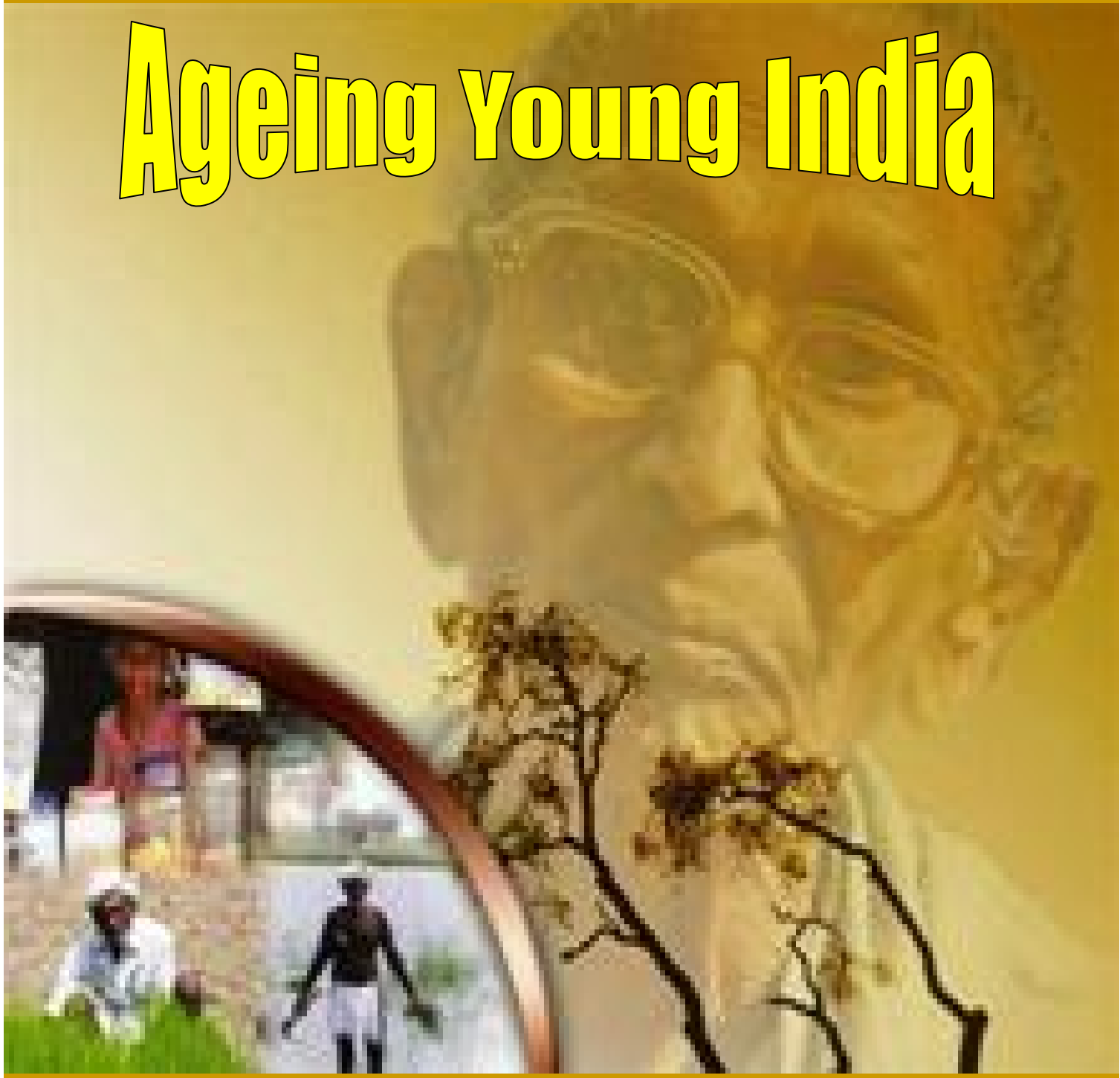


# livelihoods

*today and tomorrow*

March 2008

# Ageing Young India





Happy Valentine's Day, Happy Budgets, Happy Leap Year!

As the thought of Gandhi's death 60 years ago, is lingering in our minds, we hear the news that tireless 93 year social worker and Gandhian, our dear Baba Amte (Murlidhar Devdas Amte) has expired. All awards except BharatRatna have reached him. Scores of development workers found support from him. He went and settled in the first village that was to get drowned under Sardar Sarovar project and did not move. He walked across the country leading Bharat Jodo movement. Two youth submitted themselves to him as a gift on his birthday. Great Soul! His message .....multiple lives in one life. He will continue to live through all of us.

All the budgets presented have an unmistakable election flavor. It is a revelation to us that between the Union and the States, Budgets account for near to 50 per cent of the GDP. Our GDP is growing largely through services and manufacturing drivers. Lot of money has been allocated for decreasing the expenditure of the poor in terms of the food. Considerable money has been allocated for universal primary education. Investments are proposed to flow for building institutions of excellence. Realizing the need for building the skills of the people to capture new opportunities a massive skill building mission is on the anvil.

Absorbing railway porters into railways will open up lot of opportunities for lot of poor getting remunerative railway porter licenses.

Universal pension to the poor old and researching into ageing has received attention.

Community health and nutrition got significant emphasis and cutting edge workers got increased remuneration.

Watershed development works have disappeared. There is an assumption that SEZs will give employment.

As expected income tax slab rate has been increased to satisfy the middle class Indians. Farmers got loan waivers. NREGA extended to all the 596 rural districts. It is to be realized that schemes don't give votes, but promises will. The promises that are realistic; the history that had delivered promises. When one forgets promises, when one finds lame excuses not to deliver promises one will not get votes.

Being old is a blessing. We invest our first 40-45 years towards becoming old and being there. This the stage in between Grihastha Ashram and Vanaprastha Ashram. This is a stage in which one has accumulated wisdom and one evolves a plan to live a meaningful life. One slows down a bit from the hurry burry of the earlier days and relaxes. One connects with kids, connects with people. One works towards one's supreme purpose. Life expectancy has increased, the period of working has increased. If only we can make some little changes in the way we work, if only we have some tools, some skills, some give and take we will be able to make this long period of being old into a beautiful phase of life.

When we were discussing with Bhoodan Pochampally Ikkat Handloom weavers, the conclusion was that there is no alternative but to buy collectively and sell collectively. If their interaction with the market increases and designs are changed at faster pace in line with the market needs there will be no looking back for them. In this context we may have to still understand the implications and impact of quickly developing Pochampally Handloom Park. This might have lessons for handloom workers in the country.

March 8th reminds us that women still have a long way to go in attaining gender equity in terms of ability, in terms of control on money and control on their own lives. Can we do something about it.

In our journey of livelihoods, we still need to add Livelihoods Yatras in our Livelihoods Orientation Campaigns. Then only we will be able to understand livelihoods elephants and livelihoods ants better. Your understanding, your thought, your encouragement will strengthen us. Please remember.

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

G. Muralidhar  
the 'livelihoods' team

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# Response

We present the readers' response here.

I have been following livelihoods magazine for some time and I find it very interesting enough to act.

Chandu Krishnamurthy

The different flavours in the magazine makes it an interesting read. It has something for all in the development sector.

Balasubrahmanian

Akshara team deserves praise for their excellent effort at capturing the struggles and successes of working people for a dignified livelihood. Two suggestions - less text and more visuals will be good and text should be less tightly packed.

Gopinath K Parakuni

The magazine gives us a different perspective than what we are exposed to till now.

Sandeep

Very useful magazine for us. Livelihoods angle is good.

Dr. Sujit Kumar Paul

Nice magazine. I uploaded on my website and in a day we had close to 300 downloads. Good job. Keep up the quality work.

Vikash

## Contributions Solicited

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

Email address is [akshara@aksharakriti.org](mailto:akshara@aksharakriti.org) ; please include "livelihoods Contribution" in the subject line .  
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***Go in search of your people,  
Love them  
Learn from them  
Plan with them  
Serve them  
Begin with what they know  
Build on what they have  
- Lao Tzu (5000 B.C.)***

**e-Governance News** - 11th National Conference on e-Governance took place in Haryana. Jabalpur district collectorate in MP received the National Golden Icon Award for its telephonic payment service, at the conference. The award is meant for innovative use of technology in e-governance.

The Center is planning to computerize 2.5 lakh gram Panchayats in the next three years.

Under National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) one lakh Common Service Centers (CSC) will be set up in six lakh villages across India. These CSCs would be internet enabled and would be linked to various government departments.

Burdwan district in West Bengal is India's first e-governed Panchayat.

**World Development Report 2008** - The theme of the report is Agriculture and Development. According to the report the public investment on agriculture in countries like India is heavily tilted towards subsidies than investment. Subsidies are four times that of public investment in agriculture. Subsidies should pay attention to market development, equity and exit strategy.

The World Bank in its report called for moving towards 'new agriculture' with dynamic demand for high value crops, non-traditional exports, horticulture, poultry, livestock, fish and dairy products which can increase the income of the farmers. The report recommended reduced taxes on agriculture and extension of institutional and technological innovations. It advocated the role of private sector, producer organizations and increased public-private partnership. All this requires more investments to improve farm yields and rural infrastructure like irrigation, power, roads, markets etc;

**Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS)** - The focus of this year's summit was 'Sustainable Development and Climate Change'. Speaking at the summit the President of World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) said there can be no sustainable world without a sustainable India and China. He said India should engage in building an international framework to tackle

climate change without sacrificing the country's development goals. The PM of India, Manmohan Singh called for a fair, equitable and transparent international regime to address climate change.

**Social Audit of NREGS** - According to a study conducted by WB on the impact of social audit in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), 95 per cent of the labourers engaged in the program, wanted to conduct social audit on their own. The study was conducted in six mandals of Khammam, Medak and Kadapa. As per the study the social audit has significant and lasting effect on citizen's awareness levels and enhances their bargaining power and offers them new opportunity.

**Rs.13000 crore to Bihar** - The Planning Commission approved a plan of Rs.13000 crore to Bihar for 2008-09. The plan will concentrate on bringing improvements in the areas of power, roads, irrigation, forestry and watershed development. Social sector will also get attention.

**Development Projects for Arunachal** - Rs.10000 crore package has been announced towards development projects for Arunachal Pradesh. The package includes 1840 km highway, 3000 MW power project which will be the country's biggest hydel project and 110 MW Pare power project. Also announced were new rail links, airport and water supply projects

**NABARD Funds Rural Infrastructure** - The funds will cover 252 rural infrastructure projects. These projects are sanctioned under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund. The projects include 116 roads and bridges, two water supply schemes in Nalgonda and Kadapa districts, 14 minor irrigation projects in Adilabad, Karimnagar, Nalgonda and Nellore districts, 19 lift irrigation and 101 bio-diesel plantations in 16 districts.

**New Maize Hybrid Vivek QPM-9** - Quality Protein Maize (QPM) hybrid was developed by Vivekananda Institute of Hill Agriculture in Uttarakhand. This variety of maize matures in 90 days. It has 90 per cent of milk protein and will supplement the nutritional needs of the poor greatly. Maize ranks fifth in terms of acreage

and third in production in India. The existing variety of maize is deficient in essential amino acids and QPM is expected to fill that gap.

**World Cancer Day** - February 4th is commemorated as World Cancer Day. In India cervical cancer accounts for 34 per cent of cancers in women especially rural women. This problem is turning to be a socio-economic problem with gender overtones. The male spouse are under the misconception that the disease would spread to them. Women are being treated as an outcast. The reasons for the cancer can be many factors like unhygienic conditions, early marriages, repeated child births and promiscuous sexual partners. Shame and stigma prevent the women from seeking early medical help.

A new vaccine that protects against the infection caused by human papilloma virus (HPV) mainly responsible for cervical cancer will be supplied free of cost by World Health Organization (WHO). HPV is the cause of 90 per cent of cervical cancers.

**Rural Students to get World Class IT Education** - Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Sciences will have three centers in AP - Adilabad, Krishna and Kadapa. Each centre is set up at a cost of Rs.1200 crore. These centers will impart technical education and skills to about 6000 rural students each year. The students will be admitted after SSC and the duration of the course will be six years.

**Tobacco Epidemic** - According to World Health Organization (WHO) report, Global Tobacco Epidemic 2008 a billion people using tobacco can die in 21st century. Governments around the world get more than 200 billion USD as tobacco taxes but spend less than 1 per cent of that revenue towards tobacco control. The report also stated that India has the second largest number of smokers in the world.

**World military expenditure** - According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) the world military expenditure in 2006 is estimated to be \$1204 billion. This is 3.5 per cent more than in 2005. According to UN estimates during this period the collective spending towards peacekeeping was only half of 1%.

**Bt Cotton** - India had the largest area in the world under Bt cotton. The crop is planted on 6.2 million hectares of land. The country is the fifth largest grower of genetically modified crops by area. Among the states Maharashtra topped with 2.8 million hectares followed by AP, Gujarat, MP and others.

**Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY)** - Under 11th Plan rural electrification received boost with allocation of Rs.28000 crore. 9 Ultra Mega Power Projects are in the pipeline. Electrification of habitations with a population of 100 will take place. Electricity will be supplied for a minimum of 6 to 8 hours in the villages. Electrification of border disturbed districts will be taken up on priority basis.

**Moving into Cities** - According to UN projections half of the world's people will live in urban areas by the end of 2008. About 70 per cent will be city dwellers by 2050. There will be 27 megacities by the middle of this century. In India currently 29 per cent of the population lives in urban areas. Projections show that by 2050 this will increase to 55 per cent. India will still be less urbanized than China which is expected to have 70 per cent of its population in urban areas by 2050.

**NSSS-2008** - National Space Science Symposium held in Udhagamandalam highlighted the alarming retreat of Himalayan glaciers. There is overall reduction of 21 per cent in the glacial surface area. The process of deglaciation led to fragmentation of large glaciers resulting in the reduction in the mean surface area of glacial extent. The snowline (altitude above which there is no snowmelt) is increasing. Winter run-off is increasing.

**Global Forum on Agro-Industries** - India will host the first global conference on agro-industries in April this year in New Delhi. The conference will be held from 8th through 11th. The conference is jointly organized by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The forum will promote the importance of agro-industries for economic development and poverty reduction. The forum will also encourage dialogue

between private and public sector in order to foster partnerships for developing competitive agro-industries. The participants will include representatives from agro-industry, governments, technical and financial institutions, civil society and UN agencies.

**AP Credit Potential** - The State Focus Paper prepared by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has estimated the total credit potential under priority sector for Andhra Pradesh during 2008-09 at Rs.42,460 crore. This is 15.2 per cent more than the projection for 2007-08.

**Low-Equality Growth Country** - The Director of United Nations Research Institute for Social Development during his visit to India stated that India has entered high growth bracket, the number of poor are reducing but the inequality is increasing. He stated that Indian's economic growth should related with social development. He said some low-income growth and less democratic countries have more number of kids going to school than in India.

**10.37 per cent growth in AP** - According to estimates released by Central Statistical Organization (CSO) Andhra Pradesh has a growth rate of 10.32 per cent for the year 2007-08. The growth rate achieved in agricultural sector is 10.37 per cent, in industrial sector it is 9.88 per cent and 11.57 per cent in services sector.

**Firemen to handle disaster** - About 5000 firemen in Andhra Pradesh will be trained in disaster management. These men will be called State Disaster Management Response Force and will undertake rescue and relief operations during natural disasters. They will also be involved in restoration program to reclaim infrastructure facilities like roads and tanks destroyed during the calamity. Four teams of Disaster Management Response Force will be formulated with headquarters at Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada and Tirupati.

**Urban Health Mission** - Rs.450 crore Urban Health Mission project will be taken up in Andhra Pradesh to streamline and modernize existing government health-delivery system in twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. New schemes for women and child, fighting

communicable diseases, improving ambulance facilities are being planned. There are 241 medical establishments under government sector in the twin cities and all these function independent of each other. Under Urban Health Mission efforts will be made to bring coordination between these different medical establishments.

**Reduced Tiger Reserves** - The area of the Nagarjunasagar and Srisailem Tiger Reserve has been reduced by over a 1000 sq km. The reserve that has been spread over 3568 sq km in the districts of Prakasam, Kurnool, Nalgonda, Guntur and Mahaboobnagar is now 2527 sq km. The move was initiated following a central government directive to form an expert committee and delineate the critical tiger habitat as per the 2006 amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act. A lot of the removed areas had already been de-notified for mining and irrigation.

**Six Microcredit Messiahs in News** - Harsha Moiley, son of Veerappa Moiley uses microfinance to create a rural market place through his MFI, Mokshayug Access in northwest Karnataka. Manab Chakraborty lends to poor in Uttarakhand in urban and peri-urban areas through Shah Sandhu Finance. Subhankar Sen Gupta is servicing the urban poor in Kolkata through his ANG Resources. Rakesh Dubey, Anup Kumar Singh and Ashish Gupta focus to serve the families below poverty line in groups of up to ten through Sonata Finance in UP and MP. Kishore Kumar Puli is looking beyond microcredit and poor including lending to educational institutions in AP through Annapurna Financial Services. Praseeda Kunam serves in one of India's poorest districts through Samhita Community Development Services. P.N.Vasudevan values speed of delivery through UPDB Microfinance in Chennai.

**Latest Tally of IKP** - The largest poverty reduction project of the world - Indira Kranthi Patham in AP in its briefing to the PM has indicated its latest status as on Dec 1st 2007 - 8.7 million women in 7 lakh SHGs, in 33,747 Village Organizations, 1,083 Mandal Samakhyas and 22 Zilla Samakhyas. In addition 126 mandal level Disabled Federations, 17 Chenchu Federations and 15 Fisherman Federations are in place. This constitutes 25% of all SHGs in the country. ☺

## International Women's Day



*International Women's Day has been observed since in the early 1900's, a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies. In this handout, we are giving a brief background of the International Women's Day, its evolution and current status.*

**1908** - Women's oppression and inequality was spurring women to become more vocal and active in campaigning for change. Then in 1908, 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights.

**1909** - In accordance with a declaration by the Socialist Party of America, the first National Woman's Day (NWD) was observed across the United States on 28 February. Women continued to celebrate NWD on the last Sunday of February until 1913.

**1910** - At a Socialist International meeting in Copenhagen, an International Women's Day of no fixed date was proposed to honour the women's rights movement and to assist in achieving universal suffrage for women. Over 100 women from 17 countries unanimously agreed the proposal. 3 of these women were later elected the first women to the Finnish parliament.

**1911** - Following the decision agreed at Copenhagen in 1911, International Women's Day (IWD) was honoured the first time in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland on 19 March. More than one million women and men attended IWD rallies campaigning for women's rights to work, vote, be trained, to hold public office and end discrimination. In less than a week on 25 March, the a tragic fire in New York City took the lives of more than 140 working women. This event drew significant attention to working conditions and labour legislation in the US. 1911 also saw women's ['Bread and Roses'](#) campaign.

**1913-1914** - On the eve of World War I campaigning for peace, Russian women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February 1913. In 1914 more women across Europe held rallies to campaign against the war and to express women's solidarity.

**1917** - On the last Sunday of February, Russian women began a strike for "bread and peace" in response to the death over 2 million Russian soldiers in war. Opposed by political leaders the women continued to strike until four days later the Czar was forced to abdicate and the provisional Government granted women the right to vote. The date the women's strike commenced was Sunday 23 February on the Julian calendar then in use in Russia. This day on the Gregorian calendar in use elsewhere was 8 March.

**1918 – 1999** - Since its birth in the socialist movement, International Women's Day has grown to become a global day of recognition and celebration across developed and developing countries alike. For many years the UN has held an annual IWD conference to coordinate international efforts for women's rights and participation in social, political and economic processes. 1975 was designated as 'International Women's Year' by the UN. Women's organisations and governments around the world have also observed IWD annually on 8 March.

**2000 – 2007** - IWD is now an official holiday in Armenia, Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The tradition sees men honouring their mothers, wives, girlfriends, colleagues, etc with flowers and small gifts. In some countries IWD has the equivalent status of Mother's Day where children give small presents to their mothers and grandmothers.

The new millennium has witnessed a significant change and attitudinal shift in both women's and society's thoughts about women's equality and emancipation. Many from a younger generation feel that 'all the battles have been won for women'. With more women in the boardroom, greater equality in legislative rights, and an increased critical mass of women's visibility as impressive role models in every aspect of life, one could think that women have gained true equality. The unfortunate fact is that women are still not paid equally to that of their male counterparts, women still are not present in equal numbers in business or politics, and globally women's education, health and the violence against them is worse than that of men.

However, great improvements have been made. We do have female astronauts and prime ministers, school girls are welcomed into university, women can work and have a family, women have real choices. And so the tone and nature of IWD has, for the past few years, moved from being a reminder about the negatives to a celebration of the positives. Annually on 8 March, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate their achievements.

Many global corporations have also started to more actively support IWD by running their own internal events and through supporting external ones. For example, on 8 March search engine and media giant Google even changes its logo on its global search pages. Corporations like HSBC host the UK's largest and longest running IWD event delivered by women's company Aurora. Last year Nortel sponsored IWD activities in over 20 countries and thousands of women participated. Nortel continues to connect its global workforce through a coordinated program of high-level IWD activity, as does Accenture both virtually and offline. Accenture supports more than 2,000 of its employees to participate in its International Women's Day activities that include leadership development sessions, career workshops and corporate citizenship events held across six continents - in eight cities in the United States and in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Spain, South Africa and the UK. Accenture also coordinated an IWD webcast featuring stories about Accenture women worldwide that ran uninterrupted for 30 hours across 11 time zones via Accenture's intranet. Year on year IWD is certainly increasing in status. The United States even designates the whole month of March as 'Women's History Month'.

***So make a difference, think globally and act locally !! Make everyday International Women's Day. Do your bit to ensure that the future for girls is bright, equal, safe and rewarding.***

Nirantara Community Services ☺

## Baba Amte - the 'last' disciple of Gandhi

'Let your sympathy find expression through love backed by action' - these are Baba Amte's words and Baba lived his words. He relentlessly worked in the service of the neglected and poor. His compassion for the leprosy afflicted people knew no bounds. He shared the sufferings of the tribals and stood by them. He worked for India living in unity and peace.

'**Charity Destroys, Work Builds**' – this is the talisman of none other than Baba Amte who spent his long life working for the poor and the needy. Today he is no longer among us physically, but his spirit continues to live in our hearts. Baba's phenomenal service to leprosy patients will be remembered worldwide. He brought dignity to the lives afflicted by leprosy reeling under social stigma; he fought against the exploitation of tribals and brought hope into many more lives. He set the way for others to work hard and live with a purpose.

Born on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1914 in Wardha district of Maharashtra, Murlidhar Devidas Amte, affectionately called Baba Amte comes from a rich family. He studied law and took up lucrative practice in his home district. It was during this time Baba came under the influence of Indian freedom struggle. He became defense lawyer for the freedom fighters and was imprisoned during Quit India movement in 1942. The sufferings of the poor moved Baba Amte immensely. He began to work with sweepers and carriers of night soil. In fact the seeds of social activism got implanted in Baba's life very early on. In spite of the strict norms in the family and society Baba mingled with servants and low caste children with much ease.

Mahatma Gandhi and his ways of life made an indelible impact on Baba Amte. He spent considerable time in Gandhi's Sevagram. He followed the principles of Gandhism the rest of his life and led a Spartan life. He believed in the concept of self sufficient village industry which he actually implemented later in life. He believed in the empowerment of the people and upliftment of the poor. In his fight for the poor in independent India Baba adopted non-violent methods of Gandhi. Often referred to as the last disciple of Gandhi, Baba believes there was no alternative to Mahatma. According to him, Gandhi is more relevant in 21<sup>st</sup> century and Baba hoped that today's neo-Gandhi's will bring the change. Baba's thoughts also reflect the influence he had from Vinoba Bhave, Rabindranath Tagore and Sane Guruji.

Baba Amte, found the struggles of leprosy patients living on the fringes of Warora appalling. He started working with them. He set up weekly clinics to take care of the patients. He took a formal course for leprosy treatment. All these efforts graduated to setting up of Anandwan, the Forest of Joy to socially stigmatized leprosy affected people. Today Anandwan is a self-sufficient sprawling rehabilitation center with over 5000 residents. It has its own university, school for the blind, hospital, orphanage, technical units, dairy and farmlands. Gandhi conferred upon Baba the title Abhayasadhak for his fight against leprosy. Baba also set up tribal and leper-service projects in Somnath in Chandrapur



district and Hemalkasa in Gadchiroli district. He received Damien-Dutton Award, USA, in 1983, the highest international award in the field of leprosy.

According to Baba Amte, the condition of the tribal is worse than those inflicted with leprosy and Purna Swaraj can be possible only when the poorest of the poor is uplifted. In 1973, Baba led a group of young men and set up Lok Biradari Prakalpa (LBP) in Hemalkasa. The area is inhabited by Madia Gond tribals and is characterized by illiteracy, poor health conditions and lack of food. Shifting cultivation was predominantly practiced. The tribals

suffered from malaria and exploitation by forest officials. Today the efforts of LBP resulted in a hospital taking care of more than 40000 patients a year. A residential school for tribals was set up. Apart from formal education the students were taught improved agricultural techniques, some tribal boys were trained as Bare Foot Doctors and other vocational trainings were given. Many tribals have taken up settled agriculture and are growing vegetables along with native varieties. Watershed management projects are in place.

In 1990, Baba moved to Nijibal on the banks of river Narmada and set up his ashram there. He lived and worked amongst the tribals of the area. The spiritual leader of Save Narmada movement Baba joined the agitation against the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. In protest against orders to raise the height of the dam he led the march from MP through Maharastra, Gujarat culminating in Delhi. He received Right Livelihood Award in 1991 along with Medha Patkar for his fight against the displacement of tribals and destruction of environment.

Baba was very disturbed with the disrupting forces of regionalism, communalism and casteism. He launched Bharat Jodo Movement. He marched from Kanyakumari to Jammu covering 5250km. His second march was from Assam to Gujarat. His slogan was 'Raise your hands for construction, not to beg or destroy. Raise your hands in unity to build a New India'. He wanted to establish peace and generate awareness towards environment.

Baba received numerous awards in his lifetime. He was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1985, the United Nations Human Rights Prize in 1988, the Templeton Prize in 1990, Gandhi Peace Prize in 1999 and the list goes on and on. All monetary proceeds from his awards were used for his social projects.

Baba suffered from severe spondylosis and was in bed much of the time. In 2007 he was diagnosed with leukemia. On February 9th this year, Baba passed away in Anandwan. ☹



## Bulk Milk Cooling Units

Generally, interventions in the dairy sub-sector look at breed improvement, fodder development, access to insurance services, provision of veterinary services and linking the surplus milk with the dairy plants.

Experience shows that intervening agencies face several problems during the process of linking of surplus milk with the dairy plants. The problems are particularly acute when the area to be covered by the dairy plant is large, as in the cases of dry land and tribal areas.

Some of the problems are:

- The time of milking (3 am and 2 pm) in the areas from which the milk collection vans start are too inconvenient, both for the animal and the household. The beneficiary household has to lose the wages of other work due to two reasons:
  1. At least one person cannot get adequate sleep during the night.
  2. A person will have to attend to the milch animal before the end of the labour hours and hence forego the wages. It would be difficult for the landlord or factory owner to permit the person to leave early on all days.
- The time is odd and the procedures will have to be completed as quickly as possible so as not to delay the milk transport vehicle. This dilutes the systems on which transparent milk collection at the village is built - the milk testing for Fat and SNF. This starts the vicious circle and the impairment sets in.
  1. The milk testing is given a lip service and the record maintenance becomes irregular.
  2. As the milk producers' cooperative society (MPCS) at the village level cannot function properly in such circumstances, the cooperative become hostage for power politics and government officials, rather than being a vibrant people's institution.
- The souring of milk increases due to the following reasons and reduces the price paid to the dairy farmers further.
  1. The milk collection centre does not get enough time/pay attention to clean the cans.
  2. The time between collection and chilling of milk increases.
  3. The variability of the time taken by the milk collection vans to reach the dairy plant increases.
- The long journeys by the milk collection vehicle also increases the chances of spillage/shortage and adulteration, leading to fat losses. The Secretaries fudge the records as a way of saving face in view of the fat losses.
- In the initial stages of the intervention in the dairy sub-sector, the milk in the evenings is not sufficient to justify the costs of transportation. As a result, only a part of the milk gets sold, reducing the returns to the dairy farmer. This reduces the pace of grounding more milch animals

and weans the dairy farmers away from the improved breeds and towards the non-descript varieties.

The motivation of a good dairy farmer to give quality milk goes down, as the price he gets does not depend on the quality at all. As the dairy farmer gets very low prices from the dairy (either in cooperatives or private service), they start selling the milk to the traditional dudhwallahs. This decreases the viability of the dairy cooperatives and reduces the chances of the banks financing for further increase in the milch animals. The existing animals are sold and the intervention leads to frustration among the development managers.

The bulk milk cooling unit (BMCU), a technological intervention, is the answer to several of these problems. The BMCU consists of a cooling tank used for storing the raw milk collected from the dairy farmers and chilling the same to a temperature of 4 degrees centigrade. The chilled milk is transported to the dairy plant in an insulated tanker. The capacity of the cooling tank is decided considering the availability of the milk in the area and the frequency of the transporting the milk.

As the BMCUs are installed near the target villages, the time between the milking and chilling of milk comes down to about 1 hour. This reduces the chances of souring. The time of collection of milk is not at odd hours of the day, but coincides with the normal milking cycles. This also allows for milk testing, record keeping and supervision of the collection process. As the transport of milk in the cans is over shorter distances, the management of transport becomes easier. As milk is transported from the BMCU to the dairy plant in an insulated tanker, the spillage and fat losses are avoided to a large extent. As the costs of transportation during the first lap are only up to the BMCU and not up to the dairy plant, the evening milk could also be collected, stored in the BMCU and transported to the dairy plant on the next day. This enables procurement of milk on both the times. In this manner, the BMCU solves several problems inherent in dairy intervention in dry land areas.

For BMCU to be successful some elements are key. This includes - adequate availability of water, uninterrupted supply of electricity, good approach road to the village, one person trained in handling milk including hygiene and one technician to handle cooling equipment and other technical issues.

Adopted strategically, the intervention also leads to strengthening of the people's institutions and empowers the dairy farmers in directly dealing with the market. A local federation of the MPCS (as in the case of Anantapur district) or a large MPCS (as in the case of Bangalore) can manage the BMCU. The milk collected in the BMCU can be sold in bulk to dairy plants in private or cooperative sector. In either case, the management committee of the BMCU comes into contact with outsiders and learns about marketing processes and negotiations. All this leads to building the capacities of the dairy farmers and their institutions. ❖

# Engineered Livelihoods Contexts!

February has many significant dates this time around. Valentine's day – 14 February; AP Budget –16 February; Laloo's Rail Budget – 26 February; Chidambaram's Union Budget – 29 February.

93-year tireless social worker and Gandhian, Baba Amte expired on 9th February. He will continue to inspire us!

By the time we go to e-print, we will also see Women's Day – 8 March.

As I write this, I have piled up more than 5 weeks of 70 hours each in a row. 29 February was a bonus as we are in a leap year. Starting with the launch workshop for developing Management Information System for various players in the Cotton Textile Supply Chain, it was a marathon. Towards zero-waste at Pochampally. Satisficing yet grueling 15 days for inducting in program planning and evolving an exciting plan for a decile of India. Spending time at length with a development professional discussing agenda in the livelihoods domain and loading livelihoods agenda onto MF.

Discussing the way forward about Pochampally Ikkat Cluster. Discussing MIS for MF and MIS and ICT with two professionals visiting from Africa (Gambia, Senegal) separately. Preparing A Score of Existence – Context, Path and Work, as reflections of a development worker. Looking at and considering some long-term partnerships. Livelihoods Orientation Campaign. Thinking about Livelihoods Yatra. Days were packed. They were rewarding.

The compelling Vision 2013 that emerged for HelpAge Programs 'HelpAge India develops, demonstrates and uses expertise, experience and resources to animate the stakeholders including older persons to fulfill the needs of 10 million disadvantaged older persons, comprehensively,



across the country. Of these, 200,000 would be covered directly, and 800,000 indirectly through partners; During this process, HelpAge India transforms itself into a predominantly rights-based organization, organizes elders and builds

movement(s) to demand and exercise their rights and entitlements.' has excited both the teams – HelpAge and Akshara. Starting blindfolded and placing a flower in September to the six-monthly plan for transformation and taking back a fruit in February, it was a journey of challenge, excitement, wonder, life, learning, leadership, legacy and love.

Even as development workers we hurt the poor. We hurt them badly. It has been reinforced once again when we subjected ourselves to the ways we subject the poor and marginalized.

Solidarity, advocacy and collectivisation seems to be the mantra for the poor and marginalized – be it women, be it tribals, be it dalits, be it disabled, be it aged, be it farmers, be it weavers, be it garment workers, be it sanitation workers or be it livelihoods workers themselves. The MIS exercises, the discussions on aged and the discussions with weavers endorse this.

## Perspectives

G. Muralidhar

Budgets make an interesting read as we started to see through livelihoods lenses. First come first.

AP Budget. As expected, a true election budget. It talked of a growth rate in GDP beyond 10%. It is interesting to note that more than 40% of the state GDP of 2007-8 is the budget for the year 2008-9. It is more interesting to note that less than 70% of the previous budget actually got used. The trend is likely to continue this year. Budget estimates exceeded thousand billion rupees. It is the second largest state budget in the country behind UP. The major income source is vat tax amounting to a quarter. About 10% comes from land sales. Major allocations, apart from irrigation and Indiramma housing, and salaries, have gone for rural and urban development, Rs.2 a kg rice (and dal and oil), rural roads, pensions, pavalavaddi (0.25% interest) support, education institutions, ambulance and treatment (Rajiv Arogya Sri) etc. The emphasis is on giving directly to the citizen rather investing in sustainable solutions to the problems of the poor.

Largest Rail Budget. Turnover of Rs.81,901 crores and Rs.37,500 crores is the plan. Last year, the return on capital was 21% with an operating ratio of 76%. Senior citizen concession enhanced to 50% (women). Token reduction in passenger fares and freight rates. Important agenda announced include: One time exercise of appointing Railway Porters as gang-men and to other Group D posts. Vision 2025 - roadmap for coming 17 years. IT Vision 2012 - IT applications on a common platform. Public-Private Partnerships for attracting an investment of Rs.1,00,000 crore over the next five years. Commercial use of Railway land. Passenger-friendly and cost-effective and non-inflationary budget from Laloo, as usual.

Largest Union Budget. GDP has risen at 8.7% with drivers being 'services' (10.7%) and 'manufacturing' (9.4%) with inflation under 5%. 55% of GDP is services. It is interesting

to note that Union Budget is about 25% of India's GDP. This coupled with States' Budgets, we might have 50% of the GDP in Budgets. The size of the budget is Rs. 7500 billion (or Rs.7.5 lakh Crores). Of this 32% is planned and the balance is non-plan. The unspent amount in Union Budgets is in the range of 7-8% only.

The Government has launched Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (Rs.25,000 crore) and National Food Security Mission (Rs.4,882 crore) in Eleventh Five-year Plan.

As is the need, the Union Budget focussed on the basic needs through Bharat Nirman – drinking water, roads, housing etc. Education, particularly literacy, universal primary education (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), Mid-day Meals, model schools, etc., have received attention. A portion of the funds also went for higher education – IIMs, IITs, central universities etc. National Rural Health Mission got a major share of Health Budget. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana initiated on a pilot basis. A National Programme for the Elderly to start two National Institutes of Ageing, eight regional centres, and a department for geriatric medical care in one medical college/tertiary level hospital in each State, is planned. Bima Yojanas – Janashree through SHGs and Aam Admi are pursued. Gender Budgeting has been scaled up. A massive Skill Development Mission through a non-profit corporation is proposed.

The major election agenda include roll-out of National Rural Employment Guarantee to all 596 rural districts, Rs.60000 crore loan waiver to farmers and of course, change in the income tax rate slabs, guaranteeing Rs.4000 savings at Rs.1.5 lakh income and Rs.44000 at Rs.5.0 lakh. The small mercy to service providers is increasing the threshold limit of exemption to Rs.10 lakh per year.

These may not benefit the deserving, as the NREG could provide only 40 days in its best implemented state, AP, as against 100 days/year; most farmers including small and marginal farmers are more burdened with informal credit and non-agriculture loans, 2-hectare limit benefits the rich in irrigated areas and does not provide for all the poor in dry-land areas, etc., middle-class benefits from the tax proposals a year later, not now. Therefore, I doubt whether they bring more votes.

I do hope some high ways also got some budgetary support for their completion soon. Otherwise, a progressive budget with focus and emphasis on right drivers.

It is amply clear now, if poor do not get organized and command significant bulk in supply of products and services or in buying their needs, they will not be in a position to realise remunerative and legitimate share in this impressive growth trajectory. More importantly, the poor need to acquire meta skills to see gaps and opportunities on their own, on a constant basis, and find ways and means to utilise them. Otherwise, they will not be able to compete with the rich entrepreneurs with large financial muscle and huge clout.

When we are talking to Pochampally weavers, it is clear that they need to collectivise to survive on the Ikkat tie and dye. They need to develop intricate designs that can not be



imitated easily. They also need to seek reservation of a category of weaving products for them, like sarees. A new handloom park that is coming up in the vicinity with 2000 looms, with weavers (existing or new) employed will take away the complacency of the weavers. They need to lose their self-employed status and be a job holder in the park or have a slow death. The third alternative is to collectivise.

The skill development mission, I presume, will facilitate the poor to diversify into the businesses of offering the products and services the neo-middle class and upper class want, through skilling them in a variety of these vocations/trades, may be 10000 such trades.

We keep hearing about growing MFIs and increasing availability of bank linkages. Chidambaram mentioned that some 30 lakh SHGs are linked to banks. Another similar number might be on their way to get linked in the coming couple of years. May be sooner than that. Most people have now access to more than one formal loan and matching informal loans. What they are all and we are all struggling with is how do we use this access to money for investing on ideas that can give the poor remunerative returns. When Vikash from Bengaluru came to see how livelihoods thinking can be loaded on to the micro-finance vehicle (Grameen model), it immediately appealed to us. We need to sit and think through on how we do it, without compromising the fundamental principles of participation and decision-making by the persons whose livelihoods are being discussed.

Around the same time, SHG-Federations with corpus and own funds, are discussing with us how they can take up significant livelihoods activities. We need to put time, energies, thoughts and have consultations in this direction.

8 March 2008 is another women's day that reminds us that gender equity is still a long way in the absence of free mobility and gender norms. Gender balance in decision making and access to resources is still limited. How do we integrate gender aspects in the livelihoods agenda where micro-finance works through mostly women?

All this brings back to the issue of increasing the availability of livelihoods workers at various levels. Can we augment them? And how? How quickly?

This is troubling me. Hope we emerge out surely from this cess pool and go on to make a difference! ☺

# Ageing Young India

India is witnessing a significant demographic change. We will no longer be a young nation. The number of elderly persons in India is progressively increasing. By 2025 it is expected that India will be home to more than 175 million people that are 60 years and above of age. Is the country ready to embrace this transition? Do we have adequate and appropriate aged care systems in place in the context of changing socio-economic conditions? What is the plight of the elderly among the poor? Are there options to set the poor on the trajectory of graceful ageing?



Decline in fertility rate, decline in mortality rate, improvement in child survival and increased life expectancy signify development. These are the trends towards which the world is progressing today. These are desired transitions. But these transitions are not devoid of challenges. One significant challenge is the change in demographic composition. The number of aged in the world is set to increase significantly and rapidly. According to ILO estimates the number of elderly (60 years and over) population in the world will be 1.2 billion by 2025. This means 14 per cent of the total world population. Until now population ageing has been mostly associated with the developed regions of the world. However, this will no longer be true. About 72 per cent of 1.2 billion older people will be living in developing countries by 2025.

In India the proportion of elderly population is expected to increase from 7 per cent at present to 13 per cent by 2025. This in absolute numbers mean from 72 to 175 million. Currently, the state of UP leads with 11 million elderly followed by Maharashtra, AP, West Bengal, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. The state of Kerala ranks number one with the highest proportion of elderly in the country.



Elders constitute about 7% of the current population. 70% of the elderly in India work. About 35% in the age group 80 and above are working.



Old age is commonly associated with retirement, illness and dependency. Most government jobs have set the retirement age at 60. This has tuned many urban minds to think that working life beyond 60 is incidental. However the truth speaks to the contrary. About 70 per cent of the elderly in India work. They work like rest of the adults. The number of elderly that work in rural areas is more than their counterparts in urban areas. Even at the age of 80 and above there are about 35 per cent elderly working.

Most of the elderly workforce is engaged as cultivators and agricultural labourers. Elders are also engaged in trade and commerce, non-household industry, household industry,

### **Ageing & Poverty in Indian Context**

Old age poverty in India is high. There is no adequate research done to understand the extent, nature and magnitude of old age poverty. But estimates indicate that about 8 to 10 percent of the poor in India are old.

Economic transformation, migration, social changes, HIV etc are major challenges before the elderly today. Increased pressure on land made farming expensive and less fetching. Agriculture today is reeling under the pressures of increased cost of inputs, depleting natural resources, liberalization and globalization. Agriculture being the mainstay of village economy, decline in this sector triggered decline in other associated livelihoods in the villages like black smithy, pottery, and service sectors. In addition to this the development of village infrastructure did not keep pace with its counterpart in urban areas. As a consequence people are migrating in large numbers to urban centers.

Migration disrupts traditional joint family system. Urban centers are expensive especially in terms of housing giving way to nuclear families. Old parents are left behind in the villages to take care of leftover land and/or fend for themselves.

The gender dimension of old age poverty have left the old women vulnerable. With longer lifespan than men and with the social custom to marry men older than themselves, many women are left widowed in old age. Nearly 70% of aged women are widows.

HIV/AIDS is increasing the burden of the grandparents. When children succumb to the virus the responsibility of taking care of the grandchildren is on the elderly.

Old people in India work. The numbers are more in rural areas. The work opportunities currently available are falling short of the willingness and ability of the elderly to work.

livestock and fisheries and other services.

However, the elderly are not able to find sufficient work and the works they are engaged are not remunerative enough. This makes elderly economically insecure. As age progresses the expenditure on health increases. Elderly suffer from isolation and boredom. Dependency creates a

**Percentage Distribution of Main Workers Aged 60 + by Industrial Category, Sex and Residence**

| Category                 | Total |      |        | Rural |      |        | Urban |      |        |
|--------------------------|-------|------|--------|-------|------|--------|-------|------|--------|
|                          | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| Cultivators              | 55.9  | 58.6 | 40.3   | 63.4  | 66.9 | 44.0   | 12.9  | 13.3 | 9.7    |
| Agricultural Labourers   | 22.4  | 18.6 | 44.1   | 24.6  | 20.5 | 46.7   | 9.8   | 8.3  | 22.4   |
| Trade & Commerce         | 6.6   | 7.1  | 3.5    | 2.8   | 3.0  | 1.9    | 28.2  | 29.6 | 16.7   |
| Non-household industry   | 3.9   | 4.2  | 2.2    | 1.8   | 2.0  | 1.2    | 15.8  | 16.4 | 10.2   |
| Livestock, fisheries etc | 1.6   | 1.7  | 1.3    | 1.5   | 1.6  | 1.3    | 2.0   | 2.0  | 1.6    |
| Other services           | 5.0   | 5.1  | 4.8    | 2.8   | 2.9  | 2.1    | 18.1  | 16.9 | 27.4   |

Source: Census of India, 1991

sense of lowered self-esteem and loss of control. Living with children determines the physical and psychological well being of the elderly to some extent. But complete dependence takes away the degree of autonomy in the economic and social decision making. Therefore the elderly want to work for as long as they wish.

Experiential studies indicate that health is closely connected to active life. Activity drives away isolation and boredom to a large extent. Among the poor gainful employment of the elderly brings in economic security. Currently in India the opportunities for the old to work are less compared to their willingness and ability to work. This has to change. They should get opportunities to work as long as they wish in



### Old Age Issues

- Economic insecurity
- Failing health - cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes, stroke, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, arthritis and osteoporosis, dementia, depression and blindness
- Physical insecurity
- Isolation
- Abuse and neglect
- Boredom
- Lower self-esteem
- Lack of preparedness
- Loss of control
- Equity issues

productive jobs without being forced into retirement. This work should be within their current abilities. Fortunately, many of these abilities are in demand.

When designing poverty reduction/livelihoods programs it is very important to make the elderly part of the designing and planning process. Schemes like NREGA can provide drudgery reduction implements.

Elderly groups like elder SHGs are being formed. These groups take up thrift and savings. Access to credit and micro-credit is often denied to older persons. This needs to change. The development and poverty reduction programs should actively engage elder groups like other adult groups. Training

and skills building exercises can be undertaken for the elderly on par with other adults. This will help them keep pace with the upcoming technological changes and remain active in the work force.

Elderly population has been broadly grouped as Active-Old, Assisted-Old and Dependent-Old. This kind of grouping involves lot of overlaps and arriving at the right grouping criteria can be challenging. However such divisions give some scope for understanding the issues and needs of elderly at a broader level.

The active-old can be prepared for graceful ageing to make the transition as smooth as possible. Attention can be paid towards improving the livelihoods and income levels of these groups so they have decent reserves to take care of themselves in times of need. Multiple avenues should be provided to promote savings and investment that involve less risk and decent returns. Insurance schemes can be designed to cater to the needs of the poor households. Efforts can be made to deliver affordable health care services to the elderly.

These active-old can be sensitized about the needs and issues of dependent-old. In the communities and villages people often dole out something for the poor dependent elderly. However this system is highly informal and uncertain. These systems can be streamlined and strengthened with the help of elderly groups. Community care programs can be designed and executed by the elderly themselves with

### World's reaction to ageing

As early as 1980 ILO endorsed **Older Workers Recommendation**. According to the Recommendation older workers are to enjoy without discrimination equal opportunity and treatment with other workers in the public and private sectors.

In 1982 at the **First World Assembly on Ageing**, the UN endorsed an International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Plan brought to discussion the issues relating to the independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity of older persons.

Ageing received greater impetus in 1999 which was observed as the **International Year of Older Persons**. The year recognized the coming up of demographic change and the promise it holds for maturing attitudes and capabilities in social, economic, cultural and spiritual undertakings.

In the late 90s WHO adopted '**Active Ageing**' approach with a focus shift from needs-based to rights-based approach that recognizes the rights of people to equality of opportunity and treatment in all aspects of life as they grow older.

In 2002 **Second World Assembly on Ageing** took place in Madrid. The focus was on intergenerational approach. Three directions - development, health and well-being and supportive environments for older persons - were set under Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). Inclusion of older persons themselves in policy making and need for mainstreaming the needs and concerns of older persons into development policies and programs were emphasized. 159 countries are signatories to MIPAA including India.

## **Governments' response to Ageing in India**

Under the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Constitution of India directs the States to make effective provisions for security and public assistance in the cases of old age. Social security has been made the concurrent responsibility of the Central and State Governments. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in India is responsible for aged care and associated issues.

The **National Policy on Old Persons** was drafted in 1999. The issues discussed include financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and other needs of older people. The policy visualizes that the States will protect the elderly against abuse and exploitation, make opportunities available for development and seek participation of the elderly.

In 2000 Dave Committee submitted **Old Age income and Social Security** (Oasis) report. The prime focus was on the people working outside the pension provisions in the organized sector. The committee suggested building institutions in the lines of thrift and self-help and encourage people to save towards contributory old age pension.

In 2006 the **National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector** (NCEUS) submitted its report on social security. The report proposed universal social security based on insurance plus state assistance model. It will cover health, maternity, life and disability and old age security in the form of state pension for poor households and provident fund for others.

In 2007 the Central Government under the **National Old Age Pension Scheme** increased monthly pension to Rs.200 and expects the State Governments to contribute an equal amount. Earlier the scheme was applicable to only those who are 65 years or older and are destitute. Under the revised scheme all those above 65 + years of age and belong to a household below poverty line are eligible to receive the pension. This increased the number of beneficiaries from 8.7 to 16 million.

**Institutions** have been set up that specialize in elderly care giving. The National Institute of Social Defence offers a diploma course in integrated Geriatric Care. In the recent budget the Government announced setting up of two national institutes of ageing, eight regional centers and a department of geriatric care in one medical college or tertiary-level hospital in each State during the 11th Plan period.

support from local Panchayats, NGOs, social workers, volunteers etc. Community approach helps identify the needy and also keeps the transaction costs to the minimum.

Mainstreaming age care issues is critical. They can no longer be addressed in isolation. Advocacy assumes great significance. The strength of advocacy greatly depends on the depth of information available on aged and their issues. Elderly communities themselves should actively participate in advocacy. The old should be empowered to fight for themselves with support from other stakeholders. The media should be sensitized to forge a new and positive image of ageing.

The universal pension for all the elderly below poverty line will help supplement the incomes of the earning elderly and non-earning dependent elderly. In households with dependent elderly family as a unit can be taken for livelihoods interventions.



With India ageing rapidly the need for professional caregivers is on the rise. These caregivers should be sensitive to the issues and concerns of the old. They need to

recognize the strengths of the old and empower them rather than adopt a paternalistic attitude that can have a devastating impact on the self-esteem of the senior citizens.



Family still continues to be strong institution in India. Given a chance our elderly prefer to live with their children than in any formal care institutions like old-age home. Older people's unpaid contributions at home allow younger family members to engage in paid labour. Efforts should be made to promote intergenerational bonding. This can start at the community and school level itself.

Above all its very critical to capture and capitalize the wisdom of the old. Best practitioners can be identified among the elderly. They can be mentors and disseminate knowledge that the community would otherwise stand to lose.

**Its time to appreciate and absorb the new paradigm where the old people are viewed as active participants in an age-integrated society and as active contributors as well as beneficiaries of development. This paradigm shift will help our transitioning into old age as well.**

(‘livelihoods’ team thanks HelpAge India for providing significant insights into the needs and issues of aged and aged care). ☺

# Anandwan - Forest of Joy

Anandwan – Forest of Joy – has brought life to many who suffered rejection by family, friends and relatives. The leprosy afflicted and disabled residents of Anandwan are a happy community living a life of dignity. Built on the belief that Charity destroys and Work Builds, Anandwan is a thriving self-sufficient economy.

Anandwan is the realization of the dream of Baba Amte. The sufferings of leprosy afflicted people moved Baba immensely. He resolved to build a happy home for them and thus came Anandwan. Setup in 1951 in 50 acres of wasteland in north-eastern Maharashtra, Anandwan was built on the belief in the inviolable, irreplaceable and intrinsic worth of each human being. The beliefs that whatever might be the disability, each person in this world is gifted with capabilities to give, that attempts should be made to overcome any disability, that social prejudice, taboos can be overcome, that self-respect and dignity are important and that empowerment and not charity is the way forward continue to nourish the spirit of Anandwan.

In 1951 six patients crippled with leprosy along with Baba Amte and his wife started building a leprosarium and farm where people shunned by family and society could live a life of dignity. Today Anandwan thrives in 175 hectares. It is housed with hospitals for treatment, rehabilitation and training for leprosy patients, schools for leprosy-afflicted, blind, deaf-mute and handicapped and home for leprosy-afflicted old people. It has 120 hectares of agricultural land. There are vocational training centers for disabled youth and rural school and college dropouts. There is a senior citizens home, community nursery for orphans and children whose parents are leprosy affected among many other initiatives. The uniqueness and strength of Anandwan lies in the fact that all the activities here are carried out by the leprosy-afflicted and the disabled themselves.



Anandwan has in it a thriving economy. The Agricultural, Horticultural and Dairy farms were the first enterprises started in Anandwan. All these farms produce surplus after meeting its own requirements. About 70000 liters of milk is produced annually in Anandwan. Today the Anandwan community produces everything ranging from cloth, mattresses, carpets, ready-made garments, leather products, metal furniture, tricycles, hospital equipment, artificial limbs, water coolers, air conditioners etc. These production units are unlike the regular factory units outside. Each one in the community pitches to do their share of work. There are no supervisors. The community shares the sense of belongingness and feels collectively responsible. Much of the production is sold. The assistive devices are given to the residents free of cost and surplus is sold. The workshops create vocational training facilities for disabled and rural youth. In 1999-2000 handloom and power loom units in Anandwan produced nearly Rs.3.5 million worth of cloth. Anandwan has a printing press too.

Greeting cards are produced from waste. Plastics are discouraged and whatever plastic is used is recycled. Shoes

are made from recycled tires. Biogas is used for cooking. The slurry from biogas plants is used for fisheries and vermin compost. Micro Watershed Management Scheme is launched. Ponds are dug to collect rain water. Envelope dam is built to collect surface runoff. Multi-tier Silva-pastoral system (multi-layered forest/grassland system) is used to generate forest. Environmentally friendly and cost effective Nubian cottages and spiral brick houses are built. These houses have proved to be earthquake safe.



“Happiness dies when not shared” says Baba Amte. Anandwan has a musical orchestra. Many blind children of Anand Blind School were trained as performers, singers and dancers. The musical orchestra has soon become popular and is performed in several states. Art is much encouraged in Anandwan. Muktagan is the center for cultural activities. It serves as a wedding venue, reading room, children’s park and home for animals. It also has Anandwan Emporium Sales Center.

Anandwan hospital has treated about 35000 leprosy patients in the last 50 years. Maharogi Sewa Samiti treats and rehabilitates leprosy patients. The rehabilitated patients in turn assist the doctor in treating other patients. The general hospital in Anandwan, provides free medical services for different inhabitants of Anandwan and also needy people from the surrounding villages. Anandwan has 4 communes of rehabilitated leprosy patients where each social family is formed into two couples who commit themselves to care for an older couple. This concept reinforces the enduring values of traditional Indian family.

There are two residential schools in Anandwan – The Anand Blind School and The Anand Deaf School. Both are government recognized schools. The Anand Niketan College offers undergraduate degrees in Arts, Science, and Commerce and is affiliated to Nagpur University. There is also an Agriculture College. All the buildings were built by cured leprosy patients of Anandwan. Sandhi Niketan trains disabled residents. Many students returned to their villages to earn their livelihood. ASHA Yuvagram is a training center for rural school dropouts and non-literate youth. Training is given for 6 months in marketable trade. In addition to training, they get free food, accommodation, medical treatment and also a stipend.

Anandwan continues to bring Anand (joy) to the lives of many. Baba Amte said, ‘ Add life to years not years to life’. Anandwan lives with this spirit. It shows that the diseased and disabled are no different than the others. They need support, they need work and they desire and deserve to live a life of dignity and respect. 🌱



# I Need to Live My Life

Old age should be a blessing. But for the poor old in India the sailing is not smooth. Reeling under poverty and the pressure of unpaid debts the old are struggling to survive. In this context **Chinna Koteswararao's** encounter with Mathayya and Mariamma who in their late 60s with debts as their companions and living life with confidence and I Live My Life attitude comes as an interesting contrast.

The poor are unable to repay the debts. In India loans from informal sources with high interest rates are common. Risk expenditure related to marriage, death or other unforeseen events pushes people into debt traps. For many poor with meager earnings it takes a life time to repay the debts. Debts in old age hurts the self-esteem of the individual. Unable to repay hurts their social status.

Mathayya and Mariamma borrowed for performing their daughters wedding. To repay their debts they had to migrate in search of works that can give them better remuneration. The story of this confident couple in their 60s can be an inspiration to many.

**Question:** Sir, please tell me your name?

**Answer:** My name is Ummaneni Mathayya. My wife is Mariamma.

**Q:** How old are you?

**A:** I am 66 years old.

**Q:** Please tell about your family?

**A:** I have three sons and two daughters. I got all my children married. They all live separately from us. As of now its just me and my wife that live together. My native village is Vemuru in Guntur district (AP). We moved out of the village 25 years ago and came to Hyderabad. Since then we have been living in Amberpet.

**Q:** Can you please tell the reasons for migrating to Hyderabad?

**A:** We incurred lot of debts in our native village. We came to Hyderabad to earn money and repay them.

**Q:** Please tell about your business?

**A:** I sell Kiddy Bank toys made of clay. These are popularly used in houses by kids and women to save some money. We actually make these ourselves.

**Q:** How do you make these Kiddy pots?

**A:** To make Kiddy pots we need sticky clay soil. We purchase this soil. The cost of this soil is about Rs.1600 per truck load. This truck load of soil lasts for 2 to 3 months. We soak the soil in water and knead it thoroughly to make it very sticky. Then we make the kiddy pots and put colours on them.

**Q:** Do you spend the entire day in selling them?

**A:** I start at about 7 in the morning and sell till about 2 in the afternoon. My wife stays at home and makes the kiddy pots.



After 2 pm I come home for lunch. After lunch I will put colours to the kiddy pots that my wife has finished making. I also soak more soil for making more kiddy pots. My time is also spent in taking care of other works in the house.

**Q:** How many kiddy pots do you make and sell in a day?

**A:** We make about 100 kiddy pots in a day. Some days we end up selling all of them. Some days we have few left over. Based on our

sales the previous day we make decision on how many kiddy pots to make today.

**Q:** How much income do you earn per day?

**A:** I sell kiddy pots worth about Rs.125 to Rs.175 per day. Overall I earn about Rs.3500 per month. We incur about 1000 Rupees towards household expenses per month. Rs.100 is what we pay as rent for the hut we live. The rest of the money goes to repay the debts.

**Q:** How much debt do you have on you? Why did you have to incur those debts?

**A:** I have a debt of Rs.100,000 on me. I had to incur these debts for getting our two daughters married. To repay these debts I pay Rs.2000 per month as chit. The chit money is Rs.30000. I pay 3 Rupees interest on the loan. Because of the high interest rate all my payments go towards paying the interest and the principle continues to stay as is.

**Q:** Do you sons support you in repaying the debts?

**A:** All my sons live separately. With their meager earning they struggle to make their own living. All of them are engaged in making kiddy pots. So they cannot spare anything for me. We have small plot of land in the village. My sons suggest that I should dispose off that land and repay the loans. But I do not like that idea.

**Q:** You are growing old. Why don't you live with your sons?

**A:** I will work so long as I can. I leave to God after that. My sons have their own problems. They struggle to make a living. I cannot burden them. Good or bad **I need to live my life.**

**Q:** Did you get any help from the government?

**A:** I did not receive any help from the government so far. Ration card is a must to get help and we were out of town when ration cards were issued. Thereafter no one bothered about us. Even to get old age pension we need ration card. So we are losing out on that front. 🔄

# Sheep Rearing

With over 60 million sheep, India stands third in the sheep population in the world next only to China and Australia. Reared as free range or under a shed sheep rearing constitute an important livelihood in rural India. Sheep rearing is a very important component in dry land farming system. With very low investments it can be converted into a profitable venture for small and marginal farmers and landless labourers.

Rearing of sheep and goats play an important role in the economy of India in general and sustainable livelihood of the poor people of rain-fed agro-ecosystem in particular. Sheep are raised mainly for meat, milk and skin. They provide a flexible financial reserve during bad crop years for rural population.

With the availability of synthetic wool and the quality of wool from several varieties of sheep in India being coarse, the sheep are now being reared mostly for their meat. However, the fleece can be used in wool insulation and extracting lanolin, the water-proof, fatty substance found naturally in sheep's wool and used as a base for innumerable cosmetics and other products. Other products from sheep include sheep skin (used in making clothing, footwear, etc.), tallow (used in making soaps and candles), sheep bone and cartilage (used to furnish carved items), lamb intestines (formed into surgical sutures, strings for musical instruments), etc.

Sheep is found almost in all parts of India. marwari breed in

north western region and decaani breed in peninsular India are present in large numbers. Other important breeds found in peninsular India include - bellary, nellore, mandya, hassan, mecheri, kilakarsal, vembur, coimbatore, nilgiri, ramnad white, madras red, tiruchy black and kenguri.

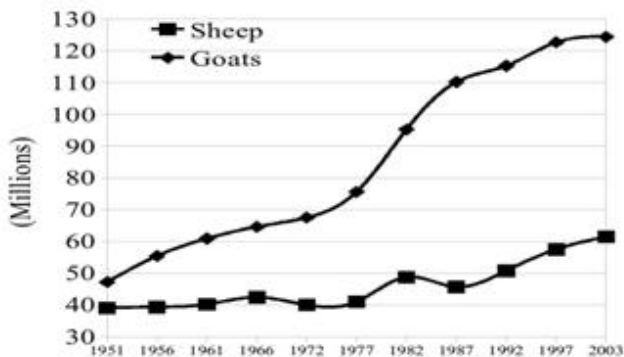


The adult females (ewes) reach maturity at six to eight months of age and the adult males (rams) at four to six months. The gestation period is about 5 months and generally one lamb is born per delivery.

The Central Sheep Breeding Farm, Hissar is producing acclimatized, exotic/cross bred superior quality rams.

Sheep/goat rearing contributes about Rs.240 million per annum to the rural economy. Together they produce 0.7 million tonne of meat which is about 15 per cent of the total meat production in the country. About 5 million families in India are engaged in various activities relating to sheep/goat rearing. This activity provides gainful employment of 184 to 437 man days per year depending on the size of the flock.

The meat industry in India is growing at about 5 per cent. Sheep has not kept pace with this growth, which is largely contributed by poultry. Though the number of sheep has been increasing, the goats are increasing much more. However goats are considered harmful for the environment and are not encouraged by the government. Goats graze till

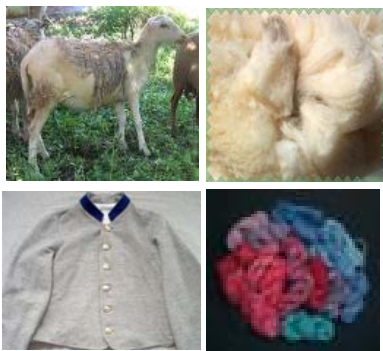


## Sheep Value Chain

| Inputs   | Pre-Production and Production   | Market I   | Market II  | Market III   |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheep unit (18 ewes + 2 rams)</li> <li>• Feed</li> <li>• Labour</li> <li>• Insurance</li> <li>• Medical expenses</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take them for grazing in fields, hills, hillocks</li> <li>• Take them into the shed by evening</li> <li>• Take them to farms for overnight stay to manure the field</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local sales</li> <li>• Sales in the nearby market</li> <li>• Sale as meat in the village</li> <li>• Sale of skin</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales in sheep/cattle shandies</li> <li>• Sale as meat after medical examination</li> <li>• Sale of skin</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sale as meat</li> <li>• Skin sales</li> <li>• Wool sales</li> </ul> |

the tip of the plant and regeneration becomes difficult. Also they graze almost all the species causing widespread destruction.

Wool production in the country is stagnant at around 45 million kg per annum. Of this only 4 million is fine wool. The demand for fine wool is around 40 million kg per annum. The efforts to improve the production of fine quality wool have mostly failed.



Poor families benefit from sheep rearing in some of the following ways -

- Over 100 per cent appreciation of capital in a year
- High liquidity market throughout the year. This acts as insurance against risk and helps meet cash needs
- Less water requirement
- Less working capital requirement as sheep can be grazed in open areas
- Sheep tend to congregate close to other members of the flock. In the absence of wild animals the sheep require less supervision. Even a dog can easily maintain the flock
- Provides for a good integration of sheep with the agricultural production system. Income from sheep manure feeds into the purchase of seed. The sheep break the soil during the summers

**Economics of Sheep rearing** - a case study from Anantapur district of AP.

An SC farmer purchased 10 sheep (9 female and 1 male) with Rs.7000 in 1998. For the next 7 years he spent Rs.2000 per year on fodder during season of stress and Rs.1500 per year on vaccines and medicines. The total amount spent for the 7 year period of Rs.24500 was met from the sale of 30 sheep during this period. At the time of his death in 2005, the farmer had 418 sheep whose worth was estimated at Rs.4.48 lakh. Thus the investment of Rs.7000 has grown by over 60 times in 7 years.

Money was also earned by selling sheep manure.

**Economics of Sheep meat trade** - The small meat shops are the retail front-end for the meat trade. Many traders belong to the minority community. The economics at the butcher level are as follows:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Price of sheep purchased                 | Rs.2000 |
| Cost of transport                        | Rs.100  |
| Total Cost                               | Rs.2100 |
| Price of mutton sold(10 kg @ 220 per kg) | Rs.2200 |
| Realization from liver, brain etc        | Rs.380  |
| Total Realization                        | Rs.2580 |

On a normal day about 4 sheep are sold by the small meat shops. After deducting all expenses the person makes a profit of about Rs.1000 per day.

Sheep rearing is not free of risks like any other trade. Sheep mortality is quite high. It is susceptible to various bacterial and viral diseases. Being a prey species instinctually sheep is adapted to hide signs of illness. This becomes challenging for those rearing sheep for the first time to detect the sickness. Sheep also falls victim to poisons and physical injuries. The risk of sheep loss is high in monsoon at about 10 to 15 per cent. Sheep need to be vaccinated and dewormed periodically. Therefore access to veterinary services is critical.

Sheep becomes highly stressed when separated from the flock. Therefore the time between separation from the flock and getting butchered should be minimal to avoid loss due to stress. To cope with this a flock is sold not individual sheep. This means the shepherd has to take the entire flock to the market and return with unsold sheep and face costs of transport.

Interactions with traditional shepherds indicated that the minimum size of the flock retained during high stress period is 20 (18 ewes and 2 rams). But the schemes implemented by the government and NGOs for providing sheep seem to ignore this fact.

Sheep rearing is labour intensive. At least one person is required to take care throughout the year. Therefore the non-poor has evolved a system of offloading the burden to the poor. For instance, poor borrow 10 sheep from the rich and rear them for 3 years and the flock grows to 50. The owner is given 25 sheep and the rest belongs to the shepherd. If there is an epidemic the remaining sheep are equally shared between the owner and shepherd. In all other cases the loss is borne by the shepherd.

In shandies where the sheep change hands quickly the shepherd might get about Rs.1200 per sheep. By the end of the day the final trader could purchase the sheep for Rs.1600 to Rs.1800. This extraordinary gain of 30 per cent in a day by the trader needs to be shifted to the shepherd.

The meat sector has been neglected in terms of research, processing and exports for quite some time. There is regulation at multiple levels. In the 11th Plan it is proposed to set up a National Meat Board to oversee the growth and promotion of this sector.

Mutton and lamb are still non-branded commodities. There is scope for branding them with attributes like tenderness or age of sheep, free range sheep etc.

Modernization of abattoirs is lagging behind. In the present scheme the responsibility is with the local bodies like municipalities. But they lack funds. The sector is dominated by unorganized units with around 25000 unregistered slaughter houses. There are only 4000 registered slaughter houses. Quality and hygiene remain areas of concern in the domestic market.

Sheep rearing continues to provide very stable income for small and marginal farmers in dry land areas. With adequate research and investment, productivity and market can be further improved in this sector thus improving the incomes levels of the farmer/shepherd. ♻️

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

# Budget and Livelihoods

The season of Budgets is here. State Budget(s), Indian Railway Budget and Union Budget are all presented in a row. All attempting to promise something for everyone!

Another non-inflationary Rail Budget expecting a Net Surplus of Rs.10, 627 crore is out! Coolies have something to cherish. They will be treated as 4<sup>th</sup> grade railway employees. This means they get all the benefits of any government worker. Some coolies will move further up the ladder to fill vacancies as gangman. Overall increase in the number of unreserved coaches is a welcome move. The number of workers travelling from cities/towns to villages during holiday season has gone up like never before. Senior citizens and women can now reserve lower berths. More special coaches for Physically Challenged will be created. There is something for vendors too. Vendor coaches for milk and vegetable vendors and other retail sellers can now be seen.

The much awaited Union Budget 2008-09 came out on 29<sup>th</sup> February this leap year. Debates were on if it would be a purely election Budget or a mix. It turned out to be a mix.

Rs.60000 agriculture loan waiver, NREG extension to all the 596 districts of India and changing the income tax rate slabs seemed like vote winners. Increased allocations to education and health are commendable. Education gets 20 per cent boost and health 15 per cent.

The most striking aspect of this year Budget is the sheer size of it. **The Union Budget is about 25 per cent of India's**

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP).** The size of the Budget is a whopping Rs.7500 billion.

The GDP is expected to hover around 8.7 per cent. The strategic drivers will be services and manufacturing that are expected to grow at 10.7 per cent and 9.4 per cent.

The growth rate in agriculture is estimated at only 2.6 per cent. Are we moving away from being an agrarian economy?



This move can be good but for the fact that the largest number of workforce in India is still dependent on agriculture for livelihood. Increasing costs and decline in productivity and decrease in investments have contributed to the decline

| Central Plan Outlay by Sectors<br>(in crore of Rupees) | 2007-2008<br>Budget | 2007-2008<br>Revised | 2008-2009<br>Budget |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|  | Estimates           | Estimates            | Estimates           |
| Total Central Plan Outlay                              | 319992              | 292337               | 375485              |
| Agriculture and Allied Activities                      | 8558                | 8544                 | 10074               |
| Rural Development                                      | 20342               | 21147                | 23831               |
| Irrigation and Flood Control                           | 507                 | 454                  | 411                 |
| Energy   | 79158               | 72230                | 93815               |
| Social Services  | 80315               | 75162                | 95919               |
| Transport  | 71589               | 68930                | 84177               |
| Communications   | 25812               | 16599                | 21937               |
| Industry and Minerals                                  | 20434               | 17953                | 28836               |
| Science Technology and Environment                     | 8816                | 7742                 | 9283                |
| General Economic Services                              | 3632                | 3043                 | 6052                |
| General Services                                       | 829                 | 533                  | 1150                |

in the share of agriculture to GDP.

The loan waiver attempts to pump some energy into the desolate farmers. However those farmers that borrowed money from informal sources and have non-agricultural loans and those farming in dry land areas that own more than 2 hectares of land have fallen through cracks. In 2004 the government introduced a scheme that would allow the farmers to swap their debt by going to public sector banks but the implementation of this was dismal. On the other hand loan waiver can cause moral hazard. Those farmers that sincerely paid back the loans may feel penalized.

The government proposes to increase Gross Capital Formation (GCF) in agriculture to 16 per cent in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan Period. This will help increase the share of agriculture in GDP to 4 per cent.

The rise in MSP for rice and wheat and increase in the prices of food grains and commodities worldwide coupled with shifting land for cultivating bio-fuel crops have risen prices of food articles. There is a dire need to strengthen the supply side. According to the Ministry of Agriculture the production of rice, maize, soya has reached an all time record.

Irrigation received attention. The outlay for Accelerated

Irrigation Benefit Program and Rainfed Area Development Program increased. The later will spread to areas not covered by watershed development schemes. An interesting neglect – watershed programs received paltry sum.

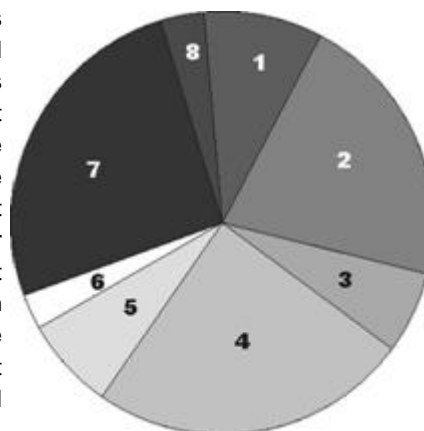
Increasing standards of living have impacted food habits considerably. Along with dairy, fruit drinks/juices, fruit pulp and fruit jelly are in good demand. In this context increased allocation to National Horticulture Mission is a welcome move. There can be decent scope for employment in value-addition activities.

National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and the pilot Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme will continue. Farmers will continue to get fertilizer subsidy. The budget itself accepts that NAIS in the present form is debatable.

Will all these measures boost agriculture sector? One has to wait and watch.

On the education front, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-day Meal Scheme and Secondary Education got decent allocations. Mid-day Meal Scheme will now be extended to upper primary classes in all Government and Government-aided schools across the

country. SSA will focus on enhancing retention, improving quality of education and ensuring access to upper primary classes. The Budget proposed to start 6000 high quality



| Sector-wise allocation                         |         |
|--|---------|
| 1 - Agriculture, Irrigation, Rural Development | 9.14 %  |
| 2 - Fuel                                       | 24.98 % |
| 3 - Industries, Minerals                       | 7.68 %  |
| 4 - Transport                                  | 22.42 % |
| 5 - Communications                             | 5.84 %  |
| 6 - Science & Technology                       | 2.47 %  |
| 7 - Social Services                            | 25.55 % |
| 8 - Others                                     | 1.92 %  |

| Expenditure Budget Highlights<br>(in crore of Rupees) |   | 2007-2008<br>Budget<br>Estimates | 2007-2008<br>Revised<br>Estimates | 2008-2009<br>Budget<br>Estimates |
|---|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Plan + Non  | Total expenditure                                   | 680521                           | 709373                            | 750884                           |
| Non-Plan  | Total Non-Plan expenditure                          | 475421                           | 501849                            | 507498                           |
|   | Total Revenue Non-Plan expenditure                  | 383546                           | 412975                            | 448352                           |
|   | Total Capital Non-Plan expenditure                  | 91875                            | 88874                             | 59146                            |
|   | Subsidies   | 54330                            | 69742                             | 71431                            |
|   | Economic Services (Agri, Ind, Power, Transport etc) | 15701                            | 15398                             | 17987                            |
|   | Social Services (Education, Health etc)             | 9321                             | 10170                             | 10385                            |
| Plan  | Total Plan expenditure                              | 205100                           | 207524                            | 243386                           |
|   | Total Revenue Plan expenditure                      | 174354                           | 175611                            | 209767                           |
|   | Total Capital Plan expenditure                      | 30746                            | 31913                             | 33619                            |

model schools. Navodaya Vidyalayas will be set up in 20 districts with high concentration of STs and SCs. 410 more Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas will be started in educationally backward blocks.

Several institutes of higher learning are proposed – 16 Central Universities, 3 IITs, 2 IISERs, 2 schools of Planning and Architecture. Young learners with passion for science can get scholarships under Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research. Efforts will be made to connect all knowledge institutions through electronic digital broadband network. The emphasis clearly comes out on improving the quality of education which is critical considering that the industry finds very few employable graduates in the market. The paradox of increased availability of jobs and increased unemployment can hopefully get addressed.

300 ITIs will be upgraded. More allocations to Sainik Schools towards improving infrastructure including classrooms, laboratories, physical education facilities, libraries etc.

Risk expenditure got attention in the budget. One of the

critical reasons why families above poverty line slip back into poverty is the quick expenditure on health. Health in the budget got 15 per cent increase. NRHM gets increased allocation. The goal of NRHM is to establish fully functional, community owned, decentralized health delivery system. 4, 62,000 Associated Social Health Activists (ASHAs) are trained. The National Aids Control Program and polio eradication program got more allocations.

Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, a good step in the direction of affordable health insurance provides health cover of Rs.30,000 for BPL workers and their families in unorganized sector. Unorganized labour constitutes a sizeable workforce in India. This scheme will help but the potential of this scheme will be realized only when rural health infrastructure improves.

Aam Admi Bima Yojana through LIC will provide insurance cover to poor households. The target is to cover one crore landless households by September 2008.

Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission gets more money in the

## Highlights of Central Plan 2008-2009 (in crore of Rupees)

- Rs.16000 towards NREGA for providing 100 days of wage employment to each rural household
- Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana - Rs.2150 for establishing micro-enterprises in rural areas. Key components are activity clusters and group approach. 50% Swarozgaris will be SCs/STs, 40% women and 3% disabled
- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - Rs.7530 towards constructing all-weather rural roads and to upgrade existing rural roads
- Rural Housing - Rs.5400 to provide assistance to rural BPL households for construction of houses and towards upgrade of kutchha houses. 60% will be utilized for constructing houses of SC/ST BPL families
- Rs.7300 to provide safe drinking water to all rural habitations;
- Rs.1200 for Rural Sanitation
- Rs.1825 towards Integrated Watershed Management Program
- Rs.473 for computerization of Land Records and updating Land Records
- Rs.1100 for National Horticulture Mission; Rs.1100 for National Food Security Mission; Rs.500 for Micro Irrigation; Rs.644 for National Agriculture Insurance Scheme; Rs.320 for integrated oilseeds, oil palm, pulses and maize development scheme
- Rs.130 for livestock census; Rs.75 for National Fisheries Development Board
- Rs.315 for research in Crop Sciences
- Rs.13100 for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan;
- Rs.8000 for Mid-Day Meals in schools;
- Rs.2185 for Universal Access and Quality Secondary Stage
- Rs.7147 towards Higher Education
- Integrated Child Development gets Rs.6300
- National Rural Health Mission is allocated Rs.11930; Health Sector gets Rs.3650
- Rs.340 towards Handloom Schemes; Rs.220 towards Handicrafts Schemes
- Rs.1500 to remote villages/hamlets targeted for electricity/lighting facility through SPV/ other RE systems and devices including DRPS

Budget. Funds are allocated to provide potable water in each school in water deficient habitations. Total sanitation gets an allocation of Rs.1200 crore.

India is ageing. Today's young nation will have about 175 million old by 2025. Under National Program for Elderly the Budget commit to setting up 2 national institutes of ageing, 8 regional centres, and a department for geriatric medical care in one medical college/tertiary level hospital in each state. Under the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, all BPL old persons are included under the coverage for pensions. This spread is expected to cover 157 lakh beneficiaries. The States are expected to match the Center's share.

ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) is being universalized. The remuneration of Anganwadi workers and Anganwadi helpers has been increased to Rs.1500 and Rs.750 respectively.

NREG will now cover all the districts in the country. The poor will benefit. But studies show that in several cases the promised 100 days of work could not be given. Many cases of fraud were also registered. The delivery mechanism should therefore be streamlined and strengthened.

PDS to be strengthened with adequate supplies, reasonable subsidies and efficient delivery. Towards this the Budget allocates a sum of Rs.32,667 crore. Haryana and Chandigarh will launch pilot schemes of smart card based delivery.

Bharat Nirman has six components - irrigation, rural roads, rural housing, rural drinking water, rural electrification and rural telephone connectivity. Under Indira Awas Yojana the Budget enhanced the subsidy per unit for new house to Rs.35000 in plain areas and Rs.38,500 in hill/difficult areas. The subsidy for upgrading the house is enhance to Rs.15000 per unit.

Backward regions in the states of Bihar, Orissa and UP will get 45 per cent of the Backward Regions Grant Fund. This will amount to Rs.2610 crore. North Eastern Region will continue to get enhanced allocations. A need assessment of the border areas of North East especially those of Arunachal Pradesh will be made and addressed through a special mechanism.

The Budget has something to offer for the disadvantaged groups. More equity will be given to development and finance corporations set up for certain disadvantaged groups - National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation, three National Finance and Development Corporations comprising Safai Karamcharis, SCs and BCs, National/State Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporations and National Handicapped Development Corporation. Scholarships for SCs, STs and OBCs will continue. Money is allocated to Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Program which supports SC and ST students pursuing M.Phil and PhD courses. Madrassa education will be modernized. Multi-

sectoral development plan will be drawn for each of the 90 minority concentration districts.

Women and Child Development get an increase of 24 per cent more than last year. Rs.7200 crore is allocated this year. The Janashree Bima Yojana run by Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) offers life and permanent disability cover to people in 44 categories. One of these categories is Self Help Groups (SHGs). Half of the premium is subsidized through the Social Security Fund. The Budget proposed to ask LIC to scale up the coverage and cover all women SHGs that are credit-linked to banks.

The size of the working population in India will peak to 95 crore by 2026. Keeping this in mind Skill Development Mission is launched. The number of trainings that people receive in western countries is many more compared the number in India. This in fact should be other way round considering the diversity of occupations and associated skills that exist in India. The Skill Development Mission will be entrusted to a non-profit corporation. The Government's initial contribution will be Rs.1000 crore.

The Budget throws faint light on the critical issue - climate change. No concrete plans are formulated. The melting of glaciers is a matter of grave concern. Livelihoods of scores of people are at stake especially in developing and poor nations. Scientific studies indicate that there is overall reduction of 21 per cent in the glacial surface area in the Himalayas. The snowline is increasing. Winter run-off is increasing. As of today India's contribution to carbon levels is insignificant compared to West and China. But if unchecked now, we will soon join the rungs of highest carbon emitters. We will compromise the lives and livelihoods of millions of people.

Overall the budget has an interesting mix of election oriented and long-term strategies. Increased allocations to health and education is noteworthy. This will go a long way in creating effective workforce. Increased pressure on agriculture is forcing people to move out and seek alternative livelihoods. Even with increased investment in agriculture it cannot support 70 per cent of the workforce. Other traditional livelihoods are also dwindling. Skill Development Mission in this context is much needed.

Before making the Plans and Budgets the poor need to be consulted and the these should be implemented in true spirit. Leakages at various levels should be plugged. Evolving effective need assessment, monitoring and evaluation strategies including social audit is important. Current growth rate has set India on the trajectory of development/progress. The number of poor in India are coming down. But the rich-poor divide is widening at an alarming rate. This inequality in distribution of growth is dangerous to all. It triggers unrest. Its in best interest of all of us to work towards more equitable distribution of wealth. The Poor and their Communities should involve on a larger and wider scale in the development process. Only then the real Nirman of Bharat can happen. ☺

# HelpAge India

The number of aged population in India currently is more than 7 per cent of the total population. By 2025 India is projected to have around 13 per cent in the aged group. We will see young India ageing rapidly. It is important to work with and for this group of the population. Ageing is a natural process. Its inescapable. Poverty adds enormous physical and mental stress for the aged. Various stakeholders are fighting this. HelpAge India is a premier organization working in this domain.

Child mortality rate is coming down in India. Fertility rate is on the decline as well. The average life expectancy has gone up. Development in general and improvements in medicine and technology in particular paved way for these trends largely. The size of aged population in India is increasing as a consequence. By 2025 India is projected to be home to 13 per cent of the elderly aged 60 and above.

HelpAge India is a not-for-profit organization that works in the aged domain. The organization started off with the mentoring and financial support of HelpAge International, UK. In 1978, HelpAge India got registered and soon became autonomous and the financial support from UK stopped. Since then HelpAge India has made several interventions in the areas of support and care for the aged.

With their mission to work for the cause and care of the disadvantaged older persons and to improve their quality of life, HelpAge reaches to 15 lakh elderly through their services.

The target group of HelpAge is disadvantaged older persons living below poverty line and deprived of basic needs. These are the elderly who have no regular source of income and no family support. They may have failing health and deprived of their rights and entitlements.

HelpAge India recognizes the 10+1 needs of the elderly.

- Economic security
- Good health
- Inclusion
- Cared for
- Protection
- Usefully occupied
- Confident
- Respected
- Prepared



- Equity

The work of the organization is governed by 3 core values - Rights, Relief and Resources.

HelpAge India advocates for the elderly rights. The goal is to have a sensitized community and stakeholders, supportive towards inclusion of older persons in mainstream activities, age care issues and elders rights and entitlements.

Towards this the organization is

actively involved in working with various stakeholders - the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged elderly, the organizations of the elderly and their supporting organizations, partners NGOs, family and community, government bodies at various levels, corporate, schools and colleges, donors, celebrities and spiritual leaders, volunteers, media, international, national and local forums, research and training institutes etc. HelpAge actively works with children and young adults to promote intergenerational bonding.

HelpAge India is represented in the National Planning Commission and also the draft committee of five year plans. Its also a member of the National Council of Older Persons.

The organization is significant contributor to the National Policy on Older Persons announced by the government in 1998. HelpAge India lobbied for about 15 years towards

achieving this. It also submitted an Action Plan to the government towards implementation of the policy. In the area of Universal Old Age Pension HelpAge made it voice heard clear and sound. HelpAge is also actively advocating for



the passing of the recent Older People's Maintenance and Protection Bill. The bill attempts to address issues relating to maintenance, care and protection of the aged. It gives the elderly an institutionalized legal mechanism to claim their



rights. HelpAge India is also a full member of the International Federation on Ageing.

PACS (Poorest Areas Civil Society Program) is one of the flagship programs of HelpAge. The program is designed to raise awareness among the older persons of the most backward districts of India on the rights and the social welfare schemes that exist for them and to facilitate greater access to benefits. The program is executed through field partners at the community level.

HelpAge India proved that people in older age are as economically productive as the adults. It undertook many income generation and micro-credit programs to address the economic needs of the elderly. Engaging in useful occupation also kills boredom and isolation to a large extent apart for restoring control in the family and keep their self-respect. About 114 income generation schemes have been implemented thus far. Elderly SHGs are formed and they undertake thrift and savings activities. These groups are also leveraged for taking up advocacy on various local issues. In a remote village in Gujarat one such group was instrumental in getting drinking water tankers to the village regularly where water was a scarce commodity earlier.

Mobile Medicare Unit (MMU) is one of the oldest programs directly implemented by HelpAge since 1982. The MMU van reaches the unreached poor on a regular basis. It provides primary health care services, medical consultation, prescription and dispensing of medicines, distribution of disability aids, counseling services, home visits to patients who are bed ridden and who require palliative care. The Unit also organizes health and awareness camps, refers beneficiaries to various health institutions and links up beneficiaries with various social welfare programs. The outreach by 2006 is more than 10 lakh beneficiaries.



Cataract is a huge problem affecting the aged. This severely affects active working lives of the poor in India. In most cases the operation costs only Rs.1000 and takes about 15 minutes to perform. HelpAge facilitates 15000 to 30000 free cataract operations every year enabling the old to take control of their lives. HelpAge is also actively working in the areas of raising awareness and also providing services to the elderly suffering from Cancer, Alzheimer's and AIDS.

Sponsor a Grandparent Program (SaGP) is another feather in the cap for HelpAge. It is being implemented for the past 30 years. Under this program HelpAge links the disadvantaged elderly with sponsors who provide for the financial and medical needs. The outreach of the program so

far is about 17000 and to accomplish this HelpAge is partnering with more than 200 rural and urban NGOs.

Industrialization and urbanization triggered migration. Failing agriculture in the villages has abetted this trend. Nuclear families are becoming a norm. Children are migrating to cities to find work and leaving old parents in the villages. The dependent old need support. Understanding this need HelpAge is supporting old age homes and day care centers for the elderly. So far 253 old age homes and 135 day care centers are being supported. Going forward HelpAge wants to pilot few old age homes directly that will serve as model homes.

HelpAge runs Helplines in Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad which serve not only as advice lines providing information and help for older people in distress, but have also established linkages with police, local old age homes & hospitals so that immediate action can be taken.

Disasters and emergencies hurt the old more because of their physical frailty and lack of mobility. They often get sidelined in rescue and



relief and rehabilitation. HelpAge runs large relief and rehabilitation programs in times of emergencies be it be earthquake in Bhuj or tsunami in Coastal India or the earthquake in South Asia. HelpAge in fact is one of the first voluntary organization to set up HelpAge India's Disaster Recue and Relief Unit in 1980. In post-tsunami operations HelpAge covered many elderly through adopt-a-gran program. About 8000 elderly were assisted with livelihood activities. Elder groups were formed and federated at the village and district level. MMUs reached remote tsunami affected areas and delivered healthcare. Multi-specialty health care camps were organized.

HelpAge greeting cards and gifts are popular. They help not only get some income but importantly promote the cause of the elderly. There is also HelpAge ICICI credit card. A percentage of the purchase and the subscription fee go towards the care of the needy elderly Indians. LIC and HelpAge entered into agreement wherein the later will sell the products of LIC and the commission earned will go towards the development projects of the older persons.

Through various initiatives HelpAge is addressing the needs of the elderly of India. Being a leading organization in this domain HelpAge is setting a way forward for other organizations to make inroads into aged care. The demand for age care professionals is on the rise and HelpAge being an expert in this domain can nurture and build professionals and organizations for elderly care. ✪

# National Policy on Older Persons

With the size of ageing population increasing ageing issues are gaining worldwide attention. While most of the developed countries already house a sizeable number of aged the developing young nations like India are quickly catching up. India will be home to about 175 million elderly by 2025. As a step to prepare for this transition the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment formulated National Policy on Older Persons in 1999.

Ageing has implications at the family, community and even at the national level. At the family level one has to take care of the dependent old along with preparing for their own ageing. The community should gear up to derive mechanisms to support the elderly populations. The country should plan for addressing age-related issues, improving social security and other benefits. The trends of industrialization and urbanization have complicated ageing issues further. Joint family system is getting disrupted increasingly. Among the poor the old are much more vulnerable and more so widowed women.

The National Policy on Older Persons aims to assure the elderly that their concerns/issues are of national concern/importance and that they will not live unprotected, ignored or marginalized. The spirit of the Policy states that the old should be able to live a life with purpose, dignity and peace. The elderly should participate in designing and implementing all policies and programs to which they are primary stakeholders.

The Policy strongly brings out the point that the elderly after 60 should not be treated as a dependent lot that depend on care. Instead they should be treated on par with other productive adults that should have all the opportunities like others to lead active, creative, productive and satisfying life. The old are not just consumers of goods and services but also producers. 70 per cent of the elderly in India work. Like the rest the elderly should be given remunerative works. The policy states that the education, training and skilling needs of the elderly will be met.

The Policy proposed a strong age integrated society. Intergenerational bonding is emphasized. Information should flow between generations and the knowledge and wisdom of the old should be recognized and captured. The young should be sensitized to respect the acquired experience and wisdom of the old and be receptive to their needs.

Increased budget allocations are needed for addressing the needs of the elderly and the rural and urban poor should get special attention. The Policy calls for various stakeholders - individuals, families, communities, civil society, governments etc to work together on aged care.

The Policy recognized that the financial situation of about 2/3 of the aged population is fragile. It proposes old age pensions to the poor elderly to supplement their existing incomes. PDS should cover all the elderly.

For employees of government, quasi-government and industries safe options to invest post-retirement benefits should be made available. Pre-retirement counseling programs should be taken up.

Organizations that provide career guidance, training and orientation and support services to the aged will be assisted. NGOs generating livelihoods programs for the aged will be encouraged. Age-related discrimination in the matter of entitlement to credit, marketing and other facilities will be removed.

A heavily subsidized health care system for the poor will be evolved. Health insurance to cater to different income segment levels will be given high priority. Primary health care system will be strengthened to meet health care needs of older persons. Geriatric facilities will be provided at various levels. Medical and para-medical personnel at various levels will be trained in aged health care. Nurse training will include modules on geriatric care. Health education programs and material will be given at all levels.

Older persons will be given easy access to loans towards purchase of house or upgrade of existing house with easy repayment schemes. Senior citizen community housing will be promoted. Public facilities will be made aged friendly.

Institutional care for the elderly will be a last resort. Non-institutional services by voluntary organizations will be promoted. Assistance will be given to organizations for construction and maintenance of old-age homes. Older people will be encouraged to form informal groups for solidarity. A Welfare Fund for the elderly will be set up.

Protection of life and property of the aged will receive priority at all levels. Special provisions in IPC will be made. Police will be directed to keep friendly vigil.

Since then government (s) have made some interventions in the aged care domain. National Council of Older Persons has been set up. Old age pension is now given to all 60 + elderly that belong to BPL families. Government put forth affordable health insurance schemes. Most recently, the government announced setting up of national institutes of ageing, eight regional centers and a department of geriatric care in one medical college or tertiary-level hospital in each State during the 11th Plan period. Many NGOs have stepped in to take the aged care agenda forward. Initiatives can be taken up to design useful, age-friendly, remunerative livelihoods for the aged who wish to work. 🔄

# Spiritual Capital

The focus of the development worker has always been on ensuring impact. As the partial provision of capitals and partial changes in the contexts have not resulted in the desired impact, the focus shifted on understanding all the important factors that impact development and providing/making changes in the same. Despite such analysis of the capitals into five categories and understanding the contexts (which were partially captured in the 'PIP' box in DFID's framework), ensuring impact was difficult.

A lot of cases were studied to identify the missing element in ensuring the impact. The study included households that improved and those that did not improve. Further, to get a fair picture, cases included both the households that took up an initiative on their own and those that benefited from an intervention by development organization.

The cases indicated that several elements, not specifically covered in the five capitals and the four contexts, were involved in the success. Moreover, the absence of these aspects also explained the failure of interventions. Some of the cases are given below to highlight the elements.

Thus, the will to take one's destiny into one's own hand, willingness to change and perseverance in the face of adversity seem to characterise people who have benefited either from an intervention by a project or from their own initiative. Those who lacked these, could not benefit from improvements in the other five capitals or the contexts or both.

Analysis of other published success stories and case studies also indicated the presence of these characteristics among the beneficiaries/clients. This indicated that the observations could be generalized.

As per the livelihoods framework, the impact needs to be always seen in terms of improvements in the four arrows at the household level. Hence, several case studies of successful business leaders and the literature on success were examined to see whether the above aspects were the basis for success in general. The above characteristics were worded in the different ways in the literature, some of which are given below:

- Going an extra-mile
- Tenacity
- Action oriented
- Taking the initiative
- Willingness to change
- Accepting the restrictions placed by oneself due to new situations/livelihoods
- Taking ownership for the result
- Pro-activeness
- Focus on the 'circle of influence' and not on 'circle of concern'
- Primacy of and focus on purpose; often associated with

Case 1: Old couple from a big village, Visakhapatnam district.

The village is situated about 9 km from National Highway. However, as it was at the bank of a river and the road ended in the village, the village did not have a good road and transportation and hence was difficult to reach even in the day time. The main crops in the village were sugar cane. A lot of labour commuted daily to the nearby market town - Anakapalle - using the railway station that was about 6 km away. Being interior, the village was slow on the development and consumption path.

An old couple, who were poor, sensed that the facilities that offered breakfast in the morning and snacks in the evening were highly inadequate, and saw a business opportunity here. As the woman was a member of the SHG, she approached the SHG for a loan of Rs.3,000 and started a canteen serving breakfast in the morning and snacks in the evening. Being old, the couple found it difficult to do all the work on their own and by the end of the first month, employed another youth to get the items from the shops and do the harder tasks. By about third month, the business picked up and the couple were making a profit of over Rs.3,000 per month. Having realized that she was making profit (which was handsome by all imaginations, when a bank employee in RRB from the village got Rs.6,000), the woman decided to serve small additions for free to her customers. In addition, she started making snacks that had a longer shelf life, particularly aimed at the school going children. Being old and unable to labour hard, she decided to spend only two mid-days for these products. The youth engaged by the couple became the sales agent and would supply the snacks to shops in the nearby vicinity. By the end of the sixth month, the profits stabilized at Rs.4,000 as she began to realise economies of scale and started enjoying free credit period of 15 days from the shop keepers in the nearby market town.

Early on, the old lady understood that the secret in the trade is to keep the facility open on all days. Further, she learnt that the business could not be left to the youth and one of the couple had to be present in the shop during business hours. She faced a lot of troubles in keeping the facility open with the business not being left to the youth. During the second month, her daughter and son-in-law visited her. The son-in-law was upset that his in-laws were not at home when he came. The upset son-in-law had to be managed. Next came a marriage (held at a distance of about 50 km) that the family had to attend. The couple started at about 10 am and were back by 3 pm, the time to start the preparations for the afternoon snacks. This resulted in the ridicule of the couple by several of their relatives. The greatest test to the lady in keeping the facility open and business running came in the fourth month when her husband fell ill and had to be hospitalized for three days. Braving all odds, the lady worked extra hours to ensure that the business was as usual without depriving her husband of the necessary nursing.

Thus, the success for the old couple came after they faced their share of hardships. The community described the reasons for success of the couple as involving (a) keeping the business running despite all problems, (b) working a little extra when needed; and (c) ignoring the rebukes of the neighbours and relatives, as they believed that they were not doing any wrong. The organizer who observed the growth in the economic status of the couple described the reasons for success as (a) knowing how & where to use the young man; (b) striving to understand the business before they entered it; (c) cultivating a relationship with the shop keeper to get the goods on credit; (d) the couple being clear as to why they wanted to do this particular business; and (e) the suggestion for activity coming from them. Reacting to the discussions in the SHG, the lady stated: "We did not think that the transformation from wage labour to being an entrepreneur was so difficult. We had to adopt to a lot of changes, which we did not anticipate at the beginning. The mutual support that I and my husband enjoyed saw us through at several times since we started the business."

## Case 2: Landless labour in Anantapur

All the 65 inhabitants of a village were the landless households that worked for a big landlord, whose lands were irrigated off a huge tank that existing within the land. In a participatory analysis, these people identified dairy as a priority area for reducing their poverty and the requested the project authorities to give them some milch animals. The poverty alleviation project, which worked for their social mobilization, appraised their request. It found that most of these people herded the cattle of the landlord; there was enough fodder to sustain the animals proposed; and the milk collection van could be asked to visit the village each day. As all the prerequisites were present, the request for milch animals was approved. Each family used the money to procure the cross-bred animals of their choice.

After about three months of the purchase, the monitoring team that visited the village found that only six families still had the cow given by the project. All the others were disposed off and the money diverted by the beneficiaries towards consumption. The coordinator had a lot of difficulty in explaining their behaviour. He ensure that these people got good prices for the milk and that the milk bills were paid regularly by the dairy. The regular visits of the veterinary doctor was ensured. He, along with several other motivators from neighbouring villages, visited door to door pleading them not to sell the animals. Big posters were made to display the top 5 earners during each fortnight. Special efforts were made to retain the milk transport vehicle for a longer duration, so as to cater to the late comers.

During the community meeting held to discuss the issue, one person articulated the reason for the sale of cows thus: "What else do we do? These cows took all our free time and bound us to the house after we come back from our work. There was no way I could visit my in-laws house along with my wife for the festival with these loitering around. I could not even go to a film show along with my wife till I could sell off the animal!" He was so displeased with the activity that he used several unparliamentary words in his discourse as to why the animals had to be sold off. During the informal interactions, several members referred to the cows as unholy animals! These cows led to several fights between the wife and the husband! Another woman stated, "Since the cow came in, my daughter-in-law has become spoilt. She has prioritized the care of the animal more than heeding to her husband's wants! What use is the cow if my son has to get a secondary treatment than the cow?"

The reactions of the community in this case were almost exactly opposite to that of those in the above case. The beneficiaries were not willing to change and sacrifice; could not withstand the adverse reactions from their relatives. Most essentially, tenacity and the will to continue with the activity in the event of adversity appeared to be absent.

Visit to this village after another six months indicated that several other efforts by the coordinator like promotion of kitchen gardening, adult education centres, skill training for grafting and nursery raising, etc., came to nought. Thus the aspects explaining the failure of one intervention had the power of explaining the failure of several other interventions as well.

sacrifices in personal life.

- Strong will, to oppose even the world for something that they believe in.
- Leaders always spent time in understanding the businesses they led.
- Making the most from the present resources and situation
- Building networks

## Case 3: Settlement colonies in irrigated areas, Raichur and Kurnool Districts.

People sell their meagre agricultural lands in prime agricultural belts to purchase larger extent of lands in areas where canal irrigation facilities are likely to come up under some dam. People who migrated from the same locality generally stay together and establish new settlements/colonies. Visits to such areas indicated that the migrants had overall better yields compared to the local people. The migrants enjoyed a diversified livelihoods portfolio and a better labour participation ratio among women. Though not staying in the main villages, the children of these migrants were enrolled in the schools. Interviews with the teachers indicated that these children, as a whole, performed better in the schools than those of the local people.

Interactions with the community indicated that the willingness to change, which was strongly exhibited by their moving out of their original place, and staying on despite low initial yields till the lands were won over and irrigated, contributed to their success in new place. On the other hand, the locals were not willing to change the intensity of their agriculture despite their lands being irrigated. The increased availability of the fodder and market for manure were not noticed by these locals.

The phrase 'the fire in the belly' is used in several occasions to describe some set of characteristics like these.

We in 'livelihoods' team, feel that a strong urge to survive and improve the situation in which one lives is behind all the above characteristics. The 'spirit' to persevere, fight, change and survive to improve the present situation, with a strong belief that the things could be changed for the better, is at

the root of all the above described behaviours. Several examples like Braille exist where the person, in the face of adversity and when everything was lost, rebounded as a result of this 'spirit'. Hence, we name this urge to survive, persevere, fight and change as 'spiritual capital'.

To give an analogy, the 'spiritual capital' is like the driver of a bus, in which a good engine, fuel, and all that are required to drive are present. It is the driver who gives the power to the inanimate bus to move forward. Without a driver, the presence of all the other essentials will not make the bus move along the desired path. On the other hand, if a good driver is present and senses that a vehicle is required in a particular situation, he would go and get one by hook or crook. Much in a similar fashion, the presence of 'spiritual capital' enables the household to use the other capitals to improve its present situation. Where required, a person with a strong 'spiritual capital' can improve the ownership and access to the capitals required.

And the perseverance, combined with learning and action, pays. This is the essence of 'spiritual capital', which is exhibited in several behaviours listed in the discussion above. It needs to be noted that 'spiritual capital' is in no way related to the religion.

During LEAP exercises, the presence of spiritual capital is known by mapping the resource use across time, the addition of livelihoods in recent years, the experiments conducted in the value chains, and case studies of the people who have come out of the poverty. Most best practitioners exhibit a higher spiritual capital.

Spiritual capital, being an important capital, the livelihoods intervention needs to be able to:

- expressly check for the presence of this capital; and
- animate the target people for improving this capital.



# Viji Srinivasan

In a society with strong patriarchal leaning, Viji Srinivasan defied all odds and championed the cause of the marginalized and vulnerable women in the backward villages of Bihar and Jharkhand. Reeling under the ills of poverty, exploitation, female foeticide and infanticide, child marriages and girl child trafficking, the women in these areas found a new hope in the cause and work of Viji Srinivasan.

Viji Srinivasan hails from a well-to-do family in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. To her, hunger and poverty were alien. All lives to Viji were beautiful and romantic. But this worldview of hers got a big jolt, when she ventured out to work with pavement dwellers in Chennai. After completing post graduation in Sociology, in 1962, Viji Srinivasan came across a community development program for pavement dwellers in Chennai who were uprooted by the city administration and driven to the outskirts. She took up the project for 6 weeks but continued on for 6 months and this became the beginning of a remarkable development worker in the making.

Today Viji transformed the lives of more than one lakh poor women and girl children. She lived with them, lived like them and worked with them. In the early 80's Viji worked as a program officer at The Ford Foundation. With the learnings she got Viji decided to move to Patna, Bihar. In 1988 she set up an NGO called Adithi which stands for Agriculture, Dairy, Industry, Tree Plantation, Handicrafts and Integration of women. Wasteland regeneration and alternative livelihoods initiated by Adithi changed lives in some of the poorest districts of Bihar.

The poor women in Bihar and Jharkhand faced exploitation and abuse from the rich landlords and upper castes. Viji believed that money is power and she went on to work for the livelihoods of the women to improve their income levels. She recognized the craftsmanship of the Santhali tribe women and gave them trainings in value addition works like Khatwa and Sujuni. Couple of women even learnt English and went abroad to exhibit their work. The exhibition in London's October Gallery fetched them a net profit of Rs.22 lakhs. One woman was groomed to clear the NIFT entrance test.

Under Swashakti (self-empowerment) project of Adithi 568 SHGs were formed which got involved in agriculture, food processing and manufacturing local products. 34000 women were employed under the project. The groups under Swashakti saved to the tune of Rs.7 lakh. Each woman saves anywhere between Rs.20 to Rs.150 a month. An SHG for the daughters of sex workers called Chaukhat was formed and they were given training in bag making, screen printing, stitching etc. Chaukhat made a profit of Rs.50000. A child bank is set up in the red-light area of Muzaffarpur which caters to the children of sex workers. Within months of establishing the bank it could mobilize business from 180 clients. The bank also employs street children to disseminate the message about the importance of savings.

As agricultural labourers' women suffered severe exploitation



under batai system where only 50 per cent of the produce was given to them and they were also charged for manure, seeds and water. To counter this Viji introduced a novel concept of share cropping to ensure food security. Women were trained in high yielding crop varieties, bio-fertilizers and crop rotation practices. This helped them to increase the yield drastically. Now the farm services of these women have more demand and they are in a position to bargain for better wages/returns.

Viji went on to establish Mahila Jalkrishak Samuh cooperative through which lease was secured on 800 fishing ponds and about 11000 fisherwomen were able to catch fish without hindrance. Trainings were given in breeding and hatching. Loans were given to build houses and ponds. The fisherwomen have set up market in the village and they fix prices for their catch. Adithi developed 700 acres of wasteland and leased it to people. Lemon grass was planted and oil extracted from it was sold at Rs.200 per litre. Under Adithi's afforestation programs tribals planted about 3.5 lakh plants. Adithi networked with 10 NGOs and gave technical, financial and managerial support to those in need.

Apart from income-generation activities Adithi has also taken up the cause of women education and empowerment. A tribal cooperative group called Gogobaisi was set up and many tribal women learnt to read and write apart from gaining enhanced craft skills.

Viji took up about 25 projects in Bihar and Jharkhand towards eliminating female foeticide, infanticide, girl child marriages and trafficking. To spread her outreach Viji tied up with several other NGOs in Bihar. Appalled by the statistics that about 2 lakh girl children are killed each month in Bihar alone, Viji founded Adithi's Short Stay Home in 1995 as a refugee and adoption center for girl babies. The IEC programs of this Home have indirectly saved children in other parts of Bihar. Also founded in 1995 was IGNOU-Adithi rural study center in Jharmundi for the education of tribal women. The center offers various courses like BA, BCom, Certificate in Rural Development etc. The text books are written in Santhali language. Viji also set up female foeticide prevention project named Kopal in 2003 and launched extensive sensitization programs and awareness meetings.

Viji also worked with Read Foundation and Pasumai Federation in Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu. She was also HWW Coordinator in South Asia.

The crusader of women's upliftment and empowerment, Viji Srinivasan passed away at the age of 67. Her legacy will continue to inspire women across. 🌟

# Books

## Book Summary

Name: **Poverty and Environment - Understanding linkages at the household level**

Author: **World Bank**

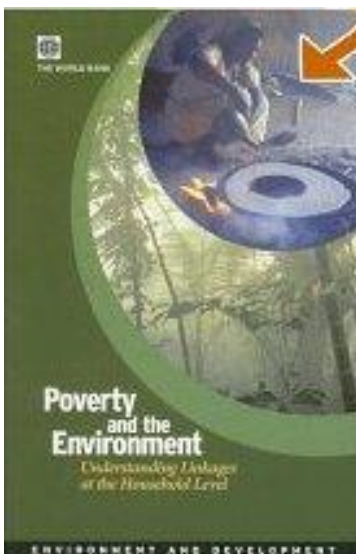
The World Bank is one of the largest international donors in the area of environmental management. It provides aid to poor nations towards addressing issues of climate change, bio-diversity degradation and towards developing institutions for environment management. The report fields important question like whether the environmental management strategies are addressing the problems of the poor and what is role of the poor in these environmental management programs.

The book focuses on the contribution of environmental resources to household welfare. The analysis increases the readers understanding of how specific reforms and interventions can have a positive impact on the health and the livelihoods of the people. The report provides micro evidence on the affect of environmental changes on the poor households. The focus is the impact on commonly held resources such as forests, fisheries an wildlife.

The book reveals that the natural resources contribute a significant source of income to many households. They provide buffer in times of need. Without appropriate policy reforms economic growth will trigger indiscriminate use of natural resources and thereby resource degradation. Therefore poverty reduction efforts should be linked with parallel environmental management strategies to conserve natural resources. Environmental reforms should be undertaken. The poverty reduction efforts should bring to light the fact that natural assets cannot be ignored in

any investment strategy for poverty reduction.

The report goes on to state that the design of health programs and projects should be based on considerations that extend beyond the health sector to include environment, education, nutrition, and information on public health. Public investment should target poor communities and not poor



households because investment in clean drinking water and sanitation creates a positive externalities for the household health.

Community based natural resource management leads to improvement in household welfare, from increased economic activity, investment in community infrastructure etc. Community participation in the community-based management of natural resources benefits participants and non-participants as well. By measuring the distribution of benefits it is known when the vulnerable groups are benefitting from the policy reforms. This will help better targeting of reforms in future.

Given the right incentives the poor are willing to participate in complex environmental management programs. Poor are also willing to contribute. ☺

## New Books

Name: **Over Coming Drought/ Adaptation Strategies for Andhra Pradesh, India**

Author: **World Bank**

Publisher: **Green Peace Initiative**

Name: **Alleviating Poverty - Cax studies of local level linkages and process in the developing world**

Editors: **Vineetha Menon, P.R.Gopinath, K.S.Nayar**

Publisher: **Rainbow**

Name: **Poverty Reduction in an Elite-Driven Democracy; The Case of India**

Author: **V.M.Rao**

Publisher: **Daanish Books, New Delhi**

Name: **Beyond the Numbers - Understanding the Distributions for Monitoring Poverty Reduction Strategies**

Author: **Taru Bedi et. all**

Publisher: **World Bank**

Name: **Studies in Local-Level Development - 2 Empowering People. Insights from a local experiment in participatory planning**

Author: **M.P.Pameswaran**

Publisher: **Daanish Books, New Delhi**

Name: **A World Growing Old**

Author: **Jeremy Seabrook**

Publisher: **Pluto Press. London**

## Nurses in Demand

Nursing is a vital component in any form of medical care. It is the art of caring for the sick people with the science of health care. This is one of the few work domains that is dominated by women. Gone are the days where Nursing lacked recognition and thanklessness. Nurses are in much demand all over. Compared to doctors, nurses are less expensive. There are cases where an experienced nurse is sought for health services than an amateur doctor.

Nursing profession in India is booming. The demand for Indian Nurses is large. Indian nurses are also in demand in other countries especially the West. In the recent past many Indian nurses have accepted work positions in US, UK and Australia. This flight has caused further shortage of qualified nurses in India.

Increase in the number of elderly in India means increase in the demand for health services and care services. Nurses with training in geriatric care can play a vital role here. The demand for the service of home care givers will increase. Nurses will be much sought after to provide such services.

Increase in standards of living have increased health consciousness among the middle class and rich. Many new hospitals and health care providers are springing up. They all need the services of nurses.

In the recent Union Budget health sector got 15 per cent more allocation. As provision for health services ramps up

the demand for health service delivery personnel will raise. Nurses are a vital component in the health delivery system.

Nursing duties cover a wide range of functions and responsibilities that depends with the level of qualification and the working environment. At the initial level, nurses are required for the bedside care of patients, while at senior level they are required to manage special group of people like psychiatric, pediatric, intensive care patients etc which require specialized skills. They are also involved in dispensing medication, keeping records of the patients progress, setting up and operating medical equipment, administration and several other routine chores.

Currently the ratio of nurses to patients in India is very low. This gap needs to be filled. There are several nurse training institutes/colleges in India. Nursing course can be pursued after Intermediate or graduation. There are also institutes offering diploma courses in nursing. Nurses earn anywhere between 3000 and 15000 rupees as remuneration depending on their experience.

However nursing is both mentally and physically demanding and nurses are often exposed to health risks from infectious diseases. This profession demands long hours of work and duties which incorporate both skill and understanding of patients needs. One should be prepared for these challenges.

The hey day of nurses is here and this will continue. 🌟

### Shining Livelihoods

### Declining Livelihoods

## Potters in Distress

Earthen pots can be traced back to times immemorial. Not very long ago they formed a vital ware in every household, may it be in the kitchen, may it be in the field, may it be for tapping toddy, may it be for milking and the list goes on.

Even today in many households summer will not pass by without drinking cool water out of the mud pot though refrigerators are increasingly taking their place.

Toddy is still tapped in pots. Pots are used even in the last journey in Indian culture to carry the pyre. But all this demand is miniscule compared to earlier days.

The first jolt for potters came when aluminum and steel hit the markets. Household kitchens replaced the shiny vessels in place of earthen ware. The real doomsday for pottery however came with the introduction of plastics. Not easily breakable and easy to clean became the mantra. Even flower pots are now coming in plastic.

Potters are struggling to survive. They are struggling to adapt to the changes. They lost their market. With agriculture crumbling in the villages the village economies are faring poorly. This decline caused huge dent in other services like blacksmithy, washer man, pottery etc. Unlike earlier when their supply was guided by the local demand now they are

subjected to external markets outside the village. Distance from the market and lack of adequate information on the changing consumer tastes is hurting their livelihood.

Environmentally earthen ware is much superior to plastic. Keeping this in mind Indian Railways made initiatives to supply hot beverages in mud pots in railway stations. But this did not take off quite well.

Decorative terracotta continues to have some market. This is obvious from the street hawkers selling terracotta wind chimes and other art objects. We also find earthenware objects in exhibits. During times of festivals like Diwali the earthen ware gathers some momentum. But that is all the demand there is. It is not enough to support the number of people that traditionally continued in this occupation. The younger generation is not opting for this livelihood anymore. So a time may come when we have to see potters wheel in the museum.

Systems should be evolved to rehabilitate the potters into other professions. Trainings and skill buildings can help them take up other budding and booming livelihoods. For those few who desire to continue in pottery, direct linkages with market can be established to have first hand information on the consumer tastes and changing demands. 🌟

## Parable of the Sheep and the Wolves

Not so long ago and in a pasture too uncomfortably close to here, a flock of sheep lived and grazed. They were protected by a dog, who answered to the master, but despite his best efforts from time to time a nearby pack of wolves would prey upon the flock.

One day a group of sheep, more bold than the rest, met to discuss their dilemma. "Our dog is good, and vigilant, but he is one dog and the wolves are many. What can we do? We are sheep, but we do not wish to be food, too!" One sheep spoke up, saying "It is his teeth and claws that make the wolf so terrible to us. It is his nature to prey, but it is the tools he wields that make it possible. If we had such teeth, we could fight back, and stop this savagery." The other sheep agreed, and they went together to the old bones of the dead wolves and gathered fang and claw and made them into weapons.

That night, when the wolves came, the newly armed sheep sprang up with their weapons and struck at them and drove off the wolves, who were astonished. When did the sheep become so bold and so dangerous to the wolves? The next day, flush with victory and waving their weapons, they approached the flock to pronounce their discovery. But as they drew nigh, the flock huddled together and cried out "Baaaaaaadddd! Baaaaaddd things! You have bad things! We are afraid! You are not sheep!"

The brave sheep stopped, amazed. "We are still sheep, but we do not wish to be food. Our new teeth and claws protect us but do not make us into wolves, they make us equal to the wolves, and safe from their viciousness!" "Baaaaaaadddd!", cried the flock, "the things are bad and will pervert you, and we fear them. You cannot bring them into the flock. They scare us!". So the armed sheep resolved to conceal their weapons, for although they had no desire to panic the flock, they wished to remain in the fold. But they would not return to those nights of terror, waiting for the wolves to come.

In time, the wolves attacked less often for they had no stomach for fighting sheep with tooth and claw even as they did. Then came the day when, as the flock grazed beside the stream, one sheep's weapon slipped from the folds of her fleece, and the flock cried out in terror again, "Baaaaaaadddd! You still possess these evil things! We must ban you from our presence!".

The chief sheep and his court and council, encouraged by the words of their moneylenders and advisors, placed signs and totems at the edges of the pasture forbidding the presence of hidden weapons there. The armed sheep protested before the council, saying "It is our pasture, too, and we have never harmed you! When can you say we have caused you hurt? It is the wolves, not we, who prey upon you. We are still sheep, but we are not food!". But the flock

would not hear, and drowned them out with cries of "Baaaaaaadddd! We will not hear your clever words! You and your things are evil and will harm us!". Saddened by this rejection, the armed sheep moved off and spent their days on the edges of the flock, trying from time to time to speak with their brethren to convince them of the wisdom of having such teeth, but meeting with little success. They found it hard to talk to those who, upon hearing their words, would roll back their eyes and flee, crying "Baaaaddd! Bad things!".

That night, the wolves happened upon the sheep's totems and signs, and said, "Truly, these sheep are fools! They have told us they have no teeth! Brothers, let us feed!". And they set upon the flock, and horrible was the carnage in the midst of the fold. The dog fought like a demon, and often seemed to be in two places at once, but even he could not halt the slaughter. It was only when the other sheep arrived with their weapons that the wolves fled, vowing to each other to remain on the edge of the pasture and wait for the next time they could prey, for if the sheep were so foolish once, they would be so again. This they did, and do still.

In the morning, the armed sheep spoke to the flock, and said, "See? If the wolves know you have no teeth, they will fall upon you. Why be prey? To be a sheep does not mean to be food for wolves!". But the flock cried out, more feebly for their voices were fewer, though with no less terror, "Baaaaaaadddd! These things are bad! If they were banished, the wolves would not harm us! Baaaaaaadddd!". The other sheep could only hang their heads and sigh. The flock had forgotten that even they possessed teeth; how else could they graze the grasses of the pasture? It was only those who preyed, like the wolves and jackals, who turned their teeth to evil ends. If you pulled their own fangs those beasts would take another's teeth and claws, perhaps even the broad flat teeth of sheep, and turn them to evil purposes.

The bold sheep knew that the fangs and claws they possessed had not changed them. They still grazed like other sheep, and raised their lambs in the spring, and greeted their friend the dog as he walked among them. But they could not quell the terror of the flock, which rose in them like some ancient dark smoky spirit and could not be damped by reason, nor dispelled by the light of day.

So they resolved to retain their weapons, but to conceal them from the flock; to endure their fear and loathing, and even to protect their brethren if the need arose, until the day the flock learned to understand that as long as there were wolves in the night, sheep would need teeth to repel them. They would still be sheep, but they would not be food!

Change faces resistance and comfort is sought in protecting the status quo. However, change is not always bad. One can adapt to good and needed changes! 🌱



## Trends and Statistics

Higher share of expenditure on food items would be indicative of poverty to some extent. Rural poor spend over 65% on food items, while urban poor spend over 57% on the same. Below is the latest NSS data on consumption expenditure on food and non-food items for different monthly per capita expenditure (MCPE) classes in rural and urban population.

### Consumption pattern across different MCPE classes of population - Rural (%)

|   | MCPE Class | Food  | Non-Food |
|---|------------|-------|----------|
| <b>I. Poor roughly below Poverty Line</b> |            |       |          |
| 1   | 0-234      | 68.45 | 31.55    |
| 2   | 235-270    | 67.16 | 32.84    |
| 3   | 270-320    | 66.35 | 33.65    |
| 4   | 320-365    | 64.78 | 35.22    |
| <b>II. Roughly between PL and 2PL</b>     |            |       |          |
| 5   | 365-410    | 63.99 | 36.01    |
| 6   | 410-455    | 62.93 | 37.06    |
| 7   | 455-510    | 61.61 | 38.39    |
| 8   | 510-580    | 60.11 | 39.88    |
| 9   | 580-690    | 58.02 | 41.98    |
| 10  | 690-890    | 53.92 | 46.08    |
| <b>III. Roughly above 2PL</b>             |            |       |          |
| 11  | 890-1155   | 49.80 | 50.20    |

### Consumption pattern across different MCPE classes of population - Urban (%)

|  | MCPE Class | Food  | Non-Food |
|--|------------|-------|----------|
| <b>I. Poor roughly below PL (poverty line)</b> |            |       |          |
| 1  | 0-335      | 64.86 | 35.14    |
| 2  | 335-395    | 63.11 | 36.89    |
| 3  | 395-485    | 60.04 | 39.96    |
| 4  | 485-580    | 57.30 | 42.70    |
| <b>II. Roughly between PL and 2PL</b>          |            |       |          |
| 5  | 580-675    | 55.35 | 44.65    |
| 6  | 675-790    | 52.37 | 47.62    |
| 7  | 790-930    | 49.69 | 50.31    |
| 8  | 930-1100   | 46.61 | 53.39    |
| <b>III. Roughly above 2PL</b>                  |            |       |          |
| 9  | 1100-1380  | 44.44 | 55.56    |
| 10   | 1380-1880  | 40.17 | 59.83    |

## Out of Poverty

## Kalavathi Employed

Kalavathi comes from economically poor background. She lost her mother at a young age. She has three elder brothers and two elder sisters. Her father cannot take up any gainful employment due to health problems. Both her sisters got married. One of her brother works as a stone-cutter. Two others work in a company that manufactures cartons.

Kalavathi is educated till 10th class. She had to quit education early in life to take care of her sick mother and also take part in household chores. There earnings in the family were barely sufficient to make both ends meet. Therefore Kalavathi had to chip in her financial contribution. She worked as servant maid.

Dr. Reddy Foundation is a Hyderabad based NGO that provides skill building trainings to rural youth and links them up with potential employers and employment opportunities. The youth mostly are those that discontinued higher education and are in search of employment. Kalavathi came to know about Dr. Reddy Foundation. She immediately capitalized on the opportunity. She got help and guidance from Ms. Murdula. Kalavathi joined Customer Relation Services (C.R.S) course.

Kalavathi put all her energies into acquiring knowledge on customer relations. She learnt how to communicate and correspond with others. The course focuses on behavioral aspects and Kalavathi took keen interest in fine-tuning her personable skills, articulating skills etc. She learnt the skill of

interacting with people, the skill of hospitality.

Opportunity knocked at Kalavathi's door. After she completed the C.R.S course with Dr. Reddy Foundation Kalavathi approached Eureka Forbes and got job with them as sales girl. She draws a salary of Rs.3000 per month.

Kalavathi's economic breakthrough helped her family to some extent. Most importantly it transformed Kalavathi into a confident young woman.

Kalavathi realizes the importance of education. Her advice to others is to pursue education by all means. People should be open to learning the new skills in the market. Computers is doing very good and so are other specific courses. She says every individual should aspire to become financially independent. Every individual should stand independent and should carve his/her own future.

Kalavathi's story stands as an inspiration to many. She decided to swim the rough seas. She was continuously on the look out for opportunities. This reinforces our belief that spiritual capital, the will power to get going even during tough times helps eventually. In the short term things may seem uphill but through confidence and perseverance nothing is impossible. Willingness and ability to grab opportunities is important. Willingness to learn, unlearn, re-learn is important. Kalavathi's journey stands testimony to these simple yet significant truths. ☘

## Broken Lives

## Distress Migration

Marikal is a tiny village in Kothapalli Mandal in Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. This village is well known for out migration. The people of this village migrate to Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Vijayawada and other areas in search of work. Migration of both land owners and agricultural labour is commonly seen in this village. At least one person per family migrated.

Bolle Lakshmaiah and Lakshamma are husband and wife. Lakshmaiah is 37 years old and his wife is 31. They belong to Scheduled Caste community. This couple is blessed with two children. The son is 8 years old and is a school dropout. Their daughter is 3 years old.

This couple own one acre of dry land. In that land they grow rain-fed crops like maize and castor. The per year yield comes to around 2 to 3 quintals. This fetches them a paltry income between Rs.1000 to Rs.1500. Lakshmaiah and his wife could not find any other works in the village that will increase their employment days and give them decent additional income. When found, the works would only fetch anywhere between Rs.10 to Rs.15 per day. This was barely sufficient to fulfill even the basic needs of the family. With a hope that the government would help them in building a

house, Lakshmaiah borrowed money in the village and started constructing his house. The construction progressed till basement but no help came from the government. Lakshmaiah was caught in the debt he made towards the house. The house remained unfinished.

In this context the family migrated to Hyderabad in search of livelihood about a year ago. They put together a temporary hut to live. The couple joined as construction labour through a contractor. Between them they earn about 120 to 130 rupees per day. If they get this kind of work continuously they will be able to save at least half the earnings. But unfortunately the number of days of employment they get is limited. Sometimes they have to go without work for a week at a stretch. During these times they borrow money either from the contractor or relatives or acquaintances. The interest on these loans vary between 3 to 5 per cent. The place where they live do not have drinking water facility. There is no medical facility either. Further they live with the constant risk of being vacated from the land at any time.

Lakshmaiah and his wife are willing to return to the village if they can find a decent livelihood. For now they just make short trips to the village to check on their land. ☘

## ‘Yoga’kshemam

February is the month of valentine. It is also the month of Budgets. It was also a month of the Aged, for us.

A great Gandhian social worker – Murlidhar Devdas Amte (Baba Amte) left us for good. May his soul rest in peace!

It was a packed month – morning 8 to midnight 12/1 for 14-15 days working with HelpAge India Program Staff who were getting inducted into development planning and project management and evolving its program vision and plan. Remaining time mostly went in developing the management information system for the players in the cotton textile supply chain project. Another need of the day - loading livelihoods agenda on to micro-finance vehicles took some of our mind space and time.

One discussion led by Bhargava is still lingering in mind. How do we advocate? One way is to lobby for policy changes. The other is to organize the ‘potential beneficiaries’ and make them demand. The most important, it appeared, is to appreciate the hegemony of dominant ideas on the mind, society, culture, literature and introduce alternative viable rationally sound ideas into the arena so that they slowly replace or fill the space to become part of the new hegemony. That would mean we need to argue the ideas logically, pilot test these ideas for their viability, demonstrate, and disseminate in a variety of forms that appeals to the mind that receives.

India is an ageing young nation. 8% are old now. This is increasing year by year. Life expectancy at 60 is more than 20 years. More than two-thirds of the older persons are working. The issue is how we could facilitate them to have decent portfolio of livelihoods that offers them remunerative enough income with less risks. Related issue is how we could reduce their expenditure without compromising the quality of life. The most important thing is how we could make old age that one should look forward to. With universal pensions for 65+ poor old and a host of benefits as senior citizens including 50% tariff for travel, old age has become less uncomfortable. Honestly, **we all be old sooner or later and it is in our future interest that we side with the old in their struggle for better lives and livelihoods.** We need to catch them when they are still young to prepare them for old age. Sure enough, they become a bit slow but that could be compensated with their experience, expertise and accumulated wisdom. They become a bit rigid but that could be compensated with their childlike ‘tantrums’. They are friends with our children which we struggle to become.

Yes, some need counseling, some need information, some need knowledge inputs, some need skills, some need market linkages, some need working capital, some need ‘realization’ and some others need adaptation. Some of them are keen to have their wishes fulfilled. But most of them need productive engagement options, recognition, support

systems, solidarity collectives, livelihoods collectives, etc. All of them need soft life skills for leading productive lives in the quick-paced dynamic contexts.

One of the greatest service that can be offered to the old-old (or dependent old!) is home care and palliative care. We can help them in their last journey being smoother and more comfortable. We are in short supply of care givers, both volunteers and paid care givers. We need to ‘produce’ them soon.

These intense days in the month have helped me control the ‘street dogs’ in the mind to let new dogs in. These include: The best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person; When one is in love, it shows; One should never say no to a gift from a child; Sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand; Ignore the facts that can not be changed and ignoring the facts does not change the facts; Love, not time, heals all wounds; The easiest way for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people smarter/wiser than I am; All the happiness and growth occurs while doing; And the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done.

We need to work towards bringing life, livelihoods, resources, environment, learning, leadership and love centre stage for every one – young and old, men and women,

marginalized, forgotten, poor and rich, professional and volunteer, secure and insecure, extrovert and introvert, skilled and unskilled, wise and ignorant, hardworking and smart working, debt-free and deep-in- debt, fit and not-so-fit, rural and urban, indigenous and migrant, believer and doubting, and spirited and dispirited.

Krishna discusses the ways to keep focus on the supreme purpose with Arjuna. If one remains focused on the purpose with heart, mind, and intellect through meditation and contemplation, one will find a way out to attain the purpose. If one is not able to focus the mind on the purpose, one has to work long to attain the purpose by a plan and practices such as a ritual, norm, rule, habit etc., such that you acquire abilities to remain focused on the purpose. If one is not able to practice and focus, then one has to perform the duty (protocol) just as an instrument to serve the purpose. If this is not possible, one can surrender, with complete faith, to a master/mentor (person) unto his/her will and renounce the attachment, anxiety and fruits of work with equanimity. Then also, one achieves the supreme purpose. This is Karma-yoga of Krishna.

Thus, to practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed to the purpose with love and purity. All this should be carried out without attachment to fruits of work.

***Come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom. For us attaining our purpose.*** ☸

## Women's Day



Five crore women grouped as SHGs are travelling towards empowerment!

These women have shouldered economic and social responsibilities!

Men are giving way for this and increasing the workload of the women!

Time has come for the women to reduce their workload and embrace the roles of management & decision-making and get work done rather than themselves working.