

livelihoods

today and tomorrow

June 2010

Meeting the Needs





Happy Rains! Hope rains wash away the inflation!

We remembered Environment, Deserts and Droughts. We also remembered children and child labour.

World Music Day reminded us - all of us need some music and music is life and livelihoods for many. It offers the high-end livelihood for some.

When we agree that the needs of the poor are genuine in most part, how are they being met? When they have access to their rightful share in all the resources in and around, their needs get fulfilled almost automatically.

This access comes with policy support! This access comes with willingness of the haves to share with the have-nots! With increased equity and respect for equity!

With increased knowledge! With deeper and more open analyses of their current reality! With increased appreciation that this access is real and possible! With increased skills to harness! With increased metaskills! With their organization and increased capacities of their organizations, leaders and human resources that work in/for them! With increased support – numbers, will and capacities - individuals, institutions, civil society and state! With more democracy, more units of democratic processes! With increased decentralization!

With increased availability of appropriate technology! With increased flow of information, transparency and accountability all around! With increased authentic information dissemination and sharing – books/e-books, audio/video, including communication channels! With increased relevant education! With increased own funds, and financial linkages! With people's banks – money, technology, information, resources! With increased platforms! With increased backward and forward linkages for their activities, products and services! With increased service providers! With capacity building! With increased consumer rupee in their hands! With increased multiple collectivization! With increased life, health and income risk covers, health facilities, safety nets, air, water and food security, employment guarantee!

With increased budgets and budgetary allocations! With increased efficiency, effectiveness and targeting! With increased partnerships! With increased leveraging! With increased action to conserve and augment natural resources! With reduced consumption (of all) to the level of survival needs! With increased earthiness! With increased proactive action on ecology and environment! With increased availability of all of us, our faculties and resources, to address the basic needs of the people at large! With maximised choices to maximum numbers! With increased assurance for the right to live life in its totality, with freedom for all! With collective leadership seized of this agenda can move in this direction. In this context, 'livelihoods' explored 'meeting the needs (of the poor)'.

Robert Chambers, participation guru of the world, continues to inspire us. He brought the reality that counts to the fore. DHAN Foundation has been a key player in collectivising women, collectivisation around tanks on a significant scale. Their efforts are also in augmenting pools of professionals for the sector. Margin-free markets demonstrate that the materials consumed for poor can be sourced from the source and can reduce the expenditure of the poor. Nilima Khetan is leading integrated development in South Rajasthan through Seva Mandir for 25+ years now. Irene Khan's 'The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights' underscores how we are not ready to hear/see the truth, not-to-talk about tackling it.

With deeper appreciation of the way forward for meeting the needs of the poor and taking steps towards the same through more and more responsive individuals and institutions (already in and new), and with you around with us in this, I remain.

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

G. Muralidhar

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'livelihoods' team

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Meeting the Needs

Poverty in India is at such levels where even the basic needs of life remain largely unmet for the poor. This calls for an integrated and comprehensive strategy, with a network of institutions and individuals, offering multiple doses of support, to the poor in meeting their needs. The government of India, being the single largest and key player in this regard, continues to launch variety of programs to cater to the various needs of the poor. In this context 'livelihoods' attempts to enumerate the various means adopted by government and other strategic players in meeting the needs of the poor and in helping the poor help themselves, the various localized strategies and possible alternatives.

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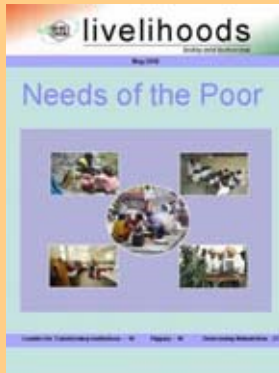
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Response



Read your lead article and went through this presentation. Intense and Persevering. Really liked this line.

'As there is nothing else to happen between birth and death but love, if we miss it, we have missed the whole opportunity of life of being useful, the very purpose of our life.' Very uplifting. Cheers"

Sitaraman Swaminathan

" really enriching...sir! you hit the nail on the head. "Shame on us! 20% of the world population is consuming 80% of its resources at the cost of lives of others and other life. This cannot go on..We need to make the Collective Indian Leadership in every dimension to commit to this agenda""

Edwin Haokip



MANY SPECIES • ONE PLANET • ONE FUTURE
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY • 5 JUNE 2010



UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

Fishermen Stall Naval Base Construction Work:

Traditional fishermen displaced by the second naval base project near Rambilli have stalled the construction work. The project, located about 50 km south of Visakhapatnam, has become a venue for protests by the fishermen against denial of sustenance allowance till they are given jobs. About 15,000 to 16,000 belonging to Bangarampalem, Revu Vatadda in S. Rayavaram mandal and Kothapatnam, Yatha Kothapatnam and Vadda Narsapuram in Rambilli mandal will be hit by the project. Most of them eke out a living by fishing at the confluence of the rivers Varaha, Sarada and the sea near Bangarampalem.

Allotment of Houses to Come Under Scanner:

Following complaints on allotment of houses constructed under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, two verifications will be taken up to weed out any duplication. To ascertain the eligibility, verification of the iris identification and cross-verifying with National Population Register taking advantage of the ongoing census exercises would be done. So far, in two spells 7,200 houses have been provisionally allotted under the scheme. The list of beneficiaries has to be finalised and displayed online. The beneficiaries are also eligible for loans at a differential rate of interest of 4 per cent to foot their contribution.

South Australia Offers Expertise in Water Management-Tamil Nadu:

With its experience in handling water crisis through public-private partnerships, South Australia can help India in its water management programmes, according to representatives of the Water Industry Alliance from Tamilnadu. Joe Flynn, CEO of the alliance, who is leading a delegation to India to explore possibilities of joint ventures with Indian organisations, said South Australia had developed expertise in water technology due to extreme scarcity. While countries such as Israel too boasted of innovations in the field, the Australian experience in

sharing of river water between States and its concerns with addressing environmental issues mirrored India's approach to solving the water crisis, he said.

ArogyaSri Scheme to be Extended to Entire State of Karnataka:

Karnataka has launched the Manipal Arogya Card Scheme 2010 May 31, 2010 by issuing the first card to a beneficiary. The State Government has decided to extend the Vajpayee ArogyaSri Scheme, which was presently being implemented in five districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, to the entire State. When the scheme would be launched in Udupi district, the Manipal University should become a partner in it. Udupi district was having the lowest infant and maternal mortality rates in the country. The Manipal Arogya Card 2010 scheme would benefit poor people as it offers a lot of concessions in the hospitals coming under the Manipal group.

NGOs to Monitor Temple Donations and Accounts- Karnataka:

Bidar district administration will involve non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in several of its schemes and programmes with the aim to increase efficiency, transparency and accountability. NGOs in Bidar have been involved in conducting a social audit for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, preparing lists of beneficiaries for pensions and ration cards, and working as third-party auditors for social welfare schemes. Their latest role is to monitor donations received by temples and maintaining their accounts. The Ramakrishna Vivekananda Ashram has been given the responsibility of supervising the finances of the 14 temples managed by the Muzrai Department in Bidar district.

Rs.10.93 Crore for Group Farming of Paddy in Kerala:

The Agriculture Department has been allocated Rs.10.93 crore for intensive paddy cultivation in Palakkad of Kerala during the financial year. The allotment is for group farming on 63,776 hectares. Farmers will get subsidy of Rs.1,500 a

hectare. Under the scheme, 400 hectares of fallow land will also be brought under paddy cultivation. Farmers will get subsidy of Rs.5,000 a hectare under the fallow cultivation scheme. A sum of Rs.6.25 lakh has been allotted for cultivation on 250 hectares under the supplementary income source scheme. Farmers will get Rs.2,500 for each hectare of cultivation under this scheme.

Andhra Pradesh State Government aiming Rs.70,000 crores in exports:

The State Government of AP is aiming at achieving a turnover of Rs.70,000 crore in exports in informational technology and creating an additional 1.25 lakh jobs by 2015.

Social Security Fund For Unorganized Workers:

The government of India has decided to set up a national social security fund for workers in the unorganized sector. This fund would cover workers in the unorganized sector like weavers, toddy tappers, rickshaw pullers and bidi workers etc with initial allocation of Rs. 1000cr.

Resuming UN Climate Talks-Protecting Natural Forests, Peat Lands and Enforcing Safeguards Must be Top Priorities:

As the UN climate talks resume toward a new global deal to prevent catastrophic climate change, negotiators will be seeking a way forward on the challenge of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD). Forest destruction and degradation including loss of peat forest soils account for up to 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Establishing a strong agreement to halt that destruction — and mobilizing the funds to implement it — could help protect forests and peat lands, forest-dependent peoples, and the planet as a whole. But a flawed REDD agreement could threaten all three — jeopardizing intact forests and the rights of forest communities while creating loopholes that undermine real greenhouse gas reductions.

Tribals Seek Separate State:

Tribal

leaders, led by former legislator Chandra Lingaiah Dora, have demanded carving out 'Manya Seema' state comprising contiguous scheduled areas from Adilabad to Srikakulam and to empower tribal communities through self-rule. The leaders, under the banner of Manya Seema Sadhana Samiti, met the Srikrishna Committee and made a presentation.

Identification Numbers for Indiramma Houses in AP: In a move to plug the loopholes in Indiramma Housing it was decided to give numbers to the houses that were taken up under the scheme. Officials feel that it would be easy to pick up any detail of any house once it is completed.

Andhra Bank Launched IndiaFirst Life Insurance Product: Andhra Bank launched its first joint venture IndiaFirst Life Insurance product in the State of AP, together with Bank of Baroda.

Yarn Price Reduction Has no Impact in Tirupur Cluster : Soaring cotton yarn prices over the last few months has been a great concern to the apparel manufacturers in Tirupur knitwear cluster as they found it difficult to keep the prices of end products competitive in the global market. The price of 40s count yarn in the market, which is often taken as benchmark, had come down to Rs. 177.09 per kg against Rs. 182.09 for a kg prevailed on April 1.

Meritorious BPL Students to Get Solar Lamps- Delhi Government: In a novel bid to reduce carbon footprint, Delhi government is mulling distributing solar lamps to meritorious students from the economically weaker sections in the capital. An in-principle approval has already given to a proposal to provide solar lamps to students of class X and above who have scored above 75% and belong to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.

Fishing Ban Set to Kick in from June 15: The 45-day monsoon fishing ban will come into force along the entire western coast of India from June 15. It will last till July 31. All the four major fishing jetties in Goa — Chapora,

Malim, Cutbona and Vasco — will be sealed, thus grounding about 850 fishing trawlers across the state.

Government Mulls More Teeth to RTI Act: RTI Act might be set for an amendment. Gol's department of personnel and training (DoPT) is examining a proposal regarding amendment to the Right to Information (RTI) Act in order to make it more effective. In future the Act might include a new section, 29A, which will empower the State Information Commissions (SICs) to make regulations.

Farmers to Get Assistance to Take up Dairying, Sheep Rearing: Karnataka State Government has introduced a poverty alleviation scheme through the Animal Husbandry Department under which soft loans will be extended to small farmers and agriculture labourers to enable them to take up dairy farming and sheep rearing. Karnataka State Government would extend loans at an interest rate of 6 per cent. Animal Husbandry Minister said that a sum of Rs. 23.2 crore would be required to implement the scheme during the current year. 1.2 lakh cattle rearing units and 26,000 sheep rearing units would be sanctioned under the scheme during the current year.

Andhra Pradesh Government Released Lila Cyclone Compensation: Andhra Pradesh Government released Rs.394.41 crores as compensation in lila cyclone effected areas for the reconstruction of damaged buildings and livestock grass supply.

MSP for Pulses Increased: To encourage cultivation of pulses, the Union government increased the minimum support prices by up to 33 per cent, but did not extend the favour to other kharif crops. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, increased the minimum support price of arhar by Rs. 700 a quintal to Rs. 3,000, of moong by Rs. 410 to Rs. 3,170 and of urad by Rs. 380 to Rs. 2,900. The objective is to stem the

upward movement of the prices of pulses in the international market, driven by the demand (in India), which far exceeds production by more than 40 lakh tonnes. Against the production of 14.7 million tonnes during 2009-10, the requirement was estimated to be 18-19 million tonnes.

Indian Bank to Extend Rs. 39-cr. Loan to SHGs: Indian Bank, the Lead District Bank in Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri districts of TamilNadu, has decided to extend Rs. 39-crore loan to women Self-Help Groups attached to the Krishnagiri-based NGO, the Integrated Village Development Programme (IVDP), for the fiscal 2010-11. The loan would be extended through five of its branches in Varatanapalli, Barur in Krishnagiri district and Karimangalam and Dharmapuri branches in Dharmapuri district and Natrampalli branch in Vellore district. Varattanapalli branch would disburse Rs. 12 crore; Barur Rs. 3 crore; Karimangalam Rs. 15 crore; Dharmapuri Rs. 5 crore and Natrampalli Rs. 4 crore.

State to Establish 10 Solar Power Plants: Karnataka is set to become the country's solar power hub with the State getting ready to implement 10 solar power projects with a total capacity of 100 MW on the basis of public-private-partnership. Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL), which will play a major role in the implementation of these projects, has identified locations, including Shimoga, Kaginele, Mandya, Bijapur, Haveri, Mysore and Tumkur, to set up these projects.

Four Government Hospitals to Get National Accreditation: Four hospitals in Kerala State would be among the first government-run hospitals in the country to get accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH). Ernakulam General Hospital and Cherthala Taluk Hospital are among the four hospitals for which the process of accreditation is going on. The other two hospitals are in

Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode.

Karnataka Government Notifies Insurance for 44 Crops: Karnataka State Government has notified implementation of the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) for 25 crops and the weather-based crop insurance for 19 crops this kharif season (2010). While the NAIS covers 747 hoblis in all districts, the weather-based crop insurance scheme covers 374 hoblis in 22 districts. All farmers who borrow crop loans have to apply for the NAIS. The NAIS, which is yield-based, covers crops of rain-fed and irrigated regions. For all crops, September 30 is the last date for farmers who borrow crop loans to submit applications to banks and avail themselves of the benefits of the scheme.

Internet Libraries in 2,000 Rural Houses: As many as 2,000 houses in villages across the Kerala State will soon be key players in the knowledge economy. They will soon assume a new role as Internet libraries under a project taken up by the government of India in association with the P.N.Panicker Foundation and the Confederation of NGOs in Rural India (CNRI). While the Central government will provide a subsidy of Rs.4,500 to equip the houses with computers, the BSNL will provide broadband connectivity. The loan taken for purchasing the computer can be repaid every month along with the telephone bill.

New Auto Emission Norms Delayed: Pressure from the automobile industry is delaying implementation of tighter vehicular emission norms in cities across India. Though four-wheelers in 11 cities, including the four metros, switched from Bharat Stage (BS) III emission norms to BS IV on April 1, other cities supposed to make the switch from BS II to BS III norms have to wait. A draft notification of the government has proposed October 1 as the new date for implementing BS III norms.

Sanitation Survey Has No Winners—

45 Percent of the Indian Cities are in Red: A survey by the Union Ministry of Urban Development to rate cities for their hygiene revealed what most people already know— urban areas across India are weighed down by their own waste. Not one of the 423 cities surveyed got the 'healthy and clean' tag. Even Chandigarh that got top rating for cleanliness has been categorized as 'recovering but still diseased'. The ratings, based on the prevalence of open defecation, manual scavenging and the management of waste water and solid waste, were made public recently.

Ganga Changes Course in Haridwar – Erosion May be Speeding Shift: The Ganga in Haridwar district has shifted 500 meters from its course over the past four decades, shows a study by the Uttarakhand Space Application Centre (USAC). The state government agency said erosion of the river banks may be speeding change of course.

Rs 470 crore needed for new schools in Orissa: The Centre for Science and Youth Development (CYS), a Orissa-based non-governmental organization (NGO) has recommended that the state government needs to set aside an additional Rs 470 crore in the state budget for the establishment of new schools in the state. The NGO has pointed out that there is only one school in every 3.2 sq km area in Orissa and 12262 villages in the state have no schools. Hence, an allocation of an additional Rs 470 crore in the budget for 2010-11 will help to meet the ideal requirement of one school per sq km.

GoM to Report to the Cabinet on All Aspects Related to Bhopal Tragedy: The accused in the world's worst industrial disaster have got two years of imprisonment as per the verdict of the court. Many rights activists are protesting against this judgement as the act of negligence by the accused Union Carbide Company has taken a toll of more than 20000. Concerned over the uproar on the Bhopal gas leak judgment, Prime Minister Manmohan

Singh directed the Group of Ministers (GoM), headed by home minister P Chidambaram, to report to the cabinet on all aspects relating to the tragedy. Manmohan Singh directed that the GoM "may meet immediately to take stock of the situation arising out of the recent court judgement, to assess the options and remedies available to the government on the various issues involved and to report to the cabinet". During the trial, a total of 178 prosecution witnesses were examined and 3008 documents were produced while eight defence witnesses deposed in the court. In the early hours of December 3, 1984, around 40 metric tonnes of toxic methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked into the atmosphere and was carried by wind to surrounding slums. The government says around 3,500 died in the disaster. Rights activists, however, claim that 25,000 people have died so far.

World Bank To Finance Two Projects in India: The World Bank approved two projects worth US\$407 million to India, consisting of a US\$300 million credit/loan for the Scaling up Sustainable and Responsible Microfinance Project and a US\$107 million loan for the Statistical Strengthening Loan. While India has a well-developed banking system and there has been significant progress in banking sector reforms, performance, and stability, a significant portion of its population is still estimated to have only limited or no access to financial services. The funding from the Scaling up Sustainable and Responsible Microfinance Project will be used by the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for on-lending to Indian Microfinance Institutions (MFIs). The funding to MFIs is designed to support their operations and growth, enhance their financial strength, and enable them to leverage private commercial funds to on-lend larger amounts to the under-served. The project will also support responsible finance initiatives such as the establishment of a microfinance information platform and promotion of adherence to a code of conduct for MFIs, as well as for capacity building and monitoring. ■

Participatory ‘Guru’– Robert Chambers

Robert Chambers is an academic and development practitioner who has, since the 1980s, been one of the leading advocates for putting the poor, destitute and marginalised at the centre of the processes of development policy. He popularised with development circles such phrases as "putting the last first" and stressed the now generally accepted need for development professionals to be critically self aware. The widespread acceptance of a "participatory" approach is in part due to his work.

Robert Chambers was born in the year 1932 and has an academic background in biology, history and public administration. Educated at the Universities of Cambridge and Manchester, he joined Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in 1972 and has worked extensively with development organisations both in India and abroad, including membership of the Band Aid/Live Aid Project Committee and the Advisory Panel on Agriculture, Forestry and Environment for the World Commission on Environment and Development.



Robert Chamber's work has included aspects of rural development, public administration training, seasonality, irrigation system management, agricultural research and extension, perceptions of poverty, professionalism and participation. His main operational and research experience has been in East Africa and South Asia.

By the early 1980's, there was growing dissatisfaction among development experts with both the reductionism of formal surveys, and the biases of typical field visits. In 1983, Robert Chambers used the term *Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)* to describe techniques that could bring about a 'reversal of learning'. This pioneering work of Robert Chambers was one example of an attempt to include the interests of the poor in the design of programmes and projects. The importance of RRA was that it recognized the need to consult the poor on their needs.

Two years later Robert Chambers coined the word Rapid Rural Appraisal, the first international conference to share experiences relating to RRA was held in Thailand. This was followed by a rapid growth in the development of methods that involved rural people in examining their own problems, setting their own goals, and monitoring their own achievements. By the mid 1990's, the term RRA had been replaced by a number of other terms including 'Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)' and 'Participatory Learning and Action' (PLA). RRA is mainly seen as a means for outsiders to gather information; and hence, the need to replace or supplement it with participatory rural appraisal (PRA) which empowers the local people. PRA is a method that facilitates the community's own in-depth look at themselves and of their possibilities, and enables them to articulate these

discoveries in their own colorful, meaningful, useable and realistic way. Perhaps because of the work of Robert Chambers and other development practitioners advocating the shift in development thinking embodied in the PRA approach, many agencies, governments and financial institutions now prescribe the use of PRA in their development programmes. There is now a wealth of experience and insights with which to view, define and practice PRA.

Chambers acknowledges that the significant breakthroughs and innovations that informed the methodology were not his, but that development practitioners in India, Africa and elsewhere were responsible for this. Many Practitioners in India and other countries collaborated with Chambers to explore emerging techniques and tools. Chambers raised funding for South-South Exchanges which were seminal to the internationalization of the PRA community of practice.

Another well known innovation taken up by Robert Chambers through IDS is Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) program, a participatory approach for the total elimination of open defecation, holds promise of major gains in enhancing the wellbeing of women, children and men and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This program was started in Bangladesh and has been spread in varying degrees in India, Cambodia, Indonesia, China and Nepal. To a limited degree, it has also been experimented in some African countries.

During his development journey, Robert Chambers wrote many books which became handbooks for many development workers. His books include *Rural Development: Putting the last first* (1983), *Challenging the Professions* (1993), *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last* (1997), *Participatory Workshops* (2002) and *Ideas for Development* (2005).

Robert Chambers is currently at the Institute of Development Studies, UK as a Research Associate in the Participation, Power and Social Change Team. He is currently working mainly on participatory methodologies, how we know, do not know, and get it wrong in development, community-led total sanitation, and personal and institutional learning and change. As a pioneer of participatory methods, Robert Chambers has influenced the development scenario across the world and is recognized as a key contributor to the development arena by facilitating the participation of the community in their own development. ■

Margin Free Markets

Inflation is going up. Prices of all commodities including the essential commodities are skyrocketing. Even the middle class people are not able to afford many things which they were able to earlier. Poor and poorest of the poor are the worst sufferers of the increasing prices. Many of them are not able to access even essential commodities like rice, vegetables, milk, medicines etc. For a country that is on the trajectory of growth, making the commodity prices affordable becomes important and margin free markets of Kerala are showing a way to make this possible.

According to this margin free concept, all commodities, including grocery, cosmetics, kitchenware and even consumer durables, are made available to consumers without fixing any profit margin. Some of the citizens in Trivandrum City thought of organizing a forum which could protect the consumers from rising prices. This is the background of the formation of Consumer Protection & Guidance Society registered in the year 1993. It is the policy of the Society to give full support to the Government, in controlling the price of essential commodities. Amongst other things, the Society has given importance to open a venue

process of direct purchase from farmers and manufactures, the intermediaries are removed and a part of the margin or 'profits' earned is disbursed among the consumers. The distribution to the different outlets under the chain is taken as a collective responsibility and is done with the objective to reduce the total transportation costs.

The Consumer Protection & Guidance Society currently controls margin free markets. The consumers are assured of quality, quantity and the fair price of the goods sold through the Margin Free Markets. Any retailer can upgrade his shop into a Margin Free outlet, by sending in an application to this



where the consumers can get products at reasonable rates. The idea of "Margin Free" programme came up as a first step, based on these ends in view. The Margin Free Market is a co-operative venture of the Consumer Protection & Guidance Society and the management, which came forward to take up the responsibility of launching it.

As Kerala is a 'consumer' state rather than a 'producing state', the idea instantly became a success there. Kerala depends on her neighbouring states for her consumer needs. Due to the large number of intermediaries involved and the transportation costs, the prices are high and there is a wide fluctuation in prices of groceries, fruits and vegetables. Groceries and FMCG goods are brought directly from the production units of the neighbouring states. In the

society. If his application is accepted, he has to make the necessary investment required. These shops deal in the entire gamut of goods required by a home for its monthly consumption, viz., grocery, food and non-food FMCG items, fruits and vegetables, consumer goods & household articles. Margin Free outlets are typical discount stores, offering one-stop-shop convenience and self-service facility at significant discount to its customers. Most of these customers, in time turn out to be its permanent customers, by taking discount cards, which permit them to obtain larger discounts than the non-card holders.

To get the products at margin-free price, one has to pay Rs. 50 for a consumer card. Validity of the card is for a year and Rs. 40 is charged for renewal. Assuming that a shop had 10,000 card-holders, the initial aggregate deposits came to Rs. 5 lakhs. And, every year, the shop proprietor got Rs. 4 lakhs by way of renewals. This deposit is interest-free. As the volume of trade and the purchasing power of the people of this state are very high, the commission offered to supermarkets were tangible. The margin-free market, therefore, ensures better returns as there is commission along with the return on the deposits made by the consumers.

The success of the experiment has led to the setting up of such stores in other parts of the State. Margin Free Markets, now, is the largest retail chain in the state of Kerala and one of the leading retail chains in India. Margin free chain today has more than 350 shops in and outside Kerala and is proving as a successful model for protecting the consumers against the skyrocketing prices. ■

Leaders are not enough!

Monsoon has arrived! 'Phet' tried to change its course a bit.

Inflation is going high unabated!

As we live the month, World No Tobacco Day (31 May), World Environment Day (5 June), Fathers' Day (Third Sunday in June - 20 June), International Children's Day (1 June), and World Day against Child Labor (12 June) pass by. World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (17 June) and UN Public Service Day (23 June) are coming.

World Music Day (21 June) is underscoring the music's scores of inspiration, celebration, healing, solitude, and soul searching.

Fathers' Day (Third Sunday in June - 20 June) may have some exchanges and some celebrations!

This month endorsed our understanding of differentiating work ethic and ethics of work.

I came face-to-face with situations during the month on Employment. During the Abilities' Mela at Sweekar-Upkaar organized by LSN Foundation, there was a discussion on self-employment. In India of 120 Crore people, we add at least 2-3 Crore youth into potential productive group every year. We have 2-3% disabled in them i.e. 5-6 lakh disabled youth enter the potential productive force. All jobs pout together in the country may come to a mere one lakh for them. What is the way out for the remaining? Self-employment is the answer! If we have to accommodate 5 lakh youth, we need Rs.5000 Crore even if we budget Rs.1.0 lakh per person. Do we know who are they? What are the skills they are endowed with? What are the skills that can be provided to them? What are the competencies one looks in a self-employed? Do they have the competencies to develop business/sell, to negotiate, to manage a team, to manage

some money? Can we offer them? **Importantly, do we have unique ideas that these youth can take up and build enterprises around them?** We need to build a special component in National Rural Livelihoods Mission that specifically looks at self-employment and enterprise development with adequate budgets, pool of competent resource persons and protocols for converting potential productive force into a self-employed and entrepreneurial productive force.

Second face-to-face is with the migrants in homeless shelters. What is the way we can address their employment issues? They offer no common background, common skill, common resource base, and no trust in each other. How do we work on this?

Third face-to-face is with the Products and Services by the families of the members in SHGs. As we are aware, poor are in both farm and non-farm livelihoods viz., agriculture including horticulture, sericulture, floriculture, etc., dairy and livestock, Non-timber forest produce, inland and marine fisheries, wage labor, artisans including handlooms, handicrafts etc., trade and small local enterprises. We are also aware that they

have multiple livelihoods. They need inputs and they also have consumption and they also have risks. There are gaps in these value-chains. They could benefit by collective purchases, collective sales and local value-addition collectively. Even then, we have no clue why these enterprises taking of whether individually or collectively? We need to dig deeper. We need to do a mapping – mapping of livelihoods, resources, skills, etc. We need to understand the markets and products and services in the local markets. We need to see what people trade in and trade out. We need to analyze livelihoods in terms of productivity, employment, income and expenditure; we need to analyze resources in terms of use, no use and less use; we need to analyze skills in terms of various use categories and scope to enhance them; we need to match them with job needs, self-employment needs, enterprise worker needs; we need to see their workday and workdays in a year in a gender disaggregated and season disaggregated manner. We also need to appreciate the positive role being played by middlemen in terms of services and supports and how these can be continued in the new thinking. We also need to appreciate the roles, scope and limitations of existing institutions there.

We are talking of the existing efforts, products and services from these groups. Can we build collectives of these groups? Can we give them a brand? Can we offer quality control? What are the other ideas around which groups can come and build enterprises? Can we build a set of protocols

Perspectives

G. Muralidhar



and routines for taking this entire effort forward?

While face-to-face with employment, we continued our deep immersion in understanding institutional architecture of the poor across in AP and beyond. The work on deepening and expanding zero drafts of the business plan (s) for 'L-channel' and other L-info units are picking up momentum. Collectives, watersheds, social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, urban, rural, tribal and coastal livelihoods, elders, poorest of the poor, disabled, elderly and other marginalized communities, the people who work with/for them, financing them, business/strategic plans and creative tension continued to hog the most of our time during the month.



Rana Kapoor of Axis Bank argues for innovations for financial inclusion in terms of customized and cost-effective products and services for under-penetrated markets. His argument is for reducing transaction cost for micro-transactions using ICT – may be digital currency through mobiles (like the 'change' given as tokens in Chennai buses accepted in small hotels and shops earlier). Given our existing mobile density and its growth can offer an effective solution. Let us think more. We can have more such **solutions that use the architecture of the wide-spread community-institutions.**

As the community institutions grow with time, their combined financial resources are increasing beyond our imagination. A federation of SHGs with about 10,000 members established about 10 years go, can talk of adding savings in its network to the tune of Rs. 1.5 Crore savings and Rs.1.5 Crore in interest per year. Today, they talk of having own funds in the network exceeding Rs.10.0 Crore. If this trend continues, there is no reason to believe otherwise, the network will touch Rs.25.0 Crore in 5 years and may be Rs.50.0 Crore in 10 years. Then, they need no small loans from MFIs or banks. They need maha bulk loans. They need loans for small and medium enterprises. Of course, this needs to be facilitated with care and concern. They need to be statute compliant. They need to have professional CEOs. They need robust funds management and loan processing protocols. They need to have internal audit processes. They need to have autonomous businesses. Their governance systems need to be strengthened. Then, this will be reality.

With this in the domain of possibility, mFIs may have to get into mF+ operations. That seems to be the future. Informal chits and other savings institutions can add mF into their portfolio. We are hearing about post-office making a huge difference. There are 1.5 lakh post-offices in the country more than any bank or MFI today. Number of savings

accounts with post offices is near to 8.0 million poor. With the paradigm shift towards prosperity and financial access, rather than reducing poverty, post-office represents a robust and credible alternative mF provider.

Leaders are not enough. We need workers, activists, professionals and paraprofessionals too. While we persist with building leaders who build or support this wider and expanded institutional architecture of the people and their support structures, we need to develop mechanisms, institutes, academies, centers, and units that build these workers, activists, generalist and specialist professionals and paraprofessionals. Some individuals can also anchor these efforts. We need to build leaders who build these mechanisms.

We are running out of time. We need to work on our political, business, academic and bureaucratic leaders to become social leaders and build more social leaders, social entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs supporting social entrepreneurs, double quick for this wider endeavor.

Let us remember we have come ahead. We no longer suffer because

there are no resources. It is their distribution that is the problem. Access to financial resources is a small problem. Bigger problem is the human resources. Bigger problem is the ideas for investing resources; ideas for building enterprises; and lack of span of attention of the people who matter. **Biggest problem is the best minds are not turning up for this task.** This cannot go on. Let us change it. Let us begin to changing it.

Let us increase access to human resources at every level. Let us attract the best brains into this agenda. Let us make Collective Indian Leadership in every dimension to commit to this agenda.

Direct all your energy towards doing it! ■

We need to work on our political, business, academic and bureaucratic leaders to become social leaders and build more social leaders, social entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs supporting social entrepreneurs, double quick for this wider endeavor.

Meeting the Needs

Issues of accessibility and affordability plague the needs of the poor in many different ways. Poverty in India is at such levels where even the basic needs of life remain largely unmet for the poor. This calls for an integrated and comprehensive strategy, with a network of institutions and individuals, offering multiple doses of support, to the poor in meeting their needs. The government of India, being the single largest and key player in this regard, continues to launch variety of programs to cater to the various needs of the poor. The results seem to be significant in some areas, but in others, gaps continue to prevail on a noticeable scale. In this context 'livelihoods' attempts to enumerate the various means adopted by government and other strategic players in meeting the needs of the poor and in helping the poor help themselves, the various localized strategies and possible alternatives.



Whether poor or non-poor, people have needs to be fulfilled to lead a decent quality of life. However, while the non-poor are able to meet their needs including the ones that are on the top of the hierarchy, the needs of the poor are largely unmet. Most of the poor in the country are struggling to meet even their basic needs such as food, water, shelter, health and education etc. Meeting the needs beyond basics such as learning new skills, good infrastructure, risk cover etc. are beyond the capability of the poor in many cases.

Poor need multiple support systems and multiple doses of support to meet their needs and to come out of poverty. One significant player that can deliver this on a scale, is undeniably, the government. In fact this is one of the key responsibilities of the government (s) in India.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular, declared that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability or other lack of livelihood. The Preamble to the Constitution of India sets out Justice - social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and opportunity and Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and integrity of the nation as the objectives. The Constitution set out the fundamental rights of the citizens, especially, equality, freedom of speech and expression, protection of life and liberty, non-discrimination, abolition of untouchability and prohibition of forced labour. The Directive Principles of State Policy envisaged a social order in which justice - social, economic and political - will inform all institutions of national life, minimising of inequalities of income status and opportunities, the right to adequate means of livelihood as well as the equitable control and ownership of material resources of the community. The protection of the interests of the weaker sections of the people, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes from social injustice and all forms of exploitation is a specific directive incorporated in Article 46 of the Constitution. Almost all the issues which the poor confront in their daily lives find place in the Indian Constitution - whether it is equality, freedom, human dignity, non discrimination, social and economic justice, right to livelihood, right to work, living wage or protection from exploitation. During the last five decades, the Supreme Court too through its corpus of active jurisprudence has read into the meaning and scope of the Constitutional provisions, fundamental rights such as the right to dignity; right to livelihood; right to speedy trial; right to health; right to education; right to gender equality and right to environment. The Indian constitution is thus a quest for equal and just society.

State on its part thought growth will take care of the needs of the poor and went on to build industry, irrigation dams and so on. It also thought that some poorest of the poor and vulnerable people require some 'charity'. For this defining poverty line has become significant. Unfortunately, this poverty line was defined taking only calories required to survive into consideration as if people don't require nutrition, clothes and shelter. These calories loosely linked to income, the poverty line was arrived at and revised periodically. For some unknown reason, it was not revised since 1991. The recent Suresh Tendulkar Committee report has

recommended the abandoning of the calorie -norm for estimating the poverty line. As per the recommendations of the committee, the new poverty lines are expected to meet not just food requirements, but also those of education and health that are important basic needs.



Food is the basic human need. Food means a balanced composition of carbohydrates, proteins, fats and water. Meeting food needs of a family includes making food available, accessible and affordable. If all these are met it means that the family has food security. 'Green revolution' in the 60's addressed food shortage crisis by increasing agricultural productivity that led to the growth of comfortable buffer stocks in the 1980s. The procurement operation of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) expanded the volume of food grain provided through the PDS. To make food accessible to the poorest of poor who find it difficult even to purchase food grains through PDS, popular schemes like Rs.2 per kg rice/wheat were introduced. As there was a realization that providing food on subsidy is not the only solution to address the issue of hunger, particularly when there is situations like drought, government has introduced programs like food for work, grain banks and Targeted Public Distribution System. Civil society groups have also shown some models of food security like Rice Credit Line (RCL), food on wheels etc. Though many programs have been taken up it is a sad irony that millions of people in India are still not in a position to access food. The coming of Right to Food Act is a ray of hope and promises to solve the issue of hunger in the country.

Water for drinking, irrigation and other purposes is also an important need of human beings. For monitoring purposes, the World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment 2000 Report specifies reasonable access to water as at least 20 liters per person per day, from an improved source within 1 km of a user's dwelling. Governments have made many attempts to make water available to the poor. The Rural Water Supply program has made significant impact by making safe drinking water available to the rural folk. Large irrigation projects made it possible to grow two crops in a year even three crops in some places thus increasing the agricultural production. Several technologies have been introduced for efficient water management like rain water harvesting through proper soil and water conservation measures like contour bunding, contour stone wall, and contour trenching, and by providing check dams and construction of percolation tanks. The ancient system of water conservation, based on the principles of rain harvesting, by constructing tanks to trap the entire runoff water of one region at one place, is being revived and many such tanks which have gone out of use are being cleaned up for reuse. Watershed programs in the country have shown significant impact by increasing the natural resource base. Many civil society organizations are also actively involved in programs like watershed management, providing safe drinking water, tank management etc. The concept of Watershed plus is now



gaining momentum in which activities like improved water management, minor irrigation works, the provision of drinking water and sanitation, forestry and interventions to address the specific needs of the poorest, including provision of credit, collection and processing of non-timber forest products, aquaculture and crafts are included.

In India, the protection of human right of good health is provided by the Public Primary Health Care System

(PPHCS), which has been developed as a three tier system with Sub Centre, Primary Health Centre (PHC) and Community Health Centre (CHC). Government is also playing a major role in mass vaccination programs like pulse polio. Health extension services are also improved drastically in recent years by recruiting health workers such as ASHA workers, ANMs, MPHWS etc on a large scale. Andhra Pradesh government has implemented innovative program like Arogya Sri through which corporate health services are made accessible to poor people. Health and nutrition needs of women and children are also addressed through Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). Provisions are also made for making health insurance available to the community by both state and non-state players. Non-Government Organizations are also playing a key role in addressing health needs of the poor by organizing health camps, health awareness programs, providing aids and appliances for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), setting up of hospitals in remote areas etc. Models like Community Rural Health Program of Jamkhed have become very popular and are being replicated by many agencies across the country. National Rural Health Mission has made health facilities accessible to many poor. The main aim of NRHM is to provide accessible, affordable, accountable, effective and reliable primary health care, especially to poor and vulnerable sections of the population. It also aims at bridging the gap in Rural Health Care through creation of a cadre of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and improve hospital care, decentralization of programme to district level to improve intra and inter-sectoral convergence and effective utilization of resources. The NRHM further aims to provide overarching umbrella to the existing programmes of Health and Family Welfare including RCH-II, Malaria, Blindness, Iodine Deficiency, Filariasis, Kala Azar T.B., Leprosy and Integrated Disease Surveillance. Further, it addresses the issue of health in the context of sector-wise approach addressing sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and safe drinking water as basic determinants of good health in order to have greater convergence among the related social sector Departments, i.e. AYUSH, Women & Child Development, Sanitation, Elementary Education, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development.

Everyone needs a decent place to live in. There have been many schemes of Government such as Indira Awas Yojana, Samagra Awas Yojana, Rural Pucca House etc. to provide shelter to the poor. Schemes like HUDCO have addressed the housing needs of urban slum dwellers and also extended

their services to rural poor. The schemes supported the poor to construct their own house by providing loans and subsidies.

Many longitudinal studies reveal that education alone has contributed to poverty reduction in a sustainable manner. Therefore a lot of importance has been given to provide a minimum of primary education to all the citizens. Government is providing free education to all the children up to secondary education level. Keeping in view the issues of poverty, backwardness etc. government has also designed and implementing several programs for child labour, children from tribal and other marginalized communities. Programs like mid-day meals, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan have helped in increasing the enrollment of children into the schools. Similarly there are programs to encourage education of girl children. Setting up of social welfare hostels has made education accessible for children from marginalized communities. Scholarships that are offered by government and non-government players and loans provided by commercial banks are encouraging students from poor families to pursue higher education. Schemes like National Literacy Mission have focused on adult education. New Saakshar Bharat program is also aimed at promoting and strengthening adult education especially of women. Recent Right to Education Act has made education as a fundamental right of every child. However, it is still a challenge for the government to fulfill all the promises that are made under the Act.

To be meaningfully occupied, poor need skills. The school going children need competency assessment, counseling and exposure to various options available, including options to continue in existing traditional livelihoods and avenues for skills. With increasing globalization, liberalization and privatization together with increasing pace of life, the education cannot ignore offering metaskills early on. Government of India has set up ITI/ITCs to provide vocational skills. Various attempts have been made to provide trainings in the informal sector through community polytechnics, Jan Shikshan Sansthan etc. Institutes like RUDSETI are also providing required skills to the rural youth. India is now offering skills in less than 150 vocations and this is far less and inadequate compared to the west which is more homogenous in terms of occupation and still provides scope for 3000 + skill-based trainings. Innovative public-private-NGO partnerships are needed to meet the diverse skill requirements of informal sector. The GOI has launched National Skill Development Mission which is expected to look at 20 areas of growth for skill development in manufacturing and services. About 70 million jobs are expected to be created during the 11th Plan and the hope is that the Mission will train people to make the best of these opportunities.

Decent employment is important for the poor to come out of poverty. However, all people may not need same kind of employment. Some people want job employment, some want self-employment, some want to be entrepreneurs. These needs are met to some extent through various programs implemented by the government. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) has provided assistance to rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods. Subsequently, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCR), Supply of Improved Tool Kits to Rural Artisans (SITRA) and Ganga Kalyan Yojana

(GKY) were introduced as sub-programmes of IRDP to take care of the specific needs of the rural population. On 1 April 1999, the IRDP and allied programmes, including the Million Wells Scheme (MWS), were merged into a single programme known as Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). The SGSY is conceived as a holistic programme of micro enterprise development in rural areas with emphasis on organizing the rural poor into self-help groups, capacity-building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure support, technology, credit and marketing linkages. It seeks to promote a network of agencies, namely, the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs), line departments of state governments, banks, NGOs and panchayati raj Institutions (PRIs) for implementation of the programme. The Wage employment programmes such as National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programmes (RLEGP) were started as an important component of the anti-poverty strategy, have sought to achieve multiple objectives. They not only provide employment opportunities during lean agricultural seasons but also in times of floods, droughts and other natural calamities. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was meant to generate meaningful employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed in rural areas through the creation of economic infrastructure and community and social assets. To promote and support village and cottage industries, organizations like Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) were set up. Programs such as Jawahar Gram Samrudhi Yojana (JGSY), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), Sampurna Grameena Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) etc. were also implemented and played a significant role in creation of rural employment. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme that came into existence in the year 2005 essentially guarantees employment to the unemployed in rural areas for at least 100 days in a year through works such as constructing roads, improving water supply and works that are necessary to improve village infrastructure. This scheme has shown significant impact on the cash flows of rural households, migration and also on the portfolio of livelihoods of the rural poor.

Poor also need support to their existing livelihoods. Generally poor have multiple livelihoods. Poor are both producers and consumers. As producers of goods and services, poor need support in terms of credit, technology, infrastructure, training in best practices, inputs at subsidized prices, information related to markets, prices and marketing etc. Previously credit support is mostly provided by informal institutions which charge exorbitant interest rates. Nationalization of Banks by the Government of India in 70's has brought significant change in poor people's access to credit. The establishment of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) has provided avenues for the rural poor to take loans at reasonable interest rates and also to save their little surpluses. After the success of Anand Milk Union's Limited (AMUL), 60's began the dairy cooperative movement. Operation Flood and Operation Golden Flow have made big difference to the poor in 70's and 80's. This has encouraged the beginning of state-supported wasteland development efforts in 80s and 90s. Many poor producers have been organized into cooperatives around their livelihood activity by both government and non-government organizations through which their needs for credit, inputs, marketing are addressed to some extent. Many NGOs are also providing livelihoods



support services to the poor by providing skill development trainings, required extension services, marketing support, infrastructure etc. However, India is still lagging behind in providing extension services for many livelihoods. Rural traditional livelihoods are going through turbulence as they are not able to withstand the global competition. They need support in modern designs, marketing, skills etc. for which very few opportunities are available. Many of the existing cooperatives are not able to meet the needs of the poor producers as they are suffering with the problems of political interference, corruption and increased involvement of bureaucracy. The new 1995 Cooperative Act for Mutual Aid has heralded possibilities for truly member-driven collectives. These acts, now in 16 states, and a friendly central act and a provision in the Company Act to have Producer's companies work like member controlled collectives have provided examples of good cooperatives that are independent of state control and regulation. These kinds of mutually aided cooperatives and producer's companies can be a way forward. National Rural Employment Mission is bringing in more promises.

Many poor people depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. Hence, rights on/ access to natural resources is very important for the poor to practice their livelihood. Land reforms have had a significant impact on poor people's access to land. Bhodan (Land donation) movement of Vinobha Bhave has handed over more than 40 lakh acres of land to the hands of poor. The Panchayats (Extension of Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996 extended the provisions of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, to the Scheduled Areas in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan. The PESA enables tribals to assume control over their own destiny and to preserve and conserve their traditional rights over natural resources, including land. However, the stringent provisions of this law have remained only on paper and have not been operationalised by state governments. The Forest Rights Act 2006 recognized the rights of the Schedule Tribes and traditional forest dwellers and while ensuring livelihoods and food security it also included the forest dwellers responsibilities and authority for forest resources, conservation of biodiversity and maintaining of ecological balance. Efforts are on in protecting the coastal eco systems for protecting the bio diversity as well as the livelihoods of the fisher folk who are dependent on these eco systems. However, still there are many issues with regard to poor

people's access to natural resources. Poor people are getting alienated from their lands, forests, sea etc. in the name of development, industrialization, environmental protection etc. while at the same time richer people are exploiting these natural resources for their interests without any concern towards the said issues.

Physical infrastructure like roads, electricity, transport, warehouses etc. are also very important

needs of the poor as this infrastructure not only provides a better standard of living for them but also an important requisite for enhancing their livelihoods. Programs like Gram Sadak Yojana, Bharat Nirman, and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission etc. have enabled some infrastructure accessible to the poor. But still there is huge infrastructural gap particularly the infrastructure that is required for the poor such as warehouses to store their produce, infrastructure to do value addition to their produce such as drying platforms etc. These gaps should be bridged by involving the poor people in the planning of infrastructure development.

Government has also started many social security programs for the poor and vulnerable. Pensions for old aged people, widows and disabled people apart from programs like Antyodaya and Annapuran enabled the vulnerable people to at least have food security. As the poor are more vulnerable to health and other risks several insurance programs were introduced for them such as Janasri Bima Yojana, Aam Admi Bima Yojana etc. Unorganized Workers Social Security Bill is expected to provide safety nets to the large number of unorganized workers in the country.

Poor and their institutions need support of professionals in their efforts to fight with poverty. Institutes like IRMA, TISS, XISS etc. have established to address this need. Many Universities are now offering rural development and social work related courses for the students and are bringing professionals into the development sector. Apart from this, organizations like PRADAN, AKRSP, CAPART and MYRADA etc. also started bringing professionals into the sector. Some of these professionals could establish and run grassroots organizations. Still there is a huge gap in the availability of professionals and paraprofessionals in the sector.

'Self Help Group' movement has covered millions of women in SHGs and their higher order institutions. Women have become the centre of development initiatives. SHG federations were formed in many places and these federations are providing credit to the members for variety of purposes.

There has also been impressive progress on the information technology, computerization, enterprise wise resource planning, communication technology etc. Telephone and mobile density has increased. Channels are increasing. Communication has become easier. Right to Information Act has proved its importance by making public information really accessible to public. However, there is a lot to do on this front to make this technology available to the poor and



poorest and providing required information to them by using this Information and Communication Technology.

Government(s) are taking the space of NGOs and creating Government NGOs. Corporate Social Responsibility Foundations and initiatives are growing. More and more development activities are happening through Community Based Organizations (CBOs). All these different kinds of

institutions are meeting the needs of poor in different ways. However, there is a lot more to be done.

India is still lagging behind in many development indices. Many poor are still dying out of hunger. Many children and women are suffering from malnutrition. Shelter less families are still visible on footpaths. Quality health services and education are still a distant dream to millions. Indian women are still walking miles to fetch a pot of water. Livelihoods of poor are still not able to give them incomes that are reasonable enough to lead a decent quality of life. Lot more issues to be resolved and lot more miles to walk to realize the dream of a poverty free country.

Programs for the poor are many. But what requires is the accountability and transparency. 73rd and 74th amendments to constitution to transfer 29 subjects and local bodies with powers and responsibilities are slowly making progress. The task of building the communities to seek accountability from the local governments is difficult but is necessary for increasing accountability. Urbanization, climate changes, push migration are bringing in newer challenges for which we still need to find solutions. We need many more professionals to work on the issues of poverty particularly in this dynamic context. We need to collectivize poor based on various issues. For this we need to have various favorable legal avenues.

By now, a new paradigm to address poverty reduction (Prosperity paradigm) –where we need to work with the poor who have just graduated out of poverty; where we need to work with the poorest, marginalized, vulnerable and left out very differently- is unfolding. The contours of this new paradigm need to be evolved. A lot more research has to be done to understand the avenues for the people who are migrating out of traditional livelihoods. We need to invest on this. Many more skill training institutes have to come up to train our youth and unskilled workers to train in skills required for different emerging sectors. It is now widely accepted that people's participation is the key for any development program to show better results. We need to search for ways and means to make community participate in their own development.

We are at cross roads. We have entered two-digit growth rate. Indians found place in the world's list of billionaires. Yet, some of us are starving and sleeping hungry. Malnutrition levels are high. In fact, we are no better than some of the sub-Saharan African countries in hunger, malnutrition etc.. This could not be ignored. We, as a nation, need to move towards inclusive growth and prosperity. ■

As Long As We Have These Arms...

“I will work till my arms are strong” says Sayamma who rolls out Vibhuti balls (sacred ash balls) for a living even at a ripe age. ‘livelihoods’ interviews Sayamma to know more about her livelihood...

Q: What is your name?

A: Sayamma

Q: Where do you stay ?

A: In Chikkadpally, Balaji nagar, Hyderabad. It is my mother's house; I was born and brought up here. But my native is Shankarpally, Near Vikarabad, Rangareddy (Dist), AP.

Q: Have you studied?

A: No. But I learned to write my name.

Q: Tell us about your family?

A: I have a son and a daughter. My husband died 11 years ago. My son went away from home as a child and has not come back. My daughter is now married and has three children. Even her children are married now.



Q: Have you stayed here always? ?

A: No, it's been 6 years since I came back to stay here. Even after marriage I stayed with my parents only, only after 5 years I went to stay with my husband in Malkajiri. My children were born and brought up there. Later even after my husband died I continued to stay there itself. As I grew old I found it difficult to stay alone So, I came to my mother's house at Balaji nagar as all my relatives' stay here.

Q: What do you do for a living now?

A: I am making Vibhuthi (sacred ash made as balls, used to smear on the forehead) near Sundaraiah Park at Baghlingampally in Hyderabad.

Q: What did you do earlier? When did you take up this work?

A: Both of us my husband and my-self were selling steel, silver and copper vessels, going home to home. It was a profitable business then. My husband was very loving and concerned for my well being. We saved money from our earnings for our daughter's marriage. As the steel rates increased we found it difficult to invest more money into this business. In the mean time my husband also died and I became alone. So I gave up on that business.

Q: From when are you into Vibuthi balls making work?

A: For 6 year now.

Q: Are you alone in this business?

A: No, My younger sister is also partner in this business. She is deserted by her husband. She stays here with three children.

Q: Where do you bring these ashes from?

A: We bring it from Warangal once in three months. We bring a lorry load of it. Each trip will cost us Rs 12000/- to Rs

15000/- for both material and transport.

Q: How do you make this ash balls? What items do you mix into it?

A: We call this ash powder as maddi. We mix it with water and keep aside for 5days before making them into balls. On the fifth day we add some more water and make a dough like that of a chapathi and make them into balls. We don't mix any other thing except water. Water has to be carefully added, otherwise the balls will break. Once the balls are dried we mix slate pencil powder for surface shining. We purchase this powder in shops Rs 20/- per 1kg. We need ¼ kg powder per 100 ash balls.

Q: How many ash balls do you make in a day?

A: In one day both of us put together make 1200 to 1500 ash balls. We do this work from morning 8am to evening 6pm.

Q: Where do you sell these ash balls?

A: We sell it every week at Begum Bazar or Secundrabad. In a week we are able to make 20 bags of ash ball, containing 500 ash balls each. We take it by auto which costs us Rs 100/-.

Q: what is your income?

A: We sell one bag at Rs 120/-, if they are broken we get less.

Q: Is there any problems in this business?

A: Problems are part of any business. We are becoming old, we find it difficult to go all the way till Warangal to buy the powder. It takes 2 days. We continue to go there as we get good quality powder. This business is more viable in summer. In rainy season ash balls don't dry well. Finding enough place to prepare them is also a problem and the demand is also very less. We can earn well only in summer.

Q: Why you want to do this work at this old age, can't your daughter support you?

A: No. As long as we have these arms to work we will work. We don't want to be depend on others. Any way once we can't do even this we have to depend on them.

Q: How is your financial situation?

A: Presently, our financial situation is good. We borrow the investment amount from relatives with interest (36% interest rate). We pay monthly Rs 300/- for loan repayment. After deducting all the expenditures both of us share the remaining amount equally. I am able to earn enough and save Rs 600/- for a chit that I pay every month.

Q: Do you wish for any government help?

A: We will not say no if government comes forward to help us. If we get bank loan we will bring more quantity of ash powder and increase our business. We will be free from the clutches of high interest. ■

Onion

Onions may bring a tear to your eye, and pungency to your breath, but they will most certainly bring delight to your tastebuds. The onion, known scientifically as *Allium cepa*, is, on the surface, a humble brown, white or red, paper-thin skinned bulb; yet, despite its plain looks, has an intense flavor and is a beloved part of the cuisine of almost every region of the world. The word onion comes from the Latin word *unio* for "single," or "one," because the onion plant produces a single bulb, unlike its cousin, the garlic, that produces many small bulbs. The name also describes the onion bulb when cut down the middle; it is a union (also from *unio*) of many separate, concentrically arranged layers. It is grown underground by the plant as a vertical shoot that is used for food storage, leading to the possibility of confusion with a tuber, which it is not. Onions are found in a large number of recipes and preparations spanning almost the totality of the world's cultures. We cannot imagine an Indian kitchen without onion.



Onions range in size, color and taste depending upon their variety. Depending on the variety, an onion can be sharp, spicy, tangy and pungent or mild and sweet. There are generally two types of large, globe-shaped onions, classified as spring/summer or storage onions. The former class includes those that are grown in warm weather climates and have characteristic mild or sweet tastes.

Onions are native to Asia and the Middle East and have been cultivated for over five thousand years. Today China, India, the United States, Russian, and Spain are among the leading producers of onions.

Onion is one of the important vegetable crops grown in India. In terms of area, India ranks first in the world with over 480 thousand hectares accounting for around 21 percent of the world area planted to onion. Globally, the country occupies the second position after China in onion production with a production share of around 14 per cent. Productivity, however, at around 13MT/ha, is much lower than the world average of 17.3MT/ha.

Onion is produced in several states in India, with Maharashtra being the leading producer accounting for about

one-fourth of the country's onion production. India largely produces red onions used as fresh produce in the domestic market. White onions (used for dehydration) are grown on commercial scale only in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat and that too only in a few districts. Red onions are not suitable for dehydration mostly due to low solids, low pungency levels and high reducing sugars.

Onions grown in India are very much in demand in the Gulf countries, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh because of its strong pungency. Onion exports have increased from 0.36 million MT in 1995-96 to 0.7 million MT in 2005-06. Being the leading producer, Maharashtra accounts for over 75 per cent of the total onion exports from the country. The major markets for Indian onions are Dubai, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, West Asia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Seychelles and Bangladesh.

There is also high demand of dehydrated onions from India. There are several companies involved in exports of dehydrated onions at a small or large scale. JISL accounts for about 40% of the dehydrated onion exports from India. Nevertheless, India's share in dehydrated onion exports as a share of the world market is less than 10%.

Inputs	Pre-production	Production	Post-production	Marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Land * Tractor * Water * Onion seedlings * Fertilizers * Pesticides * Labour * Crow bar * Bamboo baskets * Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ploughing the land * Making water channels in the land * Watering * Sowing the seedlings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Weeding occasionally * Applying fertilizers * Applying pesticides * Watering frequently * Applying fertilizers again to allow the onion to grow properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Watering the land completely * Harvesting the onion plants and separating the onions * Drying the onions in the field itself. * After completely dried, filling the onions into thin bags. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Selling the onions in nearby markets and shandys * Using the onion to make different varieties of dishes.



Onions pickled in vinegar are eaten as a snack. These are often served as a side serving in fish and chip shops throughout Australia, they are often served with Cheese in the United Kingdom and are referred to simply as "pickled onions". Onions are widely used in Iran and India and Pakistan, and are essential to daily life in the local cuisine. They are commonly used as a base for curries or made into a paste and eaten as a main course or as a side dish. They are now available in fresh, frozen, canned, caramelized, pickled, powdered, chopped, and dehydrated forms. Onions can be used, usually chopped or sliced, in almost every type of food, including cooked foods and fresh salads and as a spicy garnish. Mild onions are used for cooking or as salad. Pungent varieties are used as condiment for flavoring a number of food items. Pearl onion or small onions are used in pickles, including vinegar pickles. For dehydration purposes and for manufacture of onion powder, white onions of desired quality are preferred.

Tissue from onions is frequently used in science education to demonstrate microscope usage, because they have particularly large cells that are readily observed even at low magnifications. Onion powder is a spice used for seasoning in cooking. It is made from finely ground dehydrated onions,

Gaps:

- 1) When the onion starts sprouting there is a possibility of pest attack.
- 2) Pest may also attack during the growth of seedlings

Solutions:

- 1) Seedlings should protected from sunrays for at least 5 days after planting.
- 2) Care should be taken to avoid weed.
- 3) Fertilizers should be used in appropriate quantity.

mainly the pungent varieties of bulb onions, which causes the powder to have a very strong smell. Onion powder is toxic to dogs. Onion powder comes in a few varieties:

- * White onion powder
- * Red onion powder
- * Yellow onion powder
- * Toasted onion powder

Onions are a very good source of vitamin C, chromium and dietary fiber. They are also a good source of manganese, molybdenum, vitamin B6, folate, potassium, phosphorus and copper.

Onion juice is also gaining popularity. It is also used for identical purposes as above. Advantage of using dehydrated onion, onion powder and onion juice is exact and measured amount can be added while consuming them. Therefore, onion juice units may also be established in rural areas generating employment.

The pink colored peel on the onion, which is usually thrown away has also some commercial value. It is an excellent natural dye. It gives fast color on cotton, silk and woolen garments or fabrics. Onion has a lot of medicinal virtues. Because of the presence of several sulphur compounds, onion has antiseptic properties. This may be utilized for manufacturing many herbal medicines. Onion is said to possess stimulant, diuretic and expectorant properties and is considered useful in flatulence and dysentery. Freshly expressed onion juice has moderate bactericidal properties. Onion paste is reported to be effective for external applications in case of insect bites. Therefore onion paste can be marketed with proper packing to be used for food preparations as well as medicines.

Keeping in view the variety of uses of onions, there is vast potential to increase the production and it is also a remunerative option for the farmers. ■

Income and Expenditure from Onion (in one acre land)

Expenditure:

Ploughing and preparation of water channels (labour 3 members* 1 day* Rs 120)= Rs 360

Rent for tractor (1 day)= Rs 800

Buying onion seeds (4 kgs per acre)= Rs 700

Sowing the seeds (1 man* 1 day* Rs 120)= Rs 120

Bringing the seedlings to the field (2 men* Rs 120* 1 day)= Rs 240

Sowing the seedlings (8 women* Rs 70* 1 day)= Rs 560

Weeding (10 women* Rs 70* 1 day)= Rs 700

Fertilizers and Pesticides= Rs 3000

Spraying the fertilizers and pesticides (2 men* 2 times* Rs 150)= Rs 600

Harvesting the onion (20 women* Rs 70* 1 day)= Rs 1400

Drying the onions (2 men* Rs 100* 2 days)= Rs 400

Filling the onions into gunny bags (2 men* Rs 100* 2 days)= Rs 400

Total Expenditure: 9280

Income:

Total yield from acre- 50 quintals

Total income from acre of onions (50 quintals* Rs 800)= Rs 40000

Profit from onions (from one acre)= Rs 40000-9280= Rs 30720

Development of Humane Action (DHAN)

Development of Humane Action (DHAN) Foundation, a Madurai based professional development organisation, is striving to build poverty-free, gender-balanced, equitable, ecologically-sensitive, democratic, just and value-based inclusive society. It is acknowledged as the leader in institution building for poverty alleviation by creating replicable models of community based institutions and ensuring the participation of the community in the development planning.

Development of Humane Action (DHAN) Foundation was initiated on October 2, 1997 for the purpose of bringing highly motivated, educated young women and men to the development sector and to make new innovations in development to root out poverty from the country. The organization works with a mission of building people and institutions for development innovations and scaling up to enable the poor communities for poverty reduction and self-reliance.

DHAN has a vision where it sees itself as a pioneering development institution to build poverty free, gender-balanced, equitable, ecological-sensitive, democratic, just and value based inclusive society and creating freedom of choice to the families, groups and community to determine and develop the meaning of their lives, their identities and their life styles for the well being of their life. DHAN stands for three broad purposes- mothering of development innovations, promoting institutions to reach scale and human resource development.

To fulfil its mission of building people's institutions for poverty reduction, DHAN has promoted various Self-Help Groups of poor women and federated them at Panchayat level (Cluster Development Associations) and also at block level. It believes that institutions of women are the effective way to eradicate poverty and address gender issues. This program called Kalanjiam Iyyakam has promoted creative financial products such as savings, credit and insurance etc and also linked the institutions with the banks and other financial institutions. Through the financial assistance provided to these community institutions, this program aims to strengthen existing livelihoods of the poor households apart from creating new livelihood opportunities. With more than 12 years of efforts, DHAN has built replicable intervention designs through research and pilots on the social and development needs of the members. Within a short span of time the program has become a poor women's movement and the model created by DHAN has been replicated by many development organizations across the country.

DHAN has also initiated Vayalagam Tankfed Agriculture Development Program (VTADP) to work on small scale water bodies with the participation of farmers. The programme believes that the local management of the tank system can be the only solution to the problem in the long run. The programme has moved from working on isolated tanks, to cascade of water tanks and tank-based watersheds, and also at sub- basin levels. Now, the programme has identified 'Water' as a unique tool for alleviating poverty, and has evolved into a separate people's institution as 'DHAN Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation (DVTF)'. The Foundation aims at up scaling the renovation works with

community participation.

DHAN Foundation has taken up 'ICT for the poor' as a new theme to experiment, develop and implement socially-relevant ICT programmes through ICT based people's organisations built at the grassroots. DHAN Foundation responded immediately after the tsunami in 2004 and took up relief works. It has implemented a program called "Coastal Conservation and Livelihood Programme" with an approach to address the issues in livelihoods and conservation of coastal ecosystem. DHAN also works with Panchayats to strengthen the informal functional groups in the village.

DHAN Foundation has launched 'Rain fed Farming Development Programme (RFDP)' to make the rain fed farming viable by improving the total factor productivity through location specific interventions. Recognizing the importance of learning for both people and professionals working with them, DHAN has promoted DHAN People's Academy where it devises appropriate pedagogy to facilitate learning, build on existing experience available and promote participant-centred learning.

DHAN has promoted various institutions such as Tata-Dhan Academy (TDA), Centre for Human Resources Development (CHRD), Centre for facilitating Philanthropy (CFP), Centre for Development Communication (CDC), etc. to address various needs of the community and professionals who are working with the community. DHAN Foundation as the mothering institution of all these various institutions would guide, support and regulate its family institutions on their mission, policies, strategies and values. In all its programs, DHAN is guided by the principles of engaging high quality resources to work at the grassroots, valuing collaboration with mainstream institutions and Government to demonstrate new and effective intervention to link them with the people, promoting people's organizations to ensure entitlements etc.

DHAN believes that working in partnership towards a common goal generates new learning and solutions and it sees partnership as a greater chance of continuity, consistency and sustainability for development. Hence, it works with various kinds of organizations such as Non-Government organizations, bilateral agencies, commercial banks, insurance companies, academic and research institutes etc.

With more than 12 years of experience DHAN has become a significant contributor in professionalizing development sector. It is recognized as a pioneer of institution building for poverty eradication and is progressing towards realizing its vision of inclusive society. ■

Reforming Higher Education

One of the paradoxes we are facing today relates to employment: While vast armies of educated unemployed march on the streets, several employers simply are not able to get the required personnel to function effectively. There is a huge mismatch between the needs of employers and manpower generally available. A survey by McKinsey points that the employability of Indian graduates is less than 2%.

Different sections of the society blame different factors for the situation:

Several trade unions blame the new technology adopted for the situation as the technology adopted leads to large scale unemployment of workers. They suggest continuation with the old methods for ever or switching to new technology without retrenching the workers (or in other words, bearing the cost of manpower as well as new technology).

Some people blame the structure of the economy itself. They point out that the Indian economy transitioned from agriculture-based economy to service economy without passing through a phase where a larger part of GDP is contributed by manufacturing sector. As a result, the migrant workers and poor are unable to integrate with the economy that requires skills of a different order – particularly those that can be obtained only after high investment in agriculture.

Another section blames the quality of education, specially higher education. But their diagnosis for the quality of

education differs. Some of these are:

Funds allocated for the public school and university system are inadequate. As a result, the performance of public school system falls short of expectations. Anything that the private schooling system delivers above the public school system is considered good. Hence, overall the quality of functioning of education system goes down.

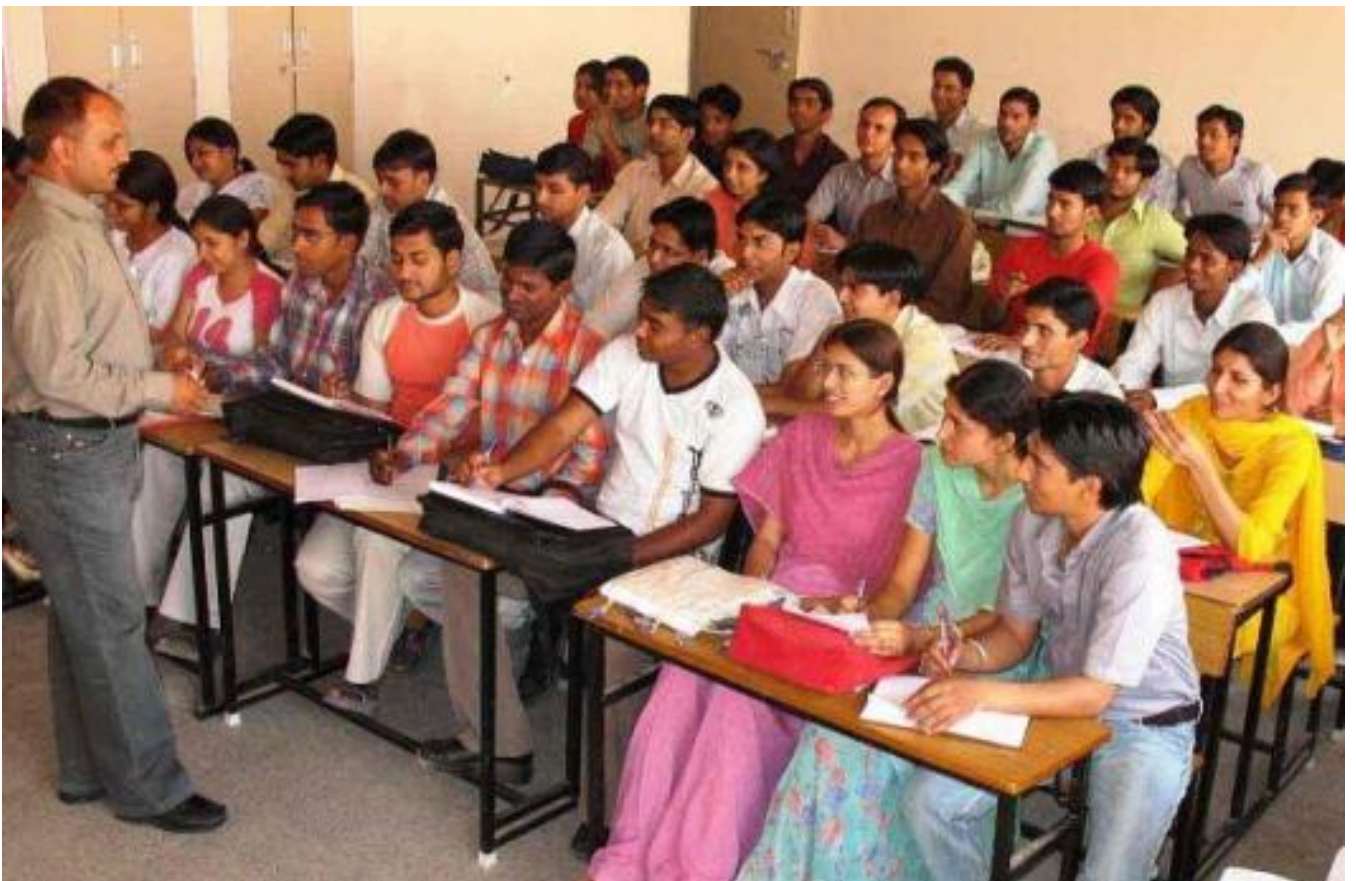
There are inadequate teachers in the primary schools and universities. Even those who exist do not attend the school adequately, either due to personal reasons or because of their official engagement.

The system of performance appraisal is bad. It emphasises the percentage of students passing the examination and not the quality of education. Hence, the efforts of the teachers is not to teach the students but to ensure that they pass the examination.

The system allows pandering to the pressure of politically active sections of students by continuously lowering standards of education to pass a majority of the students.

The policy adopted by the government led to mushrooming of higher education shops that disburse engineering, software and management degrees, without adequate supervision and quality assurance.

Then, there are sections of community that are more



Level	Professional competence	Personal/Social competence
I	Basic knowledge define, list, state, summarise Understanding describe, discuss, explain, identify	Students should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * want to study the fundamental knowledge and skills areas of the programme and to develop responsibility and the basis for further learning. * learn to work independently with assignments. * preserve and develop their curiosity and courage to take part in development processes and their desire to learn. * develop their ability to have professional and personal goals and to pursue such
II	Evaluation argue, select, defend, foresee, assess Employment apply, demonstrate, illustrate, read,	Students should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * be able to familiarise themselves with complicated problems and communicate with others about the solution. * focus on flexibility and the ability to change. * develop their ability to think and act creatively/innovatively
III	Analysis compose, construct, analyse, compare, distinguish, test, translate Synthesis propose, create, design, implement	Students should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * take full responsibility and show the initiative to formulate and solve academic and social tasks and problems and to communicate their knowledge to others. * focus on sense of quality and creativity. * be able to come to a decision independently and take a critical approach to their own attitudes/actions/ solutions and to those of other students. * be familiar with well-known models and research.

concerned about politicisation of syllabus rather than the quality of education itself.

The solutions offered also differ based on the diagnosis. But most often, the solution revolves around faculty/teacher development and promotion of vocational education.

But rarely do these debates focus on the function of education in enhancing the competencies of the students and try to look at the existing system of higher education from the perspective of competencies.

It is to be noted that several organisations are also adopting



Akshara Gurukulam adopts competency framework in all its training (learning) programmes.

competency frameworks to recruit persons. According to the 2007 learning and development survey published by Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, London, sixty per cent of organisations have a competency framework in place and 48% of those who haven't say they intend to introduce one in the next two years. Examples within the context of development organisations include DfID and CRS.

In contrast, several universities in Europe state the purpose of the educational structure of their higher education as "to enable the student achieve professional, personal as well as social competencies which enable them to meet the challenges after graduation." Dividing these competencies into various levels, these universities articulate the competencies required for graduation and match the learning methods with the competencies required.

The manner in which VIA University College articulates the competencies is given in the table above as an illustration.

The universities aim to provide level III competencies in relation to the specialisation subjects in Bachelor programmes.

By focussing on such competency based frameworks, Indian universities too can improve the quality of higher education. They need to demonstrate the use of the curriculum to the student studying in terms of competencies achieved, which in turn can go on to motivate the students in achieving a higher learning. Hence, policy makers need to steer the educational policy so that universities in India adopt and conform to such frameworks. ■

M. Vijay Bhasker Srinivas

Population Census 2011: Our Census Our Future

"In fact in these days you can not take up any serious administrative, economic or social work without referring to the Census Report which is an essential part of every enquiry of every study. Even for solution of minor problems you have often to consult the Census reports"

Census operation in India is not a modern day phenomenon; this stupendous task has a rich history of its own. The celebrated 'Arthashastra', the Principles of Government, evolved by one of the greatest geniuses of political administration, Kautilya during the Mauryan period in the third century BC, prescribed the collection of population statistics as a measure of state policy for the purpose of taxation. It contains a detailed description of methods of conducting population, economic and agricultural censuses. During the Moghul period extensive records were maintained pertaining to land, production, population, famines, etc. During the time of Akbar the Great, another bright period in Indian history, the administrative report known as the Ain-i-Akbari included comprehensive data pertaining to population, industry, wealth, and many other characteristics. Population enumeration, the importance of which was so well recognized in the ancient days under enlightened rulers in glorious period, was neglected during the dark ages when the history of the country was disturbed and disintegrated. But again when the system of modern government developed under British the need for a fairly accurate account of the population was felt for reasons, such as defence, collection of revenues and taxes and employing people in profitable trades and services. Even though many attempts of population enumeration were attempted in different towns and cities under various British Administrators, they were neither contiguous nor continuous. It was only after the establishment of Statistical Survey of India in 1869 by Lord Mayo, the then Governor-General and under its Director General W.W. Hunter, that a concrete scheme was devised and agreed upon to conduct a regular and general population census. Thus, the census of India 1872 was conducted though not a synchronous project, nor did it cover all territory possessed or controlled by the British. But based on uniform schedules it was inspired by modern concepts, it marked an auspicious beginning, and contained the rudiments of all basic demographic, social and economic tables. The first complete population census was, however, conducted in 1881, on a uniform basis throughout India providing the most complete and continuous demographic record for any comparable population. Since then the Census is being regularly conducted after every ten years.

The Census of India 2011 which took off on April 1, 2010 is

the largest census ever attempted in the history of mankind. The Indian Census is the most credible source of information on Demography (Population characteristics), Economic Activity, Literacy & Education, Housing & Household Amenities, Urbanization, Fertility and Mortality, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Language, Religion, Migration, Disability and many other socio-cultural and demographic data since 1872. Census 2011 will be the 15th National Census of the country. This is the only source of primary data at village, town and ward level. It provides valuable information for planning and formulation of policies by Central & State Governments and is widely used by National & International agencies, scholars, business people, industrialists, and many more. The delimitation/reservation of



Constituencies - Parliamentary/ Assembly/Panchayats and other Local Bodies is also done on the basis of the demographic data thrown up by the Census. Further, some of the unique features of this census are collecting; information on the usage of mobile phone, availability of tap water, and usage of banking services. "This information will help the government in preparing for the XII Five-Year Plan".

The Census of India, 2011 will be conducted in two distinct but inter-related phases. The first phase, the House listing Operation which already took off would last between April-September, 2010 in different states and union territories as a prelude to the

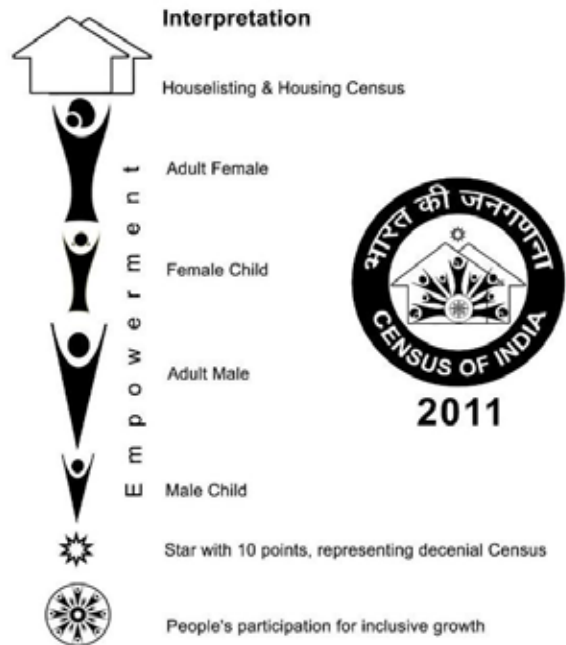
exercise of undertaking the decennial Population Census. The house listing exercise provides the basis for uniform and unambiguous frame to undertake the Population Enumeration with the ultimate objective of achieving as full coverage as is humanly possible without any omission of an area or household. During this House listing Operation, data on housing conditions, amenities and assets available to the households would also be collected. The second phase of census i.e. Population Enumeration, would be undertaken between February, 9-28th 2011 (both days inclusive) with a revisional round from 1st to 5th March, 2011. The Census moment would be 00.00 hours of 1st March, 2011, the referral time at which the snapshot of the population of the country would be taken. Further, the enumeration of houseless population would be carried out on the night of February 28th, 2011.

Moreover, the Census of India 2011 is considered to be the largest census ever attempted in the history of mankind as it also involves the task of preparing for the first time the National Population Register with an estimated population of 1.2 billion. The NPR would be a Register of usual residents of the country. The NPR will be a comprehensive identity

Act 1948. It is being carried out under the Citizenship Act of 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules 2003. As a matter of fact there is a provision regarding 'confidentiality' in the Census Act, which is not merely missing in the Citizenship Act and Rules but there is an express objective of making the information available to the UID (Unique Identification) Authority, for instance, which marks an important distinction between the two processes. Section 15 of the Census Act categorically makes the information that would be collected the census agency is "neither open to inspection nor admissible in evidence." The Census Act enables the collection of information so that the state has a profile of the population; it is expressly not to profile the individual where as information collected under NPR will not be confidential, certain information collected under the NPR will be published in the local areas for public scrutiny and invitation of objections. This is in the nature of the electoral roll or the telephone directory. After the NPR has been finalized, the database will be fed directly into the UID data base, which, while pretending to be doing little other than verifying that a person is who they say they are, will act as a bridge between silos of information that will help profile the individual. This will assist the market and, through NATGRID (National Intelligence Grid), the intelligence agencies, who will continue to remain unaccountable.

Another issue that generated heat during the Budget session of the Parliament, with both the Opposition and some constituents of the United Progressive Alliance is the demand for caste based census. Caste based enumeration of the population has not been carried out in India since 1931. In the last 80 years, some caste names have changed, quite a few new ones have emerged, several castes have merged with others or have moved up or down the social hierarchy, and many have become politically active. Caste being a sensitive issue, the proposition of caste-based census naturally provoked serious debate. An argument in favor of caste enumeration is that if the complexity of castes, which have a significant bearing on society and the polity, is to be understood, authentic data on castes should be available. The need to enumerate castes was emphasized by representatives of various Backward Classes Commissions. Their argument primarily centered on the problems of identification of B.Cs and providing reservation for them. The reasons which were laid out against enumerating castes in the Census broadly fell into three categories - moral, pragmatic and technical. A vigorous moral argument against the collection of caste data is that it would "increase casteism", "legitimizes castes", "perpetuate castes" and "create cleavages in society".

Therefore, the Cabinet has referred the issue to a Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by the Finance Minister Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, after due consultations and consensus the GoM would soon take a decision on the issue. However, one should keep in mind that the census recording of social precedence is a device of colonial domination, designed to undermine as well as to disprove Indian nationhood. They contend that even assuming that caste data are relevant,



enumeration of the population on the basis of caste is bound to be vitiated by vote-bank and reservation politics, leading to the inflation of population figures and the suppression or distortion of vital information on employment, education and economic status, among other things.

Another issue which needs to be addressed by the Registrar General of India (RGI) is that of enumerating nomadic and migrant tribes. For instance in the state of Jammu and Kashmir itself there are 7 to 8 lakhs of Gujjars and Bakerwals who along with their livestock migrate in the summer months to the upper reaches of Himalayas and come down in winter season. Added to this the official notification issued by the RGI, the first phase of the census 2011 has already commenced i.e. from 15th may to 30 June 2010 in the state of J&K. They would be obviously left out of the census operation 2011. This was also the same case in 2001 Census. Similarly, there are many nomadic and migrant tribes in other states.

Leaving aside the apprehensions regarding the confidentiality and debate over caste based census, the census of India is the most credible source of information on Demography (Population characteristics), Economic Activity, Literacy & Education, Housing & Household Amenities, Urbanization, Fertility and Mortality, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Language, Religion, Migration, Disability and many other socio-cultural and demographic data since 1872. Further, Census is the basis for reviewing the country's progress in the past decade, monitoring the on-going schemes of the Government and most importantly, plan for the future. That is why the slogan of Census 2011 is "**Our Census, Our Future**". So by co-operating in the census operations by giving the right information without any narrow considerations each one of us would be indirectly planning our own future. ■

Ravala Vijay Kiran

Organic vs. Conventional Farming

D.Kumara Charyulu and Subho Biswas did a comparison of economics of organic farming and conventional farming and the results are published as a working paper of IIM Ahmadabad. They concluded that the unit cost of production is lower in organic farming in case of cotton and sugarcane crops whereas the same is lower in conventional farming for paddy and wheat crops.

The following table, compiled from the working paper, indicate the relative economics of organic and conventional farming in paddy, wheat, cotton and sugarcane crops.

Economics of cultivation (Rs. Per acre)					
Crop	Type	Cost	Revenue	Net Return	Return %
Paddy (Punjab)	Organic	9325	27153	17828	191.18
	Conventional	7818	28715	20897	267.29
Wheat (Punjab)	Organic	7539	28747	21208	281.31
	Conventional	6436	24755	18319	284.63
Cotton (Punjab)	Organic	5427	23100	17673	325.65
	Conventional	12455	32063	19608	157.43
Paddy (UP)	Organic	13231	24719	11488	86.83
	Conventional	14446	31636	17190	118.99
Sugarcane (UP)	Organic	22399	53360	30961	138.22
	Conventional	23099	49153	26054	112.79
Wheat (UP)	Organic	9418	23463	14045	149.13
	Conventional	10223	20324	10101	98.81
Sugarcane (Maharashtra)	Organic	22546	61400	38854	172.33
	Conventional	28320	57000	28680	101.27
Cotton (Gujarat)	Organic	9903	44205	34302	346.38
	Conventional	12088	39200	27112	224.29

The paddy variety studied in Punjab and UP was basmati. In the case of wheat, variety grown by organic farmers in Punjab was bansi. Most of the sample organic farmers in UP cultivated bansi while conventional farmers adopted PBW-343 or WL-711 varieties. While desi variety of cotton was grown by organic farmers in Punjab, Bt was cultivated by conventional farmers there. In Gujarat, organic farmers grew devraj variety while many of the conventional farmers cultivated Bt or V-797 varieties of cotton.

In the case of sugarcane in UP, CoS 88230 variety was patronised by organic farmers while a majority of conventional growers were using CoS 88230 or CoS 767 varieties. In Maharashtra, most popular varieties under organic and conventional farming systems of sugarcane were Co 86032 and Co 671/Co 8014 respectively.

They pointed out that the organic farmers are yet to reach yield stabilisation and hence there is a scope for increase in the yields, which is likely to improve the situation of the organic farmers much further. Overall, the findings summarizes that relatively organic farming is a production system which has little lower productivity, needs more labour and low energy inputs, and has a changing net income level relating with unit product selling prices. ■

Tendulkar Committee Report on Poverty

The welfare of its people has been the prime concern of the Government of India since 1947. A number of policies have been formulated to help the poor who have been left behind in the overall growth process to catch up with the rest of the people. However, till the mid-1970s, the development planner thought that the growth process will take care in reducing poverty. But this did not happen significantly. Therefore, the late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed change in the strategy for poverty alleviation. The government decided to attack poverty directly rather than depend on general growth alone. This gave birth to the concept of “growth with redistribution”—the use of special schemes for the direct generation of income for the poor along with the promotion of general growth—to achieve a faster reduction in poverty.

In India, Poverty is conventionally defined in terms of income poverty, i.e., number of people below the poverty line and it is measured in different ways, predominantly in terms of inadequacy of income to procure a defined minimum level of calories. In India the minimum level of calories required per person per day is defined as 2400 in rural areas and 2100 in urban areas. The same is converted into financial terms and the poverty line is defined as a minimum level of income or expenditure, which is periodically updated. The latest updated poverty line is Rs.356.30 in rural areas and Rs.538.60 in urban areas in 2004-05 (Planning Commission, 2007). Using the same method, poverty line is also defined for various states and union territories separately for rural and urban areas. All the people, whose monthly expenditure falls below these levels, are considered as poor. Accordingly the poverty estimates given by the NSSO survey of 2004-2005 stood at 28.5%. However, many scholars have highlighted the limitations of this concept of income poverty, which is solely based on calorie intake, as a measure of the complex phenomenon of poverty. In 2007, the Arjun Sengupta of the National Commission for Enterprises in Unorganized Sector had said that 77% of Indians were poor. Further, in June 2009, a government committee headed by N.C. Saxena estimated 50% Indians were poor.

In view of this, Planning Commission set up an expert group under the chairmanship of Professor Suresh Tendulkar to examine the issue and suggest a new poverty line and estimates. The Tendulkar Committee has reviewed the present methodology for measuring poverty and suggested drastic changes for the future. It has recommended the abandoning of the calorie-norm for estimating the poverty line. Instead, the committee has recommended a new method where the present *all-India urban poverty line* is taken as the basis for estimating every other poverty line in the country. With the urban poverty line as the basis, the parity levels at the State-level for rural and urban areas are to be separately estimated using a typical purchasing power parity (PPP) method. Thus, the new State-level rural and urban poverty lines are to be at those levels at which the average national urban consumption levels can be attained.

The suggestion to use the all-India urban poverty line is

justified on the basis of two independent validating reasons. First, the urban population that corresponded in 2004-05 to the poverty line expenditure consumed 1776 calories per capita per day, which was close to the calorie norm of 1800 calories per capita per day suggested for India by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Secondly, the actual levels of urban per capita expenditure in 2004-05 were also sufficient to meet a defined “normative level of expenditure on education and health services.” It is thus postulated that the new poverty lines, fortuitously, meet not just food requirements, but also those of education and health that are important basic needs.

Using the above method, the new poverty lines for 2004-05 have been re-estimated by the committee as Rs. 446.68 for rural areas and Rs. 578.80 for urban areas (per capita per month). Further, the new HCRs for 2004-05 are estimated as 41.8 per cent in rural areas and 25.7 per cent in urban areas. These new estimates represent a significant upward revision of poverty in the rural areas, and a small downward revision of poverty in the urban areas. As per the new method, the total number of poor people in India has risen from about 403 million in 1993-94 to about 407 million in 2004-05.

Indeed, the new poverty estimates appear more realistic than the existing estimates. At the same time, the new estimates would also help States expand their BPL coverage in the public distribution system (PDS) using food grains from the Central quota itself. On that count, the report is likely to be welcomed by State governments.

However, the report is unlikely to stem the deep dissatisfaction around the use of poverty estimates to “fix” eligibility in the access to welfare schemes like the PDS, the system of targeting remains firmly in place. As a result, large sections that require welfare assistance are likely to remain excluded from these programmes even if the new poverty estimates are considered. For instance, in per capita daily terms, the rural poverty line has been raised from Rs. 12 to Rs. 15 — a meager upward revision. In the urban areas, the increase is from Rs 18 to Rs 19 per day. It is most revealing that even such a small upward revision of the poverty line could net in more than 100 million new persons as “poor.”

Juxtapose this with the fact that 77 per cent of India's population lived at an average monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) of Rs. 16 per day in 2004-05. If the *average* expenditure of 77 per cent of the population was Rs. 16 per day, there is likely to be a sizeable section of the population above the new poverty line of Rs. 15 per day in rural areas and Rs. 19 per day in urban areas. In a targeted system of welfare provision, these vulnerable sections of the population would remain excluded.

While the Tendulkar Committee Poverty Figures have been accepted for allocations for all anti-poverty programs in the country now, the real challenge lies in preserving the positives from the report, and strongly persisting with the demand for a universal social security system. ■

Ironing Clothes



Shining Livelihoods

Polishing Shoes



Declining Livelihoods

Nilima in the Temple of Service

A professional by training, Nilima Khetan, has made her way into the development sector. Her 25 years of development work have not only contributed in bringing a significant change in the lives of the poor with whom she worked, but also contributed in bringing more number of professionals into the sector.

Nilima Khetan was born in Delhi on August 3, 1961. She completed her B.Com Honors from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University in 1982. Later she moved to Institute of Rural Management, Anand to complete her MBA. On completion of MBA, she joined an NGO called Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), a leading NGO in the country which was at that time trying to bring professionals into the voluntary sector, as a Project Executive in the year 1984.

In 1984-85, she went to Anand Niketan Ashram, Vadodara district on an assignment from PRADAN to professionalize their work culture and also to start some income generating activities including patch work, banana fiber production and acrylic fiber weaving etc. for rural women. While at PRADAN, she did an extensive 'need assessment' exercise which involved visiting various NGOs in the country and assessing 'need' for management skills in the sector. Later she moved to Seva Mandir in the year 1985 to assist the economic empowerment initiatives of the organization while continuing to be on the roles of PRADAN.

Seva Mandir works mainly in natural resource development and sustainability, village development, women's empowerment, early childhood education and health care, continuing education, and children's welfare. Their scope of projects has allowed them to affect 70,000 households and 300,000 residents in the Udaipur and Rajsamand districts. Nilima Khetan worked on the setting up of the new forestry program in Seva Mandir, which later on grew to become one of the largest initiatives within the organization and also simultaneously responsible for all field operations in one out of the five geographic areas in which Seva Mandir is working. In her early years at Seva Mandir, she became role model and magnet for highly qualified people to join Seva Mandir and work in remote villages. She has also pioneered a style of working that enabled professionals, villagers and locally recruited staff to combine their skills and expertise. In December, 1992 she resigned from PRADAN and moved on to the roles of Seva Mandir. Thereafter, she looked after the Planning, Research and Training division of Seva Mandir which is called as People's Management School.

Nilima Khetan became the Chief Executive of Seva Mandir in the year 1999 where she is responsible for leading a team of 300 colleagues. She is responsible for the overall effectiveness of and coherence within Seva Mandir programs, and for representing Seva Mandir at various external forums. Under her leadership, Seva Mandir has achieved the status of one of the leading NGOs in the country, not only because of its size but also because it has been able to develop strategies in respect to organizational issues and programmatic work that are significantly

impacting the well-being of deprived people. Today Seva Mandir's work encompasses the area of governance, enhancing natural resource development and enterprise promotion to strengthen livelihoods and human capabilities like health, education and women's empowerment and extends to nearly 600 tribal villages.

While carrying on the responsibilities at Seva Mandir, Nilima has also served as the Acting Director of IRMA, Anand from 2006 June to May-200. At that time, IRMA was going through a leadership crisis and as a Board Member, she was asked to oversee this transition and prepare the ground for a new leadership to take over. This task, which she handled for one year, added a lot to her understanding of the challenges of revitalizing institutions.

Apart from her involvement with Seva Mandir, she is also on the boards of several other organizations like the Institute of Financial Management and Research, Chennai; the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur; Gram Vikas, Orissa; WASSAN, Hyderabad; and several others. She was a Member of the first National Standing Committee of CAPART for Watershed Development; a Member of Planning Commission's Joint Machinery for Collaborative Relationship between the Government and the Voluntary Sector and more recently a member of Central Government's Committee on Land Reforms.

Being the board member of several institutions, she has been involved in various activities like addressing the issues of gender and drinking water, girls education, women's empowerment, problems of sanitation and water, promoting innovations that positively impact the environment, issues of watershed and land development, microfinance, encouraging voluntarism in the country.

Nilima Khetan finds immense satisfaction in doing things perfectly, however small the task is, and also in putting public resources to proper use. Working in Seva Mandir brought her in contact with many people and by working with all of them, her self-understanding as a person and as a development worker has improved which she feels as her greatest achievement.

For her sustained contributions to the field of development, she has been nationally recognized. She was awarded the Laxmipat Singhania-IIM Lucknow National Leadership award for young leaders by India's Prime Minister in December 2006. In March 2007, she received the Maharana Mewar Award from the Maharana Mewar Foundation, for work of permanent value to society.

'To be effective, one has to learn humility in recognizing that it takes all kind of people to make headway in bringing about changes in society' is what she believes. She understands that alleviating poverty and improving governance is a daunting task and one is required repeatedly to question one's deeply held views on how it might be done. Her long and hard journey of self-reflection and relentless engagement in the field gained her many insights and with these learnings she is moving ahead to make a difference in the lives of people with whom she is working. ■

Books

Book Summary

Name: **The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights**

Author: **Irene Khan**

Publisher: **W.W. Norton & Company**



The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights, Irene Khan's book seeks to give a broad understanding of the primary factors underpinning global poverty. Having become the first Asian and the first Muslim to assume the position as head of Amnesty International, Irene Khan has travelled the world, worked as a lawyer and for the United Nations as a High Commissioner. A native of Bangladesh, it is Khan's experience in dealing with all matters concerning human rights that underpins her views in the book.

In her book, Irene Khan seeks to show that the poor people of the world are perpetually deprived of their basic rights and denied social economic and political justice because the state missionary is corrupt and sometimes directly involved in repression. Khan gives many examples which justify her claim and one of particular notoriety is that of the Bangladeshi gypsies. In Bangladesh, Khan points out that, 500,000 gypsies or nomadic people (Bede) are excluded from all government health and educational programmes. Nearly all Bede women are illiterate this is despite education

and healthcare being *fundamental* human rights according to Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As the book progresses Irene Khan narrates a more vivid picture, and a stronger argument that abuse of human rights is symptomatic to poverty. The former lawyer pinpoints the marginalized 'Untouchable' communities in India who still experience terrible social exclusion thus perpetuating their endemic poverty. Likewise, Khan affirms that there is close relation between violence and poverty among poor women.

In the book, Irene Khan is at her outspoken and devoted best as she rallies against the *Millennium Development Goals* and insists that they fail to address the key issues of discrimination. Further, she points out that it is not enough to know what proportion of the population suffers from hunger, has clean water or dies from malaria. According to Khan, creating laws that protect basic human rights is the first crucial step of all besides from legal empowerment and ensuring the poor to organize. In the book Khan insists that individual countries should launch a global human rights action plan. Khan's powerful writing style, persuasive arguments and idealistic nature stands out in *The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights*.

Moreover, all issues ranging from accountability, emancipation, slavery and global efforts are touched upon. Khan ends the book by coincidentally pointing out that all key moments in history right from eclipse of apartheid, end of colonialism, the abolition of slavery, the suffrage movement and the fall of the Berlin Wall all came about when poor people had their undeniable rights respected. Further, she points out that the struggle to end poverty is no less momentous and it is this generation's great struggle which is going to achieve it. She affirms that it can only possible when freedom, justice and equality are respected and provided for. Those are the final concluding remarks of Irene Khan in her landmark book on the elimination of poverty. ■

New Books

Name: **Tourism as a socially sustainable tool for rural development**

Author: **Pietari Sajaniemi**

Publisher: **LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing**



Name: **Analysis of Nongovernmental Organization in Rural Development**

Author: **Lawrence Maumbi Michelo**

Publisher: **LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing**



Child Rights and Welfare Programmes in India

The United Nations (UN) International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression is observed on June 4th each year. The purpose of the day is to acknowledge the pain suffered by children throughout the world who are the victims of physical, mental and emotional abuse. This day affirms the UNs commitment to protect the rights of children. In India as per the 2001 census, the population of children (below 18 years) was 42.2 crores out of which around 17 crores, i.e. 40% of the children, are vulnerable or experiencing difficult circumstances. In 1992 the Government of India ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which prescribes standards to be adhered to by all state Parties in securing the best interest of the child. It lays emphasis on social re-integration of children in need of care and protection as well as children in conflict with law, without resorting to stringent judicial proceedings and the importance of the family in building a nurturing environment for the child.

India reiterated its commitment to the cause of the children through various policy initiatives which are as follows.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

ICDS is being implemented by Ministry of women and child development. It is the world largest programme aimed at enhancing the health, nutrition and learning opportunities of infants, young children(0-6 Years) and their lactating Mothers. Its is the foremost symbol of providing pre School education as one hand and breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, mobility and mortality on the other hand. The scheme provides an integrated approach for converging basic services through community based workers and helpers. The package of services includes supplementary nutrition, immunization, Health Check-ups, referral services, pre-school non formal education, and Health education.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000

This Act was passed in consonance with the UN Convention on the rights of the child. The focus of this act is to provide for the proper care, protection and treatment of the child's development needs and adopts a child friendly approach. Section 29 of the act empowers the state governments to constitute Child Welfare Committees (CWC) for such areas as they may deem fit and it also outlines the powers and procedures of the committees to be followed. Section 31 empowers these committees the ultimate authority to dispose of the cases. Under section 34, a state government can establish and maintain child homes for the care and protection of children independently. And under section 39, the objective of the child home or shelter is the restoration and protection of childhood.

The child helpline (1098)

The Child Helpline was started by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 1996 as an emergency and toll-free number for children in distress to seek help.

Children can seek support or pass on information from the public telephone booths of the BSNL without emptying their pockets. The helpline facility is available in 67 cities across the country and is run in association with nearly 250 non-governmental organizations.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

In order to ensure child rights practices and in response to India's commitment to UN declaration to this effect, the government of India set up a National Commission for Protection of child Rights. The Commission is a statutory body notified under an Act of the Parliament on December 29, 2006. Besides the chairperson, it will have six members from the fields of child health, education, childcare and development, juvenile justice, children with disabilities, elimination of child labour, child psychology or sociology and laws relating to children. The Commission has the power to inquire into complaints and take *suo motu* notice of matters relating to deprivation of child's rights and non-implementation of laws providing for protection and development of children among other things. Aimed at examining and reviewing the safeguards provided by the law to protect child rights, the Commission will recommend measures for their effective implementation. It will suggest amendments, if needed, and look into complaints or take *suo motu* notice of cases of violation of the constitutional and legal rights of children. The Commission is to ensure proper enforcement of child rights and effective implementation of laws and programmes relating to children- enquiring into complaints and take *suo motu* cognizance of matters relating to deprivation of child rights; non-implementation of laws providing for protection and development of children and non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions aimed at their welfare and announcing relief for children and issuing remedial measures to the state governments. ■

God in the Poor

The needs of the poor are basic and fundamental in nature like food to eat; a shelter to live etc. The poor strive hard to earn their living and satisfy their needs. The poor can appreciate and can relate to others needs which are basic and fundamental because the poor themselves, are deprived of their basic needs many a time. Here is a true event which occurred when Swami Vivekananda was touring Khetri town in Rajasthan to give sermons about the importance of Vedas and Hindu religion.

The people of khetri (Rajasthan) came streaming to see the young Sanyasi. They came in the morning and noon. They flocked in the evening and stayed till dawn. They listened to what the young Sanyasi, Swami Vivekananda, had to say. This went on for three days and three nights. None thought of the needs of Swamiji. He did not have any food or drink for three days. Yet the Swamiji did not show the slightest irritation.

At last, when the Swamiji was alone, a cobbler came and fell prostrate before him. Swamiji lifted him. The cobbler said, "Swami, you have had no food for three days you have not even taken a glass of water during this period. Strange that none of your devotees thought of your needs".

Then swamiji smiled and asked the cobbler "can you give me something to eat?"

The cobbler was taken aback. He was a cobbler, he was an 'untouchable'. How could he feed the Swamiji?

Swami Vivekananda realized what was troubling the poor man. He said again, "can't you give me something to eat?"

The cobbler replied, "I will get you flour. I will get you lentil. Please cook them yourself. I can't provide you cooked food. I am a cobbler.

"But, my friend, I can't cook food. I am bound by a vow. I am observing a monastic vow. I shall not touch fire so long as I am observing the vow," Swami Vivekananda told the cobbler.

The cobbler did not know what to do. He was at his wit's end. He knew that everyone in Khetri would be angry with him if he fed the Swamiji. The maharaja of khetri might put him in jail if he learnt of his act.

The cobbler pleaded with Swamiji. He explained the danger he faced. "I know my friend. But you need not be afraid. I shall tell no one. And even if the maharaja comes to know of this, I will tell him that I asked you for food. Right?" swamiji said in a soft tone. Then he added, get me chapattis. I am

very hungry. Hurry my friend. I am just waiting for home made chapattis," Swamiji said in all earnestness.

The cobbler hurried to his hut. Swami Vivekananda was deeply touched by the devotion of the poor cobbler. None in the town had thought of his needs. And he had told none of his needs. For he had abiding faith that god would bring him someone to feed him. He saw god in the cobbler. He saw god in the Daridranarayana that the cobbler was. He wanted to share the food prepared by the cobbler. Thus, he assured himself that he had no prejudices of caste or creed. He loved all humans.

Swami Vivekananda was thinking along these lines when the cobbler appeared. He came forward, rather hesitantly. He still seemed to have reservations. He was still wondering whether he was doing the right thing by bringing the chapattis to the sanyasi.

"Ah, you have come. I hope you have brought the chapattis," swami Vivekananda seemed eager to get hold of the chapattis.

"Here they are Swamiji, a poor man's offerings. A cobbler's offering. But...but..." the man could not speak any more, as emotions gripped him.

"Ah...these chapattis...they are delicious..." Swami Vivekananda took a few morsels and told the cobbler, thank you friend. Thank you." Tears coated his eyes.

The cobbler stood and watched while Swami Vivekananda ate the chapattis.

Then Swami Vivekananda held out his hand, touched the cobbler's head, and said in a voice, filled with

emotions. "Thousands of such large hearted men like you live in lowly huts. And we despise them as low castes, as untouchables."

The cobbler fell prostrate before the Swamiji.

The cobbler went back, happy. He had played host to such a great man. Swami Vivekananda watched him till he was out of sight. Then he felt an inner peace descending on him. He had gained a glimpse of the hospitality of the poor. They were humane. There was nothing lowly about them. Swamiji saw God in the poor and the lowly. And he sought redemption by serving the poor and the lowly.

The poor may not be 'intellectuals' in philosophy, religion, so called purity-impurity etc., but they are sensitive to the most fundamental and non-negotiable needs of their fellow beings. They have lessons to teach and others have lessons to learn. ■



Temporary Migration

While several studies exist on the issue of migration, studies on temporary migration are less in number. The data published by NSSO in its report No.470 (Round 55, 1999-2000) on the subject of temporary migration is informative in this context. A few statistics from this report are being published to highlight the issue of temporary migration.

NSSO indicates temporary migration as “staying away from present usual place of residence for 60 days or more for employment /better employment or in search of employment”.

Estimated number of temporary migrants for employment or in search of employment					
(number in 00)					
Major states	Rural		Urban		All
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Haryana	1010	688	689	109	2496
Assam	1494	999	297	144	2934
Punjab	1294	1127	587	356	3364
Orissa	2277	1065	177	40	3559
Rajasthan	2624	710	520	397	4251
Kerala	2065	1531	677	519	4792
Tamil Nadu	2169	1382	1079	618	5248
Gujarat	3675	1940	249	153	6017
Karnataka	2841	2505	764	539	6649
West Bengal	4732	1837	683	583	7835
Bihar	6071	1897	698	338	9004
Andhra Pradesh	3106	2886	1578	1598	9168
Maharashtra	3897	2614	1876	791	9178
Madhya Pradesh	8103	5615	905	509	15132
Uttar Pradesh	7815	3307	3781	2245	17148
All- India	53921	30620	15003	9181	108725

The following table shows distribution of 'persons temporarily staying away for employment' by social group and the number of such persons per 1000 persons of different household social groups (All India)

Social group	Distribution	Number per 1000 persons of the category					
		Rural			Urban		
		Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Scheduled tribe	17	30	20	25	10	7	8
Scheduled caste	20	16	10	13	11	5	8
Other back-ward class	33	13	7	10	17	12	15
Other	29	13	7	10	10	7	9
All	100	15	9	12	12	8	10

The table indicates that a larger percentage of ST community from rural areas migrate in search of employment where as in Urban areas it is the OBCs who migrate the most. ■

Out of Poverty

Multiple Livelihoods Help!

Lakshmi belongs to Kincherla village in Bikanore Mandal of Nizamabad district in Andhra Pradesh. Seven years after her marriage, her husband fell ill who was the only earning person of the family. When he fell ill, she had to take the responsibility of the entire family on her shoulders.

As advised by one of her neighbors Lakshmi joined in a Self Help Group (SHG) under Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP). Lakshmi had four acres of agriculture land in which she used to grow paddy. The income from agriculture was to be invested back in to the fields as there was no specific profit from the agriculture. As an alternative source of livelihood, she started to work as a cook in a primary school. She was receiving a salary of 1500/- per month as a cook. In her leisure time mostly in the afternoon she used to roll beedis and was able to get one thousand rupees approximately by selling beedis. Even then, she could not meet all the expenses like medical bills for her husband, children education expenses and household expenses. Because of the financial constraints, children could not continue their studies beyond 10th class.

To make her ends meet, Lakshmi bought a buffalo by taking loan from the SHG. The buffalo gave 6 to 7 liters of milk per day. From then on wards Lakshmi's family's financial position improved compared to the previous times. Gradually she repaid the loan; again she took a loan amounting to 30,000 from the SHG and bought an auto for her son. As running auto was profitable she was able to pay back the loan amount and also bought a buffalo from the profit earned. Further, as there was a lot of water scarcity in the village and water had to be brought from far off places, so she bought a tractor for the purpose of water transportation and employed her younger son for this purpose. She also used the tractor for cultivation. Along with the agriculture work, her elder son earns from auto and younger one from the tractor. She got her both sons married.

In spite of the improved economic condition, Lakshmi is always busy with her multiple livelihoods. Now Lakshmi's entire family (husband, two sons, two daughter-in-laws and one grandson) is leading a happy life. ■

Broken Lives

Lack of Foresight Hurts!

Nagaraju belongs to Banda Kottur village of Gudipalli mandal in Chittoor district of AP. He has a wife and two children. Nagaraju got one and half acre of dry land from his father in which he used to grow bengalgram and ragi. By the time he started agriculture, there was no irrigation facility to his field and he used to depend on a well for irrigation as many farmers in that village depend on that particular well for irrigation purposes. From agriculture he used to earn about Rs 5000 per annum. Whenever there were no agriculture works, he and his wife used to work as labourers in others' fields through which their family used to get about Rs 1000 per month. Nagaraju and his wife are not spendthrifts and hence they were able to save good amounts of money from whatever they had earned. With those savings they constructed a house to live in and also bought one cow for milking and one ox for agriculture purpose. They also joined their children in good school.

The income that was coming from agriculture, labour works, and milk was sufficient for them to lead a decent quality of life. As Nagaraju was getting reasonable returns from agriculture and also good income from labour works, he dared to buy another one acre of land by mortgaging his old land in the bank. He also dug a bore well in that land. He got good income for 3-4 years. He was able to release his mortgaged land from the bank during this period only.

However, later the water in the bore well gradually declined as the ground water levels depleted in that area. Nagaraju thought of digging another bore well in the same field. With the help of a local geologist, he identified a place to dig bore well and got that work done with an investment of Rs 30000. But this time the newly dug bore well did not give any fruitful results as there was no ground water at all. But Nagaraju did not understand this fact and he thought of digging another bore well in some other place but that also became a waste investment. He dug bore wells in 3-4 places in the same way. But all his efforts were in vain. No bore well had given him water required for irrigation. Every time Nagaraju invested some Rs 30000 towards digging bore well by taking loans from either bank or private money lenders. But all the money invested has gone waste. Meanwhile his previous bore which he used initially for irrigation also completely dried up. Now Nagaraju is completely dependent on rain for irrigation. If there are no rains for even one year, Nagaraju and his family struggle to even feed their children.

Now Nagaraju's family is surviving mostly on the income that is coming from the sale of milk. From that meager income they are trying to repay their debts which they made for digging bore wells. Nagaraju is now regretting the mistakes he made in the life with his shortsightedness. ■

'Yoga'kshemam

From Mothers' Day to Fathers' Day!

We have not shown any concern for World Fair Trade Day (2nd Saturday of May - 8 May)! May be we are not so concerned about 'fair trade'!

Apart from World No Tobacco Day (31 May), World Environment Day (5 June), and Fathers' Day (Third Sunday in June - 20 June), the month also allowed International Children's Day (1 June), and World Day against Child Labor (12 June) to go by! World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (17 June) and UN Public Service Day (23 June) are in the anvil. World Music Day (21 June) is reminding us of music's ways of inspiring, celebrating, solitude, healing, soul searching and losing oneself in the innermost!

Students are back in schools!

Continued to live in the universe of the institutions of the poor, needs of the poor and the efforts to meeting the needs of the poor! Still appreciating the architecture of institutions and their entire gamut of existing and potential activities! Vulnerable communities continued to 'engage' us! Education -Employment-Entrepreneurship-Enterprise value-chain(s) have been consuming our time! SHGs vs JLGs, mF vs mF+, Livelihoods, Leaders, Collectives, Social enterprises, Elders, Differently-abled, networks and consortiums, continued to dominate our thinking space, as always, in this month also.

Stepped up the processes of finalizing and taking forward the business plans for L-info units, all of them including magazine(s), books, news centre(s), portal(s) and channel (s)! Project Design and Planning processes for taking the processes of building and leveraging the institutions of the poor for their better livelihoods and lives are gaining momentum!

As I struggle to cope with the repercussions of practicing 'thought silence', I need to learn to practice and appreciate the variety of hues, dimensions and planes that co-exist, co-evolve and co-guide me(us) and respond. Flows beyond 2011 continue to evolve with these efforts and 'inner' guidance.

2010-11 is dedicated to figuring out a coherent way for continual development of 'offering' - architecture, products and services, processes, contours - and plans of action (for serving the purpose of being useful). The processes of reflection, exploration, arguments and dialogues have picked-up momentum.

Being useful, would force us to explore who I am. When we are not body, mind, feelings, thoughts, actions, etc., although we have all of these, who are we? Is it soul or some core inner unit within that has some vision? Vision of being useful! Giving love, happiness and knowledge! Interestingly being useful lets you grow so that you become more useful.

A metaphysican, Florence Shinn in her 'The Game of Life' summed up some ways forward for being useful:

- * Nothing stands between man and his highest ideals and every desire of his heart, but doubt and fear.
- * Have absolute faith in the vision, absolute active faith and work accordingly

- * Help others to hold on to the vision
- * Thought → Feelings → Articulation → Action → Realized Vision; so focus on the vision always, vision of what is desired rather than what is not desired
- * Nothing can resist an absolutely non-resistant person
- * Now is the right time; live suspended in the moment; obey the law, law serves you
- * Forgetting and forgiving is part of giving and forgiving oneself is part of forgiving
- * Love; Love whatever you do or do whatever you love
- * Follow intuition, hunches, urges as they point the way
- * Do not pre-judge others' intentions
- * Faith is an effort of the will
- * There is for each person, perfect self-expression - something s/he is to do, which no one else can do
- * Accept what comes your way cheerfully

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, we constantly urge for and seek yoga, playing to the tunes of the 'innermost'. This is reflected in our urge to be one - in silence, seeing, listening, talking, arguing, touching, exploring, sharing, doing ... this is part of evolving, transforming and transcending into higher order oneness.

This is how we are challenging ourselves every second together or otherwise. Mutuality guides us in all things we do including words and actions. We need to unfold our vision, and practice towards it. No exceptions. Seeking is not exclusion. All flow in the flow. Our vision and purpose is being useful. For this, we have to become a tool. A tool that sharpens itself with learning and using (practicing, writing ...). Needs, levels and needs of urge towards these needs fluctuate with time, practice and realization. When in ring, we can only continue to fight (seek)! We are in the ring of yoga.

We need to appreciate that we are living beings with myriad shortcomings and weaknesses. In the confluence of our flows, we delete some, erase some, modify some, and cleanse one another with care and diligence. That is one way to nurture and aid our flows and the flows of the universe. The capacity to be useful comes from being one in all our dimensions - physical, mental, emotional and in consciousness - with the 'innermost'. That is one way to evolve.

Can we evolve and be there? **Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga.** In essence, Atma Yoga is constant seeking of truth (knowledge and reflection), complete devotion and surrender to the universe, and dedicated pursuit of action for being useful. In relentless pursuit of being in viswagaanayogaamritam!

Krishna confirms - wherever the mentor and mentee work together, there is yoga and victory. Guaranteed! We become siddha atma.

Join us in the world of yoga - in all dimensions of our being and innermost - towards viswagaanayogamritasiddhi. You will not regret it. ■

G Muralidhar

Welcoming the Rains

