmers market traditional rice varieties, and the Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems (CIKS) which conserves, revives and researches ancient rice varieties in Tamil Nadu.

The trio has invented a new range of snacks and sweets made with traditional rice varieties which, it says, represent the culture, identity and heritage of Tamil Nadu. Thaligai in Tamil refers to food that is offered to the gods. This assortment is meant for the discerning food connoisseur.

### NAVARASA ADHIRASAM

*Adhirasam*, a classic Tamil sweet made with rice, jaggery, ghee and spices, is offered as *prasadam* in temples across Tamil Nadu. Sempulam offers an assortment of nine exclusive *adhirasams*. Each is special because it has been made with a distinct traditional rice variety rich in iron, calcium, zinc, protein and other nutrients. The rice varieties used are Kalanamak, Karuppu Kowni, Kitchilli Samba, Kottara Samba, Mullankaima, Navara, Seeraga Samba, Sivappu Kowni and Thengaipoo Samba.

### ADUKKU NEL MANOHARAM

This is also a traditional South Indian sweet made with protein-rich Adukku Nel rice. It is basically a fried *murukku* dipped in thick jaggery flavoured with cardamom, dry ginger and other spices.

### PORIVILANGAI URUNDAI

A healthy protein-rich snack, *porivilangai urundai* is chewy and tasty. The main ingredient in this special *porivilangai urundai* is a mixture of 50 traditional rice varieties, giving you all the nutrients you need.

### KALLIMADAIYAAN BUTTER MURUKKU

*Murukku* is a crispy, crunchy deep-fried savoury snack with rice flour as its main ingredient. The rice used to make this *murukku* is the famous zinc- and iron-rich Kallimadaiyaan rice.

### NEELAN SAMBA THATTAI

*Thattai* is a crisp deep-fried cracker made with rice flour, lentils and spices. The Neelan Samba rice used to make *thattai* is calcium-rich. It adds a special flavour and strengthens your bones.

### MUKOODAL MIXTURE

A perfect replacement for the North Indian *bhujia*. *Mukoodal* is a delectable mix, fried to perfection to give you that perfect crunchiness. This *mukoodal* mixture is made from Thooyamalli rice, Thanga Samba rice and Kitchilli Samba rice.



### Contact:

Sempulam Sustainable Solutions Pvt Ltd  
New No. 23/2/2, Old No. 12/2/2, 1st Floor  
Kannadasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai - 600017  
Phone: +91 99 6262 9925  
Email: sempulamss@gmail.com  
Shop online at [www.sempulam.com](http://www.sempulam.com)  
Thaligai Restaurants  
Phone: +91 979 1272 888  
Email: [contact@thaligai.com](mailto:contact@thaligai.com)  
Shop online at [www.thaligai.com](http://www.thaligai.com)

# Civil Society

JOINING THE DOTS

## THE MAGAZINE THAT GOES PLACES

WHERE WE ARE BEING READ?

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