

**BALDNESS?**  
World Class Non-Surgical  
Hair Replacement from U.S.A.

**LOOK & FEEL  
100%  
NATURAL  
HYGIENIC  
PROCESS**

Before After

**FREE** Consultation and Live Demo  
**Call: 9217805655**  
**Hair Shoppe**

Chandigarh: SCO # 85, Sector-44C  
Phones: (0172) 4632019, 6533019  
Delhi: (011) 41315929 www.hairshoppe.in

# The Tribune

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

UNMISTAKABLY No.1  
Always first with the best

**MODERN'S**  
abc SCIENCE Series

For XI, XII, B.Sc. I, II,  
III & M.Sc. Classes

\* PHYSICS \* CHEMISTRY  
\* BIOLOGY \* MATHEMATICS  
\* INFORMATION TECH.

AVAILABLE WITH ALL BOOK SELLERS

Vol. 130 No. 59 Haryana Edition

New Delhi . Chandigarh . Jalandhar . Bathinda . Monday, March 1, 2010

www.tribuneindia.com

18 pages . Rs 2

## India, Saudi role crucial in global economy: PM

Says Indian economy to grow at 7% this year

RIYADH, FEBRUARY 28

The role of emerging economies like India and Saudi Arabia would be crucial to the restructuring of the global economic and financial architecture, said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

"The integration of our economies with the rest of the world has created new opportunities and also brought new challenges," the Prime Minister said here today. He was addressing the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry during the course of his visit to this affluent Gulf nation, one of the world's largest oil producers and home to Islam's holiest sites.

"The global financial crisis has thrown up a broad agenda for global action and reforms. The role of emerging economies such as India and Saudi Arabia within the G-20 framework, and otherwise, will be crucial to the restructuring of global economic and financial architecture," he added.

Stating that the robust growth of the economies of the two countries



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with Saudi Foreign Affairs Minister Saud Al Faisal in Riyadh on Sunday. — PTI

threw up immense opportunities for business communities from both sides, Manmohan Singh said Indian investments into the kingdom had risen considerably and now stood at more than \$2 billion, covering 500 joint ventures.

Stating that India's need for high quality modern infrastructure was vast, he called upon Saudi investors and entrepreneurs to explore investment opportunities in India.

"I would specially refer to the construction, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, health, agriculture, energy, telecommunications, biotechnology, tourism and other service sectors," he said.

From India's side, he offered the country's expertise in the knowledge-based sector. "Education and skill development are of primary importance to both our countries. Continued on page 14

T for Tharoor, Trouble, Twitter

NEW DELHI: Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor has the knack for courting controversy. He has done so again while being part of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's entourage to Saudi Arabia. News agencies quoted him as saying in Riyadh that Saudi Arabia, with its close ties with Islamabad, could be a 'valuable interlocutor' in improving India's ties with Pakistan. P 18

10 pacts finalised

RIYADH: India and Saudi Arabia on Sunday finalised 10 pacts, including an extradition treaty and agreements in the economic sphere for signing during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's ongoing visit to this oil-rich country. Manmohan Singh, the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Saudi Arabia in 28 years, will meet King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud later in the evening and hold wide-ranging talks on issues ranging from cooperation in various areas, situation in Afghanistan and the threat of terrorism. — PTI



Indian players celebrate Sandeep Singh's second goal against Pakistan during their World Cup match at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium in New Delhi on Sunday. India won 4-1 with Sandeep scoring twice and Shivendra Singh and Prabhjot Singh netting a goal each. — Tribune photo: Manas Ranjan Bhui P 16

## Scam? No money changed hands, says Gen Prakash

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

The so-called Sukna land scam, which has rocked the Army establishment for the past few months and hogged headlines in the media, is just a lot of hot air, claims the former Military Secretary to the Army Chief, Lt Gen Avadesh Prakash (Retd). The General, who retired on February 1, happens to be one of the officers accused of cosyng up to a property developer in Silliguri and of pressuring the Corp Commander to withdraw his initial objection on security reasons to construction work outside the Sukna military station in Darjeeling.

Breaking his silence to Karan Thapar in the CNN-IBN programme Devil's Advocate on Sunday evening, the retired General claimed that the 70 acres in question belonged to the Chumta tea estate and that developers did not need any permission from the Army. "The local military authorities have no jurisdiction whatsoever on the land adjacent to their area," said General Prakash in reply to a question.

But asked why in that case the promoter had sought a no-objection certificate from the Corp Commander at Sukna and why the Commander had turned

Sukna Case

Excerpts from the interview

Karan Thapar: So, on the basis of what you have just told me, is the use of the term, 'scam' inappropriate or even misleading?

General Prakash: Absolutely, because the land doesn't belong to the Army, no money has exchanged hands. The land remains with the original owners. So, where is the scam? I just don't understand that.

Karan Thapar: Many people say that at the bottom of this whole sorry affair there is a rivalry or a bitterness between Lt Gen V K Singh, the present Army Commander of Eastern Command and who is going to be the next Army Chief, and yourself?

General Prakash: This is absolutely wrong. We have been colleagues as young officers, we had our postings together. There is no question of any rivalry or any bitterness. Even during my tenure as military secretary, he is one gentleman who had never recommended any case to me. I am very clear on that.

down the request at first, General Prakash replied, "May be... they just wanted to have (good) neighbourly relations with the military authorities there... that's all I can say."

He claimed that the Corp Commander's initial objections were related to the promoter's plans to put up malls and resorts on the land. But when promoters decided to put up a school instead, General Prakash told Thapar, the Corp Commander 'must have changed his decision'.

General Prakash admitted that he knew the promoter, Dilip

Agarwal, and that he accompanied him to meet Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur in Jodhpur to discuss the possibility of securing the franchise of a school to be set up at Sukna. He also admitted visiting Sukna in the company of the promoter and visiting the land for 'five or 10 minutes'. In hindsight, he agreed, the actions were possibly errors of judgment and improper. But 'at that point of time I thought it was a harmless thing to do', he confessed.

In another candid confession, Continued on page 14

## Day 2: Punjab, Haryana tense

■ Centre rushes additional forces ■ Followers continue to demand withdrawal of case against Baba Ram Rahim

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 28

Tension continued to simmer in parts of Punjab and Haryana today, and public transport continued to remain affected even as the states limped back to normalcy after the previous evening's violence and arson allegedly by followers of Dera Sacha Sauda. Additional central forces were rushed to tie the two states although no fresh outbreak of violence was reported on Sunday.

The Dera followers, however, continued to demand the withdrawal of a fresh case of murder filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against the Dera chief, Gurmeet Ram Rahim. The CBI claims to have found fresh evidence to implicate the Dera chief in the murder of one Fair Chand, who disappeared in 1991 and whose body has never been found.

The wily satsang at the Dera headquarters at Sirsa (Haryana) passed peacefully even as a large force of policemen staged a flag march in the morning. Heavy employment of security forces and an appeal for calm and peace by the Dera seemed to have cooled frayed tempers.



Security forces hold a flag march in Sirsa on Sunday. — PTI

At Bathinda, hundreds of Dera followers offered a dharna at the mini-secretariat and raised slogans against the government. A delegation later submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner, warning that the administration and the Union government would be responsible for the consequences if the 'false case' against the Dera chief was not withdrawn. They also demanded the release of the Dera followers arrested yesterday.

Hundreds of supporters were rounded up in Moga, Abohar,

Murder case against Dera chief

Fazilka and booked under Sections 307, 427, 149 of the Indian Penal Code and also under sections of the Arms Act. They were accused of torching government property, including buses and trains, attacking the police and damaging ATMs.

The Malwa region of Punjab remained the worst affected with Punjab state transport corporation buses and even private buses, specially the ones allegedly owned by the Badals, keeping off roads. Normal train movements were also restored late on

Sunday afternoon. Taxis either refused to ply longer distances or charged exorbitant rates.

The authorities here suspect that violence was "engineered" by "someone from Sirsa", who phoned the followers of the Dera and instructed them to "set the buses and public property on fire". However, an official spokesperson of the Dera has denied the allegation. Haryana DGP Ranjiv Dalal said the police arrested 40 persons today and added that no one would be allowed to endanger human life or property and disturb the peace and tranquillity in the state.

The Dera spokesman and several politicians hinted at a 'conspiracy' and demanded an investigation into the sudden disturbances on Saturday. The manner in which violent mobs surfaced in different parts of the state, and almost simultaneously, they argued, indicated that they could not have been spontaneous. The disturbances also exposed the chinks in the Punjab police and the colossal failure of intelligence agencies, said a section of political leaders.

The authorities, however, seem to have hardened their stand and instructions have gone Continued on page 15

## Myanmar to Manipur, a scramble for HIV care

By USHA RAI

The Angel's Care Centre at Moreh, 110 km from Imphal, Manipur, and on the border with Myanmar, one of the worst HIV-infected countries of the world, has to provide medical help not just to the over 400 People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA) in Moreh but to the infected of Myanmar who cross the border desperate for medical help.

The fact that Moreh is close to the Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Laos and Thailand) of the drug route, and within sniffing distance from India's National Highway 39, has compounded the problem. Forty per cent of the Manipuri families inject drugs and there are 33,403 HIV positive in Manipur.

In fact, Manipur is one of the six HIV high prevalence states of the country with 1.13 per cent of the people infect-

ed. But in Manipur, as in the adjoining Nagaland, it is a deadly combination of alcohol and drugs in the form of tests that the young turn to for their 'hit'. When this fails to satisfy them, they have no qualms about injecting heroin, 4 and other drug opiates. Sir, a dose of heroin costs just Rs 2 in Moreh as against Rs 100 and more in Imphal, young people in this small border town resort to it when they are depressed and even when happy in need of celebration.

Though India is the medical destination for a range of ailments -- heart surgery to kidney transplants and coal replacement, the treatment of HIV-infected from across the border is almost a clandestine operation a state like Manipur where adequate facilities are not available for treatment of the local HIV-infected popu-

A Tribune Exclusive

many feel it is difficult to justify treatment of foreigners, however poor they are, coming from a country that has not been able to provide medical succour to its people.

Sachin, project coordinator of the Angel Care Centre, and Sumati, secretary of the NGO Meetei Leimarol Sinnai Sang (MLSS), Imphal, however, feel frustrated about their inability to help the very young and very sick people from across the border. Some are 20 years or even younger and others 40. They come with acute skin infection, TB and other ailments. At any given time, there are 60 to 70 patients from Myanmar and Sachin says they are HIV positive.

Many of them are farmers and daily

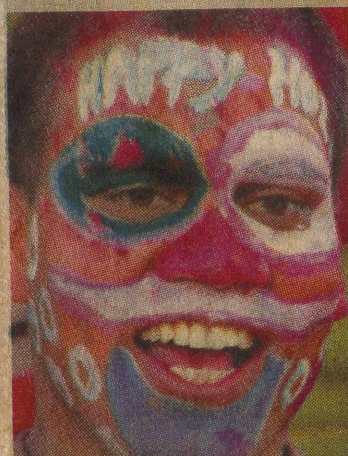
wage labourers who buy the ART (antiretroviral therapy) medicines from pharmacies in Myanmar. They do not have reports on their CD-4 count or level of immunity because they have no access to these facilities in their own country.

Without a CD-4 count report, they cannot be given ART in Moreh. So they are treated for subsidiary ailments and sent home. Since MLSS runs a DOTS Centre in Imphal and there is high prevalence of HIV among the TB-infected, the people from Myanmar are able to access the TB medicines from Manipur. They cross the border regularly for the treatment but since they speak only Burmese, there are problems of communication.

While hospitals in Moreh and even those in Imphal are in a dilemma about treating PLHA from across the

border, Dr Priyo Kumar of JN Hospital, Manipur, says since the country lies on India's border, treating patients from Myanmar is quite ethical. Besides it also helps protect Manipur's population from the infected from across the border.

With the present support from the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria coming to an end this March, Sachin and Sumati are worried about the future of the Angel Care Centre which has become the lifeline for over 200 PLHA. It has a 10-bedded community care centre and is providing Continued on page 15



The Tribune wishes its readers a Happy Holi. Our offices will remain closed on March 1, 2010, and there will be no edition on March 2.



## The Tribune

Established in 1881

### Sanction for prosecution

Put Sajjan Kumar's trial on fast track

THE Delhi Lt-Governor's sanction to the CBI to prosecute former MP and Congress leader Sajjan Kumar for his alleged involvement in the horrendous 1984 anti-Sikh riots is indicative of the Centre's belated resolve to bring the culprits to book. That it took as many as 25 years for the authorities to seek his prosecution for his questionable role in the riots that followed former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination is inexplicable. A case was registered against him after the G.T. Nanavati Commission report in February 2005 recommended fresh examination of complaints in which Sajjan Kumar had been named and no chargesheet had been filed. As he is a former MP, the Lt-Governor's sanction for prosecution was mandatory. But then, the Centre should not have taken so much time to sanction his prosecution. The ends of justice will be met only if his prosecution is put on fast track for an early trial.

Undoubtedly, the Calling Attention Motion moved by Mr Tarlochan Singh in the Rajya Sabha last month helped expedite the Centre's action on Sajjan Kumar. It is noteworthy that in response to this motion on the progress of relief to the victims of 1984 riots and the measures being taken to punish the guilty, Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram told the Rajya Sabha that he would request Lt-Governor Tejinder Khanna to decide by December-end. Now that his clearance has come, the case has become the CBI's responsibility. The CBI is now duty-bound to ensure that there is no further delay in the trial and prosecution of Sajjan Kumar.

One does not know as yet the fate of Mr Jagdish Tytler, former Union Minister. The Congress gave tickets to him and Sajjan Kumar to contest the last Lok Sabha elections, but retracted following a public outcry. On December 16, 2009, the Union Home Ministry clarified that there was no case pending for sanction of prosecution related to Mr Tytler. Meanwhile, the death of Surinder Singh, a key witness accused of flip-flops regarding Mr Tytler's involvement in the riots, has given a new twist to the case. The Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, New Delhi, will hear on February 10, 2010, the CBI's justification of the closure report defending Mr Tytler. People's confidence in the criminal justice system can be restored only if the culprits, however high and powerful they may be, are brought to justice for their role in one of nation's most traumatic events since Independence.

### Mystery fire at BARC

There is no room for complacency

THERE is cause for concern over the mysterious fire that broke out in the chemical laboratory of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in Mumbai on Tuesday in which two researchers were charred to death. According to the Director of the Chemistry group of BARC, Mr Tulsi Mukherjee, the chemicals in the lab were "non-inflammable" and the lab did not have any explosives. Yet, the fire erupted with "a loud bang" shattering a couple of windows, pointing to the possible presence of explosives. That the mishap occurred against the backdrop of a recent Intelligence Bureau alert which said that India's nuclear facilities could be under a terror threat cannot be dismissed as a coincidence. The Director of BARC, A.N. of checking the preparedness of the nuclear centre in the "one's" way the intelligence reports of a possible terror attack. While the Department of Atomic Energy spokesperson S K Malhotra was emphatic that there was no "reactor, radioactivity or radiation" involved in the accident, that too is not enough to lull the authorities into complacency.

This is the third time in the recent past that a nuclear establishment in India has been the victim of mishaps. The first incident occurred at the Kaiga Atomic Power Station in Karnataka where a 'disgruntled' staffer allegedly contaminated drinking water with a small amount of heavy water. Routine urine samples from a number of staff at the plant were found to have elevated levels of radiation. The second incident occurred at the Tarapur Atomic Power Station where CISF personnel nabbed several people attempting to smuggle out some computer-related parts. That in the Kaiga incident investigations have hit a dead end and in the Tarapur one no deterrent action has been taken speaks for itself.

It is indeed imperative that the latest case of the fire at BARC not be taken lightly. After the forensic probe is completed, the authorities must get to the root of the incident and fix responsibility without fear or favour. Besides, there is no escape from a heightened vigil.

### Lawless in Lalgaharh

Blaming the Centre or the state is pointless

WHILE expressing his satisfaction over an "eventful but peaceful year", Union Home Minister Mr. P. Chidambaram admitted his disappointment at the situation in Lalgaharh in West Bengal. The situation, he said on Thursday, was "pretty depressing" and admitted that even the presence of a strong contingent of central para-military forces in the area had failed to restore normalcy. Lalgaharh first came to limelight a year ago following a landmine blast triggered by the Maoists and targeted at the West Bengal Chief Minister and the then Union Minister for Steel, Ramvilas Paswan, who were traveling together. The police crackdown that followed alienated the local people and within a few weeks, the Maoists forced the state government to retreat and the police to abandon their posts in the area. Emboldened, the Maoists encouraged local people to revolt and take law into their own hands. Local strongmen owing allegiance to the ruling Left Front were killed, their houses burnt and CPM offices vandalised. The CPM retaliated in kind and soon violence spun out of control, giving the Maoists a free run and prompting them to declare Lalgaharh a "liberated zone".

Central para-military forces with 6000 men were dispatched in June last year to assist the state police to enforce the writ of the state. But six months later, the situation actually appears to have worsened. There has been no end to violence. Police stations have been attacked, policemen kidnapped, para-military forces ambushed and people continue to be killed in the area. The state government is unable to control the situation, and as late as last month the government submitted before the High Court that it was unable to find civil contractors willing to work in Lalgaharh. Even the forest rangers have been found seeking protection from the Maoists.

Lalgaharh has exposed the weaknesses of the entire political and administrative system and the longer it remains adrift, the administration is bound to look more vulnerable. Tougher and more coordinated measures, and not a blame-game, are required to put an end to lawlessness and bring the culprits to book irrespective of their identity or ideological affinity.

### Thought for the day

Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides. — The Rig Veda

# Reversal of HIV infection

## Distinct possibility of success in sight

by Usha Rai

GR EAT strides have been made in the care and treatment of people living with HIV, and at the core of the transformation of the lives of those infected and affected are the positive people themselves. It is with great courage that they have come forward to acknowledge their status and do advocacy for those not so brave to speak up or even access the life-saving ART (anti-retroviral treatment).

From purely urban locales, their networks have spread deep into the districts, and small bands of trained peer educators are actually tracking down and bringing for treatment not only all those infected but also those who have defaulted from treatment.

The vice-president of the Indian Network of Positive People (INP+), Senthil, recalls that just five years ago in Chennai, a pregnant woman, who went for delivery of her child to a Primary Health Centre and declared her HIV positive status, was locked up in a room. Nepravine tablets and a bottle of water were chucked into her room and from closed doors she was ordered to take it to prevent the transmission of the infection to the child in her womb.

Even when she delivered her baby no one came to help the mother or give the mandatory drug to the newborn. It was only when the complaint reached the district medical administration that someone was sent to cut the cord.

Now in South India, thanks to the strong advocacy of the positive people's network, 75 to 80 per cent of PLHIV are not only able to deliver their babies in PHCs but also have surgeries too. But in North India the stigma and discrimination persists and accessing health, education and other basic services is still not easy. Despite the slow pace of awareness in the vulnerable states of central and north India, when 350 PLHIV recently got together in Delhi to discuss access to care and treatment, the hall resonated with hope and a new vigour.

The Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria (GFATM), an international financing organisation, showed confidence in the joint efforts of the well-known health NGO Population

Foundation of India, the National AIDS Control Organisation, the positive networks and their partners to commit \$ 500 million over the next six years.

This puts an end to the uncertainty over the continuation of India's ART programme in the six high prevalence states and the eight vulnerable ones as the current phase of GFATM funding comes to an end in the six high prevalence states next March. The government's target now is to scale up to 375 ART centres from the present 227 that are currently giving treatment to 2.8 lakh people with the help of 256 Community Care Centres and 204 Link ART centres.

In fact, Mr Taufiqur Rahman of the Global Fund feels that with the current level of political commitment to the treatment of and support for PLHIV, India can hope so see a reversal of infection in the next six years. This unique public-private partnership of four years under the Global Fund has turned the infection from being considered a death warrant to a chronically manageable disease.

There is a woman, HIV positive for 20-odd years, who has managed without ART. Today close to 300,000 PLHIV have access to care and treatment. The second line of ART is available even if so far only a few educated, urban elite with the right connections have access to it.

So, how has the turn-around happened? The district-level networks (DLN) are the key to transformation. Some 283 DLNs have been established in 27 states. It is these networks of positive people that follow up all issues, whether it is availability of ART, stigma or discrimination or a close scrutiny on defaulters who are tracked down, counselled and persuaded to go back to drugs.

By 2012 another 220 districts will be covered by the network and by 2015, the entire country will benefit from the advocacy and service delivery mechanism of the DLN. Support group meetings are held thrice a month at the DLNs and there is a sharing of views, challenges and successes of positive people.

Despite access to ART, managing opportunistic infections like tuberculosis, malaria and hepatitis is a problem because the PLHIV have to go to other departments for treatment. The INP+ had to fight for ART, then treatment for opportunistic infections and subsequently the second line of ART. Not even a thousand of the 200299 people registered with INP+ are on second line ART. After being on first line ART for about two years, it is important to test the PLHIV for the second line ART. But there are just about 20 machines in the country for doing these tests.

The champions of the DLNs are the peer educators, all of them volunteers. They are members of the community who have been selected and trained for their leadership qualities, standing

The 13,500 peer educators in the country are responsible for bringing back into the fold defaulters or those who have dropped out from treatment and care

in the community and their communication skills. There are some 13,500 peer educators in the country and each of them is responsible for 10 cases or clients. It is they who are responsible for bringing back into the fold defaulters or those who have dropped out from treatment and care.

Between 2007 and 2009, some 5457 dropped out and 60 per cent of them were brought back for treatment. Those who drop out are those who are still scared of being seen at an ART centre because they have not told the family about their status. In fact, it is easier to trace defaulters in a village, where everyone knows everyone else, than in a city, says Senthil. That is how deep and strong the arms of the network are!

The kind of work done by the DLNs is

best exemplified by the story of Ramoji, (name changed) 19, from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. As a 16-year-old in class 11 he suffered serious injuries in an accident and was in need of blood for surgery. His parents were poor and illiterate and finally ended up buying blood from an attendant in the hospital for Rs 100. Six months later he developed high fever and persistent coughing and was diagnosed as HIV positive. Ramoji's parents then rejected him and would not let him into the house.

The Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre, fearing he may commit suicide, referred him to the Guntur DLN which assured him that he could lead a happy life like other members but would have to be on medicines. The DLN members even explained the infection to the parents and asked them to take him back, but to no avail.

The DLN then moved him into a religious institute where he stayed in the hostel and concentrated on his studies. After a few months he fell ill again and was taken by the DLN to Guntur General Hospital where they found his CD-4 count had dropped very low and he was put on ART. Back at the hostel one day, the religious head asked him to give up medicines and trust in God. If he took medicines he said he would have to move out.

Despite knowing the consequences of giving up medicines, desperate for a roof over his head, he gave up medicines. The next time he fell ill, his CD-4 count was 5 and his survival seemed difficult. He was in a care and support centre for 45 days and the DLN members ensured he did not default on his ART medicines again.

After he recovered, the DLN decided to make Ramoji economically independent. After training he was made an outreach worker and given Rs 3000 as wages. Ramoji stayed in a working men's hostel, paying Rs 2000 towards his board and lodging. He has completed his 12th boards while working for the DLN and has now enrolled for his graduation through distant learning.

But the silver clouds on the HIV horizon need to be nurtured. There is scope for better governance and utilisation of funds coming to India. ■

### Frogs, snails and puppy tails...

by Aradhika Sharma

MOM... MOM". My 16-year-old son bangs the door and comes into where I am fixing his milk in the kitchen. He yanks me to him roughly, gives me a careless kiss on my eyebrow and demands something 'nice' to eat.

"Cheese toast?"

"Nah!"

"Popcorn?"

"No Mom, something exciting"

"Chocolate cookies? Rasgulla? Homemade cake?"

"Boring," he said morosely and then a smile lights his face.

"I know! I want MAGGIE!"

Then seeing my expression he

says, "Don't worry ma, I'll make it myself"

The old rhyme was true.

While girls are made of sugar and spice and all that's nice,

boys are made of frogs and snails and puppy dog tails.

My boys manage to constantly shock, disgust and irritate me.

The only reason I tolerate them is because no one will adopt them and well, let me admit, they make me laugh...and laugh...and laugh!

"Mom...MOM"

Does the boy think I'm deaf?

"Yes boy, here I am two feet away from you."

"Mom, smell this," and he comes close to me and breathes

out with all his might into my face. When I move my head away involuntarily, he says, hurt: "Mom, smell...smell please, then I'll tell you why."

Fearing the worst (Cigarette? Alcohol?) I take a full whiff of his mouth odour.

"What?" I demand, backing off.

"Is my mouth smelling fresh? I mean a girl won't be put off because of bad breath, will she?"

This is worse than cigarettes and alcohol.

"GIRL? Which girl?"

"Oh! No girl mom. Just asking."

Sure; I believe that. Is it too

early to talk about birth control?

"Mom...MOM...I need you urgently."

He's standing before the mirror, with the most tragic expression.

"Mom, where did THESE come from?" he says pointing to a rash of acne.

"From your dirty thought about girls," I said heartlessly.

"Well, would you prefer that I was gay then?" He retorts while poking at his pimples.

I almost said that that would involve dirty thoughts about boys but desisted.

"Mom...mom... see the new picture that I took"

"Goodness! What in the

world is it?"

"It's the picture of a dead cat that I saw lying in the rubbish bin. One of its eyes was hanging out. I'll show you the closeup"

How wonderfully aesthetically pleasing!

These conversations took place within the span of a week.

The creatures bathe, brush and shampoo only because some girl may look at them. They talk only loudly, they watch all kinds of nonsense and exchange dirty SMSes, and they are totally irreverent and disrespectful about their teachers and parents.

QED: Boys are definitely made of frogs and snails and puppy dog tails! ■

### Letters to the Editor

#### Unholy deal between Soren, BJP

THE BJP support to Shibu Soren is appalling (editorial, "Daunting task for Soren", Dec 29). All this has confirmed that our national parties boasting of value-based politics are morally bankrupt: They say something and do exactly the opposite. Our political and judicial system is outdated, redundant and criminal and offender friendly. Under the cover of "innocent until proven guilty", politicians like Soren can contest elections and become Chief Ministers.

No political party dares to bring an amendment to stop the misuse of system because all benefit from it. Soren is not a popular choice, but an unavoidable necessity of unethical political parties.

He is known for promoting corrupt practices and is also notoriously known to promote his own family members.

Above all, he lacks morality and ethics. Madhu Koda has skimmed this mineral-rich state and Soren shall give it the "finishing" touch.

Unholy alliances, unethical friends and strange bedfellows can never go a long way. We can, therefore, see

the end of Soren's government soon. Capt AMAR JEET KUMAR, SAS Nagar

II

Aligning with Shibu Soren in Jharkhand is the biggest mistake that the BJP has committed in years. It shows lack of commitment to principles when political power is in sight. The BJP will soon be regretting its decision. What has happened to the party that once upon a time swore by values and ethics? R J KHURANA, Bhopal

#### Beat the deadline

The editorial "Race against time" (Dec 22) concerning forthcoming

Commonwealth Games rightly highlighted the apprehensions of delay. Most of the works are half complete and many deadlines have been missed. But we must remember that nothing is impossible if one has the will to accomplish it.

We still have nine months to go and we can beat the deadline, if everyone joins hands and works with single-minded determination to achieve the goal. The nation's prestige is at stake. Strict supervision and monitoring at all levels is the need of the hour.

HARBANS SINGH, Ambala Cantt

#### Enhance punishment

The people have expressed solidarity with Anand and Madhu Parkash

#### Debate the issue

THE article "Legalising prostitution?" by Rami Chhabra (Dec 22) truly underlines the fact that those entrusted with the task of guiding our interests are taking their jobs non-seriously and are working according to their own whims and fancies, unmindful of others' feelings and interests.

They are not interested in the repercussions of their actions or the gravity of the situation, rather have started taking their jobs lightly and

are often not competent enough to deal with the situation.

Few can understand the plight of women who are forced to take up this profession in which they sacrifice everything for the sake of their family's survival. Indeed, something has to be done to curb this menace.

Utmost care has to be taken in resolving issues involving women. The matter must be debated thoroughly.

NIKITA SHARMA, Shimla

#### Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor, neatly handwritten or typed in double space, should not exceed the 150-word limit. These can be sent by post to the Letters Editor, The Tribune, Sector 29, Chandigarh-160030. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to: Letters@tribuneindia.com

— Editor-in-Chief

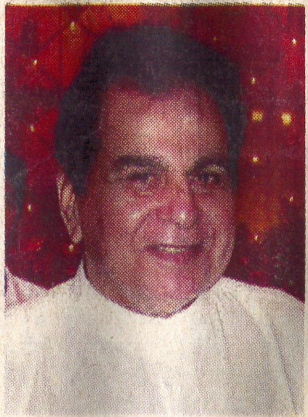
who are pursuing the case with rare tenacity and doggedness (article, "La affaire Rathore: Brutalisation of governance" by MG Devasahayam, Dec 30 and editorial, "Law closes on Rathore", Dec 31).

There is a saying, the voice of the people is the voice of God. Succumbing to the increasing pressure from the people and the media, the government is all set to re-probe the Ruchika case.

Those who aided and abetted Rathore need to be brought to book as well. In his article, Mr Devasahayam has rightly stressed upon the Chief Minister of Haryana to revisit the brutalisation of governance.

Now it is the moral and administrative imperative of the government to ensure that the voice of the people and fresh probe is not lost in the labyrinth of redtape and unending politicking.

Dr SOSHIL RATTAN, Amritsar



There's method in his acting  
Page 8

# Spectrum

**R**ATTANBEHEN KANTI DESAI (30) looks after the double-storey home of senior citizens Rajendra and Manjula Dhaga in the more affluent area of Ahmedabad. She is no ordinary domestic help. She is a home manager, a title that she wears with pride, having been put through a month's rigorous training by the Urmila Home Manager programme of the NGO Saath, which, in collaboration with the America India Foundation, provides skilled manpower for different sectors of the fast growing urban economy of Gujarat.

In the one month of training, for which she paid Rs 500, she was taught first aid as well as fighting emergencies like a fire. She brushed up her culinary skills as well as the use of gadgets like food processors, toasters, washing machines and vacuum cleaners. Care of the elderly is another area that she has honed her skills in. As a qualified and certified home manager, at the end of her training, she is given a kit which has two saris, a watch and a tiffin box. Every morning, she comes to work wearing a fresh clean sari and carries her lunch or snacks for the day in the tiffin box. The watch ensures punctuality at work. The home manager and the clients recruiting them enter into a contract, wherein the hours of work as well as the responsibilities are spelt out. For eight hours of work, the home managers earn Rs 3000. There has been such a positive response to the programme that it is to be expanded to the other big cities of Gujarat.

Like Rattanbehen, 250 other needy women have been recruited, trained and placed in jobs as home managers in Ahmedabad. Fifty persons have registered and are waiting for home managers. While Rattanbehen required no special qualification... just a keenness to improve her earning capacity, there is a growing number of marginalised, young people, many of whom have failed or just scraped through their school board examinations, who are acquiring special skills required for the new economy under the Market Aligned Skills Training (MAST) programme. Seeing the tremendous value of MAST, even the Gujarat government is taking up ownership of the project. Like the AIF, it chips in with the Rs 4500 needed to provide skills and place young people in the work force.

Hanumant Rawat, AIF's director of the livelihood programme, says, "There is a demand for skilled people from the manufacturing and service sector. Each sector requires different skills, especially in areas like telecommunication where there is competition." Despite a lot of talk on vocational education, there is little alignment with the demands of the industry for skilled workers. In fact, the market demand is for 10 million such people per year, but the current supply of skilled workers is just 2.5 million per year. So, while there is tremendous growth in the economy with BPOs and malls demanding trained staff to man their counters, whether it is Big Bazaar, Pantaloons, Coffee Café Day, Reliance Fresh or the large number of hospitals and nursing homes that are woefully short of nurses and care givers, quite clearly a vast majority of the Indian youth are unemployable.

Some 45,000 persons have been trained under the MAST programme, says Tarun Vij, country head of AIF's India office. Seventyfive per cent of those trained have been placed in jobs. Skill development can make a difference to the lives of the youth disadvantaged by the lack of access to educational facilities, poverty, and migration, among other factors. All girls and boys who have passed Class VIII are eligible for this skill training and pay Rs 500 for the three-month course, although per candidate the training cost is nine times more.

MAST begins with a systematic scan of the local market to identify industries, businesses and services that have a shortage of skilled workers. This is followed by a robust community outreach effort to enroll trainees. Skill training curricula is then developed and customised to train young people for jobs in these industries. With skills and confidence to access entry-level jobs in the high-



## Beyond being *bais*

An innovative initiative of grooming women as home managers could be an example in places where private agencies, providing household help, are exploitative or not up to the mark, writes Usha Rai



Apart from brushing up their culinary skills, home managers are trained to use gadgets like food processors, toasters and vacuum cleaners

growth service industries, young people are improving their standards of living and building on the financial security of their families. Rattanbehen is among the large number of upwardly mobile poor people of Ahmedabad and her USP is home management.

While Rattanbehen has status, a secure five-hour job and is earning Rs 2500 every month, more than she ever did as she scampered from house to house for odd jobs that fetched her

just Rs 600 and Rs 700, Manjula has found a trustworthy person in the trained home manager. She is able to relax, confident in her home manager's skills. Earlier, there were a stream of domestic helps and she had to constantly follow them around, ensuring that the dust was swept from every nook and corner and her gadgets used judiciously.

Rattanbehen has a two-year-old daughter and is nine months pregnant.

She will be on two months' maternity leave and hopes to find a job closer to her home after the baby. Instead of working for five hours, she will work for just three hours so that she can take care of her newborn. Once the child is older, she will be back to a full day of work as a home manager.

Manjula is not happy to lose her but understands her predicament. "I will compensate her for the work she has put in and hopefully she will return

when the baby is older," she says. The Urmila Home Manager Programme (UHMP) will provide a substitute manager for Manjula. In fact, the programme provides for replacement should the employer or the employee not find the arrangement satisfactory. "We allow for up to three replacements because we cannot assume that the employer is always right," says Usha, the manager of the UHMP. Usha, too, worked

### Metros need home managers

Delhi, Mumbai and the other metros need home managers because both husband and wife are out at work, and the services provided by the employment agencies have too many flaws. A large number of senior citizens live on their own, with their children staying away from them



For eight hours of work, the home managers earn around Rs 3000

as a home manager before taking on her present responsibilities as a manager of the programme.

Most of the home managers are recruited from the slum areas on the outskirts of East Ahmedabad and provide services for those living in the posh areas in the western part of the city. Usha visits the slums and recruits those wanting to improve their skills and their 'employability.' Pamphlets are distributed and the women come to the centre to fill forms, pay up and get trained. It was Rattanbehen's sister who told her about the Saath recruitment drive for home managers. The only problem is the long commute from her home to those seeking the home manager services, which is why she may have to look for a job closer home after her baby.

The money and status as a home manager has made a great difference to Rattanbehen's life. She is earning as much as her husband, a security guard. There is respect and support at home and less friction with her husband. "I have a status now," she says with pride. The salaries of the home managers vary from Rs 2000 to Rs 3000, depending on the hours of work they put in and jobs undertaken. The home managers can take leave when they want, but have to inform their employer as well as Urmila Home Management so that a substitute is provided for the days they are absent.

Delhi, Mumbai and the other metros, too, need home managers because both husband and wife are out at work and the services provided by the employment agencies have too many flaws. A large number of senior citizens live on their own with their children having migrated.

For the Dhagas, who are in their early seventies and have their two sons living in other cities, having a dependable home manager has made life easier. While Mr Dhaga, a retired Air Force officer, runs a coaching centre for students of Classes IX and XI, Manjula, with signs of arthritis, found negotiating the stairs of her home, basement and two floors, a problem.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Urbane avenues beckon

With opportunities opening up in the higher growth industries, disadvantaged urban youth, empowered by NGOs, find a way of climbing the financial ladder...

USHA RAI



**SMALL BEGINNINGS:** Nursing aides in Ahmedabad; (Right) Creating awareness on skill-training.

Jayanti Parmar, 22, son of a daily wage labourer working for a classy chain of restaurants, Shabana, Std.X drop-out turned refrigeration repair expert with Godrej, Deepti, a sales girl at the Westside Department store and Chhipa Fatima, kite-maker turned sales person at Big Bazaar, herald the new generation of young people in Ahmedabad who are honing special skills under the Market Aligned Skills Training (MAST) programme of the America India Foundation and joining the manufacturing, service and IT sectors.

Half a dozen of the girls behind the counter at the Pantaloons and Big Bazaar show rooms in Ahmedabad have been trained under the MAST programme. Some of them have become supervisors. The nursing attendants in a few of the smaller, private hospitals and nursing homes of Ahmedabad are full of enthusiasm, but still learning the ropes. All of them have garnered the requisite skills from the Livelihood Resource Centres run by the NGO SAATH in collaboration with AIF.

**Partnerships**

Some 45,000 disadvantaged urban youth have already been equipped with skills to access jobs in the high growth industries, matching the demands of the new economy. Over 75 per cent have found placements. By 2012 AIF hopes to train and place 100,000 youth in jobs not just in Gujarat but in Rajasthan, Bihar, Punjab and West Bengal. Everywhere there is partnership with a local NGO and a market scan to identify jobs and skills required by the economy.

With the under-25 population growing rapidly and urbanising, harnessing their potential by providing them the right skills is critical for the country's continued economic growth, says Tarun Vij, country head of AIF, India. They can find employment with BPOs, in the mushrooming malls demanding trained staff for counters of Big Bazaar, Pantaloons, Café Coffee Day, Reliance Fresh or Tata Cromas. But without the requisite skills Indian youth are unemployable in the new job market, says Vij.

Under the MAST programme, all girls and boys who have passed Std.VIII are eligible for skills training, and pay Rs .500 for the three-month course, although per candidate the training cost is approximately Rs.4,500. The Gujarat government seeing the potential of the project has, through its Urban Development Mission, matched AIF's investment 3:1. Currently with SAATH's support, urban youth are being

prepared for skilled jobs in eight cities of Gujarat.

After identifying industries that need skilled workers, there is a robust community outreach effort to enroll trainees. The curriculum is then developed and customised for the needs of different industries. At all stages the potential employers are involved in ensuring that the correct skills are given. Many of the guest lecturers are from the industry. Reaching work on time, speaking English, dressing appropriately and dealing with customers/ clients or patients (if it is a hospital job) are part of the work orientation. As per requirements of employers the ethics of professional life are ingrained into the first generation of office goers.

Rajendra Joshi of SAATH points out 40 per cent of the trained youth have been absorbed by local enterprises, 30 per cent by medium sized enterprises and the rest by multinationals. With skills and a new confidence to access entry-level jobs, young people are improving their standards of living and building on the financial security of their families.

The story of Jayanti is truly inspiring. In 2006 after clearing his Std.XII exam, he did the course at SAATH's outreach organisation Umeed and joined Café Coffee Day. Within a year he was earning Rs 4500 a month. With his confidence zooming and comfortable with his newly acquired smattering of English, he moved to work with the Singapore chain Pasta Mania as counter-in-charge. There was a modest hike in wages. The next job was as a manager with Chocolate Room and the salary rose to Rs 6500.

To grow in the hospitality industry, Jayanti realised the importance of a government certificate but a degree from the Institute of Hotel Management at Rs 300,000 was beyond his reach. Then he saw an advertisement that enabled the poor to access the course. "I was able to do a special, one and a half months

course at the Institute without paying a paisa and obtained a government certificate," he says. With both experience and a government certificate he has joined Barbecue Nation of the Shayagi Group and is all set to work his way up in the hospitality sector. Simultaneously he has joined the B.Com course.

**Records**

Shabana did a course in refrigeration at one of SAATH's Livelihood Resource Centres and got a job with Godrej. After two years she joined the teaching faculty of SAATH on a salary of over Rs 8500. After marriage she has moved out of Ahmedabad. Deepti, who has studied Gujarati literature in college, is a sales woman at the Westside retail store earning Rs 1900 a month. She is a great support for her family. While her immediate goal is to become a sales officer in the company so that she can take home Rs. 5500 plus, her real dream is to become a data entry operator by improving her computer skills at the Resource Centre.

For Chhipa Fatima, 31, a divorcee, the biggest challenge is to provide good education to her 13-year-old son so that he can access a respectable job. After her divorce she worked as a daily wage labourer. Then she began making kites at home and selling them to a shop earning every month Rs.1500. After a three months course at SAATH's Resource Centre she joined Big Bazaar as a sales assistant a year ago. Now she brings home Rs. 2100 and her world has suddenly opened up. She is confident of working her way up to higher positions so that she can take home eventually at least Rs. 5000. Fatima stays with her parents, her brother and five sisters. Her father is a tailor and her brother works in a cycle repair shop. Each of them earns Rs. 3000 and Fatima's contribution has added to her self-esteem.

Nikita, Jaishree and Jagruti have com-

pleted their high school but did not have the money to join a regular nursing school. There is a shortage of nurses in the hospitals and nursing homes mushrooming in Ahmedabad. A regular course at the few nursing institutes in Gujarat is expensive. So when Umeed announced its three months, Rs. 500 course for nursing assistants the three girls joined up. On completing the course they got jobs in Samved hospital. While 19-year-old Nikita is earning Rs. 3500 a month, Jaishree and Jagruti are taking home Rs. 2000 a month. Within six months of joining Samved they learnt to manage patients, give injections, administer drugs, make beds, fix canulas and catheters. In fact a lot more training happens on the job says Kinnar Shah, the administrator of the hospital. In some of the smaller hospitals they work closely with doctors to improve their skills. Then they move to bigger hospitals for nursing jobs or go into private practice as geriatric care givers earning anything from Rs 8000 to Rs 12,000 a month.

In the small room on the third floor office of the Bal Raksha Trust, a BPO, Hemant Kumari, 26, and nine other young girls are busy calling a long list of donors in Ahmedabad and seeking a donation of Rs 300 a month for the care of needy children. The pleasant female voices are able to open up purse strings, says Uttam Motwani who runs the BPO. Hemant Kumari, who was studying for an MA in Gujarati, came to Ahmedabad to learn computers. She joined Umeed's office management course and in addition to improving her prowess with the computer, brushed up her speaking skills. "Though well qualified, to access a job I needed the support of Umeed," she maintains. For Bal Raksha Trust she generates at least Rs. 4500 every month. She gets an incentive if she is able to bring in more than her quota. Chirag Desai who has been recruiting the Umeed trained skilled workers for Big Bazaar and now Tata Cromas, says the young, desperate for jobs, are sincere and hard working.

As the first generation of office goers in their families they value the opportunity given to them. Chirag, after recruiting them puts them through rigorous on-job training for six months. Those who stay on earn Rs 5000 to Rs 6000 a month and it is a big treat for their parents to come and see their children at work in these posh bazaars.

**AT ALL STAGES THE POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS ARE INVOLVED IN ENSURING THAT THE CORRECT SKILLS ARE GIVEN.**

## FISCALLY FIT Q &amp; A

By Shyam P.

## Spending pangs

Some incentive tricks to curb that urge to over-spend...

*I want to make an anonymous confession - I am a compulsive spender. I have had a well-paying job for about six years now, but my bank balance and my investments are negligible. Towards every month end, I am forced to dig into my credit cards to stay afloat until the next month's salary. I will be turning 30 this year and plan to get married. Lately, the fear of not having saved anything before starting a family is beginning to drive a chill through my spine. Can you help me?*

I think the very fact that you have realised that there is a problem is something to celebrate, so you can stop being so down! Scientific re-

search has uncovered evidence that spending and saving are ingrained habits - that are visible even in early childhood and tough to break. Is it genetic? - that's still an open question, but if you think you'll feel better, I guess you can always blame it on the genes. Of course, this doesn't mean, we can't do anything about it. Just that it may require extra effort and some tricks.

The best way to change human behavioural patterns is through "incentives" (is this the result of the ape gene in us?).

The key reason why over-spending is easy (especially by salaried professionals), is because we evaluate the current price of the item that we want to purchase and compare it with our current

salary. If you earn a good salary, a lot of items would look cheap to you if you look at the price-tags from this perspective. It is worse if financing is available for the items of our desire; then we tend to look only at the monthly EMI and compare it to our take home salary, blissfully forgetting that the actual cost of the item is not equal to the EMI, but a large multiple of it.

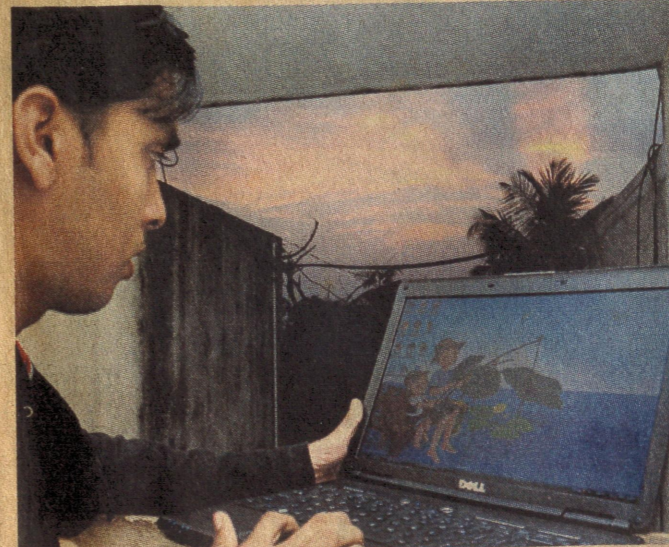
**Calculations**

The incentive trick that you could apply whenever you are about to make a purchase decision is to calculate the future value of money, assuming you choose not to purchase now, and invest instead. Now compare this future value of money to the current cost

of the item. Is it worth the price? Imagine what else you could buy today with the future value of money, as an inspiration to save.

Here's an illustrative example. Let's say you want to buy a fancy high-end laptop worth Rs 80,000, mainly for gaming. If you choose to invest this money, instead of purchasing the laptop now, the future value after 5 years (assuming a conservative equity return of 15 per cent p.a.) would be Rs 1.6 lakhs. Now think - is your new laptop worth Rs 1.6 lakhs? If you consider the life expectancy (or depreciation) of the laptop, the calculation gets even more revealing. A laptop's life is a maximum of five years, after which it would be worth close to zero. Is it better to have zero at the end of five years or Rs 1.6 lakhs? Now ask yourself, what else could you buy using this Rs 1.6 lakhs? A Nano, may be? Sounds more cool than that laptop, doesn't it?

Similarly, you could use longer range future projections to make your current purchase decision even less attractive. How much would the money saved be worth after 10 years? 15 years? Once you



**LURE OF THE LAP-TOP...**PHOTO: K.PICHUMANI

can vividly see the future rewards possible, the vision comes alive. You can see, touch, smell, and feel it. You go from "I think I want it now" to "I can probably wait for something better". This is the secret to controlling spending habits - to be able to visualise the

immense potential and attractiveness of delayed gratification. Continue to follow this simple principle and over time, your purchases will reduce to the items you really need and the charm of instant gratification would wane. In a study conducted at Stan-

## CAMBRIDGE LETTER By Bill Kirkman

## Policing village communities

It would have been impossible 40 years ago to predict the extent of multiculturalism in Britain today...

As a group of us arrived on Tuesday evening at the hall attached to our medieval parish church for a meeting of the church council, a rather shifty-looking teenage boy shuffled round from the back of the hall, which is not visible from the road. When greeted, he ran away. Moments later, we heard footsteps on a wooden platform on scaffolding - well protected by a locked corrugated iron barrier - installed temporarily to enable the church roof to be repaired. Suddenly a bag was thrown down over the scaffolding.

We picked it up, and while deciding what action to take, we were confronted by another lad, who said the bag was his. He refused to give his name, and so we said we had no proof of ownership. A third youth arrived, and as the initial "claimant" ran off, said the bag belonged to his friend. We said we would hand the bag to the police.

**Call for help**

In response to our call, a police constable soon arrived, listened to the story, and took away the bag. He asked us to check, on the following morning, when the roofers arrived, whether any damage had been done to the roof.

Our meeting finished, we decided to move a long and heavy steel pole which was lying on the grass into the hall, just in case the youths returned and used it to damage the windows, by way of vengeance for being spotted - and deprived of the bag.

Early next morning I walked round to meet the roofers. "No damage", they reassured me "but someone has stolen the pole, and the police - a different constable, and a community support officer - are doing a house to house search to try to find it". I explained what had happened. We moved the pole back from the hall - and at that moment the two police officers returned, and looked quizzically at it. "I'm your criminal", I declared, and there was some hilarity as I explained what had happened.

In the following conversation it emerged that the constable was a Ugandan Asian (whose family had originally come from Mumbai - or rather, from Bombay, since we are going back many years). In the early 1970s his father and whole family were among the many Asians who had been thrown out of Uganda by the dictator, Idi Amin. When I mentioned that I had interviewed

Amin's predecessor, Milton Obote, in 1963, the constable said: "I was a young child in that year".

We were keen to continue the conversation, and I invited the two officers back to our house, which is close by, for coffee.

We quickly discovered that the support officer was from Albania, where he still owns a restaurant. (I was glad to learn that he approved of our coffee.) Inevitably the conversation became even more international in its range. Among other things, we learnt that the Ugandan officer was actively involved in the local race relations committee, and the regional faiths council - and that I knew some colleagues of his on both bodies.

We could have continued the conversation indefinitely, but I had an appointment in Cambridge and had to leave. The officers declined my wife's suggestion that they should arrest me for wasting police time!

Apart from its intrinsic interest, the whole incident provided yet another vivid reminder of the extent to which the United Kingdom has become multi-cultural. In my Cambridge Letter on March 14 I wrote about the existence of an Indian and a Chinese restaurant in our village, commenting that this could not have been predicted when we arrived forty years ago.

**Local issue**

It would have been even more difficult to predict that police officers originating in Uganda and Albania would be providing, as a matter of routine, policing for a village community. We might have envisaged an international background for some of those involved in dealing with international crime, but surely not for the policing of relatively low level anti-social behaviour in a village.

When we grumble that "life isn't like it used to be in the good old days" (and being British, we are of course inveterate grumblers) it is extremely reassuring to find that changes can occur without leading to the end of civilisation as we know it - and that a Ugandan and an Albanian are perfectly well able to deal with a village issue. The incident was also a good reminder of the contribution made to British life by the Uganda Asians expelled by Amin.

Bill Kirkman is an Emeritus Fellow of Wolfson College Cambridge, U.K. Email him at: [bill.kirkman@gmail.com](mailto:bill.kirkman@gmail.com)

**DELAYED GRATIFICATION... THE KEY TO FINANCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.**

ford University, delayed gratification has been found to be the key to future financial and emotional well-being. The earlier we learn it, the more fulfilling our lives will become.

Finally, it may be a wise idea to return all your credit cards and switch to debit cards. This way you can avoid unnecessary temptation for binge spending beyond your means. Good luck!

The writer is a finance specialist. He can be reached at [www.shyamscolumn.com](http://www.shyamscolumn.com) or [shyamscolumn@gmail.com](mailto:shyamscolumn@gmail.com)

## SPOTLIGHT

## Urbane avenues beckon

With opportunities opening up in the higher growth industries, disadvantaged urban youth, empowered by NGOs, find a way of climbing the financial ladder...

USHA RAI



**SMALL BEGINNINGS:** Nursing aides in Ahmedabad; (Right) Creating awareness on skill-training.

Jayanti Parmar, 22, son of a daily wage labourer working for a classy chain of restaurants, Shabana, Std.X drop-out turned refrigeration repair expert with Godrej, Deepti, a sales girl at the Westside Department store and Chhipa Fatima, kite-maker turned sales person at Big Bazaar, herald the new generation of young people in Ahmedabad who are honing special skills under the Market Aligned Skills Training (MAST) programme of the America India Foundation and joining the manufacturing, service and IT sectors.

Half a dozen of the girls behind the counter at the Pantaloons and Big Bazaar show rooms in Ahmedabad have been trained under the MAST programme. Some of them have become supervisors. The nursing attendants in a few of the smaller, private hospitals and nursing homes of Ahmedabad are full of enthusiasm, but still learning the ropes. All of them have garnered the requisite skills from the Livelihood Resource Centres run by the NGO SAATH in collaboration with AIF.

**Partnerships**

Some 45,000 disadvantaged urban youth have already been equipped with skills to access jobs in the high growth industries, matching the demands of the new economy. Over 75 per cent have found placements. By 2012 AIF hopes to train and place 100,000 youth in jobs not just in Gujarat but in Rajasthan, Bihar, Punjab and West Bengal. Everywhere there is partnership with a local NGO and a market scan to identify jobs and skills required by the economy.

With the under-25 population growing rapidly and urbanising, harnessing their potential by providing them the right skills is critical for the country's continued economic growth, says Tarun Vij, country head of AIF, India. They can find employment with BPOs, in the mushrooming malls demanding trained staff for counters of Big Bazaar, Pantaloons, Café Coffee Day, Reliance Fresh or Tata Croma. But without the requisite skills Indian youth are unemployable in the new job market, says Vij.

Under the MAST programme, all girls and boys who have passed Std.VIII are eligible for skills training, and pay Rs. 500 for the three-month course, although per candidate the training cost is approximately Rs.4,500. The Gujarat government seeing the potential of the project has, through its Urban Development Mission, matched AIF's investment 3:1. Currently with SAATH's support, urban youth are being

prepared for skilled jobs in eight cities of Gujarat.

After identifying industries that need skilled workers, there is a robust community outreach effort to enroll trainees. The curriculum is then developed and customised for the needs of different industries. At all stages the potential employers are involved in ensuring that the correct skills are given. Many of the guest lecturers are from the industry. Reaching work on time, speaking English, dressing appropriately and dealing with customers/ clients or patients (if it is a hospital job) are part of the work orientation. As per requirements of employers the ethics of professional life are ingrained into the first generation of office goers.

Rajendra Joshi of SAATH points out 40 per cent of the trained youth have been absorbed by local enterprises, 30 per cent by medium sized enterprises and the rest by multinationals. With skills and a new confidence to access entry-level jobs, young people are improving their standards of living and building on the financial security of their families.

The story of Jayanti is truly inspiring. In 2006 after clearing his Std.XII exam, he did the course at SAATH's outreach organisation Umeed and joined Café Coffee Day. Within a year he was earning Rs 4500 a month. With his confidence zooming and comfortable with his newly acquired smattering of English, he moved to work with the Singapore chain Pasta Mania as counter-in-charge. There was a modest hike in wages. The next job was as a manager with Chocolate Room and the salary rose to Rs 6500.

To grow in the hospitality industry, Jayanti realised the importance of a government certificate but a degree from the Institute of Hotel Management at Rs 300,000 was beyond his reach. Then he saw an advertisement that enabled the poor to access the course. "I was able to do a special, one and a half months

course at the Institute without paying a paisa and obtained a government certificate," he says. With both experience and a government certificate he has joined Barbecue Nation of the Shayagi Group and is all set to work his way up in the hospitality sector. Simultaneously he has joined the B.Com course.

**Records**

Shabana did a course in refrigeration at one of SAATH's Livelihood Resource Centres and got a job with Godrej. After two years she joined the teaching faculty of SAATH on a salary of over Rs 8500. After marriage she has moved out of Ahmedabad. Deepti, who has studied Gujarati literature in college, is a sales woman at the Westside retail store earning Rs 1900 a month. She is a great support for her family. While her immediate goal is to become a sales officer in the company so that she can take home Rs. 5500 plus, her real dream is to become a data entry operator by improving her computer skills at the Resource Centre.

For Chhipa Fatima, 31, a divorcee, the biggest challenge is to provide good education to her 13-year-old son so that he can access a respectable job. After her divorce she worked as a daily wage labourer. Then she began making kites at home and selling them to a shop earning every month Rs.1500. After a three months course at SAATH's Resource Centre she joined Big Bazaar as a sales assistant a year ago. Now she brings home Rs. 2100 and her world has suddenly opened up. She is confident of working her way up to higher positions so that she can take home eventually at least Rs. 5000. Fatima stays with her parents, her brother and five sisters. Her father is a tailor and her brother works in a cycle repair shop. Each of them earns Rs. 3000 and Fatima's contribution has added to her self-esteem.

Nikita, Jaishree and Jagruti have com-

pleted their high school but did not have the money to join a regular nursing school. There is a shortage of nurses in the hospitals and nursing homes mushrooming in Ahmedabad. A regular course at the few nursing institutes in Gujarat is expensive. So when Umeed announced its three months, Rs. 500 course for nursing assistants the three girls joined up. On completing the course they got jobs in Samved hospital. While 19-year-old Nikita is earning Rs. 3500 a month, Jaishree and Jagruti are taking home Rs. 2000 a month. Within six months of joining Samved they learnt to manage patients, give injections, administer drugs, make beds, fix canulas and catheters. In fact a lot more training happens on the job says Kinnar Shah, the administrator of the hospital. In some of the smaller hospitals they work closely with doctors to improve their skills. Then they move to bigger hospitals for nursing jobs or go into private practice as geriatric care givers earning anything from Rs 8000 to Rs 12,000 a month.

In the small room on the third floor office of the Bal Raksha Trust, a BPO, Hemant Kumari, 26, and nine other young girls are busy calling a long list of donors in Ahmedabad and seeking a donation of Rs 300 a month for the care of needy children. The pleasant female voices are able to open up purse strings, says Uttam Motwani who runs the BPO. Hemant Kumari, who was studying for an MA in Gujarati, came to Ahmedabad to learn computers. She joined Umeed's office management course and in addition to improving her prowess with the computer, brushed up her speaking skills. "Though well qualified, to access a job I needed the support of Umeed," she maintains. For Bal Raksha Trust she generates at least Rs. 4500 every month. She gets an incentive if she is able to bring in more than her quota. Chirag Desai who has been recruiting the Umeed trained skilled workers for Big Bazaar and now Tata Croma, says the young, desperate for jobs, are sincere and hard working.

As the first generation of office goers in their families they value the opportunity given to them. Chirag, after recruiting them puts them through rigorous on-job training for six months. Those who stay on earn Rs 5000 to Rs 6000 a month and it is a big treat for their parents to come and see their children at work in these posh bazaars.

## CAMBRIDGE LETTER By Bill Kirkman

## Policing village communities

It would have been impossible 40 years ago to predict the extent of multiculturalism in Britain today...

As a group of us arrived on Tuesday evening at the hall attached to our medieval parish church for a meeting of the church council, a rather shifty-looking teenage boy shuffled round from the back of the hall, which is not visible from the road. When greeted, he ran away. Moments later, we heard footsteps on a wooden platform on scaffolding - well protected by a locked corrugated iron barrier - installed temporarily to enable the church roof to be repaired. Suddenly a bag was thrown down over the scaffolding.

We picked it up, and while deciding what action to take, we were confronted by another lad, who said the bag was his. He refused to give his name, and so we said we had no proof of ownership. A third youth arrived, and as the initial "claimant" ran off, said the bag belonged to his friend. We said we would hand the bag to the police.

**Call for help**

In response to our call, a police constable soon arrived, listened to the story, and took away the bag. He asked us to check, on the following morning, when the roofers arrived, whether any damage had been done to the roof.

Our meeting finished, we decided to move a long and heavy steel pole which was lying on the grass into the hall, just in case the youths returned and used it to damage the windows, by way of vengeance for being spotted - and deprived of the bag.

Early next morning I walked round to meet the roofers. "No damage", they reassured me "but someone has stolen the pole, and the police - a different constable, and a community support officer - are doing a house to house search to try to find it". I explained what had happened. We moved the pole back from the hall - and at that moment the two police officers returned, and looked quizzically at it. "I'm your criminal", I declared, and there was some hilarity as I explained what had happened.

In the following conversation it emerged that the constable was a Ugandan Asian (whose family had originally come from Mumbai - or rather, from Bombay, since we are going back many years). In the early 1970s his father and whole family were among the many Asians who had been thrown out of Uganda by the dictator, Idi Amin. When I mentioned that I had interviewed

Amin's predecessor, Milton Obote, in 1963, the constable said: "I was a young child in that year".

We were keen to continue the conversation, and I invited the two officers back to our house, which is close by, for coffee.

We quickly discovered that the support officer was from Albania, where he still owns a restaurant. (I was glad to learn that he approved of our coffee.) Inevitably the conversation became even more international in its range. Among other things, we learnt that the Ugandan officer was actively involved in the local race relations committee, and the regional faiths council - and that I knew some colleagues of his on both sides.

We could have continued the conversation indefinitely, but I had an appointment in Cambridge and had to leave. The officers declined my wife's suggestion that they should arrest me for wasting police time!

Apart from its intrinsic interest, the whole incident provided yet another vivid reminder of the extent to which the United Kingdom has become multi-cultural. In my Cambridge Letter on March 14 I wrote about the existence of an Indian and a Chinese restaurant in our village, commenting that this could not have been predicted when we arrived forty years ago.

**Local issue**

It would have been even more difficult to predict that police officers originating in Uganda and Albania would be providing, as a matter of routine, policing for a village community. We might have envisaged an international background for some of those involved in dealing with international crime, but surely not for the policing of relatively low level anti-social behaviour in a village.

When we grumble that "life isn't like it used to be in the good old days" (and being British, we are of course inveterate grumblers) it is extremely reassuring to find that changes can occur without leading to the end of civilisation as we know it - and that a Ugandan and an Albanian are perfectly well able to deal with a village issue. The incident was also a good reminder of the contribution made to British life by the Uganda Asians expelled by Amin.

Bill Kirkman is an Emeritus Fellow of Wolfson College Cambridge, U.K. Email him at: [bill.kirkman@gmail.com](mailto:bill.kirkman@gmail.com)

## FISCALLY FIT Q &amp; A

By Shyam P.

## Spending pangs

Some incentive tricks to curb that urge to over-spend...

*I want to make an anonymous confession - I am a compulsive spender. I have had a well paying job for about six years now, but my bank balance and my investments are negligible. Towards every month end, I am forced to dig into my credit cards to stay afloat until the next month's salary. I will be turning 30 this year and plan to get married. Late-ly, the fear of not having saved anything before starting a family is beginning to drive a chill through my spine. Can you help me?*

search has uncovered evidence that spending and saving are ingrained habits - that are visible even in early childhood and tough to break. Is it genetic? - that's still an open question, but if you think you'll feel better, I guess you can always blame it on the genes. Of course, this doesn't mean, we can't do anything about it. Just that it may require extra effort and some tricks.

The best way to change human behavioural patterns is through "incentives" (is this the result of the ape gene in us?).

The key reason why over-spending is easy (especially by salaried professionals), is because we evaluate the current price of the item that we want to purchase and compare it with our current

salary. If you earn a good salary, a lot of items would look cheap to you if you look at the price-tags from this perspective. It is worse if financing is available for the items of our desire; then we tend to look only at the monthly EMI and compare it to our take home salary, blissfully forgetting that the actual cost of the item is not equal to the EMI, but a large multiple of it.

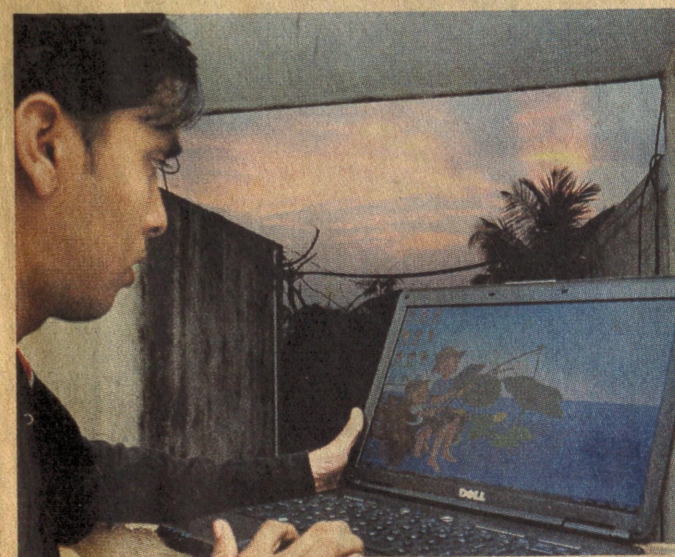
**Calculations**

The incentive trick that you could apply whenever you are about to make a purchase decision is to calculate the future value of money, assuming you choose not to purchase now, and invest instead. Now compare this future value of money to the current cost

of the item. Is it worth the price? Imagine what else you could buy today with the future value of money, as an inspiration to save.

Here's an illustrative example. Let's say you want to buy a fancy high-end laptop worth Rs 80,000, mainly for gaming. If you choose to invest this money, instead of purchasing the laptop now, the future value after 5 years (assuming a conservative equity return of 15 per cent p.a.) would be Rs 1.6 lakhs. Now think - is your new laptop worth Rs 1.6 lakhs? If you consider the life expectancy (or depreciation) of the laptop, the calculation gets even more revealing. A laptop's life is a maximum of five years, after which it would be worth close to zero. Is it better to have zero at the end of five years or Rs 1.6 lakhs? Now ask yourself, what else could you buy using this Rs 1.6 lakhs? A Nano, may be? Sounds more cool than that laptop, doesn't it?

Similarly, you could use longer range future projections to make your current purchase decision even less attractive. How much would the money saved be worth after 10 years? 15 years? Once you



LURE OF THE LAP-TOP...PHOTO: K.PICHUMANI

can vividly see the future rewards possible, the vision comes alive. You can see, touch, smell, and feel it. You go from "I think I want it now" to "I can probably wait for something better". This is the secret to controlling spending habits - to be able to visualise the

immense potential and attractiveness of delayed gratification. Continue to follow this simple principle and over time, your purchases will reduce to the items you really need and the charm of instant gratification would wane.

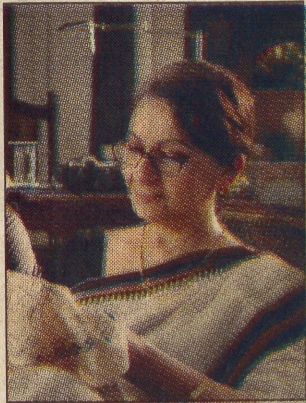
In a study conducted at Stan-

**DELAYED GRATIFICATION... THE KEY TO FINANCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.**

ford University, delayed gratification has been found to be the key to future financial and emotional well-being. The earlier we learn it, the more fulfilling our lives will become.

Finally, it may be a wise idea to return all your credit cards and switch to debit cards. This way you can avoid unnecessary temptation for binge spending beyond your means. Good luck!

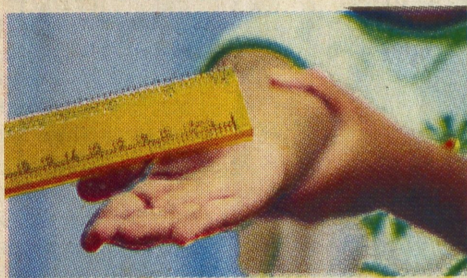
The writer is a finance specialist. He can be reached at [www.shyamscolumn.com](http://www.shyamscolumn.com) or [shyamscolumn@gmail.com](mailto:shyamscolumn@gmail.com)



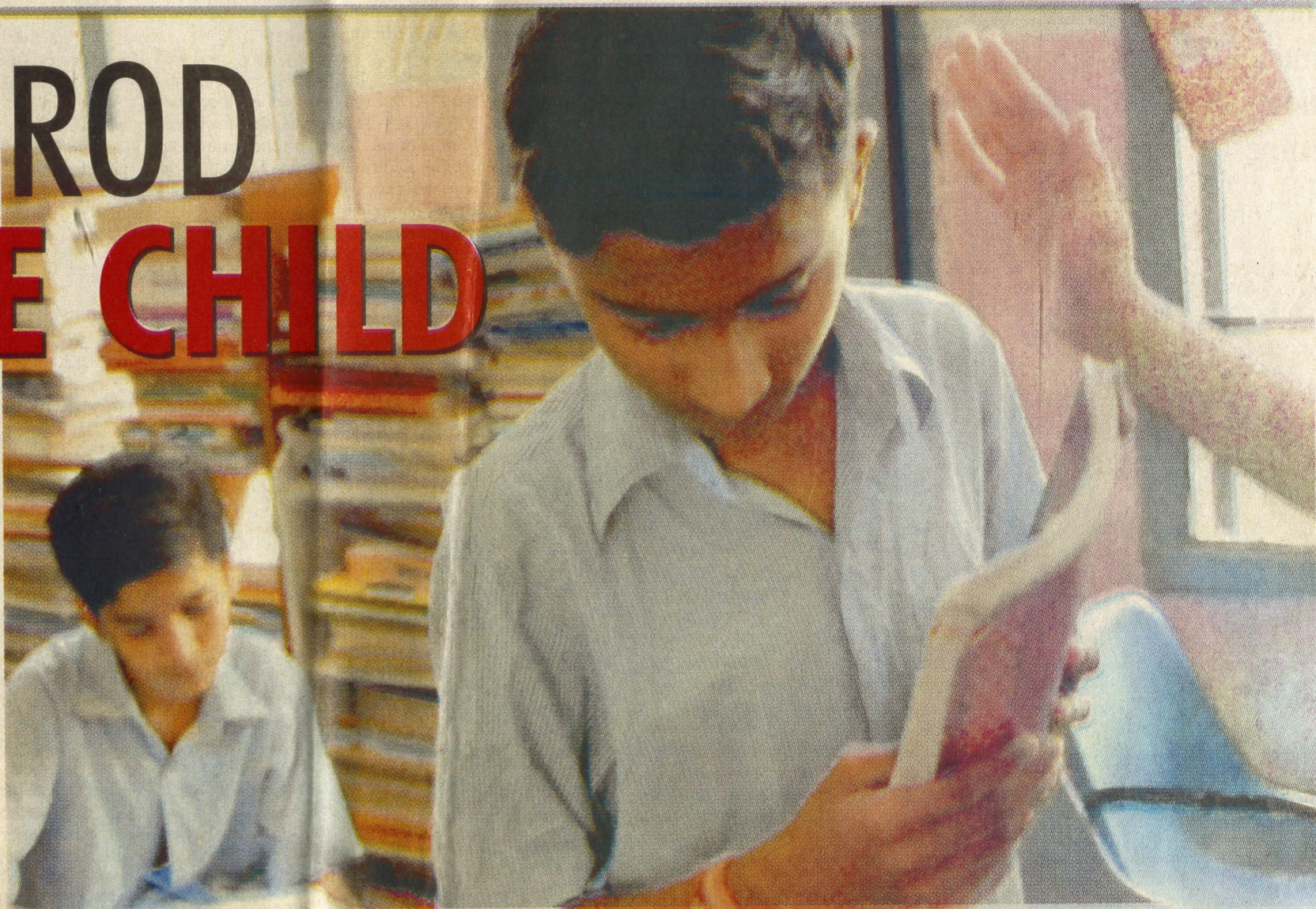
Tagore in letter and in spirit Page 8

# Spectrum

## SPARE THE ROD SAVE THE CHILD



Recent measures to check corporal punishment should send out a strong signal to schoolteachers, principals and others that they have to take up positive methods to discipline children, writes Usha Rai



The most commonly reported punishment is being slapped and kicked (63.7 per cent), followed by beating with a stove or stick (31.3 per cent) Photos : Pradeep Tewari

FOR three years, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), the Education Department of the Ministry of Human Resource Development and UNICEF have voiced their concern on the mounting violence on children in the form of corporal punishment. All forms of corporal punishment are a breach of fundamental rights of the child and a crime. It is a crime that is committed not just by schoolteachers, principals, remand homes but also by parents, who are short-tempered and resort to slapping a child, twisting her/his arms and even burning the fingers when the child does not fall in line — kowtowing to the authorities.

One of the first acts of the

NCPCR in August, 2007, was banning corporal punishment because it impinged on the child's dignity and safety in public institutions. Its guidelines were put up in schools and adequately publicised by the NCERT and state governments. In fact, 16 states banned corporal punishment but reports of violence against children continued to trickle in. Then, before the start of the academic session in 2009, additional guidelines were sent to district collectors/magistrates/deputy commissioners and secretaries of school education in the states to ensure that violence against children was stopped. Despite all these warnings and steps taken by the NCPCR, yet another child committed suicide in Kolkata. So, the arrest of the principal

and four senior teachers of the elite La Martiniere School of Kolkata for caning Class VIII student Rouvanjit Rawla, allegedly leading to his suicide a week later in February 2010, has set a precedent. It should send out a strong signal to schoolteachers, principals and others responsible for the well-being of children that they have to first understand the child and then find other appropriate methods to discipline him. Gone are the days of 'spoiling the rod and sparing the child.'

In fact, at a public hearing on corporal punishment held by the NCPCR in Tamil Nadu early in 2008, Vasanti Devi, former chairperson of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, pointed out that 91

schoolchildren in Tamil Nadu had committed suicide in a five-year span because of physical, mental and sexual harassment. The NCPCR had asked for the public hearing because it had received the highest number of complaints from that state. The brutalities ranged from giving electric shocks, physical and sexual abuse, asking children to strip, and discrimination based on caste, resulting in children committing suicide. These scars inflicted in childhood cannot be healed and affect the child's abilities as well as attitudes life long, says Shantha Sinha, chairperson of the NCPCR. Children want to be treated with respect. But many of them are unable to gather the courage to speak up or complain.

In fact, according to a nationwide study on child abuse in India by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2007, two out of three school-going children in India were physically abused, with boys the most likely target. A high prevalence of corporal punishment was found in all settings — homes, schools, institutions and even on the street. The study showed that corporal punishment took place in every district of the country and punishment as a tool to discipline children was deeply ingrained in both government and private school-teachers. But most children did not report the abuse to anyone, continuing to suffer in silence.

The most commonly reported punishment was being slapped and kicked (63.7 per cent), followed by being beaten with a stove or stick (31.3 per cent) and being pushed, shaken etc (5 per cent). For many, the hurt resulted in serious physical injury, swelling or bleeding.

Peter Newell, coordinator of the global initiative to end all forms of corporal punishment of children, was in Delhi in February last year at the invitation of UNICEF and spoke on 'the human rights imperative to eliminate and prohibit all forms of corporal punishment.' He said corporal punishment killed and maimed countless children and needs to be challenged, and not just as a child protection issue. For long, people, including those responsible for the protection of children, have tried to keep child cruelty or abuse and corporal punishment in two separate boxes. But all physical abuse of children administered in the context of punishment or control is

corporal punishment, he points out. Maybe, just a tiny minority of perpetrators are psychotic and don't have any punitive motive for assaulting their children. So, ending corporal punishment is an essential strategy for ending all forms of violence against children.

We, in India, have drawn a lot from the British system of education — especially in the elite private schools. England in its colonial past, along with other colonial powers, had a lot to do with spreading and institutionalising corporal punishment, in the context of slavery and military occupation, in the development of school and penal systems, and through some missionary teachings. At least 70 countries have adopted the English common law of "reasonable chastisement," Newell said.

Research on the potential effects of corporal punishment reveal that it could lead to the development of violent attitudes and actions in childhood and adult life. It could result in low self-esteem, depression, delinquency — all traits that no parent or society want for their children. Challenging and ending adults' punitive violence against children is central to the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC). The Committee on the Rights of Children, the monitoring body of the CRC, had in 2000 and again in 2004 reminded India to prohibit corporal punishment. India's Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, endorsed by Parliament earlier this year, too, bans corporal punishment.

Prof Krishna Kumar, the well-known educationist, who was director of NCERT till recently, says the council's nationwide survey of emotional experiences in a classroom of 1100 children, revealed that those who were frequently scolded developed poor learning abilities. Poor classroom environment, use of foul language and beating impacted a student's learning ability, the survey found.

The survey conducted in Delhi, Ajmer, Bhopal, Shillong and Bengaluru brought to light disturbing trends of children fearing schools because of the physical and mental abuse inflicted on them. Owing to the devaluation of the teaching profession, Prof Kumar said, the right people who valued these important ingredients of education were not being attracted to this field.

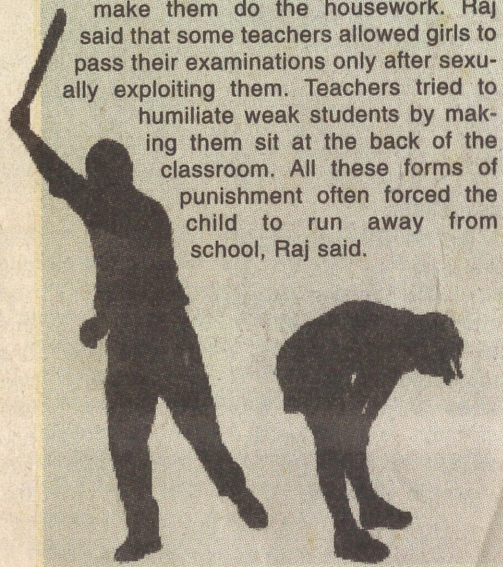
### CHILDREN'S CONCERNS

WHAT makes violence unbearable is the fact that children consider the school like their second home and teachers like their parents, says 14-year-old Tina (name changed), a student of a private school in Delhi. She says the "razor-sharp tongues of teachers" affect adolescent children to such an extent that they even consider committing suicide. When a teacher berates a student, saying he/she is 'good for nothing' or "should be sent to a special school" or that "teachers are allergic to a child's face", the student may not break down in front of the class, but it haunts him/her for weeks and months because it undermines the self-esteem and self-worth.

PHYSICAL and mental abuse forced 10-year-old Shamu (name changed) to run away from a government institution. Narrating his tale of horror, Shamu says he was asked to buy alcohol for the caretakers and if he refused to do so, he was subjected to physical abuse. On one occasion, he was made to stand on the terrace in winter without clothes. In fact, children were often asked to strip, he said. Once he heard a boy being asked to take off his pants and he was asked to stay back in the room with the caretaker. Petrified of what was going on, Shamu ran away from the scene. Unable to take the constant abuse, he finally ran away from the institution.

IT is not just in government institutions that corporal punishment exists. It is also an integral part of government schools, says Raj (name changed), 14, a student of Class VII in an MCD school and an active member of Badta Kadam, a federation of street and working children. He was part of a 52-member children's team, which held informal discussions with other children to understand the corporal punishment experienced by them. Sharing some of the common forms of corporal punishment experienced by children, he said boys were beaten up more often than girls. In one instance, the teacher hit the eye of the student and although he took him to the doctor, the child lost his eyesight.

He said that teachers often call girls home under the pretext of tuitions and make them do the housework. Raj said that some teachers allowed girls to pass their examinations only after sexually exploiting them. Teachers tried to humiliate weak students by making them sit at the back of the classroom. All these forms of punishment often forced the child to run away from school, Raj said.



Psychologists feel that disciplining a child should not mean physical violence, as it affects learning ability and leads to the development of fear or aggression

DR SAMIR HASAN DALWAI, director, Child Development Centre, Mumbai, says that the impact of a crime committed on a child is greater than the one committed on an adult because the former is going through a process of development. He points out that punishment leads to fear and aggression and behavioural changes — reflected in thumb sucking, nail biting, regressive behaviour, stuttering, stammering and lack of confidence and self-esteem. Dr Dalwai, who is also a paediatrician

### SPECIALIST SPEAK

and child psychologist, says there is an increase in the 'shaken baby' syndrome, where the young child is physically abused at home. He cites a case in which a nine-month-old infant was brought to his clinic with burn marks on the back of the hand. It was obvious that the child had been deliberately burnt as a punishment for something he had done. Disciplining the child should not

mean physical violence. Instead of physical punishment, there should be 'positive disciplining'. The child needs to be told that what he has done is wrong and why, says Dr Dalwai. He suggests that instead of focussing on "obedience and disobedience", it would be better to try "cooperation". He says if parents and teachers try to make children think for themselves and look at it not as a failure to obey, but as a failure to understand, then there would be no need for punishment.

Every year, 60,000 to 70,000 maternal deaths occur in India and 20 to 30 times more women become very ill due to pregnancy, childbirth or abortions. Women die because they are unable to access good quality, affordable and skilled care. It is estimated that one in 48 pregnant women run the risk of dying during childbirth. The situation becomes alarming in tribal populations and among the marginalised living in isolated pockets of the country

USHA RAI

A decade of focused work by the Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutritional Awareness (CHETNA), primarily in Gujarat but also in parts of Rajasthan, has shown that community empowerment and involvement is vital for improving maternal health and reducing maternal mortality. The National Rural Health Mission seeks to reduce infant mortality to 30/1000 live births and maternal mortality to 100/100,000 by 2012. It needs good NGO partnerships and action at the community level to reduce both.

CHETNA provides a continuum of care to children, youth and women. Working closely with its network of NGOs and communities, it tries to ensure that people take responsibility for their own health. Simultaneously it works with local, district, state and national governments and tries to influence policies. Each and every intervention, whether it is public hearings, improving sub centres, reducing anaemia to counter maternal mortality or providing health care to remote tribal pockets, the ultimate objective is to improve women's health and reduce maternal mortality.

Studies have also shown that women do not have access to complete, continued care from the public health system; 65 percent of births occur at home and women prefer delivering babies in the comfort and security of their homes. There is at least one dai in every village of India to assist during births and their services need to be upgraded and used to improve village level health care.

Between 2006 and 2009, in partnership with the state health department in 60 villages of the two tribal blocks of Vansada and Chikhali, Navsari district, CHETNA has shown that it is possible to enhance access to maternal health services. It has also shown that maternal deaths can be drastically decreased by reducing three delays — delay in identification of complication and taking timely action, delay in reaching the appropriate facility and, delay in initiation of treatment at the health facility.

Communities were mobilised to access maternal health services by strengthening the role of panchayat and Self Help Group (SHG) members in monitoring maternal health care services. The traditional birth attendants (TBAs) or dais became the link between the village, the service providers and the health facility. Even the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) was activated to ensure community participation and outreach of services.

#### Working as a team

Maheshbhai, sarpanch, Mohuvas village, says that the villagers learnt to work as a team after the training given to them. In March 2009, this teamwork facilitated the transfer of

# Affordable healthcare still a far cry for rural women



Anaemia continues to be a killer

200 pregnant women to health facilities for institutional deliveries. Fatimaben, trained dai, Lakhavadi village, says, "I explain to the husband and pregnant women about risks involved in home deliveries, and if there are complications, as a dai I will be responsible. They understand and agree to go to the hospital."

Dai Julkiben recalls that when she received a call from a pregnant woman, she swung into action. First, before reaching the woman's home, Julkiben called 108, the emergency ambulance number. Then, at the pregnant woman's house, she cut a clean cloth into pieces to be used at the hospital and kept a lota (container) to fetch/store water.

But when the woman's labour pains increased and it became impossible for her to climb down the hillock to reach the ambulance, Julkiben got young

In India nutritional anaemia is one of the major indirect causes of maternal mortality, accounting for 20 to 40 percent of the maternal deaths. An estimated 87 percent of pregnant women are anaemic

men from the neighbourhood to make a sling from a bedsheet and carry the pregnant woman to the ambulance. Barely had they reached the labour room and the pregnant woman delivered.

Thanks to the strategies adopted, in 2009 50 percent of the pregnant women visited PHCs for abdominal checkups and laboratory testing. Institutional deliveries also increased by 21 percent. In Vansada block the number of beneficiaries of the government supported Janani Suraksha Yojana for institutional

deliveries shot up from just 493 between April 2006 and March 2007 to 2113 between April 2008 and October 2009.

In India nutritional anaemia is one of the major indirect causes of maternal mortality, accounting for 20 to 40 percent of the maternal deaths. An estimated 87 percent of pregnant women are anaemic. So an important initiative of CHETNA has focussed on improving diets and finding 'herbal solutions' for anaemia. Seven cereals, four leafy vegetables, five herbs which

#### ANAEMIA CAN BE TREATED

Through CHETNA's intervention on anaemia, more than a thousand women understood that the 'weakness' they experienced could be treated. With small mirrors given to them, they were able to examine the pallor of their eyes and skin and confirm anaemia. They ate green leafy vegetables thrice a week, proteins (dal) a few times a week, and included amla (vitamin C) in their diet. After adopting the diet prescribed and changing their lifestyle they said they were 'less tired' and could do more work.

A woman from Sabarkantha district who felt rejuvenated after treatment for anaemia said "normally bhaji (leafy vegetable) is given to the cows and goats, but now we ourselves eat the bhaji because we know it is good for our body."

Another woman from Sattlasana block of Mehsana district who learnt to combat anaemia said "I used to eat nothing in the morning and would go to work. Finally when I got back in the afternoon I would eat whatever was leftover from lunch. I would be very tired. Now I have at least a roti with chaj before I go out in the morning and eat lunch in the afternoon before I go into the fields again. Now I have the strength to work."

After six months of nutritious food and herbal treatment there was an improvement of upto two gram percentage in the haemoglobin level of 80 percent of the 50 women whose haemoglobin levels were measured before and after the intervention.

India contributes about 50 percent to the global anaemia-related maternal deaths. Nutritional deprivation not only hampers the full growth of adolescents but leads to anaemia. Both conditions result in complicated pregnancies and deliveries, low birth weight babies and maternal and infant deaths. Yet, as the CHETNA intervention has shown, deaths due to anaemia are preventable with adequate and timely treatment. Increasing haemoglobin level by 1gm percent reduces the risk of maternal mortality by 20 percent, says Smita Bejpal, an ayurvedic doctor and project coordinator of the Regional Resource Centre of CHETNA.

improved the haemoglobin levels were identified and farmers were encouraged to cultivate them. Women were encouraged to include them in their daily diet. After six months of nutritious food and herbal treatment there was an improvement of up to two gram percentage in the haemoglobin level of 80 percent of the 50 women whose haemoglobin levels were measured before and after the intervention.

#### Dais as crucial links

In the continuum of care that it seeks to provide, the traditional birth attendants or dais had a role in childbirth and care of pregnant women and newborns. However, with ASHAs (accredited social health activists) being given importance in the NRHM, the dais were being marginalised. CHETNA worked with 20 CBOs and 8000

TBAs and ensured a government resolution recognising the role of the TBAs in reproductive and child health programmes. A standardised curriculum for enhancing their capacity was approved by the Health and Family Welfare department of the Gujarat government. The dais are now given a token fee for accompanying women to a health facility for delivery. A dialogue has begun with policy makers on the role of TBAs in the NRHM.

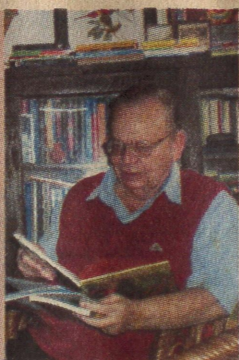
CHETNA believes that in under-served, remote rural and tribal areas where maternal mortality rates are the highest, the dais can be tapped as a link between homes and institutions to provide care in areas where home births are still high.

In the Khedbrahma tribal block of Sabarkantha District of Gujarat too there was high maternal as well as infant mortality largely because many of the villages are on hills and have no roads. Some villages are unapproachable during the rains and villagers have to travel 10 km to reach a PHC and 30 to 50 km for institutional delivery. By telling villagers about their health entitlements and how to access them, involving panchayat leaders, doctors, the state health department, link workers and ensuring the services of ambulances, both infant and maternal deaths dropped dramatically in the 35 villages of the block in three years from 2006.

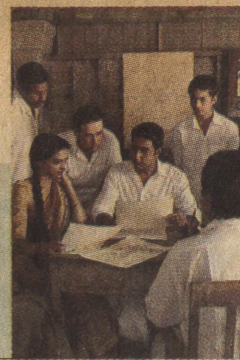
CHETNA also studied the status of the 226 sub centres in the 10 districts of Gujarat and held junsunwais in both Gujarat and Rajasthan to ensure accountability in public health. Interviews with women registered in the sub centres and community dialogue with the 265 villages covered by the sub centres revealed the services were inadequate for conducting safe deliveries. However, the community was keen to avail public health services.

At the junsunwais or public hearings, over 56 testimonies of the problems pregnant women faced in accessing the public health facilities were presented. There were husbands who testified how they had lost their pregnant wives running from one health institution to another to get the required attention. The public hearings are not one-off events. With participation of health officials and panchayat leaders in the public hearing, there is closer scrutiny, monitoring and accountability of the public health system.

Its womb to tomb approach has also led to successful interventions in areas like child sex selection in Mehsana and other districts of the state where the female child sex ratio is low and infant mortality high. It facilitated the advocacy for a State Adolescent and Youth Policy in Rajasthan. Says Indu Capoor, director of CHETNA, given the early age of pregnancy and child birth, there was a need to restructure reproductive health services to reach out to all adolescents and youth, rather than providing services only to married couples in a particular age bracket.



**Bond at his best**  
In conversation with  
the popular writer. P.3



**History in slow motion**  
Khelein Hum Jee Jaan  
Say disappoints. P.4

# Sapna to apna rickshaw

After years of pulling in the face of poverty, rickshaw drivers are joining hands to form a collective that helps them access loans and own a vehicle.

USHA RAI

Winding through the gullies and bylanes of Lucknow, edging past honking cars and tempos, at times with 8-10 children crammed into them, are 50,000 cycle rickshaws. In many ways they are the lifeline of the city but the men plying them are among the most exploited. They are dalits, tribals, landless labour from the rural outskirts of the city of Nawabs and Bihar. They are illiterate and unskilled.

Now, in a novel venture, half-a-dozen organisations including the American India Foundation (AIF), Central Bank of India, Bharatiya Micro Credit and the Rickshaw Sangh, a collective of rickshaw drivers, have come together to provide dignity, status and loans that are paid back in a year so that the rickshaws become a permanent asset of the drivers. Hanumant Rawat, Director of AIF's livelihood programmes, says the collective with its bargaining power is able to get quality rickshaws at subsidised rates and, equally important, counters the stigma attached to dalits and the landless when the Sangh goes shopping on their behalf. With a uniform, driving licence and municipal permit, rickshaw pulling is now moving to the ranks of a profession.

Last month, in a carnival-like atmosphere, some 1,500 green-and-yellow rickshaws and pushcarts were handed over to the drivers and their wives in Lucknow. Central Bank of India CMD S. Sridhar, flagged off the procession of rickshaws driven by their proud owners. Dressed in their Sunday best, the wives and children of the rickshaw drivers jumped on to the rickshaws and pushcarts, cheering and waving joyously as they drove off shouting, 'sach hua sapna, rickshaw hua apna' (our dreams have come true, we own our rickshaws).

Joining in the revelry were Vice Chair of AIF Pradeep Kashyap, Vijay Pandey of BMC that will run the project.

#### LENDING AN INCLUSIVE HAND

Says Sridhar, "For inclusive and double-digit growth of the country, the poor need to have bank accounts and get credit. There are more mobiles than bank accounts in the country and this has to be rectified." The bank wants its services to cover less-privileged sections of society such as rickshaw pullers, taxi drivers and others needing microfinance.

While the bank provides loans for buying



**Organised power:** Members of the Rickshaw Sangh are provided a uniform, driving licence and municipal permit. PICTURES COURTESY: AIF

the rickshaws, AIF provides the first loan default guarantee (FLDG) on behalf of its NGO partners. NGOs recommended by AIF (in Lucknow it is BMC) receive the loans and disburse them to individual drivers. PNB and SIDBI also support the rickshaw

#### THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY

after becoming a rickshaw owner is most apparent in the life of Sunder Lal, 38, and his wife, Rani, 35. Lal earns Rs 7,000 a month and plans to rent out his first rickshaw at Rs 30 a day after buying a second rickshaw through a loan. With two daughters married, he plans to save the Rs 30 a day earned from his first rickshaw for his third daughter's marriage. He has a TV at home, a toilet in the house, and plans to send the two younger children to school. "In my uniform, I now feel I belong to a company," he says. His only worry today centres around his 16-year-old son with a brain-related developmental disorder. Lal hopes to get his son the requisite medical help with the help of BMC.

programme.

#### THE RICKSHAW COLLECTIVE

AIF has been promoting the Rickshaw Sangh programme since 2008 in Assam, Bihar, UP, Delhi and the NCR. Some 14,000 rickshaw pullers have been given vehicles. The ultimate goal is to financially assist one lakh rickshaw pullers to own a vehicle. Each rickshaw costs Rs 11,000 and the weekly repayment instalment is Rs 225. On joining the Rickshaw Sangh, members are entitled to a package of benefits that include two sets of uniforms, driving licence and municipal permit to ply their vehicle, life and vehicle insurance, a bank account, a solar lantern with battery backup, and a mobile phone

with lifetime connection.

Negotiations are also on to create, in association with a mobile company, a rickshaw service that is similar to call-taxi.

#### OWNER'S PRIDE

Rawat of AIF says 94 per cent of rickshaw drivers hire vehicles from the *kathawalas* or custodians, who each own about 50-500 rickshaws, many of them in dilapidated conditions and suffer frequent breakdowns, with the driver bearing the cost of repair. The daily rent is Rs 30.

Mouzam Ali, who worked his rickshaw for 15 years without being able to save a single rupee, says through the Rickshaw Sangh, the rickshaw drivers have become a

**SANJAY, 28, OF ALIGANJ HAS BEEN PLYING** a rickshaw since he was 16 years old. Last year he got a rickshaw through the BMC. Having repaid the loan, he and his wife Kiran have now taken a loan to buy a pushcart for Rs 8,500. Kiran plans to roast and sell hot peanuts from her pushcart. The loan instalments are Rs 185 a week and Kiran, who is literate and can run a bank account, is confident of earning over Rs 1,200 a month after paying off the loan within a year. The couple have a two-year-old daughter and a two-month-old son.

Sanjay, who earns about Rs 4,000 a month, has some regular clients including some schoolchildren. With life looking up, he plans to send his little girl to school.

pressure group no longer invisible on the Government radar. "My name is on Government records and, finally, I too will be able to access some of the facilities available to residents of my town," he says. The uniform and driving licence have given rickshaw pullers a new status and even shields them from harassment by the police.

#### WIFE'S WORD MATTERS!

The rickshaws are given in the joint name of the husband and wife, and the responsibility for timely repayment largely rests with the women. Bharatiya Micro Credit has worked on the concept of joint liability groups (JLGs). Each group has three to five members. If one member of the JLG is unable to pay because he is travelling or has a personal problem, the other members chip in and pay the dues. Both Rawat of AIF and Pandey of BMC proudly state that till date there has not been a single default in payment.

The joint control on earnings also helps the couples plan for the next stage of income generation through the purchase of a pushcart, a rickshaw trolley or even a second rickshaw, again funded by a bank loan and repaid in weekly instalments. Without the *kathawala* breathing down their back, the health of the rickshaw drivers is also improving. They ply for five to six hours and get adequate rest now, they say.

Meanwhile, as the rickshaws ply all over the city and are highly visible, Kashyap of AIF is talking to corporate houses to advertise their products on the back of the rickshaws. The money raised through the ads will be shared with the rickshaw pullers.



**IT'S BEEN A LONG AND TOUGH JOURNEY FOR AHMED ALI (45) TO GET HIS OWN RICKSHAW.** His thin frame, pinched face and calloused hands bear testimony to his struggle to support his family of eight children. Arriving from Geetamoh village, Sitapur, nearly 12 years ago, he began driving a hired rickshaw, earning barely Rs 100 a day. He then heard of the BMC and Rickshaw Sangh, and soon formed a JLG with four others. His competent wife, Ruksana, is the leader of the JLG. Having paid off the loan, he today earns Rs 200 a day. His self-respect has gone up, and his health has improved too. His wife has taken a loan to buy a pushcart and hopes to add to the family income by selling vegetables with the help of their 18-year-old son.



# The not-so-attractive side of a job hunt

**When good looks can mar employability.**

TARA PARKER-POPE

How much do looks matter during a job search? A new study suggests that while handsome men do better while looking for work, good looks can end up hurting a woman's chances of scoring a job interview.

The study, conducted by economists at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, sent 5,312 resumes to more than 2,600 employers who had advertised job openings. Two applications were sent to employers, each with virtually identical résumés. The only real difference was that one of the resumes included a photograph of the applicant. Sometimes the applicant was an attractive man or woman, and sometimes the photo showed a more plain-looking man or woman. The researchers had collected photos



from 300 university students. A panel of four men and four women rated the pictures in terms of attractiveness. To eliminate potential racial bias, the judges selected photos of individuals who appeared to have a more ambiguous ethnic background.

Over all, employers sought interviews with 14.5 per cent of the job candidates.

**Sitting pretty for the interview?** NYT

Notably, 19.9 percent of the male candidates who sent attractive pictures were called in for interviews, compared to 13.7 per cent of the men with "plain" photos. Only 9.2 per cent of the men who didn't send a picture were called to interview. Based on the response rate in the study, an attractive man needs to send an average of five resumes

with a photo to get one interview. An ordinary-looking man needs to send 11 resumes with a photo to get a single interview.

But the apparent bias in favour of job candidates with photos didn't hold true for women. Women who didn't send photos had a 16.6 per cent callback rate, the highest response rate from prospective employers. Resumes accompanied by a photo of a "plain" woman received callback responses 13.6 per cent of the time, compared with 12.8 for those accompanied by photos of attractive women.

The researchers found that the response rate was about the same for all categories of women when the résumé was sent to employment agencies.

When resumes were sent directly to a company, however, attractive women were only half as likely to receive a response as plain women and those who didn't send a picture, a difference that was statistically meaningful. That suggests that when the hiring is done by the company where the job candidate will work, the people doing the hiring appear to strongly discriminate against attractive women.

After the study was completed, the researchers contacted the companies to deter-

mine who at each of the firms was in charge of screening job candidates. At nearly every firm, the person in charge of screening résumés was a young woman, from 23 to 34 years old, and typically single. The researchers concluded that callback rates most likely were influenced by the screener's jealousy "when confronted with a young, attractive competitor in the workplace."

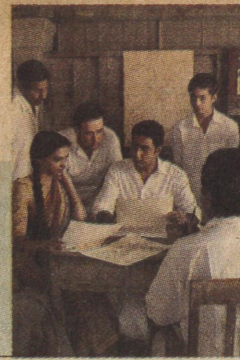
In addition, the survey of employers found different reactions to résumés accompanied by photos, depending on the gender of the job candidate. When a man included a photo with his résumé, employers found that it showed confidence and that the candidate was presentable. But when a woman included a photo, it was viewed as a negative, suggesting the woman was "attempting to market herself via her appearance."

"Our results show that beauty distorts the hiring process," the researchers concluded. "Suitably qualified attractive women and plain men and women may be eliminated early on from the selection process."

The findings are outlined in a working paper called "Are Good-Looking People More Employable?"



**Bond at his best**  
In conversation with  
the popular writer. P.3



**History in slow motion**  
Khelein Hum Jee Jaan  
Say disappoints. P.4

# Sapna to apna rickshaw

After years of pulling in the face of poverty, rickshaw drivers are joining hands to form a collective that helps them access loans and own a vehicle.

USHA RAI

Winding through the gullies and bylanes of Lucknow, edging past honking cars and tempos, at times with 8-10 children crammed into them, are 50,000 cycle rickshaws. In many ways they are the lifeline of the city but the men plying them are among the most exploited. They are dalits, tribals, landless labour from the rural outskirts of the city of Nawabs and Bihar. They are illiterate and unskilled.

Now, in a novel venture, half-a-dozen organisations including the American India Foundation (AIF), Central Bank of India, Bharatiya Micro Credit and the Rickshaw Sangh, a collective of rickshaw drivers, have come together to provide dignity, status and loans that are paid back in a year so that the rickshaws become a permanent asset of the drivers. Hanumant Rawat, Director of AIF's livelihood programmes, says the collective with its bargaining power is able to get quality rickshaws at subsidised rates and, equally important, counters the stigma attached to dalits and the landless when the Sangh goes shopping on their behalf. With a uniform, driving licence and municipal permit, rickshaw pulling is now moving to the ranks of a profession.

Last month, in a carnival-like atmosphere, some 1,500 green-and-yellow rickshaws and pushcarts were handed over to the drivers and their wives in Lucknow. Central Bank of India CMD S. Sridhar, flagged off the procession of rickshaws driven by their proud owners. Dressed in their Sunday best, the wives and children of the rickshaw drivers jumped on to the rickshaws and pushcarts, cheering and waving joyously as they drove off shouting, 'sach hua sapna, rickshaw hua apna' (our dreams have come true, we own our rickshaws).

Joining in the revelry were Vice Chair of AIF Pradeep Kashyap, Vijay Pandey of BMC that will run the project.

#### LENDING AN INCLUSIVE HAND

Says Sridhar, "For inclusive and double-digit growth of the country, the poor need to have bank accounts and get credit. There are more mobiles than bank accounts in the country and this has to be rectified." The bank wants its services to cover less-privileged sections of society such as rickshaw pullers, taxi drivers and others needing microfinance.

While the bank provides loans for buying



**Organised power:** Members of the Rickshaw Sangh are provided a uniform, driving licence and municipal permit. PICTURES COURTESY: AIF

the rickshaws, AIF provides the first loan default guarantee (FLDG) on behalf of its NGO partners. NGOs recommended by AIF (in Lucknow it is BMC) receive the loans and disburse them to individual drivers. PNB and SIDBI also support the rickshaw

#### THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY

after becoming a rickshaw owner is most apparent in the life of Sunder Lal, 38, and his wife, Rani, 35. Lal earns Rs 7,000 a month and plans to rent out his first rickshaw at Rs 30 a day after buying a second rickshaw through a loan. With two daughters married, he plans to save the Rs 30 a day earned from his first rickshaw for his third daughter's marriage. He has a TV at home, a toilet in the house, and plans to send the two younger children to school. "In my uniform, I now feel I belong to a company," he says. His only worry today centres around his 16-year-old son with a brain-related developmental disorder. Lal hopes to get his son the requisite medical help with the help of BMC.

programme.

#### THE RICKSHAW COLLECTIVE

AIF has been promoting the Rickshaw Sangh programme since 2008 in Assam, Bihar, UP, Delhi and the NCR. Some 14,000 rickshaw pullers have been given vehicles. The ultimate goal is to financially assist one lakh rickshaw pullers to own a vehicle. Each rickshaw costs Rs 11,000 and the weekly repayment instalment is Rs 225. On joining the Rickshaw Sangh, members are entitled to a package of benefits that include two sets of uniforms, driving licence and municipal permit to ply their vehicle, life and vehicle insurance, a bank account, a solar lantern with battery backup, and a mobile phone

with lifetime connection.

Negotiations are also on to create, in association with a mobile company, a rickshaw service that is similar to call-taxis.

#### OWNER'S PRIDE

Rawat of AIF says 94 per cent of rickshaw drivers hire vehicles from the *kathalwalas* or custodians, who each own about 50-500 rickshaws, many of them in dilapidated conditions and suffer frequent breakdowns, with the driver bearing the cost of repair. The daily rent is Rs 30.

Mouzam Ali, who worked his rickshaw for 15 years without being able to save a single rupee, says through the Rickshaw Sangh, the rickshaw drivers have become a

**SANJAY, 28, OF ALIGANJ HAS BEEN PLYING** a rickshaw since he was 16 years old. Last year he got a rickshaw through the BMC. Having repaid the loan, he and his wife Kiran have now taken a loan to buy a pushcart for Rs 8,500. Kiran plans to roast and sell hot peanuts from her pushcart. The loan instalments are Rs 185 a week and Kiran, who is literate and can run a bank account, is confident of earning over Rs 1,200 a month after paying off the loan within a year. The couple have a two-year-old daughter and a two-month-old son.

Sanjay, who earns about Rs 4,000 a month, has some regular clients including some schoolchildren. With life looking up, he plans to send his little girl to school.

pressure group no longer invisible on the Government radar. "My name is on Government records and, finally, I too will be able to access some of the facilities available to residents of my town," he says. The uniform and driving licence have given rickshaw pullers a new status and even shields them from harassment by the police.

#### WIFE'S WORD MATTERS!

The rickshaws are given in the joint name of the husband and wife, and the responsibility for timely repayment largely rests with the women. Bharatiya Micro Credit has worked on the concept of joint liability groups (JLGs). Each group has three to five members. If one member of the JLG is unable to pay because he is travelling or has a personal problem, the other members chip in and pay the dues. Both Rawat of AIF and Pandey of BMC proudly state that till date there has not been a single default in payment.

The joint control on earnings also helps the couples plan for the next stage of income generation through the purchase of a pushcart, a rickshaw trolley or even a second rickshaw, again funded by a bank loan and repaid in weekly instalments. Without the *kathalwala* breathing down their back, the health of the rickshaw drivers is also improving. They ply for five to six hours and get adequate rest now, they say.

Meanwhile, as the rickshaws ply all over the city and are highly visible, Kashyap of AIF is talking to corporate houses to advertise their products on the back of the rickshaws. The money raised through the ads will be shared with the rickshaw pullers.



**IT'S BEEN A LONG AND TOUGH JOURNEY FOR AHMED ALI (45) TO GET HIS OWN RICKSHAW.** His thin frame, pinched face and calloused hands bear testimony to his struggle to support his family of eight children. Arriving from Geetamoh village, Sitapur, nearly 12 years ago, he began driving a hired rickshaw, earning barely Rs 100 a day. He then heard of the BMC and Rickshaw Sangh, and soon formed a JLG with four others. His competent wife, Ruksana, is the leader of the JLG. Having paid off the loan, he today earns Rs 200 a day. His self-respect has gone up, and his health has improved too. His wife has taken a loan to buy a pushcart and hopes to add to the family income by selling vegetables with the help of their 18-year-old son.



# The not-so-attractive side of a job hunt

**When good looks can mar employability.**

TARA PARKER-POPE

How much do looks matter during a job search? A new study suggests that while handsome men do better while looking for work, good looks can end up hurting a woman's chances of scoring a job interview.

The study, conducted by economists at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, sent 5,312 resumes to more than 2,600 employers who had advertised job openings. Two applications were sent to employers, each with virtually identical résumés. The only real difference was that one of the resumes included a photograph of the applicant. Sometimes the applicant was an attractive man or woman, and sometimes the photo showed a more plain-looking man or woman. The researchers had collected pho-



tos from 300 university students. A panel of four men and four women rated the pictures in terms of attractiveness. To eliminate potential racial bias, the judges selected photos of individuals who appeared to have a more ambiguous ethnic background.

Over all, employers sought interviews with 14.5 per cent of the job candidates.

**Sitting pretty** for the interview? NYT

Notably, 19.9 per cent of the male candidates who sent attractive pictures were called in for interviews, compared to 13.7 per cent of the men with "plain" photos. Only 9.2 per cent of the men who didn't send a picture were called to interview. Based on the response rate in the study, an attractive man needs to send an average of five resumes

with a photo to get one interview. An ordinary-looking man needs to send 11 resumes with a photo to get a single interview.

But the apparent bias in favour of job candidates with photos didn't hold true for women. Women who didn't send photos had a 16.6 per cent callback rate, the highest response rate from prospective employers. Resumes accompanied by a photo of a "plain" woman received callback responses 13.6 per cent of the time, compared with 12.8 for those accompanied by photos of attractive women.

The researchers found that the response rate was about the same for all categories of women when the résumé was sent to employment agencies.

When resumes were sent directly to a company, however, attractive women were only half as likely to receive a response as plain women and those who didn't send a picture, a difference that was statistically meaningful. That suggests that when the hiring is done by the company where the job candidate will work, the people doing the hiring appear to strongly discriminate against attractive women.

After the study was completed, the researchers contacted the companies to deter-

mine who at each of the firms was in charge of screening job candidates. At nearly every firm, the person in charge of screening résumés was a young woman, from 23 to 34 years old, and typically single. The researchers concluded that callback rates most likely were influenced by the screener's jealousy "when confronted with a young, attractive competitor in the workplace."

In addition, the survey of employers found different reactions to résumés accompanied by photos, depending on the gender of the job candidate. When a man included a photo with his résumé, employers found that it showed confidence and that the candidate was presentable. But when a woman included a photo, it was viewed as a negative, suggesting the woman was "attempting to market herself via her appearance."

"Our results show that beauty distorts the hiring process," the researchers concluded. "Suitably qualified attractive women and plain men and women may be eliminated early on from the selection process."

The findings are outlined in a working paper called "Are Good-Looking People More Employable?"