



# livelihoods

*today and tomorrow*

February 2009



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## **Invite Change! Welcome to hope for change!**

We are going ahead taking the economic recession in our stride.

Republic Day! 'Do not forget' says President! 'There is no moment when we can not serve' says Gandhiji! Elections are coming. Election Code may start on 20 February itself.

Migration is an integral part of development process in history. Human race has been in migration from the age of hunter-gatherer, searching opportunities, accessing the opportunities so found, fulfilling the needs and desires. As human being moved from hunting to slash and burn agriculture to stable agriculture, from survival to prosperity and loss of value to survival-based occupations, to classifying people based on occupations, in stead of communities, individuals, families and groups began migrating going after opportunities and in search of wealth and prosperity, For education, for jobs, for business, for luck, for treasure, for new recognition, and may be for salvation. All these are still 'pull' factors! With the same reasons, Britishers came and gradually became rulers and finally exited by transferring power back to us.

Started small initially, the push migrations of the poor have become huge, with no work or not finding work, with less number of work days, with lower wages, with going hungry with inability to buy and have food, with inability to meet the basic needs. They are migrating as individuals, individual families and groups, making the children to leave schools, leaving the elders to their fate. These are in large numbers – one out of ten in the country and include labour, market-less skilled artisans turned into labour, uncultivated landed small and marginal farmers, tribals, fishermen etc., with existence more difficult than hand-to-mouth despite forests and other resources. A good quarter of them migrate as they dislike traditional occupations and unnecessary egos. Some migrate permanently, some long-term, some short-term, some seasonally, some weekly and some daily. Migration has become necessary, inevitable, but with innumerable hardships. Nobody likes it but there is no other way. In this context, it is the second sector looked into by 'livelihoods'.

In the context of elections to Lok Sabha and some Legislative Assemblies in April/May, the 'people's manifesto' is further reflected upon through the lenses of the labor, artisans, farmers within the poor, with a hope that they find their way into the common minimum program of the next government(s) at Union and State levels. 'livelihoods' compliments all the associates of the poor making efforts in this direction!

Dr B D Sharma is the national coordinator of Bharat Jana Andolan. An inspiration to movements for tribal rights. A rare and complete role model for the development workers living with and for poor. Aajeevika Bureau of Udaipur, Rajasthan has become an example of a promising initiative towards bettering the conditions of the migrants. Adhikar's Shramik Sahajoga Project is helping the migrants in remitting the money home. A replicable effort. Dr Anil Gupta, founder 'Shristi' and founder vice-chair – National Innovation Foundation has been helping in searching, popularizing and commercializing grassroots innovators and innovations all over the country and outside. A professor with a difference!

If we do not listen to 'Voices of the Poor', we will become the development workers who do not value the words of the poor! It can not be skipped.

In the journey of India and the world with hope of change, 'livelihoods' is making an effort to be a candle light. With the faith that this association of yours continues in this effort, I remain.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. G.', with a horizontal line underneath.

G. Muralidhar

the 'livelihoods' team

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**MIGRATION**

Migration is emerging as a significant part of the livelihood portfolio for the poor. Income from migration has become more significant for the poorest areas of the country. Recognizing that migration is every individual's choice, 'livelihoods' team attempts to understand the patterns, trends and issues around migration.

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# Response

Thanks for continuously updating me on the major livelihoods Issues since long back. It has helped me a lot in developing Livelihood Perspective of rural India.



Ritesh

I had been through the contents of the newsletter, it is wonderful, it is the core and grassroots work. Livelihoods team had been shouldering to really make the

livelihoods, lively and bright. It is the biggest, and stupendous task to devote ourselves to such noble cause. Even at this juncture of turmoil, moral turpitude and gross corruption, God had chosen some wonderful men and women across the world, who engaged tirelessly for the betterment of the " Vasudaiva -Kutumbakam". Hats Off !!! to such people who are the Game-Changers and Change Agents as well, of the present and future.

Prof.Mohammed Mujahid Ali

## Contributions Solicited

If you would like to contribute an article or have something interesting to share, email or mail it to us. If it contains pictures or files please remember to attach them to the email. Please include your name, email, contact information such as phone number, location (nation) and area of expertise. If your article is accepted an editor will prepare the article for publication and may edit it for accuracy, grammar, style, and length.

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**WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,**  
**having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a**  
**SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**  
**and to secure to all its citizens**  
**JUSTICE - social, economic and political**  
**LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship**  
**EQUALITY of status and of opportunity and to promote among them**  
**all**  
**FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of individual and the unity and**  
**integrity**  
**of the nation**  
**IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY the twenty-sixth day of November,**  
**1949, do, HERE BY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS**  
**CONSTITUTION.**

## World Bank's New Country Director

**for India:** The World Bank has appointed Roberto Zagha as the new country director for India. Zagha, a Brazilian national, started in his new position from January 1, replacing Isabel Guerrero, who is now the World Bank's vice-president for the South Asia region. Zagha was previously senior advisor to the bank's vice-president in the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit. India was the largest International Development Association (IDA) borrower from the bank in 2008. The Bank's \$15.1 billion-portfolio in the country covers 61 active investment projects.



## Two-Thirds of the World Hungry live

**in Asia:** According to recent Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) figures, another 40 million people pushed into poverty and hunger in 2008 as a result of spiraling food prices. The total number of people suffering malnutrition and hunger has reached 963 million worldwide. While the prices of major cereals have fallen by more than 50% from their peak in 2008, they still remain high compared to previous years. Nearly two-thirds of the world's hungry live in Asia (583 million in 2007). In sub-Saharan Africa, one in three people — or 236 million (2007) — are chronically hungry. Most of the increase in the number of hungry occurred in a single country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, as a result of widespread and persistent conflict. The FAO predicts that the impact of the economic crisis, on the heels of the food price crisis and oil price increases, could further exacerbate malnutrition and hunger levels.



**More For Anganwadi Workers** – The union government has notified the state governments to pay extra wages to Anganwadi workers where their services have been utilized for additional contingency work. The union government is also considering job security and other welfare measures for them. Anganwadi workers will have uniforms in six different colors with a badge. A manual will also be published for Anganwadi workers detailing their rights and responsibilities. The manual would spell out the areas of work in the Anganwadi centers.

## Bridge Course For AIDS-Affected Children

– Under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan 276 AIDS-affected children have been admitted to residential bridge course schools in 2008-2009 in Andhra Pradesh. The state government decided to continue this measure as a long term policy. The government spends Rs.10000 on each of these children per year towards education, food and medicines in association with the Anti-Retro Viral Therapy Centers.

## National Education Mission

**Launched** – The Ministry of Human Resources Development launched National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology. This is a Rs.4700 crore project to provide online educational content to the remotest part of the country. Under this mission, terrestrial and satellite connectivity for e-classrooms will be provided. This will facilitate interaction with professors, access to virtual laboratories and e-books through Sakshat web portal. To being with, the mission is expected to provide network connectivity to 10000 university departments and 20000 institutions of higher learning and the union government will bear 75% of the connectivity charge for 5 years.

## International Conference On Food Security

– The International Conference on Food Security was held in Spain in January this year. According to the head of the FAO food crisis pushed an additional 40 million people

into hunger in 2008 and global food production must double by 2050 to avoid mass hunger. Of the total world population of 6.5 billion, 973 million constitute the undernourished category. The current global economic crisis is making it hard for farmers to get loans. The conference stated that hunger crisis did not receive the same attention as the fight against AIDS, the global financial crisis or climate change.

## Virtual Resource Center

– The Virtual Resource Center initiated by the Jansankhya Sthirata Kosh helps students or any interested individuals/institutions to access and contribute information to the center about gender, maternal and infant health, adolescent health and birth-related issues. Students can access advocacy material in the form of films, poster and photographs.

## Freedom For Cooperatives

– The state government of Karnataka will end the practice of nominating officials and non-official members to taluk-level cooperative institutions. At the district level cooperative institutions where the government has shares, it will nominate one person as its representative.

## Padma Vibhushan For Bahuguna

– One of India's early environmentalists' Sunderlal Bahuguna was honored with Padma Vibhushan, the country's



second highest civilian award on the 60<sup>th</sup> Republic Day. Follower of Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and satyagraha, Sunderlal Bahuguna fought tirelessly for the

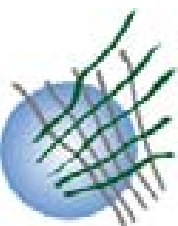
preservation of forest of the Himalayas as a leader of the Chipko movement. His famous slogan is "Ecology is permanent economy". Sunderlal was behind the anti-Tehri dam protests bringing pressure on the government to review ecological impacts of the dam. He undertook 74 days fast at Raj Ghat.

**Abhaya Hastham For SHGs** – ‘Abhaya Hastham’, hand of reassurance is a three-in-one program that provides pension, insurance cover for members of self-help groups and scholarships for their children. This program is launched by Andhra Pradesh state government. All SHG members attaining 60 years of age is eligible for a monthly pension of Rs.500. The pension aspect of the scheme is expected to cover at least 1.25 crore members.

**Child Marriages In India** – According to UNICEF latest report – ‘State of the World’s Children-2009’, 40% of the world’s child marriages take place in India resulting in gender discrimination, illiteracy and high infant and maternal mortality rates. According to the report to averting this situation requires respect for the rights of women and children, quality education, a decent standard of living, protection from abuse, exploitation, discrimination and violence and empowerment of women.



**International Year Of Natural Fibres** – The U.N Food and Agriculture Organization launched the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009. The aim is to emphasize the value of fibres to consumers and also to help sustain farmers’ incomes. According to FAO the production of animal and vegetable



Discover natural fibres 2009

fibres is a major agricultural sector and is worth about \$40 billion annually to

the world’s farmers. Every year about 30 million tons of natural fibres are harvested from animals and plants around the globe. The biggest crop is cotton. Jute is the second biggest fibre crop but is worth less than the wool in

terms of cash. The main producers of jute are India and Bangladesh.

**Health Insurance Scheme In Tamil Nadu** – The state government of Tamil Nadu launched the Chief Minister’s Insurance Scheme for Life Saving Treatments. This scheme will enable the poor to get treatment in government as well as private hospitals for serious ailments. Each family can get up to Rs.1 lakh worth of free treatment. The government will bear the entire premium.

**Cattle Insurance Scheme** – The union government will launch cattle insurance program in 100 districts across the country on a pilot basis. The aim of the scheme is to extend support to farmers to insure their high quality milch cattle. The cattle owners can insure their animals for one or three year period with the government subsidizing half of the premium. While claims for death of animals due to diseases or accidents would be reimbursed, the scheme envisages payment of Rs.50000 if one animal is insured and Rs. 1 lakh in case of two in the event of the accidental death of the owner.

**Sex Workers Spread AIDS Awareness Through CBOs** - In the state of Andhra Pradesh, the CBOs are roping in sex workers to spread awareness among the community and to instill courage among the workers by providing them community support. Apart from educating about safer sex practices, the CBOs also teach them how to fight off excesses and combat social stigma.

**WB Ranks Karnataka First In Investment Climate** – According to World Bank’s Investment Climate Index, Karnataka tops the list with Kerala in the second place. Tamil Nadu comes in the 9<sup>th</sup> place and is above Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Delhi. 46 variables grouped into three categories including inputs, infrastructure and institutions were used to describe the business environment. For each category two

dimensions including the objective indicators of cost and subjective indicators of perception were identified for each category.



Infrastructure is the biggest variable distinguishing between the best and worst states on the Investment Climate Index with electricity being the single biggest constraint in that category. The second most important constraint is transportation. The most important institutional bottlenecks appear to be corruption, crime and tax regulations.

**Puducheri Bags First Position In Primary Education:** According to the National University of Educational Planning and Administration 2007-2008 Education Development Index, Puducheri stands first in primary education. Kerala is in second place, Lakshadweep and Delhi are in third and fourth places respectively.

**NREGS Awards For Best Implementing Districts:** Kurnool and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh are nominated for awards for National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS). The awards were declared in an event held at Delhi recently on employment guarantee scheme.

**Rajiv Gandhi Award to Dr Ajaria** - Dr Ajaria Korabandi of Andhra Pradesh got Rajiv Gandhi Human Service Award 2008 from the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare. Dr Ajaria strived for the welfare of poor and orphan children. Along with Dr Ajaria Dr Meena K. Jain of Karnataka, Mahesh Bai S. Kothari of Gujarat also received this award.

**50% Indians In Cities By 2030** - According to the Urban Poverty Report of India 2009, 50% of the Indian population will be in the cities by 2030. This trend is attributed to increase in the preference for non-farm employment and also urban employment. ■

According to the World Development Report 2009, development is characterized by growing cities, more mobile people and increasingly specialized products. While these changes took place at a noticeable level in developed countries, the developing countries in the East and South Asia and Eastern Europe are now experiencing these changes. According to the report such changes are essential for economic success and should be encouraged.

The Report states that people prosper when the changes are promoted along three dimensions of economic geography – density, distance and division. Higher densities are seen in the growth of cities. As workers and businesses migrate closer to density distances become shorter. And finally as the economies enter world markets to take advantage of scale and specialization, the division between countries becomes thinner. The drivers for these transformations are the market forces, migration and specialization and trade.

The Report's main message is that economic growth will be unbalanced. But development can still be inclusive, in that even people who start their lives far away from economic opportunity can benefit from the growing concentration of wealth in a few places. The way to get both the benefits of uneven growth and inclusive development is through economic integration.

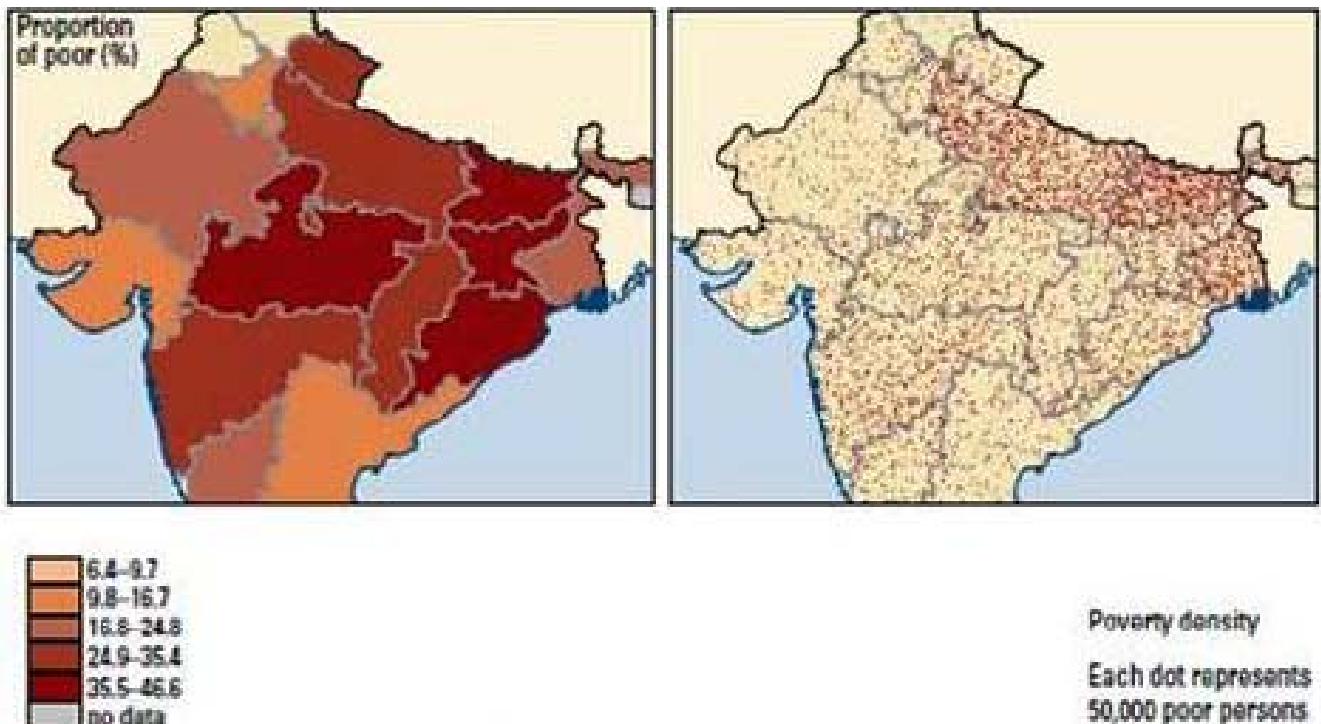
economic integration.

Economic integration can be integrating rural and urban areas, integrating slums and other parts of the cities, integrating lagging and leading states within a nation. At global level it can be integrating isolated and well-connected countries. While rural areas should be all urban amenities (like PURA), the rapidly growing urban areas should have connective infrastructure so that the benefits of development are more widely shared. Targeted interventions can be made by the governments to deal with slums.

While in some countries lagging areas are sparsely populated in others like India they are densely populated. In the former case while basic services can be provided across, people should encourage to migrate to places doing economically well. In cases like India were 60 per cent of the poor live in poor places, apart from providing institutions, infrastructure and basic services, producers especially agrobased can be given incentives to set up establishments in the poor areas.

To make globalization work for all countries, common institutions, regional infrastructure, regional institutions and where appropriate preferential access to world markets should be set up. ■

## India: High Poverty rates and densities go hand in hand



## Merged in Tribal Cause - B.D.Sharma

Dr B.D. Sharma, a retired I.A.S. officer from Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been raising issues concerning to tribals and is closely associated with the plight of tribals in India. He is instrumental in the formulation of many tribal policies and also the revolutionary Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act.

Dr B.D. Sharma joined the Indian Administrative Services in the year 1956. He is basically a student of Mathematics with doctorate in the same subject. He was posted as Collector and District Magistrate to Bastar district, the largest tribal tract of the country. While serving in the central government and also state government, he was responsible for the formulation of tribal policies particularly what is known as Sub-plan strategy. He was also instrumental in bringing back the Fifth Schedule, as the vital instrument of policy for the very survival of tribal people, on the national agenda.

Dr Sharma resigned from government service in 1981 when differences arose on vital issues of policy. However his interest on the tribal issues continued. Sharma therefore continued to work in the same area and became the Vice Chancellor of North Eastern Hill University covering some of the most enchanting tribal areas including Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya and worked in that position from 1981 to 1986. He occupied the highest constitutional position concerning tribal people, as the last commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes during 1986-91. Thereafter the National Commission was constituted.

Since 1991, Dr Sharma has been with the tribal people and is actively participating in tribal movements. He is leading the Bharat Jan Andolan (Indian People's Movement) as its National Coordinator. In October 1992, activists and representatives of various peoples' movements held a meeting to improve coordination and building alliances on issues for tribals. This meeting was attended by Medha Patkar, Pradip Prabhu, Dr.Vinayan, George Palli, Gian Singh and Dr. B.D. Sharma, among others. The meeting was the initiative of Bharat Jan Andolan and represents the beginning of the organization as a peoples' movement. The movement has a very loose organizational structure and is sporadic in nature. However, its presence is very strong in Ranchi region of Bihar, Nagari-Sihawa region in Raipur District and Sarguja district of Madhya Pradesh. The Andolan works on the issues of peasants and tribals, although its mass support comes primarily from tribal regions.

In 1992 Bharat Jan Andolan released its first manifesto but was not clear about its focus. However in 1993 when the *Panchayats* became the institutions of decentralization through the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, the Andolan focused its energies on tribal self-rule. The Andolan is not a registered society because Sharma believes that if they seek legitimacy from the state then their endeavor and mass movement to delegitimize the state will weaken. The financial needs of the Andolan are extremely limited. All the workers volunteer their services and their daily needs are

taken care of by the village in which they live. Supporters of the Andolan also contribute voluntarily to the movement. These contributions vary in form, but most are in *dhan* (paddy). In addition to this, Dr. Sharma contributes his pension to the movement and mobilizes some financial support from sympathetic and supportive individuals. Out of principle, the movement does not accept any organizational grants or aid.

Most of the social movements believe in first creating an organization and then starting to spread the ideas. According to Sharma, the ideas, not the organization, should reach the people first. In line with this thought, the books written by Dr. Sharma play a vital role. Very often the villagers read the books and then invite the Andolan to their areas. Training to the selected youth is given personally by Sharma. The youth receive intensive training in the laws and the Constitution to enable them to negotiate with the state. The trained youth then work as full-time volunteers in assigned villages.

The idea of '*gaon ganaraaj*' (village Republic) and '*hamara gaon, hamara raaj*' (Our Village, Our rule) is very appealing to the masses and captures their imagination. It encourages the people to want ownership of the resources and not merely a share. The movement coined the slogan '*jal, jungle aur jamin*' (Water, Forest and Land). Once the village accepts the Andolan, a '*shila lekh*' (rock inscription) is made at the entrance of the village, which proclaims '*hamara gaon, hamara raaj*'.

Dr Sharma has been pursuing the Panchayat Acts since 1972. He suggested to the Ashok Mehta Committee that the *gram sabha* should be given the real powers, but this was not accepted. Later due to the pressure built by the movement the Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Act was amended. After the amendment the decisions of the Gram Sabha have become binding on the Gram Panchayat. Dr Sharma played a very significant role in the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, which is the most revolutionary act in his opinion. The Act provides space to the community in the legal framework and the most significant clause is 4(d), which gives legitimacy to the culture and tradition of local communities.

Dr. B.D. Sharma writes extensively and on a wide spectrum of issues. His writing is simple and focuses on the real issues of the tribals and rural communities. Bureaucracy often functions antagonistic to people rights and entitlements. But Dr B.D. Sharma is a rare bureaucrat who gave up government position, merged in the tribal and rural cause fully and joined hands with them to fight for their rights and entitlements. ■



## Remitting Money-The Shramika Sahajoga Way

Migration has become an integral part of the livelihood strategies pursued by a large number of poor people in India. Although rural-rural migration still dominates there has been a sharp increase in rural-urban migration. Majority of these migrants leave their families behind at their villages. The major problem they face is the remittance of money to their families. 'Adhikar' is helping the poor migrants of Orissa in 'Shramika Sahajoga' way.

Orissa has a long history of supplying substantial numbers of migrant workers to various parts of India, including the economically important pockets of Mumbai, Calcutta and Gujarat. Lack of employment opportunities forced millions of Oriya people to work in the industrial hubs of the country as a cheap labour. In most cases the small savings from earnings of the migrant worker is the major source of the livelihood for the dependants in the native place. The money is remitted to the native place on an on going basis, for maintenance purpose. Their anxieties therefore, are to ensure, quick, cost effective and safe remittance and timely delivery of cash to their dependants in villages. The available institutional infrastructure like, post offices and banks were found inadequate to facilitate this.



The majority of migrant workers who send a part of their incomes to their families back home do it through money orders of the Indian postal department. A very small proportion of workers send money through bank drafts, because people in villages normally do not have accounts with banks. Even if a migrant worker has a bank account and purchases a bank draft, once the draft reaches his family, it has to be en-cashed at a branch of the same bank in their village. In case the bank on which the draft is made does not have a branch in the village, the draft is useless. Thus, unless banks expand their operations to every corner of the country, a bank draft as an option for remittance to families has very limited scope.

The families of migrant workers face a number of problems in remitting money through the post office too. A time lag of 20 days between sending money and its receipt by their families back home is typical. Post offices charge a fee of Rs 50 for every Rs 1,000 sent.

A number of private money remitters, who usually work as alternatives in few cities were found deficient in several respects particularly safety. Realizing the requirements Adhikar, a non-government organisation working for more than a decade in parts of Orissa, started the remittance work from Gandhidham of Gujarat and subsequently created a wing of its organizational frame for the purpose, named as Shramika Sahajoga.

*Shramika Sahajoga* was incorporated in August 2002 exclusively to look after remittance services for migrant workers. Shramika Sahajoga has its head office in Tangi in Orissa and a project office at Gandhidham. At both ends, bank accounts have been created in the name of *Shramika*

*Sahajoga* in Corporation Bank. Through these accounts the money is transmitted from Gandhidham to Orissa. The most difficult part of the initiative is convincing workers at Gandhidham about the credibility of *Shramika Sahajoga*, especially in the initial stages. The staff from Adhikar conducted door-to-door meetings at Gandhidham, to build awareness about the initiative, its objectives and how it will help workers. The advantage Adhikar had was that Oriya

workers in Gandhidham are from places where the organisation has had microfinance operations in place for quite some time. By cashing in on the goodwill of their *Ma Bank* (women's bank), Adhikar won the confidence of Oriya workers.

Oriya migrant workers get their names registered as members with Shramika Sahajoga. At the time of registration their address, details of family members, etc. are collected along with three passport size photos. A passbook is issued to each member. The field coordinator enters savings and remittance details in it, with a signature against each entry. This acts as record as well as receipt for the member. The field coordinator enters the same details in the Shramika Sahajoga ledger. Money meant for transmittal from the members is sent twice a week through bank transfers from the Shramika Sahajoga-Gandhidham bank account to Shramika Sahajoga-Tangi bank account.

Initially the money was sent through bank draft, which resulted in delays as the draft was sent by ordinary post. Later, Corporation Bank agreed to provide, free of charge, instant credit in Orissa against a cheque deposited in Gandhidham. Along with these transfers, Shramika Sahajoga-Gandhidham sends to Shramika Sahajoga-Orissa by email, the list of families in Orissa and the corresponding amount of money that they must receive. At Gandhidham, a transmittal fee of Rs 20 for every Rs 1,000 transmitted (plus Rs 10 per transmittal for door delivery) is collected from members. In Orissa, the money is delivered by Shramika Sahajoga's field staff. A receipt signed by the recipient and sometimes accompanied with a small message, is sent back to the member at Gandhidham. - Thus, the money gets transmitted in between three to seven days and the receipt reaches the member within 10 to 15 days.

Most migrants except short distance or seasonal migrants, are likely to have a need for remittance services. This innovative venture is finding favour with many organizations that are interested to provide this service for migrants. ■

# Next Generation Leaders?

**We are incorrigible and live on hope and optimism, as there is no other way to be. We are into 2009. Sun turned northward. Obama took charge of USA. Prime Minister went through a successful by-pass surgery. We have taken the progression of recession in our stride. Elections are going to be in April/May. Election Manifestos are on the anvil. All parties want to invest in youth, women and social justice.**

The month that went by saw our continued engagement with young professionals in appreciating poverty reduction, development and livelihoods management effort. Our 'dialogues' on eldercare and poverty reduction occupied most of the time. Balance of the time went into reflecting further the voices of the marginalized through the lens of livelihoods and poverty reduction to fine-tune elements in People's manifesto(s) for the next five years and ushering them towards inclusion in the common minimum program of the next government(s).

On the Republic Day, President of India touched upon poverty reduction, youth and women empowerment, equitable growth etc., apart from terrorism and security. She says, obviously on behalf of the government:

"..... The development process itself is becoming an increasingly participatory activity. ....

The richness of a few cannot be at the cost of depriving others .....

- \* Economic development serves a social purpose when it is for the welfare of the people. It is our effort to work towards providing education, health and better living conditions for the poorest of the poor and the weakest of the weak.....
- \* Economic opportunities should ...be accessible ... The poor and the disadvantaged people need to be drawn into circles of growth, to avoid their alienation from the mainstream. Welfare and development schemes implemented in earnest can bring about tangible difference to the lives of the people. ... Improvement in the human development parameters is important to create a productive work force and an enriched society. It is Gross Domestic Product along with welfare of the people that are the twin pillars of a progressive nation. ....
- \* Youth ... Productive employment generation prospects can be created through skill development and vocational training. ...
- \* A woman has a right to live with dignity and a right to be an equal citizen of the country.... Government has introduced gender budgeting... Self Help Groups have proved to be effective vehicles for the economic transformation of women. It should be our endeavor to

bring every eligible woman under the cover of a Self Help Group for her economic empowerment. ..."

In stead of annual budget, only the vote-on-accounts (interim budgets till the new government(s) take over) are on the anvil – Government of India on 16 February. Vote-on-account does two things – it revises expenditure estimates for the year; and it also provides estimates for the period till the new government takes over and gets the full budget approved in the next year. Given that elections are around, the government will tell its achievements and announce higher expenditures in the social sectors and some direct/indirect sops.

RBI is also likely to announce some more changes in the rates like repo etc.

I am inching towards full 36 hour fasting per week slowly but surely. Consuming more water and fibre helps in general and during the fasting in particular. With the grade of 60% or so itself, my physiological, emotional and spiritual systems are functioning far better. If you are not already practicing fasting, you may like to try. I am sure, if you taste it, you will get addicted to it.

## Perspectives

G. Muralidhar

As I continue, and I cannot help, going through the intensified churning processes, deeply explosive within and around, I am getting cleansed and tested for the immortal touch, light and power of the universe and to 'lose' my limits in joy forever. I am excited and enjoying every bit of it, in my quiet 'progression' in flow.

We get repeated endorsements that many of our educated youth lack employable skills - as our recent efforts to find professionals for development and/or livelihoods for the sector are repeatedly revealing that we do not have enough numbers available to be recruited/inducted. The quality is mediocre and not appropriate. Now a study by PurpleLeap, a talent management institute, confirms this. Interestingly it finds more than 50% of them in the category of 'hard-to-train' in three employability skills – communication, problem solving and technical skills. 80% do not meet the qualifying criteria in communications. Most of the 20% lack in problem solving and/or technical skills. Thus, only a fraction – less than 10% are employable! Of these, how many opt to work in the development or livelihoods domain is anybody's guess! **How can we attract them?** Not-so-employable may be interested to an extent but they need extremely rigorous induction over long periods. **What should be this induction? How this can be imparted to so many? And who will invest in this?** This situation gets further compounded when this not-so-competent professional wants to have 100 times or 1000 times the average income of the people whose lives they are affecting. Then, **what is the way forward?**

When the development projects of the government employ

staff with an intention to make them accountable to the community and fail to truly make them accountable to the community rather than making them accountable to the officers in the project or government or their political masters, we see strikes and agitations for making them government staff a la staff of Indira Kranthi Patham, the largest and model development project in the country. If they have nurtured the communities to get organised and demand things, they would like to be role models to the community by



getting organised, and succeeding in government acceding to their demands. In the process, the communities fail to have these staff accountable to them. Sensitivity of the staff can be a casualty! These large projects in AP, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Orissa etc., have to remember this. The new organization at the national level or the nation poverty reduction mission in the pipeline has to begin its course keeping this reality in perspective!

The situation is slightly better at the community level, with the community leaders, activists and paraprofessionals, service providers etc. But they lack adequate skills and pay may not be commensurate. Thus, skills for jobs inside can not be neglected.

Skills for Jobs for outside employment – what is the potential? An assessment in a district indicated some 8 skill areas - automobile mechanic, electrical motor repair and electrical work, hospitality, construction - masonry, nursing, cell phone repair, IT enabled services, trade, etc. Will they suffice to meet the numbers in the reckoning?

This gets compounded with economic recession and the frauds around. More than a crore of individuals without jobs get added to the natural supply of unemployed annually. Then the moot question is – do we know the domains, activities, skills etc., into which they can be taken to accommodate so many people? With liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) processes progressing, we may have more and more jobs, skills and occupations getting out of the reckoning as we are not competitive.

Warren Buffet's suggestions to cope with recession may not be out of place here – do not bank on financial experts, work

hard, be alert, have multiple sources of income, buy things only you need, spend what is left after saving not otherwise, monitor expenses rather than just counting, look at and correct small leaks, do not put all eggs in one basket, and never test the depth of the water with two feet. Can we pass on this wisdom of our elders which Warren Buffet has managed to put together for us to all who take decisions in general and financial decisions in particular?

**Then, what are the ways forward for us to influence, support, nurture and design now and in future?**

This would also mean the need for increased number of people working in the development and livelihoods domain. Even at one per 100, this would mean a crore of them. A minimum of 10% have to be professionals. One out of 10 of them, at least, have to look at development/livelihoods work as something beyond a career, like a vocation, a work for life with passion. **Can we help increasing their numbers, their abilities and their performance?** This is a task before us, who are interested in decent livelihoods for all. Naturally, some of these have to be the best brains immersed in cracking these issues.

When a Chief Minister recommends stoppage of live transmission of the proceedings of the legislative assembly, we can be sure that transparency in public governance is a casualty! After five years of non-effort, a government talks about a joint committee to look into statehood for a region, we can be sure that the political establishments do not put the faith in the wisdom and capacity of the people, the quintessential value of any development worker. Then, it is difficult to visualize our governments seeing the people's issues from the lenses of the people, their livelihoods and poverty. It is difficult to imagine any body really responding to 'People's manifesto' evolved through this lens.

But, can we lose hope? As incorrigible optimists, we do not lose hope. We continue to ensure that these ideas float around. We continue to appeal to the 'vested' interests why addressing these helps them. For now, let us fine-tune the people's manifestos further with more nuances from the specifics of a marginalized, in addition to the equity, justice and right to life and livelihoods perspectives. Then, can we take them to appropriate and multiple fora so that the parties, governments, bureaucracy and opinion makers agree to some of this at least? Can we pressurize them to allocate budgets? Can we see that they spend the allocated budgets? Can we keep a watch and lend a hand in 80-90% of the spending actually reaches the targeted activity/institution/individual?

Therefore, can we **concentrate on people, the new generation leaders, who reach out to these appropriate fora and influence them in favour of the just, equitable and sustainable world in general and the poor and marginalized in particular, now and in future.** All of us are aware - it is a lot of hard work, over long periods of time. But we know these leaders can talk, walk the talk and bring the legacy of change we are yearning for. ■

# Migration

Migration is emerging as a significant part of the livelihood portfolio for the poor. Income from migration has become more significant for the poorest areas of the country and sometimes exceeds income generated locally. Regional imbalances in development contribute to the push and pull factors of migration. About 30 million + are engaged in temporary/seasonal migration. Migrant labour constitute important building blocks of urban growth centers but their contribution largely goes unrecognized. Instead of emphasizing and making efforts to bridge intra-state and inter-state development gaps, short-term measures are being taken up to slow down and stop migration. Recognizing that migration is every individual's choice, 'livelihoods' team attempts to understand the patterns, trends and issues around migration.



Migration of people is considered integral to development. People across have been migrating for centuries from rural to urban, from urban to urban and from one country to another. However the migration we are seeing in 21<sup>st</sup> century particularly in developing countries is quite unprecedented. Migration within these countries or internal migration from rural to rural, rural to urban and urban to urban areas has become more a norm than an exception. Among the poor, migration is emerging as a significant part of their livelihood portfolio and for some households the income remitted from places of migration is more than the income generated locally in the village.



While some households migrate on a permanent basis, temporary or circular migration is emerging as a dominant pattern among the poor in India. Permanent migration rates are higher among the more educated but people with lower literacy and lower marketable skills constitute majority in temporary migration. Temporary migration ranges from trips that last for several months to daily commute to work depending on the distance from the economic centers and also the demand for particular type of skills/works in those centers. This also includes workers migrating to Middle-Eastern countries, Sri Lanka, Maldives etc for livelihood in which case trips last for few years at a stretch. One pattern of temporary migration commonly seen is seasonal migration. One type of seasonal migration works around agriculture season. This kind of seasonal migration is not mostly out of choice but also out of necessity. For instance agriculture labour and small and marginal farmers from West Bengal migrate to Delhi and Haryana during non-agriculture season and engage in pulling rickshaws. On the contrary some poor from Bihar migrate to agriculturally rich states like Punjab during agriculture season and engage in agriculture operations like weeding, harvesting etc. There is another kind of seasonal migration we see among cattle herders especially mobility between plains and hills. This migration is not forced but inherent in the livelihood itself and outside the scope of our current discussion.

The estimates of the number of temporary migrants in India vary between 30 – 100 million and this number is increasing. Why do poor migrate? What are the pull and push factors involved? What are the emerging trends in these factors that are propelling migration?

Nearly two-thirds of the arable land in India is semi-arid and drought prone. These areas have shown high rates of seasonal migration. Agriculture which is the mainstay of the village economy in India has slowed down in terms of productivity, job creation, real wages etc. The land-people ratio is worsening. The increase in the prices of agriculture inputs, water scarcity and persistent drought, volatile commodity markets have placed enormous financial burden on small and marginal farmers leading to debt traps. The changes in cropping pattern, particularly towards horticulture requiring less person-days, unused and/or barren lands have accentuated the situation. Apart from small and marginal farmers and agriculture labour, the fallout in agriculture has also negatively impacted the entire farming system and other livelihood sectors within in the villages including the artisans and service providers. Areas dominated by these push factors are significantly contributing to numbers of migrant labour. Seasonal migration is often linked to debt cycles and the need for money for repaying debts, covering deficits created by losses in agriculture or meeting expenditures of large magnitude on account of marriages, festivals and ceremonies. The reluctance of the youth with some schooling to continue in agriculture and other traditional occupations and absence of remunerative opportunities in the vicinity for them is causing further stress.

On the contrary, in other areas especially those close to urban centers are moving under the force of pull factors. Improved communication and roads, new economic opportunities arising from urbanization and changing market context are determining mobility. Urban labour markets offer opportunities to switch jobs rapidly, diversify incomes and become upwardly mobile with very low asset-base and skills. Migration is also increasingly being viewed by the migrants not just as survival mechanism but as an accumulating mechanism and a way to break caste constraints.

Regional imbalance in development acts as both a push and pull factor for migration. The rural poor are concentrated in eastern India and in the rainfall-dependent parts of central and western India which continue to have low agricultural productivity, while the bulk of jobs are being created in western and southern India. Developed western and northern states such as Punjab, Maharashtra and Gujarat are major destinations for inter-state migrants from the poorer states of the east including Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. In states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan there is lot of rural-urban migration within the states due to sharp regional inequalities.

Migration destinations are towns and cities, industrial zones,





costs of food and housing in urban locations. It also allows households to retain access to government services that are based on resident criteria such as subsidized food, healthcare and education.

Is grass always greener for migrants? The answer is NO. Migrant labour is paid lower wages, longer timings and harsher terms compared to local labour, and the implementation of the Interstate Migrant Workman (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act of 1979 is largely on paper. Migrants from backward regions are willing to accept any distress wages that are offered as long as they have access to employment. In the bargain they undercut the employment prospects of local labour. Their excess supply also contributes to reducing the wage rate. Employers prefer to hire migrant labour, as they are considered to be cheaper and more docile than local labour. Consequently, labourers need to migrate in search of jobs, which they are denied in their native region. This perpetuates a vicious cycle of migration. We also notice an interesting phenomenon – the people migrate out from area X on one hand and some others migrate into the same area X.

Migrants particularly women face mistreatment in the hands of employers. They live and work in appalling conditions with

stone quarries and coastal areas for fishing and salt panning. Jobs tend to be in factories, agro-processing plants or working as porters, domestic servants, rickshaw pullers, street hawkers, petty traders and construction workers. A recent and growing trend is the migration as domestic workers, for instance - tribal girls on a large scale from Jharkhand and West Bengal to Delhi. Power looms and diamond polishing businesses in Gujarat attract migrants from Orissa. A switch is happening from rural-rural to urban-rural temporary migration in areas where agricultural employment is declining and industrial jobs are being created either at the same destinations or elsewhere. A study of migration from Bihar indicates that migrants who used to go to Punjab for agricultural works are now travelling to urban centers and industry in other destinations. This is because of the relatively higher wages and diversified opportunities in industrial/urban areas compared to agricultural areas.

Temporary/circular migration is high among the poor either by necessity or by choice. A study in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh found that many rural migrant households cultivated one rain-fed subsistence crop recognizing that keeping in touch with both rural and urban economies provides them greater security. Combining rural and urban livelihoods provides a dual advantage to the poor. Agricultural laboring and marginal farming are important safety nets when urban employment is mainly in the informal sector which is high risk. Commuting is the most preferred mobility option because it allows people to keep rural social and economic links alive and cuts down the considerable



uncertain jobs and underpaid works. Whatever little education the children might be getting in the villages is now disrupted with migration. Slums where most migrants dwell hardly provide any decent atmosphere for the children. Young adult populations have a greater propensity to migrate. In such cases the old parents are left behind in the villages to fend for themselves. In cases where the men have migrated leaving the women and children behind the burden of women has become manifold.

One of the key players in the migrant labour value chain is the labour contractor. It is a semi-formalized system in which the labour contractor (locally called 'mistry', 'mukadam' or 'sardar' etc) establishes links with potential employers, he herds the labourers in the villages and organizes them into groups and sends them to different employment destinations. Apart from this, the contractor also establishes other relationships with the labourers like giving them high interest loans in times of need etc., which will be paid back from migration earnings. Because of the high dependence of the labourers on the contractor, this system paves way to a lot of exploitation. For instance labourers from Orissa are



brought to work in the brick kilns of Andhra Pradesh. They work for 12 to 15 hours for a wage of Rs.70 per day. Unfortunately this wage is more than what they get locally in Orissa which is about Rs.50. When time for final settlement the contractor deducts transportation costs, food costs and money spent for other expenses from the labour wages. These kind of exploitative systems exist in the migrant labour markets, for the migrant labour from the poorest areas in particular. These include labour from Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh (Srikakulam and Palamur).

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*In India some of the poorest areas are most densely populated. Therefore it is imperative to set up growth centers, infrastructure and services in those poor areas rather than shift the entire population to urban growth centers.*

✦

Some migrant workers work as freelancers. In such cases they receive better wages but work will not come by every day. On an average they get work for 3 days in a week. The contractor based system on the other hand assures more days of work and payment of some advances but there is a cut (15-50%) from the labour wages as commission. Further under the contractor system hardly any labour graduate to the formal sector apart from remaining underpaid and ill informed. On the contrary, there are arguments supporting the contractor system. These arguments state that the contractor provides information on work availability creates market and indirectly gives exposure to the workers to urban opportunities. In this process the migrants can establish their own contacts and get better understanding of the urban labour market.

In spite of the difficulties associated with migration, poor are willing to migrate at the given opportunity. This is particularly true among those coming from marginal areas where wages are too low to make a living. Evidences from micro-studies indicate that migration can reduce poverty, inequality and contribute to growth. But for the most part one can see only mixed trends. For instance in Kerala, migration to Gulf countries has caused wages to rise, reduced unemployment and improved economic situation of those left behind. On the other hand impact of labour migration in tribal western India has not led to any significant increase in assets or reduction in poverty.

The watershed programs and rural employment guarantee programs have provided additional days of casual employment to a large number of families providing additional incomes to a good number of families that migrate. However, these programs could not make a serious difference in changing the trends of migration yet.

Remittances form a significant percentage of rural household income in poor areas compared to prosperous areas. Remittances coming from migrants have streamlined income flows of some households. It increased their disposable income which is invested in a variety of production and consumption uses. Remittances are used to finance expenses including food, health, weddings, funerals etc. The



way remittances are invested back at home show tremendous variation by context. The poor need opportunities/ideas to invest the remittances gainfully.

Many governments see migration as a socially and economically destabilizing process. Therefore most rural development and natural resource management programs have an implicit aim of controlling people mobility. Migration is stated as the cause of degradation of rural and urban ecological resources, of urban poverty, of spread of HIV/AIDS and crime. However what is not admitted is the failure of government to take up regional planning, measures for regional development and growth and provide for basic services and infrastructure in rural areas. PURA still remains a distant dream for much of India. Drawing comparison between China and India, the WDR 2009 states that in China it is not viable to set up growth centers and infrastructure in poorer areas because these areas are sparsely populated. Therefore the government should motivate such population to migrate to urban growth centers. In India on the contrary some of the poorest areas are most densely populated. Therefore it is imperative to set up growth centers, infrastructure and services into those poor areas rather than shift the entire population to urban growth centers. But today in India, the governments are on one hand trying to control the mobility of people through NREGA, horticulture schemes and the like and on the other hand are not actively distributing the growth centers or at least providing for basic services in the rural areas. While efforts like 108 and 104 health services are a welcome measure they need to be taken up quickly by the entire country. Agriculture needs fresh energies. A recent DFID study shows that for each percentage point increase in agricultural productivity there



was a 0.6-1.2% decrease in the number of people earning less than a dollar a day. The moot question is – can this be raised at all?

This is not to say that people's mobility need to be controlled. In fact migration is the choice of every individual. The government(s) and civil society have to reckon with the reality of migration and see how to better the infrastructure and systems required for migrant families and policy framework that protects the migrants and their families.

Environment at both the origin and destination of migrants should be ameliorated for the benefit of the poor. For instance sending money back home is expensive and/or risky for the migrants. They rely on friends, family or other informal channels. Theft, cheating and delays are common. Migration exchanges can be set up facilitated by banks at the destinations to streamline the process of sending money and also to provide other services to the migrants. These exchanges can also link up employers and migrant workers thus diminishing the role of labour contractors. Migrants

need protective legislation and social security. Minimum wage rates need to be revised and implemented strictly, opportunities for training and skill building should be created, living and working conditions should be improved. Schools for migrant children are critical and so is access to health care. It is important to create a national database on migration. Multi-purpose identity cards should be issued to all and migrants should be able to access PDS and other programs using these cards even in the destination places.

The contribution of migrant workers to urban growth is largely undervalued. However, if not for the toil of migrant poor, the cities cannot have infrastructure like roads, flyovers, security guards, domestic help and many more services at the scale we are seeing and availing today. Mindful and well-planned regional growth is more a political will. Instead of decrying migration it helps to distribute employment opportunities across all sectors and multiple geographical areas. Let people have choices including the choice of migration! ■



## These Problems Should End With Us...

For many people who migrate from rural areas to urban areas life is nothing but a struggle. They have to face problems of food, water, shelter which are the basic necessities of any human being. "livelihoods" interviewed one such migrant, Bhikshapathi, to know the problems that migrants face in urban areas.

**Question:** What is your name?

**Answer:** Bhikshapathi

**Q:** Which village you belong to?

**A:** I come from the village called Ankireddipalli, located in Keesara mandal.

**Q:** What is your profession?

**A:** I do business in livestock. During festival seasons I go to Hyderabad with my bulls to perform the bull dance ('gangiredlu').

**Q:** How do you come to the city from the village with bulls?

**A:** I don't come alone. There are around 10 people in our village who are in the same profession. We come together by walking from our village. It takes 3 Days for us to reach the city.

**Q:** Can you explain us your profession?

**A:** We decorate the bullocks with colourful clothes and tie ankle belts to the legs and go to every house and stand in front of the house. While we play the shehnai (a musical instrument) our bullocks will dance to that rhythm. The people of that house will give us some money or grains. People believe that these donations will bring prosperity to their family.

**Q:** Where do you stay with your bulls in the city?

**A:** Wherever we find some open land we tie the bulls there and we sleep on the roads. The people in the surrounding houses give some food for us to eat. With that food we just pass our time. We are the victims of mosquitoes. Apart from this accommodation problem we also face the problem of high expenditure. In our village, one bundle of grass is available only at Rs.5 but in city it is more expensive.

**Q:** How much you earn on this profession?

**A:** If we go to the houses for performing bull dance some persons may give donation and some may not. The donations also may be in the form of cash or kind. Approximately we earn one to two hundred per day. We perform bull dance only in festival seasons.

**Q:** What is your livelihood in the remaining days other than festival time?

**A:** We have cows and goats in our village. We rear them and sell the babies whom they give birth and make cash. We



have 10 cows. But we can't sell the milk because each and every house of our village has their own cows.

**Q:** Do you go for any other work apart from these two?

**A:** I don't go for any other works other than doing my profession. We are in this profession of bull dance performing since our forefathers. I may be the last person in my family continuing in this

profession. My children will not come to this profession. I wish them to lead their lives happily with out facing any difficulties which I am facing now.

**Q:** Is the Government providing any help or facilities to bull dance performers like you?

**A:** Not specifically for us. But Government is providing 100 working days for the labour under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. But I don't go for other works. We don't have any union for bullock dance performers. There is no patronage to our profession. Though we have cows, there is no milk collection centre in our village. If Government or any other organization can establish such centre in our village it will be a great help.

**Q:** Can you tell use about your children?

**A:** I have two girl children and two boys. All the three are going to government school. One child is going to Anganwadi School.

**Q:** How do you send money to your family when you are in the city?

**A:** The persons along with me take care of my bulls and I go to the village once in a week to meet my family and give money . I go by bus. It takes Rs 20/- for transportation.

**Q:** Is your profession satisfactory to you?

**A:** No, in fact I would like to stop this profession. But I cannot. Because, this is our profession and we are accustomed to it. The difficulties we faced in this profession are a lot and we get very little remuneration. Finding free land in the city is a very tough task. Though we find a place, the surrounding residents are objecting to tie the bulls there. These problems should end with us. We don't let our children face these problems by taking up this profession. That's why I am educating all my children. I hope they will get good jobs and settle well. ■

## Street Side Hotel (Tiffin Centre)

If you are sad, heart broken or simply lonely there is one sure remedy guaranteed to work: order a plate of piping hot tiffin (snack) and a cup of steaming chai (tea) at a small street side hotel and see your troubles evaporate.

These street side stalls often grandly billed as 'hotels' by proprietors, have been the saviours of Indian urban masses. These hotels draw food lovers and newly arrived migrants from rural areas in huge numbers. Migrants are not only consumers but also producers in the hotel industry. While large number of them have occupied jobs as construction workers, goods-carriers and assistants to skilled workers, some have taken up works like waiters and cooks in street side hotels. They are engaged in preparation of food items, supplying the items to customers, cleaning of tables and utensils etc. These people are very low paid and there exists limited scope to enhance their skills and capabilities.

However there are some migrants who have invested all their savings in setting up a small street side hotel using very limited or no outside labour. In the initial stages they make only two or three items but depending on the diversity of the market demand they expand the range of food items.

We can categorize the road side hotels into different categories depending on the items they supply. There are some hotels which only supplies tea. Some hotels prepare tea and also some snack items. These hotels generally have a temporary structure on a footpath or at any corner of a street. Some hotels which have a permanent structure but with little space prepare breakfast, tea and snack items. There are certain road side hotels which also supplies lunch/ dinner to the customers.

These road side hotels are very much active in attracting customers as they offer delicious local food at comparatively



much cheaper prices than any well established hotels. Many of these hotel owners offer a informal atmosphere thus giving a personal touch to the business and this aspect draws repeat customers.

These road side hotels, both in urban and rural areas, provide employment to lakhs of people, both men and women. Among the jobs that are available in these hotels some are skilled and some are unskilled. Cooking food deliciously definitely requires lot of skill on which the success of any hotel depends. Helping in cooking, cleaning of vessels and tables, supplying food items may not require much skill but are laborious. Many unskilled migrants are engaged in the second kind of activities. Also in many street side hotels

Inputs	Pre-Preparation	Preparation	Types of Items	Post-Preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Maida</li> <li>◆ Bombay Rawa</li> <li>◆ Gram flour</li> <li>◆ Oil</li> <li>◆ Salt</li> <li>◆ Chilli</li> <li>◆ Fresh coconut</li> <li>◆ Dry coconut</li> <li>◆ Potato</li> <li>◆ Other spices</li> <li>◆ Cooking gas</li> <li>◆ Labour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Cleaning of utensils and tables etc</li> <li>◆ Purchasing the required inputs</li> <li>◆ Keeping things ready for cooking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Preparing the food items as per the customer order</li> <li>◆ Preparing some items in advance like Idly estimating the demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Mysore Bajji</li> <li>◆ Poori</li> <li>◆ Samosa</li> <li>◆ Chilli Bajji</li> <li>◆ Chutney</li> <li>◆ Potato Curry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Supplying the items as per the customer order</li> <li>◆ Parcel the items on customer demand</li> <li>◆ Serving the items always hot</li> <li>◆ Cleaning the tables and utensils from time to time</li> </ul>

Income and Expenditure of a Street Side Hotel		
<b>Initial Investment</b>		
1	Gas stove	2,000.00
2	Cooking vessels	1,200.00
3	Plates	250.00
4	Glasses	250.00
5	Jugs	100.00
6	Spoons	200.00
7	Tables	5,000.00
8	Chairs	10,000.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19,000.00</b>
<b>Monthly Maintenance Expenditure of the Hotel</b>		
1	Room rent	1,500.00
2	Current bill	600.00
3	Water bill	200.00
4	Miscellaneous	2,500.00
<b>Daily Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income from the sales of food		1400.00
Expenditure towards inputs		989.00
Profit		4,111.00

the entire family of the hotel owner also work that reduces their expenditure to a substantial amount. Some hotels apart from daily activity, take up catering orders for small functions and parties. This gives them additional income in some seasons particularly during marriages.

In recent days both husband and wife are working in many



### PROBLEMS

- ◆ Increase in the market rates of inputs can hurt the profit margins of the business.
- ◆ At times some ingredients can get affected with low supplies and high prices. In such cases there is a threat of losing regular customer-base that consume items made out of using the affected ingredient.
- ◆ At times with poor customer turnout the food items especially those pre-prepared can get wasted.
- ◆ Maintaining clean surrounding and cleanliness in cooking is critical. This kind of maintenance also involves some price. It is a challenge to maintain the balance between the costs associated with cleanliness and the need for cleanliness.

### SOLUTIONS

- ◆ Collective buying from wholesalers can help deal with price fluctuations in a better fashion.
- ◆ The skill of understanding convincing customer to try different foods is important. Customer service is the key.
- ◆ Maintaining cleanliness, quality and good customer service can increase both the regular customer base and also new customer base.

families especially in cities. Also bachelors have moved in good numbers to the cities for jobs. These people find no time or do not have adequate skill to cook food. Also longer commutes to and from work and long working hours leave little time for cooking. Hence they are depending mostly on curry points particularly for their dinner. Utilizing this opportunity some hotel owners are preparing curries in the evenings and making them available by the time people return to their homes. Some hotels rent out a small portion of their place to paan wallahs and earn some additional income in the form of rent.

Thus street side hotels are servicing a variety of population ranging from poor migrants to the blue and white collar workers in a significant way by providing them low-cost, good tasting and timely food and above all right around the corner. ■

Value chain analysis is an examination of different stages in a good or service till it reaches the customer. In this analysis, backward and forward linkages are studied to identify gaps and possible interventions.

## Aajeevika Bureau

Rural, seasonal migrant workers are a massive workforce with numbers that touch nearly a 100 million across India. They drift through the economy, often at its very bottom end, remaining largely outside the reach of state services and devoid of opportunities offered by the growing markets. Despite the major contributions migrant workers make to India's prosperity, they suffer neglect from employers, public and government alike. To help these poor rural migrants, Aajeevika Bureau was established as a charitable trust in 2005 in Udaipur in Rajasthan.

Aajeevika Bureau is a specialized non-profit, public service organization set up to provide solutions, services and security to seasonal migrants who leave their villages to find work in cities, factories and farms. Presently it is fully functional in 5 blocks of Udaipur and Rajsamand districts of Rajasthan.

Aajeevika Bureau works both in the 'source' as well as the 'destinations' of rural migrants within western India. The Bureau addresses issues that collectively influence the contributions of rural migration to the national economy, the livelihoods of the migrants and their families, and the very survival of their home communities. It provides a range of services to help migrants improve their outcomes from the labour markets and acts as an agent of policy change and advocacy in favour of migrant workers.

Aajeevika Bureau provides a number of services to migrants aimed at establishing their identity, increasing incomes and reducing expenditures, and emergencies associated with their movement away from their villages. The main target of Bureau's livelihood services are unskilled, semi-skilled, seasonal and vulnerable migrant men and women. The node for the Bureau's work and services to migrants is a network of centres known as the Shramik Sahayta Evam Sandarbh Kendra.

Registration is an entry point to the migrant workers into the Bureau's support services. Registration of migrant workers is aiming to fill a huge gap in data and information on the numbers, location and spread of seasonal migrants. Registration also forms the basis of Bureau's services such as counselling, training, placement, legal aid and financial services. Migrants are carried out through a locally identified network of volunteers in the villages, as well as directly at the Bureau's centres.

Registration is accompanied by the issuing of a photo identification card. The purpose of the photo ID card is to create a legitimate public identity of the rural migrant and to

serve as a proof of residence, skill and organizational association. The photo ID card is a powerful means to establish identity - it reduces police harassment, helps in a bona-fide introduction and leads to a sense of association with a broader umbrella of migrant workers.

There is a steady inflow of workers coming to the Bureau centres with complaints of fraudulence and malpractice against them relating to incidents at destinations, some of which result in the termination of their employment. The field centres register and respond to cases requiring intervention between workers and their employers/contractors. In more difficult cases where arbitration is not possible, assistance is sought from experienced legal practitioners. Workshops that focus on rights of labour are a regular feature of Bureau's communication with migrant workers. As part of its counselling, legal information is regularly provided. A simple take away attendance diary that the Bureau has developed continues to be very popular and useful as it helps keep a record of work done and payments received. Another publication ("*Pardes Jaane Se Pehle*") provides practical tips and cautions to those who are on the threshold of leaving their homes for work.

As a core service for migrants Aajeevika Bureau creates regular opportunities for skill training and up-gradation to help them improve their prospects in the labour markets, enhance their incomes, and establish themselves more lucratively in an environment that is offering better returns.

In order to help rural migrants, especially younger workers, break into the new, more skilled niches of the market, Aajeevika Bureau facilitates vocational training and up-gradation in a variety of skills. The Bureau has devised special programmes and modules aimed to include those who do not have enough time to invest in long term trainings and who cannot afford disruptions in their earnings. Rural youth identified through Bureau's own centres as well as through its partner agencies are provided with hands-on



training opportunities. Trainings are conducted in all the field centres of the Bureau and often in collaboration with other training institutions that have the infrastructure and expertise for this unique group of young learners.

The trainings offered by the Bureau combine rigorous and practical technical training with a series of life skills, personality and confidence building inputs. The Bureau has learnt that the ability to negotiate markets and new opportunities require skills that go beyond technical proficiency in a particular trade or occupation.

The Bureau has facilitated training in the areas of Plumbing, House wiring, Masonry, Welding, Carpentry, Hospitality and Hotel services, Retail, Salesmanship and Customer relationship, Office assistance and Secretarial practice, Apparel production and Industrial tailoring and Driving etc.

Aajeevika Bureau serves as the nodal agency of finding and disseminating regular information on jobs, openings and vacancies amongst its clients. The Training and Placement Cell of the Bureau continuously scans markets and is also approached by a wide number of employers looking for workers in various positions. If considered suitable in terms of offer and work conditions, the Bureau disseminates this information through its field teams across their areas of operation.

*Rozgar Melas* (Employment Fairs) are regularly organized by the Bureau in order to bring employers together with potential workers. These events are also used by the teams to build a data base of interested youth to who information can be given at a time when there is a more appropriate opening for them. The Bureau teams also counsel youth in making appropriate career or training choices.

All Trainees of Aajeevika Bureau are provided a one-time placement opportunity at the conclusion of their training. In case of their drop out or retrenchment, the Bureau provides them with additional connections and networks for ensuring that they remain in the job markets.

As a core strategy of mobilization, the Bureau has started to collectivize migrant workers on occupational lines. A collective provides the benefit of association and mutual help among its members.

A group also makes it possible for individual members to engage in more forceful bargaining and to provide new work opportunities to each other. At a later point a collective can evolve into a body that might negotiate contracts and even enter joint contracts with employers or service users.

At this time there are nearly 20 active collectives with a membership of nearly 2000 workers. These include collectives of construction workers, cart pullers, plumbers, factory workers and head-loaders. A new collective is coming up for workers in the catering business and rickshaw pullers. The Ahmedabad, Udaipur and Jaipur centres of Aajeevika Bureau have provided the context for promotion of several collectives, given the high concentration of migrants in these urban centres.

Keeping in mind the unique difficulties faced by migrant workers in accessing credit, savings and remittances, Aajeevika Bureau has promoted a new entity (a Section 25

Company) with the mandate of providing comprehensive financial solutions. The company is known as the Rajasthan Shram Sarathi Association (RSSA) and it



has launched a micro-lending programme for migrant workers registered by the Bureau's field centres. The programme is presently in an action-research phase in which a set of loan products are being tested before being launched on more commercial lines.

Aajeevika Bureau has been pushing commercial banks to open their doors to migrant workers. Migrants are not able to produce adequate identity documents to meet the Know Your Customer (KYC) norms of banks hence remain excluded from banking services. The Bureau is assisting large scale opening of bank accounts among migrant workers by helping them access the no-frill account provision in banks. A few banks have started to accept the Photo ID card as a valid introduction document, hence easing the process of account opening.

The Aajeevika Bureau is a Service Delivery Partner in an innovative Contributory Pension Scheme launched by the Government of Rajasthan. The scheme is aimed to provide pension coverage to the large number of unorganized sector workers of the state and the Bureau is using its networks to include migrant workers in its fold.

The inception of Aajeevika Bureau was a direct outcome of the results of a study aimed at understanding rural livelihoods across Rajasthan. The major finding of the study was that short-term migration is rapidly replacing agriculture as the major source of income for many families, particularly those in poor, predominately tribal areas. The study confirmed that migration is no longer primarily a response in times of drought and distress, but a regular strategy for the rural poor.

Aajeevika Bureau continues to build this understanding through a dedicated and ongoing research and knowledge generation programme. The results of the research undertaken have helped determine, expand and modify its operations. Through these studies, Aajeevika Bureau has also tried to inform and influence mainstream views on migration and reach out to a broader audience.

As a large and vulnerable section of India's unorganized labour force, migrant workers have poor social security, and meagre protection from malpractices and hazards. Yet for most migrants, migration is an inevitable reality – driven by lack of opportunities in rural areas and motivated by an urge to engage in the more rewarding options in more prosperous parts of the country. Organizations like Aajeevika Bureaus can provide better prospects for growth and advancement to these poor rural migrants and India needs more of this kind of organizations. ■

# People's Sector-specific Manifestos 2009-14

This is a part of the manifesto/Common Minimum Program for the coming 5 years for any party/coalition government that will come into power at the Union/State level. This part below is voicing the agenda of the farmers, weavers, artisans and labour through the lens of livelihoods and poverty.

**Farmers** are in despair that agriculture is no longer remunerative, and feel that their children would be better off in any profession other than agriculture. The agricultural crisis persists and has worsened in some ways. Farmers' suicides have continued at an alarming rate and the deep distress continues. Decreasing incomes to farmers, high external input based agriculture and skewed support systems are major problems that farmers are facing today. Though government has initiated few relief programs the dire situation of crisis has not improved as the fundamental underlying problems have not been addressed.

Weaving is the second largest employment giver, but not achieved much in 60 years. The focus here has been more on improving **weaving** industry rather than focusing on the issues of the weavers. Government has come up with many plans to improve conditions of weavers; however it has many loopholes. Importantly Government has failed to recognize the difference between textile industry and weavers. As a result it has common development plan to both of them, failing to identify uniqueness of weaver's problem and to provide adequate solutions. There are also problems in its implementation.

Government has given less importance towards development of **artisans and service providers** (like barbers, dhobi, sweepers etc). Their significant contributions in keeping alive traditional craftsmanship and also to the relevant industries has not been recognized. Lack of political consciousness and an opportunity and awareness to participate in planning and development of programs meant for them has kept them far away from developmental processes. Even State is not enthusiastic enough to ensure effective implementation of programs it has planned for them. Work of artisans is skilled work, which is increasingly being challenged by the dynamics of modern market conditions. The rapid capitalist development and ensuring technological innovation has almost made these Artisanal skills irrelevant.

Agricultural labourers, Construction workers and Artisans and other informal workers comprise major portion of **labour** force in India. Lack of opportunity to upgrade their skills, problems associated with migration like housing, education for their children, safety, and job security are major problems that affect lives of these people. Under employment is the main cause of many problems related to poverty like, malnutrition, indebtedness, child labour right, MMR/IMR etc...

## What should the government do?

We need to use the upcoming elections to introduce fundamental policy changes; this manifesto is proposed as a

step in this direction. We suggest the following points to be included in the manifestos of the political parties.

## Common manifesto

1. Ensuring sustainable income and livelihood security by extending NREGS to all and ensure effective implementation.



2. Improve social security measures: Provide social security measures like pension, life and health insurance
3. Should be provided free housing and space to work (for artisans, weavers etc)
4. Their children should be provided free education and youths from the family should be provided with development programs to improve their livelihood opportunities.
5. Increase budget allocation for research
6. Separate body should be establish to identify problems, to provide help during crisis, prepare development program plans and ensure implementation.
7. Training centers should be started for skill up gradation.

## Specific demands:

### Farmers:

To make farming viable for small, marginal and medium farmers, the government should articulate a clear vision for sustaining agriculture and agriculture-based livelihoods. A three-pronged approach should be taken to realize such a vision.

1. Ensuring sustainable income and livelihood security all



farmers: The government should appoint an Income Commission for Farmers as a statutory body to ensure

- ◆ Direct income support: that farmers get above poverty line wages and farmer families are assured a minimum income of 25000 per family per annum and revised every year.
- ◆ Fair price for agricultural produce: The prices for agricultural commodities should be based on the real cost of production and linked positively with inflation. The determination of support price should be done transparently at the state level and recommended to the CACP.
- ◆ Extend NREGS to all agricultural operations: The employment guarantee scheme should include all agricultural operations from sowing to harvesting.
- ◆ Increase rural employment opportunities: Post-harvest operations and value addition enterprises and agriculture-centered small scale rural industry should be promoted at the village level.

## 2.Promotion of sustainable agriculture/ecological farming;

- ◆ Government should promote sustainable agriculture to maximize use of local resource. Farmers adopting organic/ecological farming should receive financial support from the govt.
- ◆ Restrictions on the agrochemicals should be banned
- ◆ Ban GM crops till their bio safety is proven beyond doubt.
- ◆ 50% of the research investments in agriculture institutions should be earmarked to organic farming
- ◆ 50% of the demonstrations by department of agriculture should be on organic farming
- ◆ public institutions like APSSDC should be revived and decentralized with transparent functioning and accountable to farming community

- ◆ Farmers training centers should be equipped to run courses on organic farming and experienced farmers should be used as the resource persons
- ◆ Organizing and empowering farmers' collectives: Appropriate institutional systems need to be established to support farmers to plan and manage their resources and livelihoods, lobbying for a policy change and securing their entitlements.

## Weavers:

1. Separate weavers from workers in the textile industry, announce special national weavers procedure
2. Re-vitalize cooperatives, and come out with development plan for master weavers who not part of cooperatives
3. Increase central budget for weavers to 5 thousand corers
4. Control cost of raw materials, and make it easily available. (put up a spinning mill for every 5000 looms



and put up a centre to provide raw materials)

5. Women in weaving industry should have special plan, along with what is in the general plan for development of the weavers
6. Ensure implementation of Minimum wages act and provide all basic necessities to the weavers
7. Raw materials like thread and colours should be given at 40% discount to the weavers
8. Give loans to weavers (who are not part of cooperatives)
9. All programs given to weavers in the cooperatives should be made available to other weavers too.
10. Their should be continuous research on improving production and develop products required by market
11. Interaction centers should be stated to provide space for interaction between customers and weavers
12. Weavers should be given free electricity
13. Separate committees should be established to make changes to the existing development plan in tune with the

specific problems unique to the cluster and also a new plan should be made to address these specific problems.

14. Large scale programs should be organized to bring awareness among customers to identify and appreciate difference b/w power looms and handlooms
15. Government should develop plan to reduce production costs as well as provide food supplies at subsidies rates.

#### Artisans :

1. A report should be made to define what is handicraft, and make a list of handicrafts and place where they are produced.
2. Form village level collectives of all artisans, not basing on caste. They should be trained o market their products
3. They should be provided shed, storage space and electricity to continue their work
4. Their should be a research wing at the state level for developing new products
5. Their should be centers to provide raw materials
6. Artisans should be given loan at rate of 25 paisa, for investments to develop and increase their production
7. Law should be changed to help artisans make use of wood, water and mud (natural resources); they should not be criminalized for using these natural resources.



8. Tax should be exempted on marketing finished products and raw materials
9. Guidelines should be evolved for costing of products based on quality and skills
10. District level artisan societies should be registered under producer company
11. Government and public sector should give reservation
12. Product designed by artisans should be patented. Duplicate and imitation of artisan products should be banned.
13. Government should give publicity to the products developed by artisans

#### Labour:

1. Employment: At least 270 days of work annually should be provided to all kind of workers.
2. Minimum wages should be fixed at, at least Rs. 120 in rural areas, and Rs. 180-Rs. 200 in urban areas.



3. Equal wage for equal work should be adequately protected by relevant laws and enforced rigorously. Perpetrators of discrimination should be stringently punished.
4. Skill up-gradation (Re-skilling): Skill up-gradation entails staying away from work and loss of wage. Therefore government should create a budgetary fund to take care of their wage loss.
5. Special bus passes, and train passes should be issued to daily wage labourers.
6. A social and preventive health program specifically designed for urban poor need to be designed and implemented with active community participation.
7. Day care centers with trained child care professionals and nutritional supplements for the children as well as lactating mothers at work places.
8. Arrangements for safe drinking water both in the neighborhoods and work places are a must.
9. Special schools with public-private partnership can be thought of children of migrant workers.

In a democracy, political will with integrity can help translate the demands of the people into reality. With elections around the corner time is ripe for all political parties to listen to the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, weavers, artisans and service providers and all labourers that constitute the backbone of Indian economy in many ways. It is the time to introspect, review their manifestos and come up with long term sustainable solutions to the problems plaguing the poor.. Instead of responding only to symptoms its time to respond to the disease itself with the intentions to deliver and not just promises to deliver. ■



# Interim Budget Highlights 2009-10

## Agriculture, Rural Development, Education, Social Sector

### Agriculture



tonnes in 2007-08.

⇒ Annual growth rate of agriculture rose to 3.4% during 2003-04 to 2007-08.

⇒ Food grain production touched 230 million

- ⇒ Gross capital formation in agriculture as a proportion of agriculture GDP increased to 14.2% in 2007-08.
- ⇒ Plan allocation for agriculture increased by 300 per cent from 2003-04 to 2007-08. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna launched with an outlay of Rs.25,000 crore to increase agriculture and allied sectors growth.
- ⇒ Agriculture credit disbursement increased three times to Rs.2,50,000 crore in 2007-08 compared to 2003-04.
- ⇒ Revival packages in 25 states taken up to strengthen short-term cooperative credit structure.
- ⇒ Interest subvention will continued this year to ensure that farmers get short term crop loans up to Rs.3 lakh at 7% p.a.
- ⇒ Agriculture debt waiver and relief scheme waived 65,000 crore + rupees and covers 3.6 crore farmers.
- ⇒ MSP for paddy increased to Rs.990 per quintal and for wheat to Rs.1080 per quintal.

### Rural Development



year 2009-10.

⇒ The corpus of Rural Infrastructure Development Fund increased from Rs. 5,500 crore in 2003-04 to Rs.14,000 crore for the year 2008-09.

⇒ Rs.30,100 crore allocated for National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for the

- ⇒ Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Scheme will be expanded.
- ⇒ 'Project Arrow' to provide new technology enabled services through post offices to common man and support effective implementation of social sector schemes like NREGS, while promoting financial inclusion.

### Education



⇒ Allocation for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is proposed to be Rs. 13,100 crore for 2009-10.

⇒ Rs.8,000 crore allocated for Mid-day Meals Scheme for the year

2009-10.

- ⇒ Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched to universalize education.
- ⇒ Higher education outlay increased 9 fold in the 11th Five Year Plan.
- ⇒ 15 new Central Universities, 8 new IITs, 6 new IIMS, 5 Indian Institute of Science Education, 2 new schools of Planning and Architecture are proposed / have started functioning.
- ⇒ Educational Loan Scheme has been expanded to 14.09 lakh students.
- ⇒ 500 ITIs are upgraded into centers of excellence
- ⇒ National Skill Development Corporation created with a corpus of Rs.1000 crore.

### Social Sector



⇒ Authorized capital of National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation raised from Rs. 200 crore to Rs. 300 crore.

⇒ Rashtriya Mahila Kosh authorized capital enhanced.

⇒ Priyadarsini Project, a rural women's employment and livelihood program will be implemented as pilot in the district of Madhubani and Sitamarhi in Bihar and Shrivasti, Bahraich, Rai Bareilly and Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

- ⇒ Two new schemes – 'Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme' to provide pension of Rs.200 to widows between age groups of 40-64 years and 'Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme' to provide pension for severely disabled persons.
- ⇒ Widows in the age group of 18-40 years to be given priority in admission to ITIs, Women ITIs and National/Regional ITIs for women. Government to bear cost of their training and provide stipend of Rs.500 per month.
- ⇒ 22 States and Union Territories initiated process to implement Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana for BPL families in the unorganized sector and 60 lakh thirty two thousand persons covered for death and disability under 'Aam Admi' Bima Yojana (AABY).
- ⇒ Allocation of Rs.6,705 crore proposed for Integrated Child Development Scheme for the year 2009-10. New WHO child growth standards adopted for monitoring growth of children under ICDS.
- ⇒ Allocation of Rs. 11, 842 crore proposed under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) for the year 2009-2010. ■

## The Unorganized Sector Worker's Social Security Bill

It is estimated that the workers in the unorganized sector constitute more than ninety-four percent of the total employment in the country. On account of their unorganized nature, these workers do not get adequate social security. Recognizing the plight of these poor unorganized workers the Government of India has formulated the unorganized sector worker's social security bill in the year 2007.

The notion of social security as enunciated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 102 of 1952, caters to a broad spectrum of nine social security contingencies compensated by benefits, namely, sickness benefit, medical benefit, maternity benefit, employment injury benefit, old age benefit, invalidity benefit, survivors' benefit, unemployment benefit and family benefit. This Convention has not been ratified by India. However, India has ratified other conventions of the ILO: Workmen's Compensation, Occupational Diseases (Convention 18 and Revised Convention 42 of 1934); Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) (Convention 19 of 1925); and Equality of Treatment (Social Security) (Conventions 1 and 8 of 1962).

Some welfare schemes are being implemented by the Central Government for specific groups of unorganized sector workers such as beedi workers, non-coal mine workers, cine workers, handloom weavers, fishermen etc. State Governments are implementing welfare programs for certain categories of unorganized sector workers and some Non – Government Organizations also provide social security to certain categories of workers. Despite all these efforts, there is a huge deficit in the coverage of the unorganized sector workers in the matter of labour protection and social security measures ensuring the welfare and well-being of workers in the unorganized sector, such as agricultural workers, construction workers, beedi workers, handloom workers, leather workers etc. In the light of this Government has formulated the Unorganized Sector Workers Social Security Bill 2007.

The Unorganized Sector Workers Social Security Bill, 2007 aims to provide for social security and welfare of the unorganized sector workers. As per the bill, the central government may formulate suitable welfare schemes to the unorganized sector workers on matters relating to life and disability coverage, health and maternity benefits, old age protection and any other benefit as may be determined by the central government. Similarly the state governments may formulate and notify different welfare schemes suitable to different sections of the unorganized sector workers including schemes related to provident fund, employment injury benefit, housing, educational schemes for children, skill upgradation of workers, funeral assistance and old age homes.

The bill mentioned that the central government shall constitute a National Board to be known as National Social Security Advisory Board to perform the functions such as recommending the central government suitable schemes for unorganized sector workers, advising the central government on such matters arising out of the administration of this Act,

monitoring such social welfare schemes for workers in the unorganized sector, reviewing the progress of registration and issue of identity cards to the unorganized sector workers, reviewing the record keeping functions performed at state level and reviewing the expenditure from the funds under various schemes etc. This bill also mentioned about the constitution of the board. It suggested constituting a State Social Security Advisory Board in similar lines which can perform similar functions at state level.

As per the bill, every unorganized sector worker shall be eligible for registration. Every eligible unorganized worker shall be registered and issued an identity card by the district administration which shall be a smart card carrying a unique identification number and shall be portable. If a scheme requires a registered unorganized sector worker to make a contribution, he or shall be eligible for social security benefits under the scheme only upon payment of such contribution.

According to Clause 2(k) of the Bill, "the unorganized sector means an enterprise owned by individuals or self-employed workers and engaged in the production or sale of goods or providing service of any kind whatsoever, and where the enterprise employs workers, the number of such workers is less than ten."

The bill defines unorganized sector workers as of three types, viz.: (i) Home-based workers [Clause 2(b)];(ii) Self-employed workers [Clause 2(j)]; and (iii) Wage workers [Clause 2(m)]. There are workers, who continue to receive salaries/wages but are not on the regular pay roll and unless the nature of the work is deemed as regular, no pension benefits become due to them. The scope of the bill needs to be comprehensively and exclusively defined.

Even though this Bill represents the first step in the direction of comprehensive definition and identification of the unorganized workers, it has been criticized for being vague about much else. For instance, the powers contemplated for the Central and state governments under the Bill are already with these governments under previous programmes. At the same time, the advisory boards possess no such substantive powers. It has also been said that several valuable recommendations of the National Advisory Council and the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector have been ignored.

Recognizing the need for social security for the unorganized sector workers and bringing out a bill to provide social security is a positive sign. If the governments can formulate policies in line with the spirit of the bill and implement them with integrity, it can help majority of the work force in the country in a big way. ■

# Paying Volunteers at Grassroots

The management of a non-profit organisation needs to keep in mind two issues while deciding to pay the volunteers. The first issue relates to the differences of opinion about the issue of paying volunteers for their time and effort. The very notion of volunteering means that the persons involved in volunteering is not paid. Based on this notion, the first group holds the opinion that the volunteers need not be paid. The second group, basing on the spirit of volunteerism, holds the opinion that the monetary compensation should be paid to the volunteers, but cannot be as good as the market alternative for the work done by the volunteers. However, both the camps are in agreement with respect to the following principles:

- ⇒ The organisation should make every effort to satisfy the motives with which the volunteers have come forward to offer their services as volunteers.
- ⇒ The volunteers need to be compensated for their out of pocket expenses.
- ⇒ Whatever payment is made to the volunteers, it can not be beyond the capability of the organisation/ community served by the volunteers. (If paying the volunteer pinches, it is usury.)

There is also a general agreement among both the camps that the volunteers need to be paid a sustenance amount if they are full time volunteers and are not engaged in any other activity through which they earn their sustenance.

The second issue relates to the organisational environment. It is difficult to attract and retain good and competent people, especially when it relates to the work of non-profits. Hence, the compensation – both for regular staff and volunteers – should be structured to attract good people. The approach of fixing compensation case by case should be avoided as equity within the organisation could then be diluted. Every effort needs to be made to ensure that the motives with which the volunteers have come forward are fulfilled. But ensuring this requires some costs and the non-profit organisation should calculate these costs also as being the cost of compensation to the organisation.

The issue of paying the volunteers at grassroots gets complicated by another dimension. These volunteers come from the poorer communities. Some times, the time for volunteering clashes with the time of their work. If they volunteer in such circumstances, they lose on the meagre income that they earn. Thus, though these persons volunteer only on a part time, volunteering increases their financial hardship. It would not be equitable for a non-profit to increase the hardship of a person for the benefit of several others. Hence, resolving this conflict becomes important.

In light of the considerations above, two types of organisations that are largely successful in drawing volunteers are studied to derive some general principles of designing compensation policies for the volunteers. The first type of organisations are religious orders or cults, while the

second type of organisations are the political parties. The volunteers in both these cases come from various sections of the community as in the case of non-profits. Interaction with some of the volunteers belonging to poorer communities brought out the following insights relating to their behaviours:

- ⇒ The trade-off between an opportunity to earn and an opportunity to volunteer is rare, as in most cases more than the required number of volunteers turn-out at any event.
- ⇒ The main attraction for volunteering appears to be the social security involved in the relationships that are built around volunteering opportunities. Many persons would respond in the event of emergency and maximum help becomes assured.
- ⇒ These relationships also contribute to the person becoming important too.
- ⇒ The network built around volunteering opportunities is also helpful in getting services from the establishments involved in the delivery of social services. This may not always mean out of turn service, but could mean ensuring the service is delivered (as in the case of renewal of taxi license) or ensuring the quality of service (as in the case of a surgery at public hospital).
- ⇒ Where persons volunteer for longer times, particularly for the political parties, they forego several opportunities to earn their income. To cover this loss, they collect some facilitation charges from the public and use their network to get things done. In one way, this is and leads to corruption.

These learnings have important implications for the management of non-profits in designing compensation systems for their volunteers. The volunteers would come forward more readily if they perceive the officers of the non-profit as influential and that such officers would use the influence to support the volunteer in the case of need. Further, the need to feel important among the community has to be ensured. As the non-profits cannot train several times more number of volunteers than required, these organisations have to operate without the luxury of a posse of volunteers. Therefore, to be able to plan events in advance, the non-profit has to compensate the loss of earnings where the volunteer is asked to work full time during busy labour seasons. However, this payment should not lure the person away from the present occupation and make the person dependent on the non-profit for sustenance. One strategy is to provide the volunteers at grassroots with an alternative skill-set, and show them community-based employment. By this, the volunteer would be compensated enough while being involved in the work of the non-profit. Being under the overall supervision of both the community and the non-profit, the chances of the volunteer becoming corrupt gets reduced. ■

## Retaining Ground!

Shining Livelihoods



## Losing Relevance!

Declining Livelihoods



## Friend of Grassroots Innovators, Anil Gupta

Strengthening the capacities of grassroots level innovators and inventors and facilitate their development is the crucial thing in the Nation development .In this field Professor Anil K Gupta created a replicable model in developing grassroots level innovations to India and rest of the world.

Professor Anil K Gupta completed his master degree in Bio Chemical Genetics in 1974 from Haryana Agricultural University, Haryana. Later he earned his Ph.D in Management from Kurukshetra University (India) in 1986.

His unique work analysing indigenous knowledge of farmers and pastoralists and building bridges to science based knowledge has led to the honour of being elected at a young age to India's National Academy of Agricultural Sciences and recognition through Pew Conservation Scholar Award of USD 150,000, 1993-96 from University Of Michigan.

He setup Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN) Society and Trust in 1997 to scale up grassroots innovations and convert this into viable products or services with appropriate benefit sharing arrangements, with a corpus Rs 50 Lacs with Gujarat Government collaboration .He helped to establish National Innovation Foundation (NIF) India in March 2000 with an initial corpus of Rs 20 Crores with a view to help India become an inventive and creative society and be a global leader in sustainable technologies by scouting and sustaining grassroots innovations.

He developed his interest in the areas of Expanding global, national and local space for grass roots inventors and innovators to ensure recognition, respect and reward for them, creating knowledge net work at different levels for augmenting grass roots green innovations and build a global value chain to get creativity.

Prof Gupta has designed and supporting Honey Bee Net work including 23000 innovations and examples of traditional knowledge from various parts of the country. His desire to develop a platform to recognise, respect and reward local innovators was the stimulus behind the creation of the Honey Bee network. The name Honey Bee was chosen to reflect how innovations are collected without making the innovators poorer and how connections are created between innovators. Honey Bee network has demonstrated that by building upon a resource in which poor people are rich in, that is their knowledge, a new paradigm of development can be unleashed.

He designed and implemented methods for farm and non farm sustainable technologies ,energy saving, herbal aid to humans and special focus on women innovators. His award



Rs US \$ 150,000 for Bio diversity conservation and Environment, has been used for strengthen Honey Bee Network. He brought news letter on indigenous innovations on the name of Honey Bee Network.

To help provide support structures for grass roots innovators and link formal and informal knowledge systems, SRISTI, a global initiative and an NGO, to network local innovators was established in 1993. It provides organisational support to the Honey Bee network in over 70 countries. He designed and established SRISTI (Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable

Technologies and Institutions) with an aim to strengthen the capacity of grassroots level innovators and inventors those who engaged in conserving bio diversity .The key objectives of SRISTI are 1. Protect grassroots innovators and inventors intellectual property rights, 2.Experiment to add value to their knowledge, 3.Enrich their cultural and institutional basis of dealing with nature and modern science. He has been working as President to SRISTI .He set up National Micro Innovation Fund on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003 with collaboration between SIDBI and NIF.

He worked as National Project Director for Global Environment Facility (GEF). He worked as adviser to Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institution from October 1985 to 1986 and Worked as chair person to Indian Institute of Management from 1993 to 1994.

Recognizing the necessity of NIFs, commonwealth secretariat requested to Pro.Anil K Gupta's help in establishing similar NIFs in all commonwealth countries .He has also been requested to review the performance of Common Wealth Council (CWC), UK. He has helped in organizing Common wealth gathering and arranged to showcase outstanding grass roots innovations at the exhibition in South Africa during 9<sup>th</sup> June to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2002.

He was honored many times for his services. Padma Shri award was given by the honorable President of India on the eve of Republic Day 26<sup>th</sup> January 2004 .He was Nominated for world technology award for environment on 2001.He Received Asian Innovation award in 2000 and Asian Young Inventors award in 2001.

Professor Anil K Gupta presently has been working as Professor in Centre for Management in Agriculture, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

The only one purpose in Gupta's life is to make India innovative and generate a new model of poverty alleviation relying on innovation based enterprises. He has been an inspirer and a ray of hope to many young budding innovators across India. ■

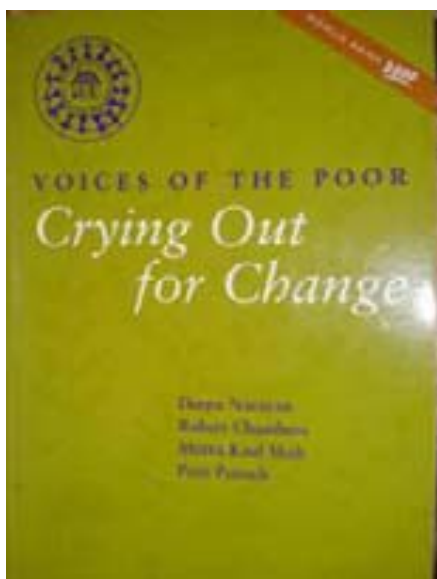
# Books

## Book Summary

Name: **Voices Of The Poor - Crying Out for Change**

Authors: **Deepa Narayan, Robert Chambers, Meera K. Shah, Patti Petesch**

Publisher: **The World Bank**



“Poverty is like heat. You can not see it, you can only feel it. So to know poverty you have to go through it” is the opinion of one poor person from Ghana. “Voice of poor” is a collection of such opinions, views and expressions of thousands of poor people from all over the world. This book is based on the realities of poor people. It draws upon research conducted in 1999 involving over 20,000 poor women and men from 23 countries.

There are 2.8 billion poverty experts, the poor themselves. Yet the development discourse about poverty has been dominated by the perspectives and expertise of those who are not poor-professionals, politicians and agency officials. This book seeks to reverse this imbalance by focusing directly on the perspectives and expertise of poor people. It brings out poor people’s perspectives and experiences of poverty, its causes and how it can be reduced.

When we have gone through pages and read about certain situations like “the necessity to send the children to the neighbor, since they had already gone to ask for bread several times before and hesitated to again; the death of relative in the hospital because they could not buy the required medicine in time; their children forgetting the taste of sugar and meat; their children could not go to school due to the absence of clothes and shoes” we also feel terribly upset along with the participants of the study.

A Bulgarian, who lost his leg when he was stealing manganese from the railway station, touches our heart by asking ‘Do you think that I would risk my life for nothing if I had a job? Do you know what it’s like to have your children crying because they are hungry?’. This question doesn’t allow us to move further.

“voices of poor” discloses various dimensions of poverty such as precarious, seasonal and inadequate livelihoods and assets; Isolated, risky, un serviced and stigmatized dwellings of poor; Hungry, exhausted, sick bodies; troubled and unequal gender relations; weak capabilities because of the lack of information, education, skills and confidence etc.

The study also revealed the changing men and women relationship due to poverty at household level. The poor opined that the mental stress caused by poverty also showing its impact on their relations.

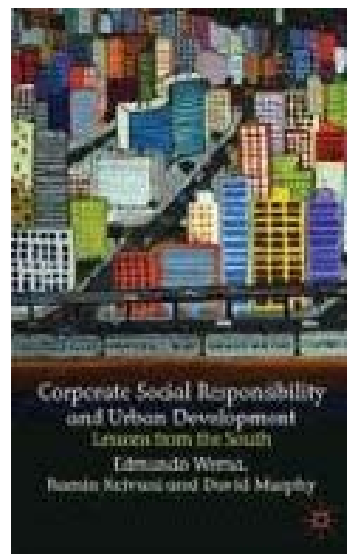
This book also gave a call for action to bring about a positive change in the lives of the poor. The poor people who participated in this study expressed their opinions regarding what can be done to alleviate poverty. These opinions are really valuable. If we do not read them, we become bad development workers who don’t value poor people. We all are trying to make this world a better place for living to all its residents. To make this happen, we should definitely listen to these “voices of poor” . ■

## New Books

Name: **Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Development**

Author: **Edmundo Werna, David Murphy, Ramin Keivani**

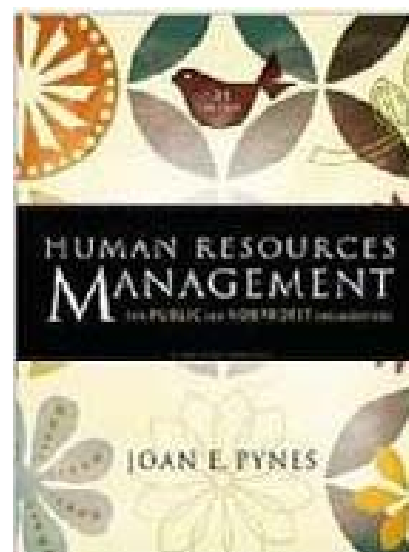
Publisher: **Palgrave Macmillan**



Name: **Human Resource Management for Public and Non - Profit Organizations: A Strategic Approach**

Author: **Joan E. Pynes**

Publisher: **Jossey –Bass**



# Ways to Support Volunteerism

Supporting volunteers is an essential part of enhancing volunteering efficacy. Working to secure and support volunteers, promoting and enabling volunteering and community involvement is a powerful force for change, both for those that volunteer and those who want to volunteer. Besides participating in the act of volunteering, there are several ways in which you can support the cause of volunteerism in your local communities or outside. Finding creative ways to promote volunteerism is easy. Below are just few examples of practical ways you can support the cause of volunteerism.

- ⇒ **Use the World Volunteer Web:** Take advantage of the resources available on the website to educate and inform your peers, and raise awareness about volunteerism. Email articles to your friends and colleagues.
- ⇒ **Write to Local Lawmakers:** For legislation that supports volunteers and volunteering programmes.
- ⇒ **Get involved** in Millennium Development Goals and International Volunteer Day activities (i.e. by participating in local events or showing your support for such activities).
- ⇒ **Publish Articles:** Research and reflect about volunteerism and share your opinion in the local media or on the local community websites.
- ⇒ **Create a School Group to promote volunteerism:** Start by recruiting friends with a common interest, find a staff sponsor, and form a school club.
- ⇒ **Help raise Awareness:** Talk about volunteerism and distribute information to your friends, family members and other interested people in your community.
- ⇒ **Organize an Open Volunteer Forum:** Invite young people and youth organizations in your community to an event and discuss the benefits of volunteering and how to encourage volunteerism.
- ⇒ **Participate in Discussion Forums:** Engage with other people in your community to share ideas and experiences from volunteering.
- ⇒ **Network with Other Volunteer Organizations:** Join such organizations in your community and work on a volunteer project/event together for International Volunteer Day.
- ⇒ **Create a Volunteer centre:** Match people in your area to community organizations that need volunteers. This can be done online by visiting websites where you can check out thousands of volunteer opportunities.
- ⇒ **Nominate someone you know for a Volunteer Award:** Or apply for a grant if you have a community service idea. Visit the Take Action Website or the US President's Volunteer Service Award Website
- ⇒ **Create an Artistic Exhibition:** Share it in the local media or online (i.e. displaying some photos of different forms of volunteerism in your community).
- ⇒ **Create a Statement Supporting Volunteerism in achieving the MDGs:** Encourage your local community, organization, school, or businesses to issue a statement of declaration showing their support for volunteerism in achieving the MDGs.
- ⇒ **Join a Council or Parliament:** Seek out various local groups in your community or country that are active in the political circle and advocate for volunteerism in city council and national parliament.
- ⇒ **Contribute Financially to Volunteer Organizations:** Or help out with fund-raising activities with a volunteer organization.
- ⇒ **Train Other Volunteers:** By equipping them with skills, knowledge, and resources. ■

(Source: [www.worldvolunteerweb.org](http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org))

## Brahma Face To Face With Brahma

There is always a gulf of difference between mentally knowing a truth and realizing the truth. Many people are content with their superficial knowledge of a theory, over and above the fact that they do not understand the complete implication of the theory even at a mental plane. This little story of Laloo explains us this truth in a simple way.

Laloo was a good-natured boy but was often told by the sage in whose Ashram he lived, "My boy, it pays to be prudent. Do not over-do things."

It is difficult to say how seriously Laloo took his mentor's advice - rather how much he understood it, though he never confessed to having failed to understand anything at all of the guru's teachings-from Vedanta to Samkhya. When the guru explained a text, he was the first man in the audience to repeatedly not indicating how much he appreciated or rather approved of the explanation!

It was a bright morning and Laloo was on his way to his home after almost a year. None of his childhood friends had the privilege to live in an Ashram. Every time he went home, they gathered around him in order to benefit by his wisdom.

This time Laloo was prepared to tell them something that was sure to startle them. Lately the sage explained to his students the mystery of Brahma - the Supreme Reality that pervaded the universe. All was Brahma-said the sage-all the human beings, all the animals, all the birds, the trees, the hills-all, all was Brahma!

This was a knowledge quite exciting to him. He saw everything around him in a new light. He hill, the trees, the river, the grazing cattle in the fields to his left, the boys playing hide and seek amidst the bushes to his right, appeared quite interesting to him because they were all essentially one-the Brahma.

The road before him was long, tall trees on both its sides providing it with ample shade and keeping it cool.

An elephant was coming from the opposite direction, its mahout seated on it and humming a tune. A bullock-cart passing by Laloo moved to a side at the sight of the elephant. So did three or four pedestrians. But Laloo, walking right along the middle of the road, did not care. Just as he was himself the Brahma, so

was the elephant. Why should Laloo-Brahma be scared of the elephant-Brahma? The carter and the pedestrians do not have the knowledge which he had. That explains their conduct. A wise man's conduct need not be similar to that of the ordinary ones!

"You boy, move to a side; don't you see what you are going to face?" one of the passers-by shouted at Laloo. Laloo looked at him displaying a smile of superiority, but showed no sign of being effected by the warning.

The elephant had come quite close to him.

"Get off its way, boy, get off its way!" the mahout himself shouted.

Laloo only threw a look of contempt at the rider. What does the fellow know of the mystery of the Brahma?

"Be careful boy, give way to the elephant!" shouted the mahout again, quite desperately.

And the elephant took hold of Laloo by its trunk, lifted him high and threw him on the roadside bush and marched on as if nothing had happened.

Nothing much, luckily, had happened to Laloo physically except that he had been bruised at several places all over his body. But much had happened to him mentally. He was in a state of daze.

The passers-by helped him to stand up and upon learning that he was an inmate of the nearby Ashram, put him in the bullock-cart and the carter was kind enough to carry him to the Ashram.

The surprised sage heard all that led him to his present condition. To the sage's question why he did not move away from the elephant's path, Laloo's was a simple answer; "Why should Laloo-Brahma be scared of the elephant-Brahma?"

"But why did Laloo-Brahma refuse to listen to the mahout Brahma?" asked the sage.

Laloo, needless to say, had no answer to the sage's last question. ■



# Productivity Deficit in India

Area, Production and Yield of Principle Crops in Various Countries in 2006			
Country	Area ('000 Hectares)	Production('000 Tonnes)	Yield (Kg/hectare)
<b>1. Paddy</b>			
World	154324	634606	4112
Egypt	613	6500	10598
USA	1142	8787	7694
Japan	1688	10695	6336
China	29380	184070	6265
India	43700	136510	3124
<b>2. Wheat</b>			
World	216100	605946	2804
U.K.	1833	14735	8039
France	5247	35367	6740
Egypt	1287	8308	6455
China	23450	104470	4455
India	26480	69350	2619
<b>3. Maize</b>			
World	144376	695228	4815
Turkey	28590	267598	9360
Italy	1108	9671	8729
France	1503	12902	8586
Canada	1093	9268	8480
India	7590	14710	1938
<b>4. Groundnut (in shell)</b>			
World	22232	47768	2149
Indonesia	707	14700	20804
China	4722	14722	3118
Argentina	164	496	3031
U.S.A.	499	1479	2964
India	5800	4980	859
<b>5. Sugarcane</b>			
World	20399	1392365	68257
Egypt	135	16317	120887
Guatemala	190	18721	98534
Colombia	426	39489	93601
Australia	415	38169	91973
India	4200	281170	66945

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India)

A Comparison with the world productivity and that of the four top countries in each crop indicates the productivity deficit that we need to bridge. Probably just lab to land is not the only issue. ■

## Out of Poverty **Jarnappa - Planned Out Of Poverty!**

A few years ago, Jarnappa lived at Nizampet village of Medak district. He did not get any assets from his father. He used to go for labour work and earned money to feed his family. He has a wife and four sons. Few years back he was unable to get any work in his village. At that time it has become a problem for him to lead the family. During that period many labour families in the village started migrating to Hyderabad. Along with them Jarnappa's family also migrated to the city from the village. He started to go for labour work in the city. It was very tough to live in the city along with the family because of the high cost of living. His income wasn't sufficient to feed the family. Because of that he started shoe repairing which is his family occupation.

First he started his shoe repairing on a busy street at Hyderabad. He thought that it will be difficult to live with one income. Then he made his wife also to earn. She started doing work as a domestic servant to earn money. Once, a person came to Jarnappa to get his shoe repaired. He gave the information about a hut which will be available only at Rs 15/- only. So he shifted to that house which is at Baghlingampally area of Hyderabad for rent.

He wanted to give education to all his sons. But as the children grew up, the household expenditure also increased but the income was not sufficient. So he could not educate

his elder by beyond intermediate. Having discontinued studies his elder son also opened a shoe repairing shop at Baghlingampally. At that time the family had three earning members. They also reduced their expenditure to a large extent. They consumed low quality food items that are available at lower cost. The family was able to save fair amount of money by spending their earnings carefully. With that savings of 8 years, they bought the house for Rs.20,000 in which they were earlier staying for rent. Then Gangamma, his wife, also started repairing shoes near their hut.

After 3 years, the state government sanctioned houses under housing scheme to the dwellers of that locality. They constructed a pucca house with their savings and also with the support from the government. The remaining three children also stopped their education with 10<sup>th</sup> class and started working. Now all the members of the family are earning money. His elder son got married. Now Jarnappa has 3 shoe repairing shops. Along with the shoe repairing shops, he is also running a petty shop and maintaining two coin boxes. Gradually he is set on increasing his income.

Now Jarnappa's family is leading a happy life. They overcame all their difficulties and moved out of poverty with proper planning and timely decisions. ■

### Broken Lives

## **Ill Health Brings Down Krishtappa!**

Boya Krishtappa was a resident of N.R. Roppam village, Gudibanda mandal, Ananthapur district. He has a wife, two daughters, a son, and a mother. He has 4 acres of dry land. Some years ago a NGO called MYRADA had worked in this village for the upliftment of poor and needy people. They built houses for poor people under the house building programme. Krishtappa also got a house through this programme.

Then he thought that it will be good if he can earn sufficient money for the family when his children are young. So he started cultivating groundnut crop in his 4 acres of dry land. But he was not engaged all the year in that farming activity. So he also started working as an agriculture labour in a neighbouring village to earn more money. With in few years he was able to save good amount of money. During his work in the neighbouring village, he observed the farmers who were cultivating areca nut crop in 10 acres of land.

Krishtappa thought of trading in areca nut. Then he talked with the farmers of the neighbouring village and an agreement was made between them to sell the total crop to Krishtappa. With the savings he had, he started areca nut business. His business involved procuring the areca nut from the farmers and selling it to the wholesale traders in a distant market. In the initial years his business gave fruitful results and he earned lots of money. Soon he was recognized by

the people as an expert trader in arecanut.

But life took a u-turn for Krishtappa. Walking long distances to many villages for his business purposes, Krishtappa soon got knee pains and his health became worse. That made his life upside down. As he became unable to walk he stopped his business. He incurred huge expenditure to revive his health. At around the same time Krishtappa got his two daughters married and he also spent some money on his son's education. All his savings melted within short period of time. Moreover he had taken loans to meet his expenditure. Nature also was not favorable to him at this time. Because of lack of rains for continuous years he hardly got any yields on his land. He lost all his savings, income and was left only with debts.

Later, after huge expenditure on health he recovered and became capable to work. But he hardly had any money to invest again in his business. Hence he migrated to a village in the state of Karnataka to work as a daily agricultural labour. But the work availability in this village is not continuous. Being unable to get work and earn money in that village he returned to his native village. Recently one person in the village who knew Krishtappa well gave him a loan to restart his areca nut business. Krishtappa is now busy in restarting his business. Let us wish him good luck. ■

# 'Yoga'kshemam

India is getting ready for general elections for Lok Sabha. Many of its states are also getting ready for the state assembly elections.

Manmohan Singh undergoes by-pass and Vajpayee is on ventilator. Old guard is giving way!?! Bharatiya Janata Party goes back – brings Rama upfront; promises to build Ram Mandir. Yet, it is the only party which is unequivocal about creating small states. Third Front is materializing slowly. Congress wants to go alone nationally. Campaigns asking people to vote and honest to contest are gaining momentum. Even if 10% more votes – many equations and calculations go wrong.

This is also season of awards. Slum Dog Millionaire, Rahman in the West! Sunderlal Bahuguna, and Sister Nirmala are one of the few who represented development work in Padma Awards of the year. Vijay Mahajan considered for Indian of the Year – Public Service by CNN-IBN!

Satyam is still in news. Advertisers do not miss the opportunity - a tagline from Amul "Satyam, Sharam, Scandalam"! Rajus are safe in Chanchalguda Jail, investigations are going slow and Satyam Board goes ahead to place an insider as its CEO.

We celebrated Republic Day with our Prime Minister in the hospital. President points out about increasing emphasis on people's participation in development processes. She tells us - ".... The richness of a few cannot be at the cost of ... others ...The poor and the disadvantaged people need to be drawn into circles of growth ..... A woman has a right to live with dignity ....SHGs have proved to be effective vehicles for the economic transformation...."

Of course, Barack Obama took over as the 44<sup>th</sup> President of USA. He has to take oath twice as he was not smooth first time! On this occasion, he has delivered a speech that moved the world – "....Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, ..... they will be met."

The month, that was, spent on five items broadly – livelihoods on a scale and beyond micro-finance; people's manifestos; eldercare; people for work; resource centres and learning programs; and intelligence of the universe. When you are in tune with the flow and go with it, you become spontaneous, expand to love and merge in eternal and universal 'whole'.

I am still inching towards the 36-hour fasting a week, except some water and low calorie liquids. Meanwhile I have learnt more about tea and coffee. They: Enhance Mood; Boost Endurance and alertness; Boosts metabolic activity; and Improves Brain health. Anything beyond 575 mg caffeine/day is not beneficial. Beware! 100 mg in coffee cup; 46 mg in a cola can and 50 mg in tea cup.

Apart from fasting, some processes that better the health include: Drink more water, as much as 5-7 litres/day; Eat more fibre, as much as 30-40 grams/day; Eat often, say

every 3 hours; Eat more and varied fruits and vegetables; Choose local foods; Stretch and move around even at work, say every half-hour; Walk, use stairs; Consume less sugars; Be moderate on any foods/drinks. **Then, the fasting works miracles for us!**

When we have reconciled that what matters the most in life – air, water, food, warmth, shelter etc., and when we have reconciled that there is enough for everybody's need, the way forward is loving life. In fact, life is love. The best use of life is love. The best expression of love is time. It is said – the best way to spell love is "TIME". The best time to love is now. All the gifts, talents, opportunities, energy, relationships and resources we have need to be used for this. We recognize that great opportunities often disguise themselves in small, routine and seemingly insignificant tasks.

Elections are round the corner. It is time we as a country endorse the processes underway and get ready to handover the leadership to our young men and women in every sphere of life including political sphere apart from economic, development and spiritual spheres.

We need to teach them to love life. Practice loving life, the whole and universe. For this we need to be doing the same. Then the peace, joy and the bliss will be ours. As you mentor and nurture, as you get drenched in the nectar, tears swell, eyes soak and the souls 'lost!' Into the 'whole' and sum total of all souls!

Can we do this? **Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga and pursue the discipline of developing all four intelligences and bonds – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.** Being aware, being fit, knowing the tools and the agility to use them, connecting with other life and souls, living a life of values are part of the discipline. Maturity in practicing this discipline is tested in a variety of situations – when others drive you down, when doubt creeps in, when drawn into quarrel, when things are not going right, when giving space for others, when your progress slows down, when others do not respond to you, when you nurture others, when you feel lazy, and when someone's trust is at the soul level beyond body, mind and heart.

Obviously, this requires practice and patience. This 'atma' yoga calls for seeking yoga in actions, thoughts and words, feelings and spirit.

**Krishna advises the atma yoga practitioners/partners – they should be ever ready to take over the responsibility associated with the spread of knowledge throughout the society. As atma yoga practitioners, they should appreciate and practice the concept of contentment, actively guided and led by the co-practitioners and vice-versa.**

**We need to practice atma yoga with our co-practitioners/mentors in all dimensions of our being where the discipline of seeking yoga in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions simultaneously is pursued.**

Join us in the world of yoga - in all dimensions of our being – a union of purpose and practice, and practitioners – purusha and purushottama. You will not regret it. ■

**G Muralidhar**



## World Wetlands Day - February 2

