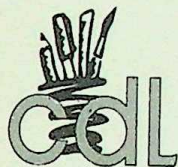


Women in



NEWS YOU CAN USE (NYCU) is a specially formulated media clippings service directed to meet the specific information needs of NGOs. Published on a bi-monthly basis, NYCU presents a comprehensive compilation of selected media clippings of news that could be of direct use to NGOs working at the grassroots level.

NYCU includes a selection of newsitems/features/ articles/editorials/ letters from 10 leading national newspapers and 5 newsmagazines. Each newsitem carries the source, name of publication and date of publication. The compilation is categorised under appropriate heads with an index for easy reference.

Subscription cost – Rs. 150/- per annum

June - August 1998

Research Team: Joyatri Roy
Ruth Sebastian
Sushma Majumdar

Compilation: Ratan Gopinath

Circulation: P.S.Saraswathi

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Please address your subscription to Communication for Development and Learning, Post Box 3457, Koramangala, Bangalore - 560 034

News You Can Use

A mediascan for NGOs



August 1998

**A bi-monthly publication from
CDL, Bangalore**

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What Makes News?

It was to enable an understanding of this question, that we at CDL, started a research project to compile and analyse the content of leading newspapers and magazines. The publication **News You Can Use** (NYCU), is an outcome of this project.

Our interaction with other NGOs highlighted the existing dearth of information, or access to the same at the grassroots level. While information highways and global villages were the buzzwords for one group, it was ironic that the '*felt need*' of our NGO partners was *access to newspapers*.

NYCU is a modest effort at meeting the information needs of NGOs working in remote rural areas. NYCU, a specially formulated media clippings service for NGOs, presents a comprehensive compilation of selected newsitems/features/articles/editorials/letters from leading national newspapers.

The extensive data base was informative, but diverse. Eventually the research team, through extensive debate, agreed to restrict the selection to information which would enable grassroots level NGOs to function more effectively in their work. But, defining news as 'useful' or not, was not an easy task.

We hope NYCU will serve its purpose. As far as possible, effort has been made to reproduce each item as it actually appears in the newspaper. Every newsitem carries the name and date of publication. The compilation is presented in a chronological order with a categorised index to enable easy access to relevant information.

We would like to state that CDL is in no way responsible for the authenticity of information presented in this compilation. For any clarification or for more information, we request our readers to directly contact the agencies/organisations concerned.

News You Can Use, is published with support from the National Foundation of India. This compilation is a part of a research project on 'What Makes News? Understanding Media For Advocacy'.

We look forward to receiving your feedback.

Shangon Das Gupta

August 1998

Table of Contents

Agriculture

Novel stir by farmers in Kerala goes in vain	1
RBI advice on farm credit	3
Maharashtra to bear farmers' interest burden for one year	12
Credit card for farmers in offing	16
Opium farmers fall victim to Narcotics Act	23
Green farming recipes	26
Fifth agricultural trade fair in city in November	35
High yielding red rice	36
Ban on sale of seeds sans certification	54
Yellow revolution	64
Virus free banana saplings raised	67
Crop Insurance to be made compulsory	71
Terminator - big threat to Indian agriculture	79
Lime soaking boosts cane yield	84
Food Grain Production Graph	90

AIDS/HIV

NACO website on Internet	25
Bad blood	32
Mobile AIDS booth set up for migrant workers	34
Britain launches AIDS website	35
AIDS threatens survival of truck drivers	85
In AID of AIDS	90

Child

Hazardous work endangers children	11
Helping construction workers build a future for their children	29
PIL over child beggars admitted	37
Cabinet okays Central adoption agency	49
We can make a difference	57
Millions of births not registered in India: UNICEF	58
Dreams of poor children will now take flight	82
Child labour banned in 43 more industries	87
Winning strokes: A cricketer who cares	89

Disability

New options for people with disabilities	2
Free Scholarship for physically disabled	4
A note of hope for the deaf	8
Disabled quota	10
Light shines in the eyes of the Ariyad village	14
Privileges that the disabled are hardly aware of	15

New writing aid for the handicapped	19
Don't despair if your child is differently abled	22
Exclusive petrol pump for the disabled	27
Training for the deaf	39
NGOs need to enrol disabled candidates	67
Are teachers too blind to help?	70
Attention-manufacturers of aids and appliances for persons With disability	78
National Awards for welfare of people with disability	82
New rehabilitation scheme for disabled planned	97

Education

Rotary award to focus on literacy	72
Environment to be made compulsory in schools	86
Mayor inaugurates school on wheels	89

Environment

AIR broadcast on environment	4
Four eco task forces at work	10
Global environment expo in December	16
Guidelines to regulate mining in forests	23
In harmony with nature	28
Seeds of selflessness	38
AIR series on environment	51
Green guards for forest mooted	53
World resources report released	58
Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskar-1998	65
Govt. will enact law to protect bio-diversity	67
Rules being recast for a green clearance	82
Only gender bias can make woods lovely - Suresh Prabhu	86
Environmental award for Surat	91

Girl Child

Centre plans free education upto graduation for girls	5
Meena is UNICEF's symbol of the girl child	18
Rs. 100 crore scheme for girls' education proposed	49
Little sister's watching	60

Health

Meningitis is major killer	4
"Must-Haves" for medicos	10
Who cares	25
A vaccine scam	30
Panel to probe use of spurious oral polio vaccines	36
Kidwai introduces cancer insurance scheme	37
Community medicine	42
Video cassette on herbal plants of Tirumala	43
Home remedies:a handbook of herbal cures for common ailments	47
Awareness on vaccine potency lacking	48

How to prevent cholera	74
The best 'tonic' for newborns	91

Human Rights

Suggestions sought to improve NHRC functioning	12
Vienna to host meet on human rights	17
NHRC introduces summer internship	53
Tackling armed opposition	73

Micro-Credit

More bazars on <i>Dilli Haat</i> pattern in offing	12
NABARD set to expand micro-credit	40
Credit-cum-subsidy scheme for the poor	79

NGO

Speaking wall	1
Involving people in development	5
NGO project helps villagers dodge debt during famine	31
Tihar inmates get a "helping hand"	42
Ask and it shall be given unto you - a helping handshake	43
All for a cause	45
Rise of the Bangla NGO: a lesson there for India?	75
MP government stops aid to NGOs after adverse reports	92

North East

Waiting for Sanjoy Ghose	7
Defying ULFA	52
North East book fair	56

Pollution and Waste Management

Effective waste management	4
Where garbage is turned to wealth	41
Polluting firms to fund afforestation programme	51

Reproductive Health

Misconceptions about miscarriage	21
Infokit on health	22
Reproductive and child health plan to cover urban slums	35
The demographic bomb	59
Govt. UNFPA start district based population projects	58
Women's groups demand action against US doctors for 'Q' trials	68
Population explosion	69
Adolescents seek a voice	87
Government drags feet on Quinacrine threat	90

Technology

Animal Power	9
Low-cost housing kit	10
Volvo launches a tractor amid farmer protests	20
New spinning wheel to empower men and women	24

Flyash for farm use	51
Harvesting rain water	63

Tribals

Denotified communities	36
Tripura's tribal laws to be codified	50
Branded for life	88

Water

Mighty Ganga may not flow forever	17
Water disinfection with juice extracts	19
Tehri dam designed to withstand quakes	44
Rs. 100 crore allocated for water conservation	50
Cauvery still on clash course after 191 years of contention	85

Women

Bound by tradition and four walls	13
Calcutta HC verdict on rape sets a new trend in judicial conventions	39
Women's helpline	55
Progressive measure	55
Bill of wrongs	66
Right of Hindu widow: SC sets aside HC judgement	72
It took a village	76
Equality in law	83
Government for death sentence to rapists	92
DNA tests conducted to curb exploitation of rural women	94
TN bans eve-teasing - vows harsh sentence	94

Novel stir by farmers in Kerala goes in vain

Thrissur, May 31: Demonstrations, dharnas and relay satyagrahas failing to attract the attention of the authorities, farmers in Kerala's Thrissur town stood in the middle of burning fires, as a mark of protest.

Members of the All Kerala Coconut Farmers' Union (AKCFU) stood on one-leg in the middle of 'panchagni' (five burning fires) at the southern pagoda of the Thrissure Poomam's famous Vadakkunnathan temple to press their demands.

The agitationist-farmers sought declaration of floor price for copra at Rs 3,700 per quintal, distribution of coconut oil through authorised ration depots, abolition of import of retreaded and second-hand tyres, remission of interest on loans availed for agricultural purposes and moratorium in repayment of loans among others.

AKCFU president A L Sebastian said the farmers in general and the coconut and rubber planters in the State in particular were facing a serious crisis following steep decline in the

prices of their produce.

Besides, the State and Central Governments' step-motherly attitude towards the farming community in Kerala had also put the State's economy in the doldrums, Sebastian alleged.

The farmers cleansed the atmosphere of suspended impurities before performing the 'tapas'.

It was performed on a 30-metre circular make-shift platform surrounded by coconut shells, fronds, spathe, husk and vertiver (a herb) as also five 'homakundams' (sacrificial fires) kept burning with jackfruit tree's tender wood as fuel.

Though the tapas is originally a Hindu custom, farmers of a cross section of society, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, participated in it.

The farmers later put the mandatory 'ashtadravyngal' (eight ingredients) like butea, eagle-wood, bedellium, Indian spikenard, sandalwood, saffron, costus roots and camphor in the 'homakundams'.

The agitating farmers performed penance in the middle of the panchagni while standing on one-leg and invoked blessings of sun god with their arms kept aloft.

Conducting a penance like this for more mundane objectives (almost akin to the nirahara satyagraha) is a novel idea and AKCFU resorted to an abridged version of this to invite the attention of the central and State Governments for redressal of their problems, Sebastian said.

However, almost a fortnight after the agitation, there has been no reaction from the authorities.

Nonetheless, the farmers have decided to continue their struggle in a peaceful manner by resorting to a picket on June 5.

Former State Minister and Kerala Congress leader K M Mani will inaugurate the picketing in front of the Export Credit and Guarantee Corporation (ECGC), where thousands of farmers are expected to participate, Sebastian said. • PTI

The Indian Express
1 June 1998

The speaking wall

• 'They would rather use their heads for studying... with a little help from you...' goes a caption for a photograph, which among others leaves a deep impression on the viewer. This photograph depicts tender aged and undernourished children carrying heavy brick-filled baskets on their heads. The photographs and related messages have been put up by Child Relief and You (CRY), on 'The Wall' at Sabha - the heart of India. Sabha, is a marketing platform for a lot of micro-enterprises where there is an interactive exchange between

producers and buyers working towards empowering the poor, according to Seema, one of its members.

With the help of Action Aid, Sabha has initiated a novel method where any NGO or related organisation with a social message can display their stuff on 'The Wall' at Sabha for a period of 15 days.

'The Wall' seeks to create an awareness on issues of development ranging from gender bias to livelihood, to health and to education systems, to name a few.

Ms Seema says more often than not nearly 50 per cent of the

people express keen interest in getting in touch with the organisation and doing their bit for the cause.

Madhyam, Samraksha and the Institute for the Physically Handicapped have already put up their messages on 'The Wall' which have been received very well by the public who visit Sabha.

Deccan Herald
1 June 1998

New options for people with disabilities

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

When he was 23 years old Rajgopal's legs were congenitally short and bent and he did not have a left hand. After training as a planter, he worked with a landscapist and was subsequently appointed as a horticulture instructor to the Spastic Society of Karnataka in Bangalore. He now earns over Rs 1,000 a month.

Many of us are concerned about integrating people with disability into the mainstream of society. But how many of us are aware of the innovative and professional services which several organisations working in this area have initiated?

Association of People with Disability (APD), an NGO in the heart of Lingarajpuram, Bangalore, is a case in point. Recognising that "people with disabilities need not necessarily be bound by them," it strives to encourage their self reliance. Its horticulture training programme, initiated in 1987, for disabled persons provided vocational rehabilitation programme.

APDs logic was closely interlinked to its objectives: The trainees and workers are people with disabilities who have no hope

of employment otherwise.

The 11-year-old marriage where horticulture provides both therapy and employment for people with disability has clearly paid rich dividends: Of the approximately 120 trainees who have completed the course, more than 70 per cent have gone on to have a career in some horticulture activity. Some have become gardeners in nurseries, industrial houses, with individuals and institutions. Others have pursued kitchen gardening or are free lance gardeners who take on small gardeners who take on small contracts.

In order to generate income, a production unit was set up at Jeevan Bheema Nagar, Bangalore. Separate from the training centre, it provides house and garden plants for sale. It has successfully undertaken several commercial ventures such as landscape gardening, decor design and plant maintenance for business houses around Bangalore.

If its corporate list is any indication, APD has reason to be proud: ActionAid India, Cheshire Homes, Garden Feature, Hindustan Office Products Tapovana and Associates, Tata Energy Research Institute, Usha Beltron Electronics, Westar International Ltd. are all a part of the clientele.

The Asian Age
2 June 1998

RBI advice on farm credit

By Our Staff Reporter

MUMBAI, June 1. The Reserve Bank of India has advised all scheduled commercial banks to immediately implement the recommendations made by the one-man high-level committee on flow of credit to agriculture, according to a press release issued here on Saturday.

The banks have been asked to:

Ensure that pre-sanction appraisal of the borrower focusses on income stream of the borrower, his credibility, his capability for taking up the activities proposed, integrity, etc., and technical viability of the proposal.

Delegate adequate powers to the branch managers so as to enable disposal of 90 per cent of loan applications at the branch level, including modification of the powers at the branch level, if the pattern of lending so warrants.

Introduce annual composite cash credit limits to all agricultural borrowings families.

Consider designing a fully liquid savings module with an appropriate return and in-build the same in the loan product which will take care of farmers' interests in the event of adverse price fluctuations or natural calamities.

Disburse all loans for agricultural purposes in cash which will facilitate dealer choice to borrowers and foster an environment of trust.

Dispense with production of "no due certificates" from banks/institutions by borrowers as a compulsory requirement.

Evolve an appropriate mechanism to monitor recovery performance in respect of agricultural loans, particularly in regard to old and sticky loans.

Ensure that the value of security taken is commensurate with the size of the loan and desist from asking additional collateral by way of guarantors where the land mortgaged is considered adequate.

Use discretion on matters relating to margin/security requirements for agricultural loans above Rs. 10,000.

Furnish the borrowers with a clear statement of the credit facilities availed by him separately indicating various fees and charges for introducing an element of transparency.

Ensure that the officials of the internal inspection team visit a few service area villages covered by each branch and meet farmers to discuss their problems so as to obtain a feedback on the quality of interaction which the branch officials have at the ground level.

Ensure that the Chairman and Managing Directors of banks pay surprise visits to rural branches during their tours to states which will send appropriate signals to the field level staff.

Consider giving weightage in the performance appraisal system to increase in the outreach measured by the members of new clients, incremental increase in flow of credit and loan recoveries.

Design specific loan products to the borrowers in non-farm sector to enable them to pursue a number of non-agricultural activities alongside agricultural activities for supplementing their income.

Ensure operationalisation of a model set of documents prescribed by the Working Group on Non-Governmental Organisations and Self Help Groups relating to agreements among members, loan formats and application forms.

Ensure that farmers are given the right advice regarding cultivation of crops and inputs to be used.

Link the activities of rural branches with farmers' clubs established with the initiative of the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development, to facilitate technology transfer regarding agricultural operations, wherever possible.

Finally undertake a review of the banks' high-tech agricultural branches to identify the branches which are not working well due to inadequate expertise and/or lack of demand, also ensuring that these hi-tech branches are used to disseminate information relating to agricultural operations specifically to provide technical information regarding cultivation of high value crops.

The RBI has stated that it is referring to the Government of India the recommendations which require consideration of the Government of India/State Governments, viz., abolition of stamp duty for agricultural advances, matters relating to mortgage of land, subsidy related credit, etc.

The RBI has also requested the Indian Banks' Association to work out simplified application forms and documents for agricultural loans and rationalisation of internal returns of banks.

The committee was set up by the RBI in December 1997 to suggest measures to improve the delivery systems as well as simplification of procedures for agricultural credit. Mr. R. V. Gupta was the one-man committee and submitted its report on April 27, 1998.

The Hindu
2 June 1998

Effective waste management

Waste from livestock farms is a growing source of pollution around the country. Now the Research Service of the federal Department of Agriculture is exploring a solution to the problem: a 77,000-square-foot composting centre that can handle 100 tons of cow and poultry manure a day.

Emphasis has been laid on finding techniques for bulk composting of organic byproducts, in which the heat produced — temperatures in a heap can top 130 degrees — kills all disease organisms.

Waste trucked into the centre is dumped in one of 20 rows, called windrows, each 160 feet long, five feet wide and 40 inches high. The rows are churned once a week by a machine to speed decomposition by letting in more air. Most of the rows are fully "cooked" in 12 weeks. The centre hopes to develop composts, mixes of farm, industrial and urban materials that can be used to prevent particular diseases in crops.

The Asian Age (Business Age)
3 June 1998

AIR broadcast on environment

ALL INDIA RADIO is to broadcast *Yeh Kahaan Aa Gaye Hum*, a new series aimed at creating a greater awareness of problems relating to the environment from June 5, which is observed as World Environment Day every year. The series will be broadcast from 31 stations of All India Radio in the Hindi speaking Belt.

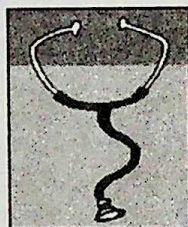
The Asian Age
4 June 1998

Free scholarship for physically disabled

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has offered Rs 2,400 scholarships for physically disabled and students of economically weaker sections to learn music and fine arts at its centre in the City. Applications are available at its office on Race Course Road. For more information phone number 2267421 may be contacted

The Indian Express
4 June 1998

Meningitis is major child killer



BANGALORE: The meninges are the membranes which cover and protect the spinal cord and the brain. Meningitis is

blood, and both pulmonary and joint infections.

However, the symptoms of meningitis may easily be confused with those of less serious disorders. In about 15-20 per cent of the cases neurological complications such as

HEALTH FILE

caused by the inflammation of these meninges due to bacterial or viral infection, or by poisoning. It may cause neurological problems, sometimes, leading to death.

The dreaded *Haemophilus Influenzae* Type B (Hib) meningitis is caused by a bacterium of the same name and is a major cause of severe bacterial infection in infants and children below five. It is also the primary cause of meningitis in this age.

Other severe infections include acute inflammation of the larynx and pharynx which may produce asphyxia, septicaemia, or infection throughout the body carried in the

mental retardation, paralysis and epilepsy may occur.

- All children below five years of age stand the risk of developing Hib infection for two reasons. Firstly, children below five do not possess enough anti-bodies. Also, as Hib is transmitted through saliva, the risks are higher in children who spend time together in creches or in groups.

Vaccination is recommended for all children below five. The vaccination, along with that for Hepatitis B, should be given. As Hib meningitis usually occurs before two years, it is vital that vaccination is started at the right time.— **Sriranjan Chaudhuri**

The Times of India
4 June 1998

Centre plans free education up to graduation for girls

DH News Service

NEW DELHI, June 4

A Rs 100-crore scheme to provide girls with free education upto graduation, creation of a new fund for national sports development and a national reconstruction corps are to be the highlights of the ministry of human resource development in this fiscal year.

In a post-budget address to the media here today, the Union minister for human resources, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, said the government has earmarked Rs 7046.82 crore for education, a hike from Rs 4715.85 crore in the previous budget.

But he conceded that a chunk of

this amount would be consumed by the increased pay packets for school and college teachers.

Dispelling fears that the recent economic sanctions imposed by foreign countries would affect welfare programmes for women and children, Dr Johi said the foreign component of such welfare schemes was only about 20 per cent. At worse, the programmes would be slightly delayed, he said, but such a situation did not exist at present.

The minister said the government was planning to launch a new scheme for gender equity by providing free education to girls upto college level. The present budget had allocated Rs 100 crore

for this.

Besides, to transform as many as 800 schools under the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan into model schools, the government, he said, had increased the outlay for the sangathan by Rs 48 crore.

The government also proposed to provide 100 per cent income tax exemption upto Rs five lakhs to undertakings which are willing to establish and run educational institutions exclusively for women and children in rural areas, Dr Joshi said. Such incentives, he said, would also be extended to those who set up creches for workers employed in factories and project cells.

Deccan Herald
5 June 1998

Involving people in development

By DARRYL D'MONTE

KERALA never ceases to surprise, each time one visits it. Its strides in making virtually every person able to read and write is world-renowned. It is also well known that its health indices approximate those of many Western societies, even though its per capita income is far smaller.

Kerala is now launching a novel experiment in enabling people to map their own natural resources as a first step in planning from the grassroots upwards — a sharp divergence from the Nehruvian grand planning initiatives from above. The provocation were the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments which paved the way for panchayats to take the lead in decentralised planning.

During a recent four-nation trip through coastal Kerala, organised by the Forum of Environmental Journalists of India and funded by the World Bank, Prof T M Thomas Isaac

from the Centre for Developing Societies (CDS) revealed how 37 per cent of the State's annual plan expenditure is now made out to the panchayats as an outright grant-in-aid. This amounts to Rs.1,000 crore this year, with another Rs.250 crore for specific schemes.

Volatile swings

The "birthplace" of this experiment was in Kalliasseri Taluk in Kannur (Cannanore) District. Its 15-sq km area is divided into 15 wards and there are now around 30,000 inhabitants. Coincidentally, it happens to be the birthplace of both E K Nayanar and K Karunakaran, present and erstwhile chief ministers whose left and right-wing coalitions rule alternatively in the volatile electoral swings in the State. Not accidentally, however, the area has witnessed a long tradition of anti-imperial struggle: in the 1940s, the Raj administration

imposed Section 144 Cr PC for six months, the longest ever, in the country. Many public movements began there.

With such a baptism in social ferment, it is not surprising that the whole concept of decentralised planning took root in Kalliasseri from the beginning of this decade. Behind the scenes, the Kerala Sastra Sahita Parishad (KSSP), one of the finest development NGOs in the world, paved the ground. The KSSP began as a movement of science teachers who translated scientific work into Malayalam to make it accessible to a wider audience. It later widened its scope to take the campaign against the Silent Valley hydro-electric project, which Mrs Indira Gandhi stopped. It now has 50,000 members, publishes six journals, has book fairs and other *jathas* and has spread into virtually every nook of the State.

The KSSP model of mapping natural resources was subsequently refined by organisations like the Centre for Earth Sciences Studies, the Kerala Land Use Board and the CDS. Each panchayat prepares its own land use map. This consisted of villagers drawing up a rudimentary sketch of their resources — farm areas, the kind of crops, water availability, soil quality and environmental problems.

Subsequently, these have been extended to socio-economic surveys of every household in a panchayat. This in-

cludes simple demographics, their energy consumption, sanitation, income and so on. The important element was that the villagers themselves did all this, with their mentors only providing the training. The first group activity that resulted from this "people's research" was the cultivation of vegetables. This "learning by doing" created the methodology for local-level planning. The entire experience proved that the State could do something only with the people's involvement.

Obviously, such innovative education can produce concrete action. In Kalliasseri, villagers have co-operated on constructing their own water drainage system. Each ward committee deputed three or four people to survey the canal areas: there were 740 volunteers in all; the panchayat spent no money on this whole operation. One lesson they gained was that people can do so many things without outside assistance.

The State Planning Board, drafted the services of many retired engineers for this purpose and one lakh volunteers have been trained. Even BJP-led panchayats have adopted this approach.

Of course, only a fifth of the 1,000 panchayats have been empowered in this manner. Activists concede that there are around 250 which are corrupt. Another 500 are sitting on the fence. But activists believe that "things can't be worse than they already are" in most panchayats. An offshoot of this

grassroots democratisation is the free access to information: all panchayat documents can be xeroxed for 30 paise a page. As other movements like that of the people's 'Right to know' launched by the Kisan Mazdoor Shakti Sangathan in Rajasthan villages have demonstrated, this is the first step to rid the system of corruption.

There are still some reservations about the ultimate efficacy of this movement. First, will this pattern be environmentally sustainable, or lead to over-exploitation of natural resources? To ensure that this concept is built into programmes, every project is now required to have an environmental impact assessment. The second is the extent to which panchayats can generate their own funds. They already contribute around 40 per cent — the highest proportion in the country (elsewhere, it is less than one-tenth) — but have to look for other sources to become replicable.

Common infrastructure

There were certain pre-conditions which made this experiment a success in Kerala, and may be difficult to implement in other States or neighbouring countries. First, it can only be launched in a society which is very literate. Second, basic land reforms have brought about social accord and diffused land ownership. Third, this has created a common infrastructure which makes such concepts as land management and social forestry real alternatives. Perhaps the telling comparison is with West Bengal, which has also had a Left Front in power for virtually three decades, but cannot hope to mobilise people on anywhere near the same scale. If one factor is responsible for the difference, it is probably Kerala's near total literacy.

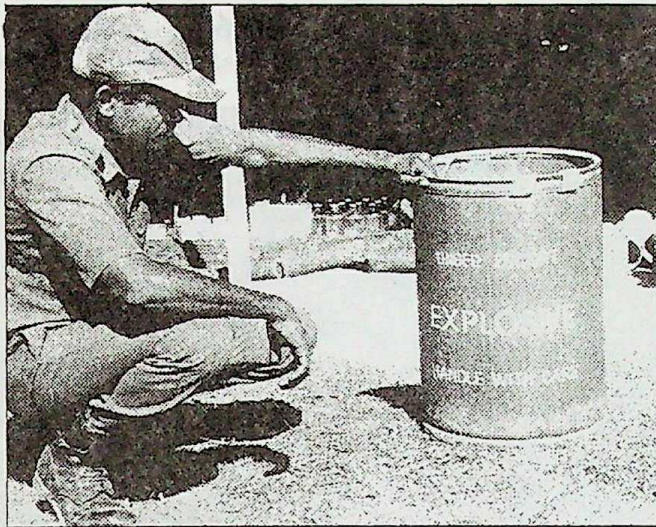
Deccan Herald
6 June 1998

Waiting for Sanjoy Ghose

“MAJULI is a beautiful place,” wrote Sanjoy Ghose a few months before he was abducted and perhaps killed on July 4, 1997. It was perhaps the month of May, just before the season of floods... “the rain drops bounce off the fast flowing Brahmaputra, the purple flowers of the azhar are in full bloom. Taking the ferry upstream is a zen-like experience, time passing with the illusion of movement.” The reports that refer to his brutal end in a place of such beauty, a centre of spirituality in Assam are far from Zen-like.

Attracted by its isolated grandeur, baffled at the same time by its backwardness and low levels of development, Sanjoy was led to this large river island where he felt a plan of voluntary action could be initiated that will provide a forum for self expression and involve the young people in finding solutions to problems that were old and endemic. They could use, he dreamed, the democratic space that already existed but had not been sufficiently explored. True to his nature, he and his small team began work on a low key, decided to first understand the language, the culture and problems of the place before embarking on a plan of action. They journeyed into remote hamlets and met tribal farmers, scheduled caste fisherpeople and school teachers whose homes became their homes. Women, mostly from the scheduled caste and Mising tribal communities, responded to them intuitively. It was mainly their labour, 30,000 woman days that helped in preventing erosion of the island in the time of floods.

“We could not just watch, researching while Majuli was drowning,” wrote Sanjoy as he and his team found themselves being pushed into development work. Sorting through alternatives they decided to run a mobile medical camp and make clean drinking water available by helping sixty displaced communities to dig shallow tube wells. At this point they made their first enemy in Bongaon, a powerful local



THE OTHER INDIA

Anees Jung

leader, who decided to keep a tube wells with technical help from Nawell for himself. The second intentional Institute of Design in emy emerged when in their news-Ahmedabad and interactions were letter *Dweep Lok* they uncovered happening between the local people a scam where a local panchayat and visiting environmentalists president, a woman, had given the and social workers. Other projects contract for building houses to her were to include the training of son. Their work soon alienated health workers and setting up of them from the powerful contractor village libraries that would help as lobby who lost commissions in centres of learning and dissemination tube well installations and the erosion. These programmes were decision work where the community signed to help people move from had got so splendidly involved, the culture of dependence to the This was also the beginning of the use of their own creative energies. process of alienation with ULFA For this they were accused for be who saw them as a threat with aning imposters, for perpetrating a alternate mass base. culture of dependence and destroying the culture of Assam.

The arrival of the Indian army on the island led the enemies to spread word that Sanjoy's group AVARD had intelligence links with the army. It did not however affect the work that had already begun — mobilising people within groups and the communities outside.

Local bamboo craftspeople were exposed to improved production and finishing techniques; young people were trained in mushroom cultivation, four of them were sent in drama training to Guwahati; twenty women were weaving products for outside mar-

walking, on cycle to save bus fare.” The meeting that lasted for five hours supported the work of AVARD. “They are ideals for us and our children,” said one speaker. “Far from creating a culture of dependence they’ve shown us what we can do on our own.” This was not to be the end of the story as Sanjoy predicted in his own words. “It has become difficult for us to work in this atmosphere of fear and tension. Everywhere we go people are welcoming as before but seem slightly distant. They all want development and change but are scared.” Those who worked for him began leaving. On July 4 Sanjoy himself disappeared. It is almost a year since his abduction.

“No, he is not dead,” says Shumita, vehemently. “It is not possible to harm Sanjoy. Even if he did not agree he could never be aggressive. He worked with the best of intentions. He cannot die. Good always wins over evil.” This frail hope of a brave wife and woman needs to be strengthened. The government must sit up, the ULFA must open its heart not its guns and all of us who care must give Shumita the support for a rally she is organising on July 4 in Majuli. For details phone Avard in Delhi 011-3234690; fax: 011-323-2501.

Deccan Herald
7 June 1998

Unsigned posters appeared overnight. Intense propaganda made people withdraw into fear and silence. To give them hope and clarify their own stand AVARD called an open meeting. It was the first time when a public organisation opened itself to public scrutiny.

“The first of June dawned cloudy and the island was lashed by the first torrential rains,” wrote Sanjoy in his diary. “The Ahudhan was ripe in the fields and there was little time to be wasted but more than 300 people came,

A note of hope for the stone deaf

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI, June 7

● Dr Anil Chauhan, a medical practitioner in Himachal Pradesh, was deaf in his right ear since birth. But last year, he became 'stone deaf' after a sudden infection in his left ear as well following a viral infection.

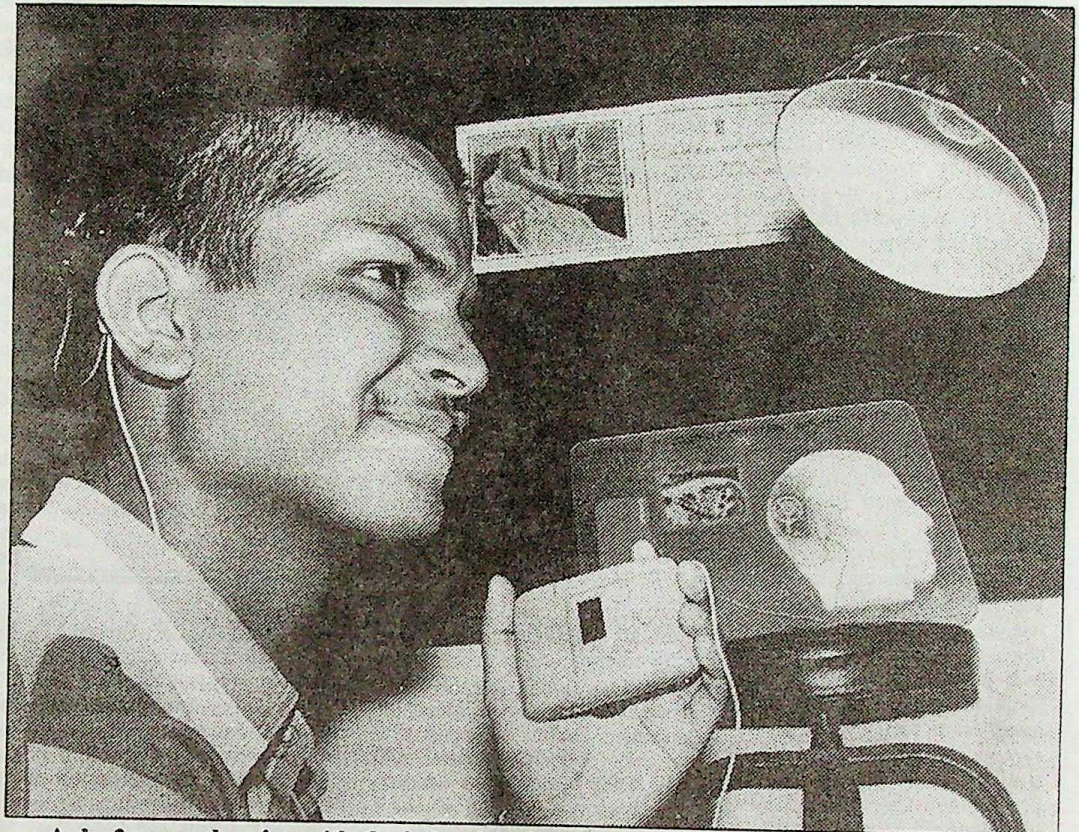
● Life came to a standstill for 24-year-old Deepak Gupta when a severe attack of meningitis last year led to a hearing loss in both his ears. An accounts executive by profession, he was contemplating suicide as the world became silent for him suddenly.

● Puneet Jain, a hotel employee, lost his hearing abilities, when the doctors in a hospital, rather than operating on his infected ear, opened the other ear. After the operation, he had lost the hearing of both his ears.

But now, there is a ray of hope for such patients, who, in medical terms, are suffering from bilateral profound deafness or stone deafness. All these three patients, whose lives had become silent overnight, are now able to listen to sounds, thanks to the 24-channel, new hearing device implanted at the ENT Department at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Dr R. C. Deka, head of the ENT Department at the institute, said that the new cochlear implant system assists in hearing by activating the auditory nerve.

He said that a majority of the people in the country are deaf due to damage to the inner ear and not the nerve itself. "Even a person who is profoundly deaf has some functioning nerve fibres in the inner ear. These may be able to send sound signals to the brain if they are stimulated electrically. The



A deaf person hearing with the help of the new 24-channel, cochlear implant system.

cochlear implant system does just that," Dr Deka said.

The functioning of the cochlear implant is extremely simple. "Sound is collected in a microphone (placed in the hook of the ear). Then it is transmitted to a speech processor (carried in the patient's pocket pouch). The processor selects and codes useful sounds and sends them on to a transmitting coil and implant receiver stimulator (which is hidden in the scalp). These electrical signals are sent through electrodes to

stimulate hearing nerve fibres in the ear and onwards to the brain," Dr Deka informed.

He said cochlear implant surgery benefits post-linguistically deaf patients, who, generally, don't get benefits from the most powerful hearing aids in both ears.

These are the persons who had been hearing for a sufficient time and had suddenly become deaf.

Dr Deka said at the moment these three persons had been rehabilitated with the help of the cochlear implant. "But one should not

have the impression that implant, hearing and speech will come automatically. That will take a few weeks. The patients will have to undergo speech therapy classes for a few months so that they can identify the sound signals. It will also take some time before the patient can start speaking satisfactorily since a stone deaf patient's speech abilities are also affected," Dr Deka added. He said the implant was now available in 24 channels which would give better hearing reception to the patients.

The Hindustan Times
8 June 1998

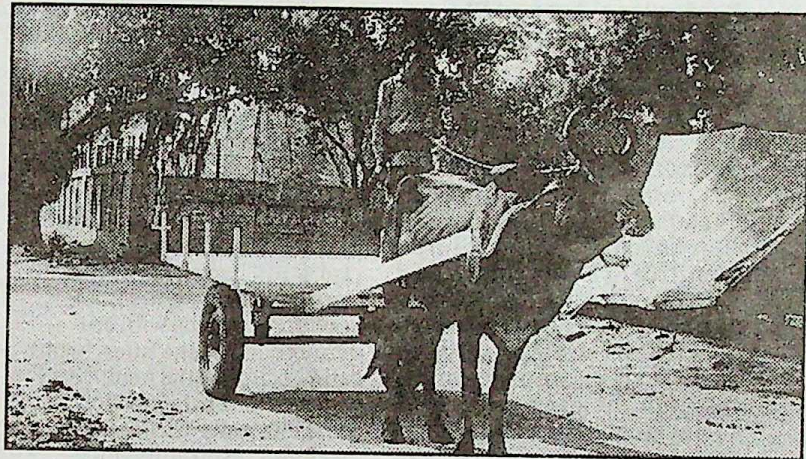
Animal power

G V JOSHI

HOW useful is the bullock? Well, the bullock comes in handy for ploughing and tilling the fields as well as for hauling and transporting the produce in carts. That's all? How about optimising the animal's output? A small industrial unit at Pune has developed a bullock cart, with attachments that allow it to be used as a small process unit. Considering that a bullock cart covers about 6 km in a hour, it can be used as a flour mill, an oil mill and a spice grinding mill while on the move, performing traditional jobs like hauling people and material.

It can also operate a fodder cutting machine or charge batteries for use at home to light, lamps, drive fans or operate a TV, tape recorder and radio running on rechargeable batteries.

The radius of a wooden wheel of a bullock cart is about 0.6 metre. Concentric to one wheel, the entrepreneur has filled a 0.3 m radius wheel which drives another 6 cm radius wheel through a rubber belt. This small wheel is connected to another wheel through a system of reduction gears fixed in a gear box. On an average a bullock cart wheel completes 25 revolutions in a minute. Through the reduction gear system, the small wheel would make about 1,500 revolutions per minute providing about 1 horse power of energy. This is enough to run the appliances or charge lead-acid batteries while the bullock cart is



on the move. When not travelling to a distant place, it can be driven in a small circle working as a power house.

Another system for harnessing animal power for generating electricity for rural household applications had been developed by the National Institute for Training in Industrial Engineering (NITIE) based in Mumbai. The system produces sufficient electricity for lighting two tube lights, operating one table fan, a radio and a portable TV running on a 12 volt DC battery. Designed for bullocks, it can be adapted to other animals such as the donkey, horse, etc.

The NITIE system uses simple gears and a conventional dynamo such as used in automobiles. The dynamo charges a 12 volt car battery in about

4-5 hours. Two bullocks working for a few hours a day can keep the homes of poor farmers illuminated and entertain the family through a radio or TV.

Experts in the energy field estimate that the 80 million draft animals in India can contribute about 40 million horsepower, roughly equal to 10,000 MW of electricity. A horse can generate 1 hp, a bullock and buffalo 0.75 hp, a mule 0.7 hp, a cow 0.45 hp, and a humble donkey about 0.35 hp.

Unfortunately, the bullock cart has not changed much during the last 5,000 years. Very little research work has been carried out to develop steel or aluminium based bullock carts running on rubber tyres that can carry more material with less effort from the bullock.

Deccan Herald

9 June 1998

'Must-Haves' For Medicos

Text Book Of Community Medicine

By Dr A.P. Kulkarni and Dr J.P. Baride

Published by Vora Medical Publications, Agarwal Bhavan, Kidwai Marg, Wadala, Mumbai - 400 031
First edition, 1998
Rs 280

Baride venture into this faculty of medicine



planning, nutritional disorders,

COMMUNITY Medicine is the medical faculty on the ascent thanks to its newly acquired significance in India and abroad. A predominantly rural country like India stands to gain a great deal in its health care system improvement through the preventive and social facets of medicine that are represented by Community Medicine.

Vora Medical Publications' textbook of Community Medicine is a thorough compilation of topics comprising as well as related to Community Medicine. Dr Kulkarni and Dr



and try to present each topic in all its comprehensiveness. Their attempt to encompass all these topics is noteworthy and has resulted in this book. The book features detailed accounts of sociology, social psychology, demography and health education in the first section of the book. Section two deals with epidemiology, biostatistics, health care, occupational health and genetics. The third section is more clinically-inclined as it dwells on respiratory infections and contagious diseases. Borne infections, worm infestations, food and water borne diseases, chronic illness, maternal and child health and geriatrics. A separate section on nutrition discusses diet

ders, requirements and assessment, food, and milk hygiene in a concise manner. Considering the information offered and its expansiveness presented in a lucid compilation, the book is certainly a valuable source for medical undergraduates and doctors, especially those seeking to work in rural areas.



The Indian Express (Science Express)
9 June 1998

Low cost housing kit

● A new low-cost housing kit using broken concrete blocks, flyash and other industrial by-products has been devised by researchers, PTI reports from New Delhi.

The housing kit, developed by a team of researchers of Sri Sairam Engineering College in Chennai under Mr N Chitharanjan, comprises precast components which can be procured from a centralised plant, transported to the site and assembled, according to a recent report in the *Indian Concrete Journal*. Lightweight concrete prepared from pieces of concrete blocks and broken brick rubble are used to manufacture prefabricated wall panels.

Deccan Herald
9 June 1998

Four eco task forces at work

DEHRA DUN, PITHORAGARH, Bikaner and Samba are the four places where battalions of the ecological task forces are located, carrying on the preservation of the environment at the behest of the environment and forests ministry.

Besides these four, one wastelands development force of the Army is at present operating in Gwalior, according to the *Indian Defence Year Book 1998-99* brought out at Dehra Dun recently.

The 127 infantry battalion, raised on December 1, 1982, is responsible for the return of greenery to Mussoorie, which had become devoid of greenery in the 1980s.

The Asian Age
9 June 1998

Hazardous work endangers children

International Labour Conference is holding its 86th session in Geneva between June 2-18, 1998. The main focus of the conference will be on extreme forms of child labour. At least one third of working children world-wide are employed in hazardous jobs, such as mining and construction, considered dangerous even for adults. In some countries, upto two-thirds of working youngsters ages five to 14 are involved in such dangerous activities, which can cause injury and even death.



The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was founded in 1919 to advance the cause of social justice. Over the years, the ILO has built up a code of international labour standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations, relating to freedom of association, employment and training policy, conditions of work, social security, industrial relations and a host of other matters.

The following important agenda will be taken up during the conference:

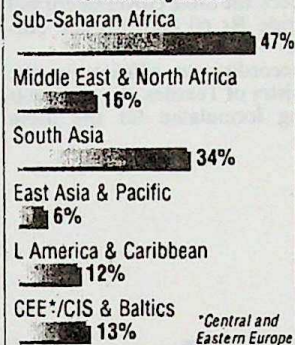
1. Conventions on Child Labour and Contract Labour to be adopted.
2. Recommendations to be adopted on General Conditions for Stimulating Job Creations.
3. Declaration of Fundamental Human Rights at Work.

While India entirely supports the first two, it wants the text of Declaration of Fundamental Human Rights at Work to be amended suitably and is in consultation with the Asia-Pacific countries for a common stand.

ILO seeks to bring an immediate halt to hazardous, exploitative working practices that confront millions of children world-wide.

Children out of school: A cost and cause of child labour

Children of primary school age not attending school



Child labour: At what age?

Legal minimum ages for different types of work, in selected countries

Age	Country	Type of work	Age	Country	Type of work
18	Bolivia, USA	Construction	15	Costa Rica	Street trade
	Luxembourg	Abattoirs, meat tendering		Dominican Republic	Mining
	Peru	Ports & seafaring		Italy	Machinery in motion
				Thailand	Night clubs, bars
17	Austria	Tanneries, glass manufacture	14	Belize	Electrical work
	Canada	Maritime work		Cyprus	Construction
	Myanmar, Pakistan	Mining, circular saws		India	Explosives, carpet weaving
16	Cote d'Ivoire	Mining		Sri Lanka	Street trades
	Mexico	Work with acids	13	Denmark	Shop assistant
	Peru	Deep-sea fishing		Germany	Light agricultural
	United Kingdom	Noxious substances		Switzerland, Tunisia	Non-industrial light
			12	Benin	Light agricultural
				Burkina Faso	Domestic service
				Egypt	All work
				Senegal	Seasonal work

Sources: ILO, Unicef

Vijay Kumar/KBK Infographics

The Asian Age
10 June 1998

Disabled quota

RECKNOW: The Government has decided to strictly implement three per cent reservation for disabled persons in government jobs and has launched a four-month campaign through District Magistrates to identify disabled persons to provide them benefits of various schemes, reports HTC.

The Hindustan Times
10 June 1998

Bound by tradition and four walls

Women are so used to their domestic roles that they are afraid to even dream for themselves



Gita Aravamudan

Some days ago, I heard a story of remarkable grit and determination. Dr Sarvamangala is a gynaecologist who received this year's "Sahas Nari" award from the Guild of Women Achievers. During her acceptance speech, Dr Sarvamangala spoke of her girlhood spent in a village

where her father was a farmer. "When I was in the eighth standard, my father stopped me from school," she said, "because he couldn't afford the fees. Besides, he felt it was more important to educate my brothers."

And, everyday, when she heard the school bell ring, she would cry as she went about doing her daily chores. At age 12, she was a school drop-out and she had some specific household chores. Grazing buffalo, patting dung cakes and cleaning the yards. "But, whatever I had to do, I did with all my concentration," she said. "Sometimes, I would do five tasks simultaneously, including reading my brothers' books while grazing the animals." When she was 15, she faked her age as 18, ran away from home to a big city hospital and took an "ayah course". By the end of the year, she had learnt to deliver babies.

Back home in her village, the rumour-mongers were at work. They said she had eloped. They blamed it on her "English education". Many withdrew their daughters from school. They didn't want them to get inspired by this girl who dared to dream. From mid-wife, Sarvamangala became a nurse. At the age of 27, she went back to High School. By this time, her parents had given up asking her to come back home or get married. They realised she had this goal in life... to become a doctor. Today, Dr Sarvamangala is a gynaecologist with an MD. She has travelled abroad, taught in many colleges, practised in big towns and remote villages and even worked for a stint in Saudi Arabia.

Which just goes to show that dreams are the stuff of life. Dreams which have to be fleshed out with very hard work and a de-

GENDER JOTTINGS



TOI Illustration: Prakash Babu

termination to succeed. Dreams which need focused attention and a positive attitude. But, most women are afraid to dream. Or, they don't know how. And, this is not true just of little village girls grazing buffalo. Patriarchal wisdom dictates that girls wherever they are, have to be kept tethered to predetermined life patterns for the good of the family. And so, even mothers are afraid to let their daughters dream.

Little girls do not even have any modern day role models. No feminine equivalents of K.R. Narayanan and Abdul Kalam. They are expected to look up to unreal women from the past — Sita, Kannagi, Shakti, Jhansi Rani. Women to whom a little girl going to school just cannot relate.

Vinaya Prasad, the actress who stars in some of the strong women-oriented serials on TV was the chief guest that evening. Vinaya herself has been a woman who never veered from her goals even when the going was rough. She lost her husband a couple of years ago and is bringing up her daughter on her own. "Women do not have faith even in the goals they have set for themselves," she said, in a speech which came from her heart. "Everyone has troubles and problems. Even Arjuna, the epitome of Sahasa or

bravery." But, like Arjuna who thought of nothing else except his target, women should learn to focus themselves. They should, she said, learn not to bring their domestic problems to work. She held up as examples, women teachers who beat their students and blame it on their problems at home and moody bank clerks who use their troubles as an excuse. But to change the script which has evolved over generations will take time.

As the uninitiated never fail to tell me, women are more often than not their own enemies. And sometimes I tend to agree. Not because mothers-in-law set fire to their daughters-in-law or because one woman runs away with another's husband.

But because they keep themselves and their daughters firmly yoked to a system which has never allowed them to grow. If women lack professionalism it is because they have never been "allowed" to view events as a whole. As the Lakshmis, Parvathis, Saraswathis, keepers of virtue, purity, family values etc they are forced to permanently view life through tinted eye-shades. They are never encouraged to focus, for intense focusing would mean forgetting, at least for a while, the demanding domestic world of which they are the keepers.

The Times of India
13 June 1998

Light shines in the eyes of Ariyad village

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Alappuzha, June 13: Kerala has done it again. A little known village, Ariyad, in Alappuzha district has emerged as the country's first complete blindness-controlled area. A village of mainly coir and farm workers and fisherfolk, Ariyad could achieve this, thanks to the efforts taken by the blindness eradication society in the village for the past one-and-a-half years.

The society led by P J Fra-

cis, MLA, and Block Panchayat president R Jayasimhan, who are the chairman and chief organiser respectively of the Society, could eradicate all the curable blindness among the people in the village through its blindness eradication crash programme.

In the first phase of the programme, over 800 trained volunteers carried out door-to-door survey on the eyesight of the villagers and identified people who had problems for their eyes. The survey found that

out of the total 1,05,000 people in the block panchayat, 15,600 villagers had impaired vision.

In the next stage, over 75 medical camps were organised and the people who complained about visual problems were examined at these camps by the local ophthalmologists. In the final phase, about 800 patients, in whose case operations had been recommended at examinations carried out at the camp, were operated upon, mainly for cataract, at the local hospitals and at Aravind

Eye Hospitals, Madurai. Over 4,000 opticals were distributed to the people with help of sponsors.

Along with this, the Society motivated the people to donate their eyes and consequently over 10,000 villagers gave to the society their consent to donate their eyes after their death. This idea could be translated into a reality with a fund of Rs 1.5 lakh provided under the People's Planning Programme and Rs 50,000 contributed by the block panchayat.

The Indian Express
14 June 1998

Privileges that the disabled are hardly aware of

BY NEENU ABRAHAM

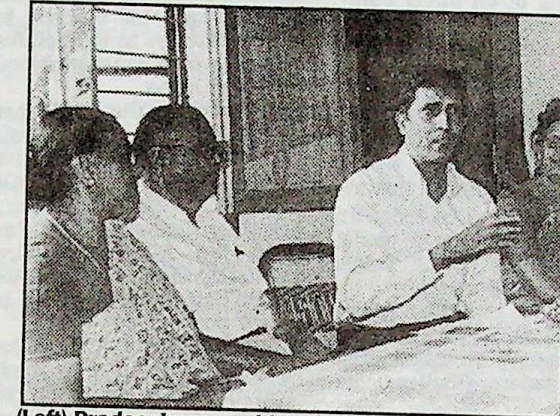
Bangalore: It's very rarely that we see Government authorities working in tandem with rural-based organisations, and that too with those organisations which do not have much of a fame to boast of. But a unique camp was held at the Rural Development Centre, Whitefield, where the Assistant Director of the Directorate of the Welfare of the Disabled, Pradeep Kumar, social workers, doctors and local pastors got together to create an awareness camp for the parents of the disabled.

Statistics show that 10 of every 100 children born were handicapped, of which one was found to be affected with cerebral palsy. "Most of these children are found in rural areas and the parents do not know what to do with such children," says Chitra Talappa, the vice-president of the Centre.

The Centre was started following a seminar in 1981, on 'The Disabled in Rural India' which was held at the Ecumenical Christian Centre. Two ladies, who attended this seminar, Lakshmi Nizamuddin and Dr Molly Abraham, undertook a survey of nearly 12 villages located about three to five km around Whitefield and brought the handicapped children to a make-shift building to be taken care of.

"We were given the land by the panchayat on compassionate grounds," says Mrs Abraham.

But as most of the children came from as far as Lingarapuram, they had to start lodging facilities here. "Some of the children are brought here by the parents, who come to collect them after about a week or so. In the meantime, we teach them toilet-training and to



(Left) Pradeepkumar addressing the parents of the disabled. (Right) Some of the disabled children



do some ordinary jobs," says Ms Lilian, who looks after the children. Most of the parents of the 25-odd children who attended this camp, belong to the lowest strata of society, and they are hardly aware that their children are eligible for disable-pension benefits.

"Even if we get the forms duly filled and go to the Tahsildar's office, they harass us a lot. We do this just to get Rs 100 a month. Why should we waste our time on this? asks the father of N A Muthanna, who is deaf and dumb and who can hardly stand on his two feet.

Pradeep Kumar, in fact, made the group aware of the rights they were eligible to. "We have started a provision to get identification card for the handicapped. Those who have more than 40 per cent disability are eligible for a monthly scholarship of Rs 25 till class five, about Rs 50 till class 10 and Rs

125 for their degree courses."

"We have received complaints from parents who say that the headmasters of the schools concerned do not disburse the amount but we can do very little about this," he says. "Thirty such schools are getting financial assistance in the State, but it is only the elite NGOs who are aware of these provisions by the Government and as a result, organisations like this Centre hardly get the privileges entitled to them," he says. Like other voluntary organisations, this institutions is also facing a severe cash crunch. "We had a van to transport the children from far off area, which was donated to us by Broke Bond. But we had to sell this, because it was difficult to maintain it," says another committee member Kamath.

Those interested to get in touch with this organisation can contact: 3334847 and to know more about the rights of the disabled contact Pradeepkumar at 2860907.

**The Indian Express (World Panorama)
15 June 1998**

Credit card for farmers in the offing

T V Sathyanarayanan

NEW DELHI

A credit card for farmers, to be introduced for the first time in the country, might see an improved version of the one being used by vegetable and fruit cultivators in Kerala, officials said.

The scheme will be open to an estimated 100 million farm families in the country, an overwhelming majority of whom belong to the category of marginal farmers operating holdings of one hectare or less.

Senior Government officials say that under the pilot project in Kerala, a plastic card bearing the logo of financial agencies involved in rural credit and a stamp size photograph of the farmer enables the farming community to get inputs like seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, interest subsidies and cash resources in stages, according to their needs.

The Union Agriculture Ministry has sent copies of the Kerala scheme to various states for their scrutiny and suggestions for improvements, if necessary, for adoption all over the country on a uniform basis.

While no time-frame has been set for the introduction of the scheme, it is expected to be ready in the next few months by the start of the rabi or winter crop season in October.

A senior official said that the agri card, or the kisan (farmer's) credit card as Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha called it in his Budget speech on June 1, would not exactly be like the ones used by urban consumers.

It will enable a farmer to use a loan sanctioned to him as and when he needs to buy inputs or get cash resources to increase crop production.

The agri card will show the farmer his loan entitlement, worked out on the basis of his land holding size and yield data.

The facility, which will be available to all farmers — big or small — will infuse greater transparency in transactions

while cutting down many cumbersome processes in the sanction and utilisation of farm loans.

Mr Sinha said that the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) to ensure timely credit to the farm sector through rural financial institutions, had been entrusted with the task of preparing a model bill for adoption by all States and Union Territories.

The Nabard is studying not only the Kerala model but also other schemes of States on similar lines, before finalising its proposal.

The Andhra Pradesh Government, for instance, had tried out a credit scheme limited to a few market yards where farmers could get loans on the basis of the produce taken there.

The Government also proposes to have the new scheme approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) before it is sent to the States for implementation by involving all banks dealing with rural credit — commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative banks.

The involvement of the co-operative credit structure is important, since it dominates the rural financial system. Besides, there are over 35,000 branches of commercial banks and regional rural banks operating in rural areas.

The agri card is designed to simplify and smoothen the oft-criticised operation of the rural credit system.

Simplification of procedures for credit supply has been a longstanding demand of farmers.

Although the flow of institutional credit to agriculture has more than doubled in the last five years — from about Rs 16,500 crore in 1993-94 to a projected Rs 342 billion in 1997-98 — there has been widespread criticism about the time and money wasted by farmers to get loans sanctioned.

The weaknesses in the rural credit system came into sharp

focus in recent months following a spate of reported suicides by about 100 farmers in some states, in the face of chronic problems of overdue loans.

In formulating the credit card for the farmer, the Kerala scheme has been found to have many advantages since it facilitates effective use of the loan.

Four thousand vegetable farmers in the Allepey, Idukky, Palakkad, Quilon and Wayanad districts have been covered in the first phase.

It is a collaborative effort for promoting horticulture by small and marginal farmers with three agencies — the Horticulture Corporation (Hortcorp), Department of Agriculture and Canara Bank — actively involved in the implementation.

The role of Hortcorp was to identify the farmers for credit, provide good quality inputs and interest subsidy, assist banks in monitoring and recovery of credit and make arrangements for the marketing of the produce, officials stated.

The Department of Agriculture, on its part, helps Hortcorp in identifying the farmers and provides technical support for cultivation.

It also channelises input subsidies and planting materials to the growers. The Canara Bank provides credit support and manages the funds of the project. The bank organises credit camps as well.

In the credit card supplied to the Kerala farmer, his loan amount is divided into five columns to facilitate withdrawal of the amount in stages as per requirements.

The card carries his signature and thereby also serves as an identity card. □ (IANS)

The Observer
15 June 1998

Global environment expo in Dec

Observer Economic Bureau

NEW DELHI

AN international exhibition is scheduled to be held here in December to highlight the pressing need for environment protection, pollution control and maintenance of ecological balance.

The expo, Enviro International '98, will be held from December 14 to 17. Its display profile will include industrial waste management, sewerage treatment, non-conventional energy sources, solid waste and soil protection, air pollution control, waste water and sludge and garbage handling and management.

Participation in the expo is expected from Indian and overseas manufacturers and exporters, research and development organisations involved in the development of environmental technologies in manufacturing, processing and packaging and state governments, according to a spokesman of Messrs Tafcon Projects (India) Pvt Ltd, which is organising the exhibition in collaboration with the Royal Dutch Jaarbeurs of the Netherlands.

The event is co-sponsored, among others, by the Ministries of Environment and Forests and Non-Conventional Energy Sources □

The Observer
15 June 1998

Mighty Ganga may not flow for ever

SHARAT PRADHAN

GANGOTRI, June 15. — The mighty river Ganga, which originates at the foot of the Himalayas and meanders through northern and eastern India for 2,510 km, may not be there for ever.

The rate at which the Gangotri glacier, the source of the river, is receding, the Ganga may dry up in the next few thousand years, say geologists and Defence personnel.

A senior Army officer posted in the area said their teams as well as Indian Air Force pilots had observed that the glacier was shrinking at an alarming rate. The officer, who didn't want to be named, said that the Gangotri was shrinking at more than 20 metres a year and that the rate had decidedly increased in the past decade.

"IAF pilots too have confirmed that the glacier is contracting from all sides," he said.

Experts in glaciology have carried out studies confirming a continuous recession of the Gangotri glacier over the past several decades. The first formal study by the Geological Survey of India was done in 1934. It was updated in 1990, and then in 1996.

"There is no denying that this glacier has been receding at a rate of 10-30 metres per year over this half century," said Mr Deepak Srivastava, director of GSI's Glaciology division.

While some Hindu ascetics living in this town, which is known as the original home of the Ganga, firmly believe that the great Indian river, deified in Hindu religion and glorified in its folklore, will vanish in the next 5,000 years, scientists too do not rule it out completely, though they grant it a longer life.

The Statesman
16 June 1998

One of the largest glaciers in the Himalayas, the Gangotri, originates at a height of about 7,100 metres above sea level and descends about 30 km to a height of some 4,000 metres, covering an area of about 143 square km. Its estimated volume in 1990 was 27.75 cubic km.

While the snout of the glacier, known as 'Goumukh' (mouth of a cow) has been a place of Hindu pilgrimage since time immemorial, ancient scriptures and subsequent scientific documents have recorded its recession.

"Hindu scriptures show that the Ganga actually descended on the earth at Gangotri, which is why a temple was built over here in the later years," points out Swami Sunderanand, a Hindu monk from Andhra Pradesh who has made this place his home for the past 50 years. He is also an avid mountaineer and an expert on the Himalayas.

The first ever scientific study on the Gangotri glacier was carried out in 1842 by two British scientists, Hogson and Herbert. They have shown the source of the Ganga at a spot some two km downstream from today's "Goumukh."

GSI studies, however, show that while the rate of retreat was slow between 1935 and 1956, it became faster in the subsequent years. "Recession in terms of total area was of the order of 2,530 square metres in 1935. It increased by two and a half times during the 1956-62 period and five times during the 1962-71 period," says an official GSI study. It goes on to add "The recession process slowed down between 1971-77, only to revert to its earlier pace after 1977."

— India Abroad News Service

Meena is Unicef's symbol of the girl child

By FREDERICK NORONHA
Inter Press Service

Panaji, June 15: From South Asia, little Meena is set to travel the globe as an ambassador for Unicef, the UN Children's Fund. This girl from the world of animation is taking up the task of building awareness about the status of the girl child.

Meena — a lively heroine of a Unicef multimedia package — is part of an initiative in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. This effort aims to build concern over the need to improve the lives of girls and give them an

equal chance in a region where many girls have little or no access to healthcare and education. She's the main character of an animated film series featuring her life in a village with her parents, brother Raju, sister Rani and pet parrot Mithu.

Big names like Hanna-Barbera Productions, the world-famous producer of cartoons, have been involved in bringing Meena's adventures to life, on screen. India's leading animation studios, Ram Mohan Biographics, has lent Meena her spirit, form and figure. Norwegian aid saw the completion of this project.

To improve lives of girls and equalise oppor-

tunities between boys and girls, the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation has even named the 1990s as the decade of the girl child. But nearly a decade after the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, many girls in South Asia have little or no access to healthcare and education. They face a "life of severe discrimination," says Unicef. In the series, Meena's dream of going to school comes true, while brother finds out what it is like to be Meena for a day. This caring and intelligent girl also helps to solve the problem of bullies and questions the practice of dowry.

The Asian Age
16 June 1998

Vienna to host meet on human rights

DH News Service

NEW DELHI, June 15

Vienna will host a Human Rights assembly on June 27, which will be attended by UN officials and Nobel prize laureates.

This assembly, in the capital of Austria, is going to be held five years after the conclusion of the World Conference on Human Rights, and during the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This will be a commemorative event preceded by discussions on related issues. The 'Vienna Public Assembly on Human Rights' will be addressed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, former US President Jimmy Carter, Nobel laureates Wole Soyinka of Nigeria and Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, Yelena Bonner (on behalf of Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov) and Pino Arlacchi, Director-General of the UN Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

The Austrian government will be represented by state secretary, Benita Ferrero Waldner. Hollywood actor Michael Douglas will read the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The theme of the assembly will be "Human Rights and the Rule of Law in the Twenty-first century."

The Public Assembly, which will take place at the Austria Center will include music and dance performances by Austrian artists.

This event will conclude a two-day programme of discussions, including a conference on building justice in post-conflict situations.

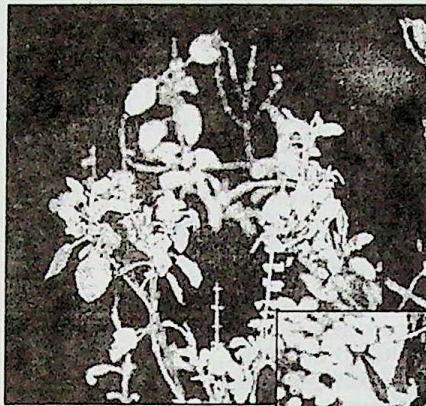
Deccan Herald
16 June 1998

Water Disinfection With Juice Extracts

JUICE extracts prepared from locally available herbal plants can be effectively used as a substitute for the current methods of water disinfection.

The disinfection method, developed by researchers at the Visvesvaraya College of Engineering in Nagpur, uses extracts of tulsi (*Occium sanctum*), wheat (*Triticum vulgare*) and neem (*Azadirachta indica*) leaves to treat polluted water, says PTI

The Indian Express (Science Express)
16 June 1998



(Top) Tulsi leaves.
(Right) Neem leaves

quoting a report from the Journal of Water Supply Research and Technology, Aqua.

Present methods of water disinfection are chlorination, a widely-popular and moderate-cost method, and ozonation, which is costly for developing countries.

The new method can be used



and neem. Water treated with neem juice is bitter, while that with tulsi is pleasant. With wheat juice, it is tasteless.

for disinfecting water at the consumption stage in remote areas where proper handling, transporting and storage of lethal chlorine gas and highly reactive chemical compounds cannot be assured because of costs, inaccessibility and other factors.

The effectiveness of the extract increases with increasing concentration of juices and increase in contact-time.

Tulsi juice gives the best results followed by wheat

New Writing Aid For The Handicapped

THE physically handicapped, especially those who cannot use their hands, will soon find writing or painting an easier task, thanks to a new aid developed by a German dentist.

Most of the aids developed for the handicapped require sticking a pen or a stick in the mouth that is not only strenuous but also inconvenient for them.

The patented new device, developed by Michael Guggolz from Oberried, makes it easier for a person to wield a pen or operate a keyboard due to its simplified approach offering better control, according to a German journal Fraunhofer.

In the conventional methods, paper is usually kept too close to the eyes leading to eye strain and headache.

The unnatural position of bending over the paper causes tension in the neck and back, while parting lips for a long period of time causes saliva to dribble onto the paper.

The writing also tends to be uneven since the person has little control in exercising pressure on the paper.

The new device consists of a thin plate that fits snugly on the upper and lower teeth, on either the right or left side, depending upon the individual's preference. The plate is tailor-made for each person and is fixed in the mouth by biting onto it gently.

Volvo launches a tractor amid farmers' protests

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

Bangalore, June 15: More than 100 farmers of Hoskote gheraoed vehicles of Union Commerce Minister Ramakrishna Hegde and Chief Minister J H Patel in front of Volvo factory, while they were returning after participating in the launching ceremony of the Volvo tractor-trailer. The farmers were protesting against the Volvo management for reneging on their promise of providing employment opportunities to them.

It was a rude shock for the chief guests, who showered praises on the Volvo management for completing the project in just 12 months. Some of them were impressed by the welcome address of Ravi Uppal, managing director, Volvo India Pvt Ltd, who promised to contribute towards the development of Hoskote. Caught in a dilemma, they escaped thanks to the clout wielded by the police who made sure the roads were cleared for their journey.

These farmers said they had sold 200 acres of fertile land to the Volvo management. Almost all of them were building castles in air whenever they happen to pass the upcoming factory, since they had been promised jobs by Volvo. All the castles they had built vanished in thin air when they found that there were no jobs to be had.

"Recently the management conducted interviews for 85 local candidates. They declared that 12 of them were successful but provided employment to

only two candidates. A majority of the candidates have passed the matriculation examinations. What more qualification is required to get a helper post in the factory," asked Y B Nanjundappa, a farmer; who sold his land with the fond hope of getting employment for his son.

Many alleged that they did not get the compensation amount as it was promised. "They promised us the moon but actually indulged in brazen cheating. Even our elected representatives have become puppets in their hands. If the case is like this whom shall we approach and whom shall we trust?" asks Syed Nissar, whose son has passed PUC but failed in the interview for a helper's post.

ROLL OUT: Earlier, the Volvo tractor-trailer of the FH12 series, the first product of Volvo in India, was rolled out from its Rs 300-crore plant.

Karl-Erling Troger, president and CEO, Volvo Truck Corporation, said FH12 series Volvo trucks offer a variety of advantages ranging from increased productivity through higher driver efficiency, special safety provisions, low fuel consumption and a reduction in transportation costs and exhaust emissions by 40 per cent and 80 per cent respectively.

He said apart from introducing its tractor-trailer, Volvo also intends to establish a smooth functioning and efficiency system of transporting people. With this objective, Volvo India has targeted the manufacture of bus chassis at the Hoskote plant by 1999.

The Indian Express
16 June 1998

Misconceptions About A Miscarriage

What is a miscarriage and what is its incidence?

Miscarriage or abortion is defined as the loss of pregnancy before 28 weeks of gestation (before the period of viability). In International standards, however, it is considered before 20 weeks or of a foetus weighing less than 500 gms.

Most miscarriages occur before 12 weeks of pregnancy and are called spontaneous abortions of the first trimester (a period of three months). Here, the main cause is a defect in the egg, chromosomal abnormality, defective sperm or due to unknown causes. In the second trimester abortion i.e., up to 24 weeks, the cause is generally infection, uterine or cervical abnormality and uterine tumours. Here, the environment is not compatible for the foetus to grow.

About 20 per cent of all clinically detectable (a pregnancy which can be seen in the scan as a gestational sac) pregnancies are lost to miscarriage. If more than three miscarriages occur successively, this condition is termed 'recurrent miscarriage'.

What causes a miscarriage in most cases?

The risk of a miscarriage increases with the increase in the age of the prospective parents, specially in women above 35 years. A woman who has suffered three previous miscarriages has a 50 per cent chance of miscarrying again. If there is a previous live birth of a full term, the risk is reduced to 30 per cent.

Causes of miscarriage

Genetic reasons: About 50 to 60 per cent of first trimester miscarriages are generally due to these. The most common defect being an abnormal number or structure of the chromosomes.

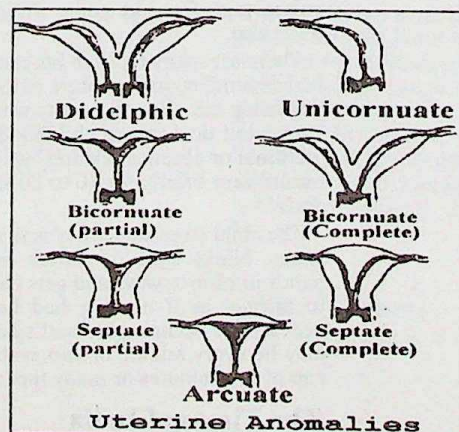
Chromosomes, the basic units of inherited characteristics, are located in the nucleus of the cells and contain the genes. If it is established that the abortion is due to a chromosomally abnormal foetus, there is a greater chance that the subsequent pregnancy will be abnormal. But if the chromosomal examination of the foetus is normal, then there is a very remote chance that the subsequent pregnancy will be lost.

To test for abnormal chromosomal pattern, a karyotype (the nucleus of a cell) of the foetal tissue and blood of both the partners are taken. If karyotype is abnormal, there is no cure available. However, this information will help diagnose the cause for recurrent abortions and the couple can plan the next option like donor oocyte and donor sperm after a genetic counselling session.

Uterine abnormalities: About 10-15 per cent of recurrent abortions have an abnormally shaped uterus, for example,

septate uterus which has a central ridge or septum (a partition between two cavities) that protrudes into the uterine cavity and because the blood supply to this septum may not be adequate for foetal growth, a miscarriage occurs. Other causes are bicornuate, unicornuate and arcuate uterus (see figure). These can be corrected by operative hysteroscopy.

Uterine fibroids: It can cause an abnormally-shaped uterus. These growths are non-cancerous tumours in the wall of the uterus and can interfere with implantation and growth of the foetus. These fibroids (benign tumours usually found in the uterus), increase in size during pregnancy and cause pain resulting in miscarriage. Uterine abnormalities and fibroids can be diagnosed by a simple vaginal examination, an ultrasound or HSG (Hystero salphingogram).



Cervical abnormalities: Up to 16 per cent of mid-trimester (12-20 weeks), miscarriages are caused by a weak cervix (lower end of the uterus) and this is called cervical incompetence. The cervix is a narrow canal and at labour it is taken up by the uterus to allow the foetal head to descend. If the cervix is weak (cause can be congenital or acquired), it opens up prematurely and miscarriage occurs. Previous history and HSG can diagnose the condition. Once diagnosed, a correcting cervical stitch is carried out in the subsequent pregnancy and miscarriage averted.

Hormonal abnormalities: Disorders of the thyroid gland, overactivity (hyperthyroidism) or underactivity (hypothyroidism) are linked to abortion. Thyroid antibodies also have a two-fold increase in miscarriage. Diagnosis can be made by doing the thyroid profile blood test and effective medication can be given.

Luteal phase defect: The second half of the menstrual cycle i.e. after ovulation is called the luteal phase (luteum is a yellow mass which forms in the ovary after rup-

ture of the minute vesicles in the ovary). This is the time when the endometrium (uterine lining) thickens and becomes healthy under the influence of progesterone hormone for an embryo to implant and grow. If progesterone secretion from the ovary is low, the endometrium fails to provide a nourishing environment for the embryo and a miscarriage occurs. An endometrial biopsy in luteal phase can be done and the tissue taken is examined under the microscope. Results show whether the endometrium is responding normally to progesterone or not.

Prolactin: It is a pituitary hormone which stimulates milk production. If it gets elevated, disturbances in ovulation and luteal phase occur. And, galactorrhoea, a milky discharge from the breast, occurs in a woman who is not nursing. A blood test measures the elevated level and medication can lower the levels.

Infection: Why certain infections cause repeated miscarriages, has not been established yet. However, they are more likely to cause tubal problems and infertility and if an infection is established, then a course of antibiotics is prescribed for both the parents.

The immune system: The body's immune system plays a vital role in maintaining general health and fighting infection. Today, the immunological interaction between the mother and her foetus is not clearly understood, but its role in a miscarriage is under scrutiny. The first reason is believed to be the production of certain antibodies, which the pregnant woman's body creates and directs to act against circulating substances which affect blood clotting. These antibodies can affect foetal development and result in miscarriage. The second involves alteration in the immunological response of the mother against the pregnancy. A recent theory suggests that during a normal pregnancy, the foetus which carries the father's foreign genes survives in the mother's uterus because of a special protective response from the mother's immune system. In certain couples, this protective response is absent and the maternal immune system rejects the foetus as it contains the father's foreign material resulting in an abortion.

Treatment of this condition is very controversial and involves prescription of aspirin and a steroid preparation called prednisolone.

Always consult the doctor before any medication during pregnancy.

*(Courtesy: Srishti, 9-1-192,
St Mary's Road, Opp Prashant Theatre,
Secunderabad - 500 003,
Ph: 040-7700150, 7701414)*

The Indian Express (Science Express)
16 June 1998

Infokit on health: Voices, a non-profit communication resource group, has developed an infokit, "Knowing for Ourselves", on reproduction, contraception and reproductive health problems to generate information in urban slums and rural areas. Health workers who wish to have the kit containing 13 modules may contact Voices, No 59, Miller's Road. Ph: 5546564 or 563017.

The Indian Express
18 June 1998

Don't despair if your child is differently-abled

H.N. Ranganath

Every parent is concerned about the progress of their child in every aspect of life specially studies. When they were called by the class teacher to say about their ward, parents do get disturbed and say why my child is not doing well in school?

This is not an unusual problem. Some children are different in their studies, activities and habits. While they are away from home, they are well observed by the teacher and sends call to concerned parents. The causes of such conditions are childhood epilepsy or seizures. The common term aware is 'fits'.

There are many causes for fits like when the child has high fever, convulsions, later fits may come without fever also.

There are many types of fits classified depending on the nature of their beginning etc... But one entity which is rare but do occur in childhood is 'petitmal or absence' seizures which occurs very briefly for 10 to 20 seconds.

The child stops doing any activity, stares, blinks eyes or moves lips, hands in bizarre ways and gets back to normal as if nothing had happened. This occurs again and again, may be every minute or two, with a gap of few minutes or many times a

day. So the child cannot cope up with studies or activity, hence gets a notice.

This is a simple type of seizures easily diagnosed when seen by a competent, experienced doctor and by medication one can control these attacks completely and put the child back to life.

The other important condition in learning disability are due to speech disorder.

There are four components of speech:

- a) expressive
- b) written — under motor speech
- c) auditory and
- d) visual — under sensory speech.

They are interlinked and defect in any one of them can affect the learning capacity of the child, which is broadly known as Dyslexic Syndrome. These conditions can be easily diagnosed and advised by qualified medical personal with the help of speech assessment and proper advise.

Independently defective hearing and vision also need careful assessment before giving a definite reason for the child not doing well in school. These are the few important causes for the child not doing well in school.

*(Dr H.N. Ranganath is a
senior consultant neurologist)*

The Times of India
18 June 1998

Guidelines to regulate mining in forests

Observer Economic Bureau

NEW DELHI

Opium farmers fall victim to Narcotics Act

From Abhilash Khandekar

BHOPAL, June 17

As many as 171 innocent farmers have been detained for the last two years by the narcotics officials under the draconian provisions of the Narcotics Act (NDPS) in Mandsaur district alone.

This sensational fact came before Governor Bhai Mahavir in a memorandum submitted to him here yesterday.

Mr Surendra Sethi of the "anti-drugs movement", a Neemuch-based NGO, in the memorandum demanded action to safeguard the human rights of the opium-growers of Mandsaur.

Mr Sethi said harassed opium-growers were being forced to give up opium cultivation, a licenced trade in the area.

Mandsaur district grows maximum opium of the country.

He recalled a visit by the then chairman of the human rights commission Justice Ranganath Mishra, to the Mandsaur jail. Mr Mishra was shocked to see the plight of the inmates. "Regretably, none of the orders he had issued have been followed by the State Government," Mr Sethi said in the memorandum.

Mr Sethi, an anti-opium smuggling activist, said that the crisis required a high-level commission.

The Hindustan Times
18 June 1998

TO preserve over-exploited mining areas, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF) is formulating guidelines to regulate mining in ecologically fragile forests.

According to the proposed guidelines, forest areas will be mapped under four parameters such as the quality of mineral deposits and forests and the distribution of biodiversity and tribal population. Mining licences will be issued based only on these norms.

The process of mapping is being done using satellites, and the entire process is being co-ordinated by the the Indian Bureau of Mines.

As of now, 50 to 60 districts have been mapped, said official sources.

Once the process of mapping for the entire country is complete, "there will be a mining policy within the forest policy," said sources.

Although the Environment Protection Act lays down rules to ensure mining activity in accordance with prescribed environmental standards, the need for such an exercise has arisen as at present no zonal classifications exist to ascertain the extent of mineral deposits and their existence in forest areas across the country, said sources.

"This is the major stumbling block while deciding the issue of grant of licences for mining activity," the sources stated.

The idea was not to ban mining activity completely, but to give out forests for mining

so as to ensure a balance between industrial activity and environmental concerns, sources said.

Explaining the system of earmarking, they said that "if a particular mineral is found in several areas, we would first give out forests that are the least exploited," enabling mining of specific minerals in a particular area in a more regulated manner.

According to the new mapping exercise, forests will be termed 'inferior' or 'superior' and earmarking of blocks of mining areas will take place in terms of fragility or lack of it in forest ecology.

The area that is fragile and overmined will be given "least preference" while granting mining rights, the area which is rich in minerals and is as yet untapped, will be given preference while leasing it out for mining.

The other parameters that would be used to grade forest areas for mining will include prevalence of biodiversity and wildlife as also the concerns of tribal populations affected by mining activity.

Amongst the forest areas which are most mined are Bastar in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, the Aravalli region and the north-east region of the country.

Areas like Bastar are rich in iron and coal deposits and are heavily mined. It may therefore be classified as a "touch-me not" zone, the sources stated, adding that over exploited areas in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar may also be graded as fragile zones. □

The Observer
18 June 1998

New spinning wheel to empower rural men and women

Batuk Vora

VADODARA

A mini spinning mill, that can dramatically enhance the potential for employment for rural jobless women and men, is to be marketed in a big way in India. The motorised spinning wheel is modelled on the charkha that Mahatma used to spin thread to make his own clothes, which soon became a major symbol for economic nationalism or swadeshi.

The new machine has been developed by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Gujarat, from where Gandhi hailed. The motorised charkha with 12, 16 or 24 spindles can spin thread four times faster than the traditional contraption. It has been developed by Shramik Vikas Sanstha (SVS), an NGO headed by Sanat Mehta, former member of Parliament from Gujarat.

So far no charkha with more than six spindles had been available in India. The innovative charkha can be run by a single-phase, half-horse power engine to produce high-quality cloth of 40-count that can compete well in the market.

It has been manufactured with the help of Udyog Bharati, an organisation based at Gondal in Rajkot district. Sanat Mehta, who is also a former Gujarat finance and food supply minister, told reporters that the Handloom Commissioner of the Govern-

ment of India had financed the project.

The commissioner had undertaken to sell the charkha countrywide in a big way to handloom weavers, he said. "The economic reforms is bringing about new capital and new industries everywhere, but very few new jobs," Mehta said. "This will force us to depend largely on rural agrarian industries to meet the challenge of unemployment. Building small industries with new technology could solve this problem to a great extent."

The Eighth Five Year Plan was supposed to create some 8.5 million new jobs every year on an average, but according to the economic surveys of 1992-93 and 1993-94 only 6.4 million and 5.6 million jobs, respectively, were created.

Big industries absorbed 133 million workers in the four-year period of 1990-94, while the small industries gave jobs to 55.86 million, says a study paper brought out by the SVS. "This

means the rate of job creation stood at just 8.16 to 8.75 per cent and no more in any year. A talk about new technology is also heard since many years without actually having it," says the report.

It is also understood that the Khadi and Village Industries Commission produced cloth worth Rs 44 billion in 1995-96, providing jobs to five to six million people. But the lack of

use of power in this handloom industry prevented it from making a leap in creating jobs, despite the fact that polyester yarn has now been accepted by khadi industry.

Explaining the situation, the report said that based on the prices of 1987-88, the monthly per capita income in rural areas was put at Rs 131.8 and urban income at Rs 150.1. This means no fewer than 320 million people in India — out of the 960 million — live below the poverty line, constituting a third of the world's 800 million destitutes.

The record of growth in agriculture has remained quite poor so far. The report says that it was against this background that the SVS launched a project to improve upon the working tools. New Ambar Charkha is the result of such a project. Giving details of the Udyog Bharati institution of Gondal and its pioneer leader Hargovindbhai Patel, the report said that the institution owns a big workshop for creation and maintenance of handlooms and charkhas.

SVS granted it Rs 100,000 for such a new project. Within a short time, they produced new motorised charkhas with 12, 16 and 24 spindles. Udyog Bharati provides jobs to 3,535 workers, most of them women, on its six-spindle charkhas at present. These women earn Rs 40 per eight hours on those machines. SVS explored the possibility of

producing superfine cloth on those charkhas and took the help of Ahmedabad-based ATIRA (Ahmedabad Textile Industry research Association). They concluded that 40-count superfine cloth can be produced on 24-spindle charkha.

"The six-spindle charkha costs Rs 6,900, the 12-spindle one would cost Rs 11,500, the 16-spindle Rs 14,500 and the 24-spindle charkha would cost Rs 18,000. One kilogram of 40-count yarn per day would cost respectively Rs 112.56, Rs 117.60 and Rs 126, including tax," Mehta calculated. He said that the schemes for employment undertaken by the Central Government have not given satisfactory results. □ (IANS)

The Observer
18 June 1998

WHO cares

Reports show that, when it comes to health standards, India has nothing much to be proud of

'Health for all' said the charter that recognised health as a fundamental right. What the 51st World Health Assembly meet in Geneva did, recently, was review why it wasn't truly implemented. The Indian government failed to send

in its delegates confirming, said health experts, "its lack of commitment and lackadaisical approach towards providing health for all by the year 2000."

Back home, many agree. Says Alok Mukhopadhyay, Convenor of the Independent Commission for Health in India (ICHI), "Twenty years after the Alma Ata Charter was signed by 116 countries, committing themselves to health care, India still lags behind. Health indicators do not show a major sign of improvement."

Although the life expectancy in India has doubled from 32 years at the time of independence to 62 years today, Scandinavian countries and Japan boast an amazing figure of over 75 years. The World Health Report 1998, points out that three out of every four persons in developing countries

P S Annapurna

are dying before the age of 50.

It also says that a majority of premature deaths were preventable and depended largely on the political will and commitment of individual governments. The question is, how can this be done in a country like India?

As per the report, the failure of various governmental health measures despite allocation of huge budgetary outlay demands a change in strategy. The Tuberculosis (TB) Control Programme, for example, has grossly failed with at least 300 million people infected.

Paradoxically, India has one of the most developed drug industries in the third world and, according to a UNIDO report, belongs to category V. this means that it is capable of self reliance in the production of most drugs.

There has also been phenomenal growth in government infrastructure on health, since independence, and a number of health institutions have been established in more vulnerable areas. The WHO study reveals, however, that these are grossly underutilised due to faulty planning of health programmes and a lack of proper monitoring. For the lay man, an assurance that modern science can keep him and his family alive is all that's necessary. Is anybody listening?

NACO website on Internet

NEW DELHI, June 18 (HTC)

The National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) has created its own home page on the internet. Now NACO can be accessed on www.nic.in/naco.

The new website will be the medium of communication and store house of information to spread information on all aspects of HIV and AIDS. The website will be interactive in nature whereby a person can put a question without divulging one's identity. It will also be updated regularly.

The Indian Express (Medicare)

19 June 1998

The Hindustan Times

19 June 1998

Suicides by farmers all over Karnataka and other parts of India has been the chilling harvest reaped from the rampant use of pesticides. Tales of treachery, exploitation and ruthlessness, death and disease from the pesticides industry, have emerged steadily over the last decade and yet, many farmers are still relying on these dangerous chemicals.

The story of Purushoththam Rao then, is a happy and encouraging one, because this adventurous farmer set out to find new and healthier answers to the problems and issues related to farming. He reaped many golden harvests and this column will celebrate his unique achievements in the hope that other farmers too will learn from him.

Rao is a farmer of Kuruvalli, Thirthahalli, Shimoga district, who decided to switch over to organic farming in 1989. He has a farm of 10 acres on which he grows several different crops and his principle is "Twelve months — twelve harvests." He therefore has a rich variety of crops during all the months. His story has been related by Dr T N Prakash and B A Anil Kaushik in *Honeybee* a newsletter or journal which describes itself as "A voice of creative farmers, artisans, pastoralists and other grassroot innovators."

When Rao suffered heavy losses in 1988, due to strong winds which ravaged his arecanut plantation, he suspected that the stems of his areca plants had been weakened due to heavy doses of chemical fertilisers. He decided to find other, safer ways of farming. Through Pradeep Tapas, an organic farmer, he began to learn the new way. He experimented himself and tried out new methods. He was soon rewarded — costs came down and

Green farming recipes



yields increased! His coconut yield surpassed that of his companion farmers by about 80 per cent! In the case of paddy his costs were about 80 per cent lower than that of other farmers!

Here are some of his recipes and methods which are truly organic gold!

Krishi Nivas Kuruvalli compost: Clean and level a piece of land measuring three square feet. Place the following materials in layers upto a height of three feet: dried and green leaves and farm wastes; slurry from a bio-gas unit; poultry manure; forest soil and press mud. Cover this heap with dried leaves and let it stand in the sun for a month. Then dilute 100 litres of cow urine in 1,500 litres of water and spray this on the heap. Mix it up well and cover it with dry farm waste and let it stand for another 45 days. Now dilute ten litres of sour buttermilk, one litre of honey and 10 litres of butter water with 500 litres of water and sprinkle over the heap. This enriches the bacterial activity and quickens decomposition. Add amniotic fluid of the cow to increase hormonal activity of the compost. Now leave the heap alone for three months. When the compost is ready, one to two baskets (about 10 to 20 kg) are applied per tree.

Manure to heal depleted soils: If you want to restore soil that has been weakened and damaged by too many chemical fertilisers, follow Purushoththam Rao's recipe: Add 50 kg of cow dung fortified

with one kg honey and one kg. ghee to about one acre of land, for two to three years.

Growth stimulant from earthworm castings: Make or get a concrete tank (six feet into two feet into 2.5 feet) and fill it with farm waste, farmyard manure, cow dung, vegetables and household waste. Put broken tiles along the inner sides of the tank. Dig a channel of water around it to prevent ants, worms and rats from entering. Cover it with aluminium mesh to keep rats out. Add about a 100 earthworms of local varieties to the tank. When enough worm castings are formed, sprinkle a bucket of water on the surface daily. The water seeps through the castings and organic waste collects at the bottom from where it is tapped through an outlet. The water collected in this way (about half a bucket) is used as a liquid manure and growth stimulant. Rao says that brinjal plants sprayed with this fertilizer grew to a height of about 1.2 m within 20 days! They also got a good foliage and pests did not attack them.

An all-round herbal pesticide: Collect the leaves of *Lasiosiphon erioccephalus* (*mukkadaka*) or *Strychnos nuxvomica* (*kasaraka*) or neem or *Agave americana* in a bucket and pour ten litres of boiled water on them. Allow to ferment for a day. Keep the fermented solution in the sunlight and remove the leafy residue. Dilute the solution with water in the ratio of 1:10 and use as a pesticidal spray.

CONSUMER CALL

Daksha Hathi

The story of Purushoththam Rao is a happy and encouraging one because he set out to find new answers to the problems and issues related to farming

Herbal growth stimulant: Chop and crush the leaves of *Eupatorium* or stinging nettle (*Tragia hipede*) or *gliricidia*, and put them in a drum with enough water. Allow to stand for 15 days. Filter the mixture and use the filtrate as a growth stimulant. Companion planting to repel fungal disease: Purushoththam Rao grows amorphophallus plants between rows of arecanut trees because he believes that they have anti-fungal qualities. Last year when fungal diseases affected many farms having areca plants, his crop was protected.

General purpose insecticide: Crush the nuts of the casaraka tree and add to coconut milk. The combination becomes lethal and appropriate concentrations can be sprayed on different insect pests.

Recipe to treat paddy leaf curl: Steep one kilo of agava leaves in 10 litres of boiling water in a copper container and allow to stand

for 24 hours. Spray the extract on the crop.

Recipe to tackle Rhinoceros beetle in coconut plantation: Arrange two to three tubelights in various spots in the plantation so that the beetles are drawn to the light instead of to the coconut trees during the night! However, in the long run this could be harmful since many predators are also attracted to the light!

Neem oil is mixed with honey in equal proportions and sprayed on the apical part of the tree.

This farmer has also grown organic vanilla on his farm very successfully by interplanting it with coconut and arecanut. His vanilla crop is ready for harvest every ten months!

If you would like to know about other such farmers and innovators, subscribe to *Honeybee*, by writing to Dr T N. Prakash, Dept. of Agri. Economics, UAS, Hebbal, Bangalore 560 024.

Deccan Herald
21 June 1998

The Times of India
22 June 1998

Exclusive petrol pump for the disabled

Staff Reporter

BANGALORE: Hindustan Petroleum has installed an exclusive petrol dispenser to make filling easier for the disabled, senior citizens and women at the usually crowded 24-hour Balaji Service Station on MG Road. The pump was inaugurated by Hindustan Petroleum Director (Marketing) S.K. Kapoor.

In harmony with nature

NATURE lovers in India's youngest Chakrashila wildlife sanctuary have embarked on a unique educational project to help the people in the region preserve and protect the environment and also their traditional way of life.

Tapoban, seeks to inspire a sense of ownership and pride in forest resources amongst the local population.

"It took us some time to educate them on the need to preserve the forest wealth they are endowed with and that they alone can be the natural caretakers of these resources," says Soumydeep Datta, director of *Tapoban*.

Not only are the natives involved in preserving the environment there, they are also encouraged to continue with traditional methods of weaving, cultivation, using herbal medicines, indigenous food, and also music and social mores. A team comprising conservationists, environmentalists, ecologists, physicians, economists, social and rural

development activists together with various village level organisers taught villagers how to protect the tiger habitats and adapt to a sustainable

Not only are the natives involved in preserving the environment, they are also encouraged to continue with traditional methods of weaving, cultivation, using herbal medicines, indigenous food, and also music and social mores

economy.

Besides, attractive folders and posters in the local dialect have been widely distributed giving information about the various species of tiger that stalk their locality.

"The knowledge, however, must trickle down

to the younger generation and this is where *Tapoban* fits in," says Datta.

Children are exposed to their indigenous cultural traditions and imparted working knowledge of health, hygiene, nutrition, conservation, reading and writing.

There is special focus on women, and the Assam Prathamik Siksha Achan Parishad has started a project to educate them on achieving sustainable progress.

Preservation of habitat is the most important factor for the conservation of the various species of wildlife and various projects have been taken up in this respect.

Some of them cover the areas of social forestry, community farming, agro forestry, poultry, pig farms, microshed water development for irrigation, distribution of quality seeds, literacy programme, weaving, primary health care and veterinary camp for inoculation of cattle.

Richa Bansal
(PTI)

Filter to decontaminate poisoned water

Basirhat (West Bengal), June 22: The residents of Burma Colony, victims of the dreaded arsenic poisoning which has gripped at least five districts of West Bengal, have now found hope in a water filter based on the principle of absorption.

Arsenic poisoning has led to acute stomach disorders among at least 300 residents of the colony, which houses Bengali refugees who fled erstwhile Burma about 30 years ago and settled in the colony in North 24 Paraganas.

The filter, which is a cylindrical device, has to be fitted to

the mouth of the shallow tubewells for decontaminated safe drinking water.

The filter has been developed by R N Bagchi, who says the device requires only periodical removal of saturated adsorbent and detoxification and will purify water from both trivalent and pentavalent forms of arsenic.

The system, he says, is simple and ideal for a layman to operate.

Bagchi has earlier successfully installed water filters to decontaminate water of arsenic in Farakka Barrage area for the National Thermal Power Corp-

oration. The filter has been installed by Organisation for Native Women Aid and Rural Development (ONWARD), an NGO.

Anup Bhattacharya, the secretary of the residents' forum of Burma Colony, said due to the arsenic contamination, the residents cannot digest any food prepared using water from the shallow tubewells, which are the only sources for drinking water.

The people of the colony, most of whom live in abject poverty, alleged that appeals to the local municipality have fallen on deaf ears. • PTI

The Indian Express
23 June 1998

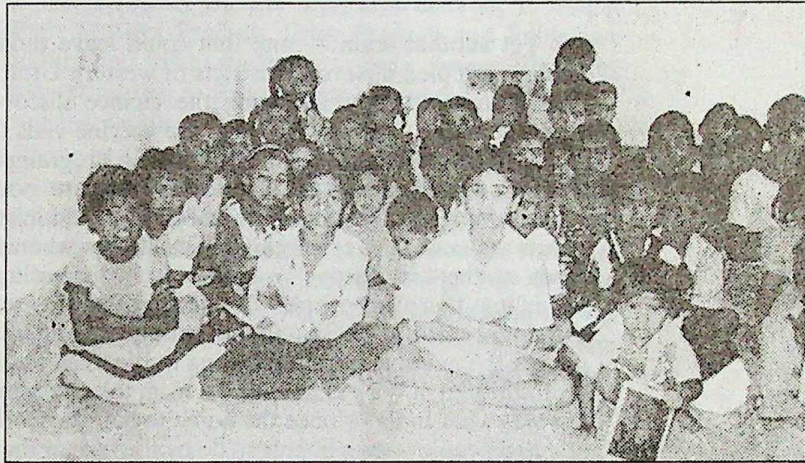
Helping construction workers build a future for their children

By Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Bangalore: There are very few NGOs which are interested in taking care of migrant construction workers' children. These children are left to fend for themselves at construction sites while their parents work at the sites. There is no one to look after them and their parents cannot afford to leave them at a creche.

These children are not able to continue their education as they keep moving from place to place with their parents and have to put up with a lot of hurdles like language problem, lack of proper guidance, socio-economic factors, etc. Very often, these kids end up working at the building sites itself. Most of the children here are malnourished.

But now, an NGO 'Outreach' is taking care of the kids. It was started in 1992. It runs nine day-care centres at construction sites in the city to help more than 400 children of migrant con-



Children of construction workers at the day care centre

struction workers. Each centre has a teacher to take care of the children and to impart basic education. If any of the children are fit to be admitted into regular schools, the organisation gives them the necessary help. So far, 35 children have been admitted to various schools in Bangalore and 17 children into residential schools — 17 in Bangalore and eight in KGF.

Explaining Outreach's activities, its Project Co-ordinator Muniraj says: "There are three types of migrant construction workers — seasonal, permanent and bonded migrants. Except for the seasonal workers, who come to the city when they have no work in the villages, the other two categories bring their children along. Each of the couples has a minimum of four to six children. A majority of the construction sites do not even have the basic facilities. We visit such sites and convince the builder to provide a shelter for a day-care centre and convince the parents to send their children here."

"In the beginning we found it very difficult to convince the builders. But soon they realised the benefits of sending their children to these day-care centres and started co-operating with us. Many of them agreed to our proposal provided we did not disturb the

workers during their working hours. We find it difficult to get admission for these children as they belong to different States and languages. We pay their fees and monitor their progress in their studies by conducting periodical visits to those schools," he said.

When asked about its resources, he said: "We get a major part of our finance from CRY (Child Care and You). They give us Rs 2 lakh every three months. The Rotary Club donates medicines and clothes to the children. Unfortunately we are still short of funds. We have to pay Rs 6,500 as building rent. We do not get any help from the State or Union Governments."

When asked whether any attempt was made to educate the construction workers, he said: "It is very difficult to find teachers to educate adults as our most of the teachers at these day care centres are women. It is not fair to ask these teachers to conduct classes for adults during night times. Whenever time permits we conduct counselling sessions for them on the importance of hygiene."

For further details contact: Muniraj, Project Co-ordinator, Outreach, 109, Coles Road, Fraser Town. Phone: 5511481/5545365.

The Indian Express
22 June 1998

A vaccine scam

Yet another scam — one that could leave thousands of children crippled in several districts of western Uttar Pradesh — has come to light following the chance discovery of a different indicator colour on the polio vaccine vials that were imported from Belgium for the Pulse Polio Programme earlier this year. Fortunately, the spurious vials were noticed and doctors know the areas where they were administered; so efforts are now on to re-vaccinate the children who were given doses of the “ineffective” vaccine. It is distressing beyond words that there are people who, for petty profit, would play with innocent lives. Polio, an ancient and deadly virus which attacks the nervous system resulting in life long paralysis, can be eradicated only by eliminating it from the environment and this was what India — once the home to half the world’s polio affected people — was hoping to do by the turn of the century.

Two years ago a massive campaign, which was then described as the biggest movement in the country following the independence struggle, was launched and a staggering 125 million children were immunised across the country. Lapses were perhaps inevitable in an endeavour of such a magnitude. But surely what cannot and should not be condoned is that vials with spurious drugs were sent at all. Reports say that about 35,000 vials were recovered during a raid on the Ghaziabad District Health office and that they were sent by the centre without the knowledge of state authorities. What is more, they were imported by the last government though quality vaccines are being manufactured in India. Agitated parents are demanding a CBI enquiry. While this is a demand that should be considered what is more urgent is the constitution of a National Drug Authority to police our proliferating drug market. There are 8,000 drug manufacturing units in India but there are only four testing facilities and these are understaffed and ill-equipped. Small wonder then that India has become the testing ground for untested drugs and vaccine trials by foreign pharmaceutical companies.

Deccan Herald
23 June 1998

NGO project helps villagers dodge debt during famine

BY BHARAT DOGRA
Inter Press Service

Raipur, June 22: The noon day sun beats down on the scorched earth in villages in central India that have not seen rain during the monsoon planting season for the last three years.

Errant monsoon rains and heavy downpours during the dry season have played havoc with the staple paddy cultivation in the area, forcing poor out-of-work peasants and the landless down on their knees.

Earlier, during times like these, jobless and impoverished villagers were driven into the arms of moneylenders, who made a killing on their distress by charging unscrupulously high interest rates for both big and small loans.

But this time things have been different in some 50 villages in the semi-forested Chattisgarh region of central Madhya Pradesh state. For the first time, the poorest of the poor have not sunk deeper into debt during the long wait for the evasive monsoons.

A food-for-work programme implemented by a non-governmental organisation Mukti Niketan with funds from Christian Aid, London and the German Diakonisches Werk has been helping the poor survive the terrible drought in the region since 1996.

The programme was initiated by the NGO, which has been working for the release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers in the mineral-rich, still feudal Chattisgarh area, to prevent those who had been released from bondage from being forced back into indebtedness by poverty.

As a result, instead of mortgaging themselves and their families to blood-sucking loan sharks for

money, the poor have been working on land development and minor irrigation projects for wages in cash and kind.

Babulal, Khiraram, Maithi and Rajam Tanti, landless peasant women and men, from Chandan village, said each couple gets 32 kgs of foodgrain and Rs 90 for six-days work in their village.

In addition, pregnant and lactating women are supplied with special nutrition packets, which are also distributed among the old and infirm in the villages, according to S.K. Patel of Mukti Niketan.

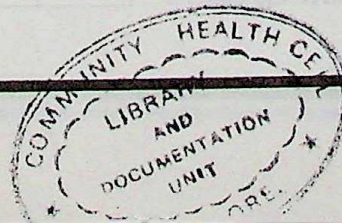
In villages where the number of affected people were more than in others, the NGO has resorted to redistributing the grain to accommodate a larger number of recipients. Similarly it has devised a system of staggered employment to cover a larger pool of workers.

The work itself is, however, decided on by the villagers, who have been organised into Gram Vikas Samitis or village development committees, and executed under the supervision of a group of five members — both female and male — elected by the committee members. "It was for us villagers to decide what type of work we want to do. No one imposes the decision on us," asserted Karmaha of Dumarpalli village.

While land development projects were undertaken by all the villages covered by the food-for-work programme, tank or well digging has taken place in only some.

What the poor did was to pool their resources to level and prepare land given to them individually under a government land distribution programme for the poor that has given them ownership of small patches of previously uncultivated, waste land.

The Asian Age
23 June 1998



BAD BLOOD

Calcutta High Court will soon hear a landmark case: for the first time, an HIV-positive patient has sued the government for negligence. **Rebecca Dodd** reports

It might turn out to be a landmark case. Few years ago, a woman who was transfused with HIV-infected blood in a hospital had sued the Indian government for negligence. The case will soon come up for hearing at the Calcutta High Court.

Geeta (not her real name) was admitted in October, 1992, to a naval hospital in eastern India during childbirth. When she continued bleeding after delivery, doctors gave her two units of blood, but did not bother to test it for HIV.

Six days later — after she had been discharged — the doctors decided to test a sample of the blood and found it infected with HIV.

"That is the tragedy of the whole thing," says Anand Grover, the lawyer representing Geeta. "They didn't test until it was too late."

When doctors called in Geeta's husband, who works with the Indian navy and told him what had happened, they blamed the incident on "ill luck" and said it was "all in the hands of God," according to Geeta's petition before the Calcutta High Court.

Geeta is now HIV-positive but her child and husband are not — further indication that the virus was transmitted to her during the blood transfusion and that she was not already a carrier of HIV.

While sex with an HIV-positive person is risky and may result in infection, receiving an infected blood transfusion virtually guarantees transmission of the virus.

Geeta's case is unusual for two reasons.

First, she has gone to court without revealing her identity. Grover, whose work at the Bombay Lawyers' Collective fighting for

legal rights of the poor and disadvantaged is well known in India, obtained a 'suppression of identity' order for an HIV-positive person in 1995. Then, it was only the second such case worldwide, and the first in India. According to Grover, this is a crucial breakthrough for HIV-positive people who want to go to court. "Lots of people come to the Collective for advice, but few want to pursue their cases they are frightened to reveal their HIV-status in public," he said.

LIVE WITH DIGNITY

Praajak, an organisation promoting dialogue on AIDS, explains the rights of AIDS patients.

●**Right to life:** Under Article 21, an AIDS patient has the right to be medically treated. This is his Fundamental Right.

●**Right to treatment:** No medical professional can refuse treatment to an AIDS patient because he/she is HIV-positive. By an extended definition of the Hippocrate's oath, a medical student must take this oath before he can be a practitioner.

●**Right to personal liberty:** No person can be coerced to undertake a test for detection of HIV.

●**Right to confidentiality:** The results of the tests for HIV cannot be disclosed by medical professionals or any one else without the patient's permission.

●**Right to work:** An HIV-positive person cannot be retrenched from work unless there is an onset of AIDS and the nature of his work is hampered by the ailment/infection.

In addition, Geeta is the first HIV-positive person in India to sue the government.

As in the United States, the federal and state governments of India — and their employees — have sovereign immunity. But last year, citizens from the state of Uttar Pradesh successfully sued the government after police fired on them during a demonstration. The action has opened the way for cases against government employees.

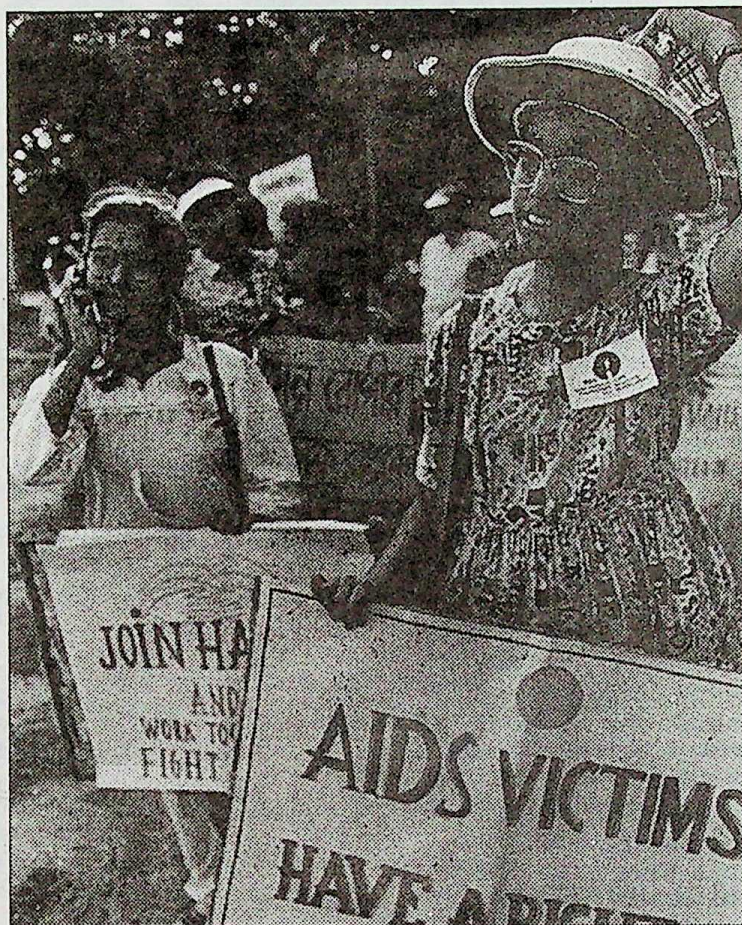
Geeta, who has charged the Ministry of Defense and — through it — the federal government, lists two counts of negligence.

First, doctors are blamed for not testing the blood before it was transfused — as Geeta's case was not an emergency, she argues, the doctors could easily have requested blood from a nearby state hospital, which has a blood bank. Instead they decided to take fresh blood directly from a sailor in the Indian navy. Sailors are known to have casual sex or sex with sex-workers and are therefore considered more likely to be HIV-positive than others.

Second, Geeta claims the transfusion was unnecessary — the two units of blood transfused were too little to have any medical benefit, her lawyers argue.

In January 1993, Geeta, her husband and child moved to an Indian naval base in a western Indian state with better medical facilities. But in April 1995, the naval authorities began threatening to evict the family. A court ruling — again obtained by Grover — has forced the authorities to continue housing them, at least until the outcome of Geeta's case.

Geeta has demanded Rs 10 crores in compensation and a monthly payment of Rs 5,000 for



HOPE YET: Awareness, not ostracism, is the antidote for AIDS

medical expenses and a special diet. In addition, Geeta, who has an MA in economics, wants a teaching or clerical job to help her live "a full life in the short period of time that she has left."

Married in March 1991, the incident has reportedly put Geeta and her husband under terrible stress. "Despite the fact that her husband is supportive, there is an uneasiness in their relationship so that they cannot even relate to each other normally," says Geeta's petition.

Geeta's case highlights the need for governments to make their blood supply systems safe from HIV.

In India, roughly one-fifth of the over 1,000 blood banks are commercial. They are believed to rely on 4,000 - 5,000 professional donors

across 20 cities. Studies in India suggest that such donors have particularly high rates of HIV and Hepatitis B infection, and that many are drug-users.

Even so, no more than 190,000 units of blood are collected annually — less than half the 400,000 units required by the country's medical facilities.

Recognising that professional donors cannot take all the blame for the HIV-positive blood that continues to be transfused in India, the Supreme Court has ordered the government to clean up the blood-banking system.

Experts say it is unlikely things will begin to change until individual doctors are fined or jailed for negligence. It remains to be seen who the court holds accountable for such tragic cases of negligence as Geeta's, and how.

The Telegraph (Business Telegraph)
24 June 1998

Mobile AIDS booth set up for migrant workers

Visakhapatnam, June 23: Mobile AIDS Booth, (MAB) is a novel intervention project for migrant labourers conceived by a City-based AIDS research worker, Kootikuppala Surya Rao.

The strategies of MAB include person-to-person information at the workplace and habitation and counselling on HIV/AIDS, health and sex education and supply of condoms.

The alarming growth of AIDS among migrant workers in and around Visakhapatnam in the last two years had forced him to create awareness about the dreaded epidemic, he added.

Rao, who is also chairman of the IMA Academy of Medical Specialities, said his study had revealed that 80 per cent of men among the migrant workers were infected by HIV thro-

ugh commercial sex workers.

Claiming that he had developed a herbal remedy for AIDS 'Kootikuppala compound', in association with the department of pharmaceutical sciences, Andhra University, he said he had been invited to the 12th World AIDS Conference at Geneva from June 28 to July 3, to make a presentation on MAB and the herbal remedy.

He said some herbs have pot-

ent anti-viral activity and some others counter the effects of the disease by stimulating the intrinsic immunity factor. Certain herbs increase the vigour and vitality to fight the onslaught of the virus and all these were time-tested and non-toxic, he added.

Surya Rao said the 'kootikuppala compound' was tried on 60 HIV positive patients for 15 months and it was found that there was a remarkable improvement in the patients.

Surya Rao said the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) had invited him, besides B N Hegde, pro-vice chancellor, Manipal Academy of Higher Education and Ashok Rajgopal, senior consultant of New Delhi, to address their 16th annual convention at Dallas in the United States on July 4. • UNI

Britain launches AIDS website

LONDON: A new AIDS website, launched in Britain, will provide the latest information on research and treatment for the illness that afflicts an estimated 30 million people worldwide. AIDSmapp is designed to help health professionals, patients and carers to find their way around the increasing complex field of aids and hiv medicine and research.

Junior British Health Minister Tessa Jowell launched the website www.Aidsmapp.Com on Monday. AIDSmapp results from the collaboration of the National AIDS Manual, publishers of one of the most comprehensive guides to available AIDS treatment, and BHIVA, a forum of more than 300 medical experts working in the field of HIV and AIDS. —Reuter

The Times of India
24 June 1998

The Indian Express
24 June 1998

Reproductive and child health plan to cover urban slums

DH News Service

NEW DELHI, June 23

The Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme which was launched in October 1997 is being extended to cover urban slums, tribal population and adolescents. According to the annual report of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (1997-98), which was released recently, the government proposes to improve the scope of services under the RCH programme.

The programme will target vulnerable groups of the population which have been, so far, left out of the planning process. Non-governmental organisations will be involved in a big way to make it a people's programme.

The report states that the skills of practitioners of Indian systems of medicine (ISM) will be upgraded with proper training. Research

and development in ISM will be supported to improve RCH services. The panchayat raj system will have a greater role in planning, implementation and assessment of client satisfaction.

During the last two years, the Ministry took two important policy initiatives — accepting the challenge to eradicate polio by the year 2000, and adopting a target-free approach in the implementation of family welfare programmes. NGOs and the private medical sector will be actively involved in the implementation of RCH's programmes. In addition to publicity through the press and the electronic media, the government proposes to promote family planning through interactive panel discussions on television.

The IEC (Inform, Educate and Communicate) component will be strengthened through district literacy societies headed by district magistrates. The National Insti-

tute of Health and Family Welfare and the International Institute of Population Sciences were asked to conduct training programmes and field surveys to assess the impact of the RCH programme at the district level and also to generate monthly reports on the extent to which the available facilities are being used. It has also been decided to conduct a National Family Health survey every five years.

To supplement the efforts of the allopathic system, the Department of Family Welfare, in consultation with the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine is proposing to supply Ayurveda and Unani drugs to primary health centres (PCH). The report states that the department of health has made strategic interventions to ensure more vigorous implementation and to improve the effectiveness of different National Health Programmes aimed at combating communicable and non-communicable ailments.

Deccan Herald
24 June 1998

Fifth agricultural trade fair in City in Nov

Kisan'98 — the fifth agricultural trade fair of the South, will be held from November 11 to 15 at the Kanteerava Indoor Stadium in the City.

The fair is being supported by the Directorate of Horticulture, Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences, Directorate of Agricultural Marketing, Processed Foods Export Development Authority and National Dairy Development Board. Over 300 companies from all over India will display developments in all the profiles of the agriculture industry. Details can be had from Convenor, Kisan'98, 21, SNS Chambers, 239 Sankey Road, Sadashivnagar, Bangalore. Ph: 3440096 or 3316331.

The Indian Express
25 June 1998

Panel to probe use of spurious oral polio vaccines

DH News Service

NEW DELHI, June 24

The department of family welfare in the ministry of health and family welfare has ordered a high-level inquiry into the alleged administration of spurious oral polio vaccine to children in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh.

A three-member technical committee will look into the matter and will ascertain whether any vaccine with lost potency as indicated by the vaccine vial monitor was used for the vaccination programmes.

If so, the reasons for such use and the state of the cold chain and other related matters will

also be probed. The inquiry was ordered following news items which appeared in the media about the alleged health risks to many young children in western UP because of the administration of spurious oral polio vaccine.

The ministry has also clarified that there is no danger to the health of children through the use of these vaccines.

However, the use of the vaccines with lost potency would not give children any protection against polio and therefore, they will have to be re-immunised.

The ministry has repeatedly advised state governments not to use such vaccines.

The ministry procures oral polio vaccine

from local manufacturers and a substantial quantity of vaccines used in the Annual Pulse Polio programme is received free of cost by way of commodity assistance from bilateral and multi-lateral donors.

All vaccines received from abroad have vaccine vial monitors, which, through progressive shades of discolouration, indicate the loss of potency, if any, of the vaccine. This is an easy and convenient way to ascertain the potency at the point of use.

The oral polio vaccine requires storage in deep freezers at 18 to 20 degree centigrade. One of the common causes of loss of potency is the disruption of the cold chain, although other causes cannot be ruled out.

Deccan Herald
25 June 1998

High-yielding red rice

Red rice varieties have a good demand in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu and in the neighbouring State of Kerala. Hence farmers prefer to cultivate red rice instead of white rice.

For Kanyakumari, high-yielding red rice varieties such as TPS-1, TKM-9 and ASD-17 are recommended. These varieties are suitable for cultivation during Kannipoo season (May/June to August/September) both under semi-dry and wet conditions.

TPS-1 is a cross between IR-8 and Kattisamba. It is a short duration variety maturing in 110-115 days.

It yields short, bold red rice. It is drought tolerant, moderately resistant to brown plant hopper and leaf spot, and resistant to white tip nematode.

TKM-9 is a cross derivative of TKM-7 and IR-8. The crop matures in 110-105 days and is non-lodging. It is resistant to drought. The grain is short and bold.

ASD-17 is a double cross between ADT-31/Ratna and ASD-8/IR-8. It matures in 95-100 days and is non-lodging.

It yields short, bold red rice. It is resistant to drought and moderately resistant to brown plant hopper and sheath rot.

The yield potential of the above varieties ranges from 5,600 kg to 9,000 kg per hectare.

**O. Ramanatha Pillai and
A. Vinayagamurthy**

*Agricultural Research Station
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University
Thirupathisaram, TN*

Denotified communities

● The Denotified and Nomadic Tribals Rights Action Group has started a nationwide movement for the upliftment of these communities. It is felt necessary to initiate schemes for their social rehabilitation and protect their human rights. The group wishes to help denotified activists, social workers and registered institutions to setup developmental projects from the central government and funding agencies.

Those interested may contact: The Denotified and Nomadic Tribals Right Action Group, 6, United Avenue, Baroda.

Deccan Herald
26 June 1998

The Hindu
25 June 1998

Kidwai introduces cancer insurance scheme

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, June 25: The Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO) is introducing a cost-effective health insurance scheme to treat cancer patients belonging to the low and middle income groups.

KMIO Director P S Prabhakaran told reporters here on Wednesday that the scheme — formulated keeping in mind the high cost of cancer treatment — would cost Rs 1,000 for individuals.

A one-time payment of the

said amount would ensure treatment if the person suffers from cancer during his or her life time.

The insurance scheme for nuclear families would cost Rs 2,500, he added.

Announcing several programmes undertaken by the KMIO as part of its Silver Jubilee year celebrations, Prabhakaran said a 50-bed centre would be set up at the institute, which would take care of the social, physical and psychological rehabilitation of cancer victims.

A trust would run the centre in "corporate style", he said.

The Institute would set up two peripheral cancer centres at Mysore and Chikmagalur, in addition to the peripheral centres at Mandya and Gulbarga.

The peripheral centres would also take up cancer education in rural areas, he said.

Kanakapura Town had been selected for a survey on the tobacco-related habits of people.

While the initial survey was underway, the formal study would be inaugurated on July

2, with the help of several non governmental organisations.

As children in the age group of 12 to 20 years were known to take to smoking, the study would also concentrate on educating them on the ill effects of tobacco use.

As part of the silver jubilee celebrations — which will be inaugurated on Friday, June 26 — the institute will organise a continuing medical education national workshop in Brachytherapy on the theme "Emerging Frontiers in Cancer of the Breast and Cervix"

KMIO's Head of the Department of Radiology M H Shariff said that a live demonstration of a Iridium-192 procedure would be conducted by world-renowned radiation oncologist Nisar Syed, who is also the Director of Radiation Oncology, Memorial Medical Centre of Long Beach, California.

Syed, who will also be guiding the June 27 workshop had evinced interest in a technology transfer programme between KMIO and Memorial Medical Centre, California, he added.

PIL over child beggars admitted

Bangalore, June 25: A division bench of Karnataka high court on Thursday admitted a public interest writ petition filed by an advocate in the matter of neglected juveniles and child beggars. The bench comprised Justice Ashok Bhan and Justice S.R. Venkatesha Murthy. The petitioner, Srirambabu of Bangalore, had submitted that in July, 1997 an article appeared in an English daily which threw light on the maiming of child beggars. The petitioner had submitted that on an inspection made by him on the roads, public places, temples, among others, found that a number of children were begging at these places. The petitioner contended that the provisions of juvenile justice act 1986 prescribes the procedure for proper care and custody of the neglected juveniles. The petitioner also contended that the inaction on the part of the authorities to take necessary steps had infringed the rights of the children. (PTI)

Indian Express
26 June 1998

The Asian Age (Bangalore Age)
26 June 1998

Seeds of selflessness

Usha Rai rediscovers a natural truth on World Environment

Day: "There will be water in the villages if there are enough trees"

JUNE 5 was a memorable World Environment Day and one that will go down in the record books as the day that 1.27 lakh trees were planted in just eight hours. The greening of Amby Valley, Village Ambavane in Pune District was a historic event not just because of the large number of trees planted but because on this day three persons who have devoted the best years of their life to planting trees in different parts of the country, had come together to green the first post British hill station being constructed by a business house.

The three living legends, who have probably done more to green the countryside than anyone else, were brought to Amby Valley to be honoured and to sanctify the hill station with the magic in their fingers. For at least two of the three honoured, *Vana mahotsav* was not an annual ritual but a life's mission. The oldest of the three, Visheshwar Dutt Saklani, 76, is a frail old man who dresses in khadi kurta pyjamas and sports a well worn cap on his head. He has single handedly cultivated a forest of his own at Pujargaon, 50 kms from Dehra Dun in the Garwal hills. In 40 years, he has planted some 200,000 deodar, oak, rhododendrons, fruit and spice trees and nurtured them till the mountain springs and water systems of his village were recharged. He still spends eight to nine hours a day in the forests planting and tending trees.

Thimakka (70), a small, frail woman, has been a daily wage worker at construction sites all her life. She did not have children so with her husband for 10 years from 1948 to 1958 with all the fervour of a childless couple seeking the Lord's blessings they planted trees as a kind of penance. The two planted *salumarida* or banyan trees on four kms of the national highway. They did not know how many they planted or how many died. Thimakka was never blessed with a child but she has no regrets for her children are the 274 tall, strapping, shade giving banyan trees that line the national highway of Karnataka, fairly close to her thatched mud hut at Kudur village, Magadi taluka of Bangalore district. "My children may not be able to look after me in my old age but they have brought me honour and laurels," says Thimakka who has to date won 10 awards including the National Citizens Award.

The youngest Vrikshmitra, Abdul Karim, 51, was working in the Mumbai dockyards and running a travel agency till he decided to return to his native Kasargod in Kerala 22 years ago. Karim has grown close to 30,000 trees, most of them forest species and herbs. He is also growing sandal wood, on what was considered wasteland, in Kasargod. Like Saklani, with a small forest that he has cultivated for the last 19 years, he has been able to recharge the wells and bring up the groundwater level in the area.

Based on the simple philosophy "there will be water in the villages if there are enough trees," he grew deciduous trees that soak in the water during the monsoon and release it to the earth during the summers. Karim does not allow a single fallen leaf to be removed from his forest. They just pile up forming humus and pushing up the ground water, he says.

The development of Sahara Lake City of Amby Valley has been mired in controversy and the Bombay Environmental Action Group has even gone to court on tribal and forest land being given to a business house for constructing a colony for the super rich. The Maharashtra Government has issued a notification declaring the Amby Valley project as the creation of a hill station and Debi Goenka of BEAG is an unhappy man. The political big wigs, industrialists have got together to put up plush holiday resorts on some 5,000 acres. Each bungalow on the hill station will be sold for Rs 8 crore, say those opposing the project.

In keeping with the mega image of the project, Kapil Dev — who is helping with the design and construction of the golf course, Amitabh Bachchan, Raj Babbar and veteran actor Dilip Kumar were flown in to plant trees and add their clout to the project.

But by planting 1.27 lakh trees in a carefully worked out plantation strategy and honouring the humble but true green leaders, the Sahara Parivar has redeemed itself. To ensure survival of most of the trees an elaborate irrigation system has been worked out. Of the 5,000 acres that have been acquired, 1,400 to 1,500 acres will be forests, assure the project authorities. To show they meant business they had invited the *Limca Book of Records* editor and staff to count the trees planted and check out the time taken.

There were four distinct zones in which the trees were planted — 67,000 in the biggest zone, 14,000 in the smallest zone near the gate and 25,000 and 27,000 in the other two plantation areas. In fact the target of 1.15 lakh was crossed and another 12,000 trees planted. A hundred varieties of the local trees were planted including desi mango, jamun, sheesham, supari, cashew, coconut, avlan, neem and ficus. Pits were dug and the saplings placed alongside and soon after the formal inauguration, a horde of villagers and others descended on the plantation and put in the saplings. (A trial plantation drive had been held earlier to see just how many trees can be planted in an hour.)

Villagers who were migrating to Sholapur and Pune in search of employment are now confident of finding enough work at home. The project authorities are encouraging villagers to go in for dairying with a promise of buying the milk produced. In fact they will provide the fod-

der for the cattle. All vegetables and other agricultural crops grown by the villagers will now have a ready market in Amby Valley itself.

But in all the pomp and show of a blooming hill station, it was the Vrikshmitras from Garhwal, Karnataka and Kasargod who stole the limelight. Saklani appealed to the select audience to plant at least three trees each — one to record birth, the second marriage and the third death. Deodhar and Oak help in recharging ground water and causing rainfall, he explained. "Clouds are attracted by the fragrance of the tall oak trees and so there is more rain in oak forests and they remain evergreen. Sixteen kgs of oxygen are needed per person per day and if there are no trees we will not have the oxygen to breathe," is Saklani's simple philosophy.

For Thimakka the recognition has come late in life — she received the first award only in 1995. But she has one unfulfilled dream. She would like a hospital to be set up in her name and that of her husband in her village. She is willing to invest the Rs 70,000 she has saved. If she can give 274 life sustaining banyans for Karnataka, can someone not help set up a hospital for her village, she asks. As Abdul Karim's little forest spreads from 5 acres to 32, he knows that the ponds and water reservoirs of his village and surrounding villages will have sufficient water. For him that is reward enough.

The Hindustan Times

28 June 1998

Polluting firms to fund afforestation plan

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 4
Creation of an Environmental Fund to be financed by fines collected from polluting industries, 15-Year Perspective Plan for rehabilitation of forests and wastelands, and an institutional mechanism for joint forest management were some of the important decisions taken at an expert committee meeting chaired by Minister for Environment and Forests Suresh Prabhu here today.

The meeting was attended by Mr Mohan Dharia, former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, the Secretary Environment and Forests, Mr A. K. Mukherjee, IGF (Retd.) chairman of the Mukherjee Committee, senior officers of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Secretary Rural Areas and Employment, Secretary Rural Development, General Manager NABARD.

The meeting discussed strategy to increase forest cover in the country. The minister stressed the need for a national awareness campaign for this purpose.

Mr Dharia laid emphasis on preparing a 15-year perspective plan for integrated land development based on scientific watershed management.

Mr Vishwanath Anand, Secretary Environment and Forests said there was a need for involving forest department employees in

rural development activities.

The Rural Development Secretary and the Secretary Rural Areas and Employment promised full cooperation to the Ministry of Environment and Forests for increasing the forest cover.

The meeting took the following decisions:

- * To involve the people in afforestation activities. A separate institutional arrangement will be made in 2 lakh villages situated in and around forest areas through a joint forest management and development agency on the lines of DRDAs. This agency will receive funds from Rural Development Ministry directly to undertake afforestation activities and also for all rural developmental activities in these villages.

- This would ensure a better understanding between forests and the people on the one hand and involvement of the people in the management of natural resources on the other. This would require a change in the attitude of the forest department to act as catalyst for development and will reorient the peoples attitude towards forest conservation and the role of foresters.

- * A national perspective plan will be prepared to rehabilitate the forest and non-forest wastelands in the country in 15 years.

- * Institutional arrangements will be made for channelling bank finance through NABARD in order to provide soft loans to the farmers, cooperatives

Flyash for farm use

HUBLI: Flyash which comes out of the Raichur Thermal Power Station (RTPS) could be used for agriculture purposes for more yield, according to Raichur Agriculture College director of instruction C.V. Patil.

He said that a decade-long research in fly ash management had proved the presence of several nutrition in it which could be useful for plant growth if the fly ash was used as manure for crops like paddy, groundnut and jowar.

The Sunday Times

5 July 1998

The Hindustan Times

5 July 1998

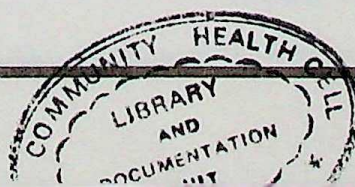
AIR series on environment

- All India Radio, in collaboration with the State Public Instruction and Research Department, will broadcast a special series on "Environment Education" for teachers, at 2.30 pm, on all the stations of the state, from August 13.

To listen to this 13-episode series, teachers can register their names at the District Institute for Education and Training. There will be an examination at the end of the series. For every district, 25 special prizes will be awarded. Those interested can register their names with DIET. For further details contact DIET or AIR.

Deccan Herald

5 July 1998



Defying ULFA

It is exactly a year since social activist Sanjoy Ghose was abducted by ULFA militants from Majuli in Jorhat district. ULFA leaders later claimed that he died in Arunachal Pradesh while trying to escape from their captivity. Sanjoy's family members and friends, however, believe that the general secretary of Avar-NE is still being held. That Sanjoy's wife Sushmita Ghose should brave ULFA's warning to stay away from Assam and visit Majuli island speaks volumes of her courage and her commitment to the pioneering work that Avar undertook in the State against heavy odds. A few days ago, ULFA sought to intimidate Sushmita Ghose and other members of the organisation 'Friends of Sanjoy Ghose', maintaining that the non-government organisations working in Assam were destroying "the liberation struggle of the people of Assam". One is of course familiar with ULFA's fatuous espousal of the Assamese people's "right to self-determination" and its grandiose claim to work for the creation of a "Swadhin Asom". In fact, if Assam has suffered long years of disruption, it is thanks to the self-serving ULFA leaders' campaign of terror and blackmail.

At a time when Assam is retreating from several of its previous commitments and is perennially faced with a resource crunch, the NGOs have a crucial role to play in the promotion of education, health, social awareness and skill development. Sanjoy Ghose's abduction and the pressure built by ULFA on Avar to leave Majuli have dealt a severe blow to the NGOs. Given ULFA's campaign of violence and intimidation, the NGOs find it difficult to work in the State. Sushmita Ghose's visit to Assam and the rallies planned by "Friends of Sanjoy" in the State on Saturday were an expression of solidarity with the people of Assam who have suffered years of violence and public dislocation. Extortions and blackmails have become part of the daily life in Assam and elsewhere in the North-East and State leaders are largely responsible for failing to check their chauvinist planks and occasionally conniving in the intimidatory politics of the militant groups.

The Hindustan Times

6 July 1998

Calcutta HC verdict on rape sets a new trend in judicial conventions

Rakesh Bhatnagar

NEW DELHI: The Calcutta High Court has set an extraordinary trend by asking the state government to pay Rs 10 lakh as compensation to a woman who was gangraped in a railway hotel by some railway employees.

The courts have so far been extremely conservative in ordering compensation to the victims of crime or their dependents. But the Calcutta HC judgment is a step forward as it comes out of the judicial conventions to stop at the limit fixed by the Indian Penal Code. If the IPC was to be adhered to alone, perhaps this exemplary compensation would not have been possible. Section 376 dealing with rape provides giving at least seven years jail term and a nominal amount as fine to the accused person.

In fact, the criminal trial of the rapists in the Calcutta case is pending. It is for the trial alone to determine the punishment, whether life term or not, and amount of fine to be imposed on the accused if they are found guilty of violating the tourist woman.

The High Court's conscience was stirred when one Ms Chandrima Das moved it under Article 226 of the Constitution (power to issue writ to any person or authority for enforcement of the fundamental rights) seeking the Central Bureau of Investigation probe into the rape case. She apprehended tinkering with the evidence and felt that the crime was committed due to laxity in security at the railway station and its outfits. She also enlarged the base of her petition demanding compensation for the victim from Eastern Railway.

"The crime was heinous and the railway did not ensure her (victim's) safety. She suffered deep scars and life will never be the same for her. Moreover, she came to this country as a visitor and she should have been treated with respect," the High Court made these observations while compensating the rape victim.

The Times of India

29 June 1998

LEGAL VIEW

Indian criminal jurisprudence has come a long way. Law of torts enforcing cost, compensation or damages is not the same what it used to be when the gravity of an offence was gauged by the yardstick of obsolete statutes.

Its march started with the supreme verdict in Neelbati Behra case. It ruled that a citizen is entitled to compensation if the state or its instrumentalities are guilty of violating his fundamental rights. Soon, the Bhagalpur blinding case hit the head lines and a new era for public interest litigation ensued. It was merely a post card which the then justice P.N. Bhagwati admitted for hearing because the issue concerned a class of hapless victims of state oppression.

There was no looking back. Later, a number of judgments followed, some of them by the different High Courts on matters relating to the violation of citizens' rights at the hands of State or its officials. In one of such cases about the inhuman atrocities committed by the Uttar Pradesh police on a large number of peaceful rallyists demanding Uttarakhand that the Allahabad High Court ordered exemplary compensation notwithstanding the facts that the petitioners had never asked for one. What they demanded was justice. The High Court moved a step further and felt that the state must be penalised, the culprits booked and amount of compensation recovered from them.

The principle of sovereign immunity, the basis for a delinquent official's defence against various omissions and commissions committed by him, has been negated by the apex court.

Thus, the cops guilty of killing innocent persons in the stage managed encounters in different states were ordered to face trial and also bear the compensation payable to the victims of crime.

Training for the deaf

BANGALORE, June 27.

The Technical Training Centre for the Deaf, sponsored by the Association of the Deaf, Bangalore, has invited applications from eligible trainees. Training of two years duration will be given in the trades of fitter, turner, electronic mechanic, cutting and tailoring, data preparation and computers. The training will be free and hostel accommodation would be provided for boys. Those who have failed in SSLC can apply.

Details may be had from the Principal of the Centre can be contacted at the Centre, from 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at No: 28/2, Haines Road (near New Bamboo Bazar Road), Bangalore-51.

The Hindu

28 June 1998

Nabard set to expand micro credit system

Virendra Parekh

MUMBAI

ENTHUSED by the encouragement it received from the Finance Minister, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) is all set to expand the micro credit system under its self-help group scheme.

A separate department, headed by a Chief General Manager, has been set up for the purpose. The Union Budget 1998-99 proposes to increase the capital of Nabard by Rs 500 crore, while asking it to expand the scope of the self-help group scheme. Of the additional capital, Rs 400 crore will come from the Reserve Bank and Rs 100 crore from the Central Government.

The Bank has already drawn up plans to expand the scheme both in terms of the number of families covered and the amount of credit extended to utilise the new capital, said the Nabard Executive Director, Mr Y C Nanda.

The number of groups covered under the self-help group scheme

is expected to increase from 14,283 groups at present to over 30,000 by the end of this financial year, he said.

The credit extended to these groups is likely to increase from Rs 23.6 crore in 1997-98 to Rs 50 crore this year.

Loans under this scheme could be as small as Rs 100. The average loan given by banks to SHGs is about Rs 20,000. The numbers are modest, Mr Nanda admitted but added that the assistance of is of vital importance to the people concerned.

The SHG scheme is aimed at the poorest of the poor, Mr Nanda said and added that it is meant to assist small self-help groups who are unable to access normal credit sources.

Their requirements are small, they cannot wait, they are not literate enough to handle documentation and cannot afford to travel to the nearest bank branch. Such people are encouraged to pool their modest savings in small informal groups and give loans to one another for productive purposes.

These groups are then linked to a bank (public sector bank, regional rural banks or a co-operative bank) which provides them funds in multiple of their own resources.

At present, 140 banks are involved in the scheme and more will be drawn in as the scheme expands, said Mr Nanda. About 260 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are engaged in the formation, monitoring and supervision of the self-help groups.

In the next phase of expansion, the emphasis would be on Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and the North-East States. At present, the self-help group movement is doing well in Andhra Pradesh with 2,145 groups, Kerala (1,826 groups), Karnataka (1,037) and Orissa with over 1,000 groups.

The recovery rate for the loans given under this scheme is close to 100 per cent, belying fears expressed when the scheme started, said Mr Nanda.

Interestingly, about eighty per cent of the self-help groups are all-women groups, he said. □

The Observer
29 June 1998

Where garbage is turned into wealth

By Mahesh Vijapurkar

PIMPRI-CHINCHWAD
(Maharashtra), June 28.

Hemmed in by Pune city and Dehu and Kirkee cantonments, this is a unique rural-urban sprawl with a population of nearly a million and still growing. An agglomeration of 27 villages, with three fully urbanised ones — Pimpri, Chinchwad and Akurdi — houses nearly half of the population. The rest are spread over the 24 other rural nodes. Its growth from a rural expanse to an urban sprawl has been without the usual deleterious effects that accompany such transformation. It remains Maharashtra's most industrialised pocket.

Having grown from a rural base, it has decided to give something back: treat all of its 250 tonnes-a-day garbage through vermiculture and pass it back as compost to farmers. This decision, enthusiastically backed by the civic has given urban management a new dimension of being eco-friendly. Such a decision could be taken only by a young civic body not weighed down by rigid past practice. Its altruism, however, is marked by some enlightened self-interest.

"This city has come to be because we took away lands from farmers. We owe it to that community, wherever they live, to send back garbage turned into compost here itself and thus restore the balance," says Dr. Pravin Chordia, a surgeon who now turns the city's muck into potent fertilizers through vermiculture.

An NGO, the Institute of Natural Organic Agriculture (INORA), is similarly processing garbage. Mr. A. D. Tambe of INORA says that there is a great demand for the compost thus converted.

Mr. Pravinsingh Pardeshi, Municipal Commissioner, is promoting NGOs' participation in garbage treatment. Garbage is brought to the areas set aside for the purpose and is converted into organic manure. All refuse from hotels is also brought to these dumps.

Recent vermiculture attempts have succeeded in converting upto 45 per cent of garbage into valuable compost. Its economics should attract and sustain more enterprise in this direction. Each kg. of compost sells for Rs. 4, says Mr. Tambe. It is cheaper if farmers buy it in bulk. With commercial floriculture and horticulture increasing the demand for compost is sustained.

The only condition the civic body imposes is that 40 per cent of the compost generated has to be handed back to the city for use in its gardens. In a city that serves industrial giants such as Bajaj, Finolex, TELCO and Hindustan Antibiotics, vast areas are being developed as lung-spaces. The infective enthusiasm of Mr. Pardeshi notwithstanding, there is apprehension about the future of the project. An NGO activist, Ms. Sanskriti R. Menon, says: "what happens when the civic body changes? Another bureaucrat can put this on the back-burner. All this should be institutionalised."

There are road-signs that this is going to happen. Mr. Pardeshi, who has the support of the elected representatives, has introduced special texts prepared by the Centre for Environment Education in all the schools run by the civic body. It makes for future support, as more than 40 per cent of people come from the agriculturally prosperous Western Maharashtra more attuned to nature.

The civic body has become so conscious of the environment that of the two city dumps, one is to be made into a forest and the other into a zoo and garden. The garbage will still come, but it would be converted into fuel to generate electricity. "The city has to be a facilitator of this kind apart from provider of roads, water, sanitation and not just build commercial complexes," says Mr. Pardeshi. Even a community incinerator has been set up to handle hospital waste.

Since the downstream stretches of the Pavana river, from whose upper reaches drinking water is sourced, are highly polluted, the city wants to re-cycle its water. Nearly 150 million litres a day is used by industries — the biggest polluters — and 115 MLD by households. The scheme envisages treating and re-cycling the river water.

"We will ask industries to re-use the water we treat or sell it to farmers in the civic area itself," says Mr. Pardeshi. The civic body is all set to convert problems into opportunities.

It wants correctives in place before ill overtake the city. For instance, the city has a dozen vast, abandoned quarries, in which muck and water fill up from drains and rain. They are being aerated and their peripheral areas converted into gardens.

Introducing such progressive steps calls not for so much for funds but for initiative and innovation. This city does have that.

The Hindu
29 June 1998

Tihar inmates get a 'helping hand'

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI, June 29

Various organisations have come together to work towards giving the inmates of Tihar jail a new lease of life.

In its annual report on voluntary community participation in the treatment of prisoners titled, "Helping Hand a Tihar Model", Inspector General of Prisons R. S. Gupta stated that along with giving the prisoners a sense of dignity and respect in society, several programmes were undertaken and arrangements made to give solutions for the economic problems of prisoners who had left the jail.

While admitting that the biggest problem faced by the jail was overcrowding, Mr Gupta stated that a complete plan for construction of nine new jails with a capacity of lodging 1000 prisoners was on the anvil. He added that these new prisons would have greater facilities, reformation activities, a modern community kitchen and im-

proved systems of community conveniences.

There were about twenty NGOs working on various areas like AIDS awareness, drug addiction and vocational training etc. Implementation of the new reformation package popularly known as "New Delhi Correctional Model", which aimed at gradual social integration of prisoners, was being done with the active association of society in the form of NGOs and individuals, stated Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Jayadev Sarangi.

As part of all these efforts, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) had not only started graduate courses for the inmates, but had also introduced MBA and computer courses in 1996. The first batch of graduates would be passing out this year. The pass percentage in the year 1997-98 was 74, said the report. There was also an IGNOU ward in the prison where student inmates could study in a conducive atmosphere. The inmates have to qualify

a written test and also appear for an interview to get admission in the IGNOU ward. Interestingly, 18 prisoners are also preparing for the UPSC civil services examinations from the Tihar IGNOU study centre.

AASRA, which is involved in rehabilitation of drug addicts, has pointed out that it would have been easier for them to continue their work if the prison staff and prisoners trained by them were allowed to continue to build on the programmes. The staff are changed continually hence the training needs continue to be unending, it stated. "What has affected our work is the poor quality of some of the jail staff as well as not having middle aged prisoners or persons who could have helped in developing a culture of control and calmness," remarked AASRA.

The AIDS Awareness Group explained the difficulty in finding lawyers who could help the inmates by explaining that the group not only worked for AIDS aware-

ness but also helped prisoners deal with negative emotions etc. Owing to lack of funds, the lawyers had to come to the prison and do the legal work on their own expenses which many were not able to maintain. So, after starting with five lawyers they were left with just one lawyer, said the group.

Yoga, meditation, sports and theatre were some of the other activities organised by various organisations like Ashiana, Vipassana and others. Many of the NGOs were also providing health services and creche and other related facilities for the children of the women prisoners. Mahima Church even helped prisoners who were released from the jail, return to their families and reconcile with them.

Again, vocational training was being provided by many of the organisations working inside the jail. Powerlooms, oil extracting and paper recycling units were set up recently. Many of them were taught cloth dyeing, block printing, pot painting.

The Hindustan Times
30 June 1998

Community medicine

TEXTBOOK OF COMMUNITY MEDICINE: Prof. A. P. Kulkarni, Prof. J. P. Baride; Vora Medical Publications, Agarwal Bhavan, Kidwai Marg, Wadala, Mumbai-400031. Rs. 280.

With the changes in the curriculum for medical course introduced by the Medical Council of India, these two senior academicians have taken the opportunity to present a comprehensive textbook on community medicine appropriate to the needs of the Indian medical student.

Not only does the book cater to the limited purpose of gearing the under-graduate student towards the university examination, it is broadbased enough to enrich post-graduate and other health professionals and administrators on current views on the many aspects of this extremely important branch of medicine. The text is strongly recommended as standard reading for all under-graduate medical students.

Uma Krishnaswamy

The Hindu (open page)
30 June 1998

Ask and it shall be given unto you - a helping handshake

Staff Reporter

Suresh K - a young college student on the threshold of life and with everything to live for - was hit by a speeding truck last month near the Koramangala cross road at 2 pm when he was returning from college. While the truck sped away, some good samaritans put a profusely bleeding Suresh into an autorickshaw and tried to reach him to where all accident victims are normally taken-NIMHANS. Suresh was refused entry simply because there was no place available in the intensive care unit. He was rushed to three other hospitals before he could get treatment in a private hospital. But that proved too late for him and he succumbed to his injuries.

With Bangalore witnessing as many as 80 to 100 vehicle-related accidents on an average each day and lives being lost at such an alarming rate, we need to roll out the red carpet and welcome in HELPING HAND, an NGO enterprise which has come out with an elaborate helpline, the first of its kind in India, to cater to the needs of accident victims in and around Banga-

lore.

"We had seen that while an accident victim is rushed to a hospital within 15 to 20 minutes, the victim actually gets real medical attention only after six to seven hours of the incident due to confusion about hospital," said Dr Khawja Ali of Helping Hand. Most of the persons die due to lack of treatment in the first hour better known as "golden hour". "Generally in the panic the victim is taken to the nearest down the road clinic. The ICU beds in each hospital are limited and victims mostly with head injuries need immediate medical care which is not forthcoming due to lack of information," Dr Ali added.

Helping Hand has stretched itself out to bring instant information about availability of ICU beds and ventilators, the cost of treatment, ambulance facilities and availability of other life support systems at a particular hospital. This will guide anybody to look for the nearest hospital where a victim can be rushed to. The data will be updated twice a day.

Information regarding the cost of

charges and availability of facilities of 20 major hospitals, both private and government, will be provided at any instant. "The confusion can be definitely avoided and victims can be guided to the nearest treatment place according to his or her affordability," Dr Ali said. Talks are presently on to bring in the insurance agencies to release relief money of Rs 5,000 to the hospital.

The hotline which will be functional from July will be operational between 9 am and 7 pm to start with and subsequently will be made into a 24-hour service. The effort is purely voluntary and does not involve any charges. Grab a pen and jot it down before you lose it. Enter Helping Hand's phone number 2284532 into your telephone diary. You will have taken the first step towards helping yourself and others too.

The Times of India (Bangalore Times)
30 June 1998

Video-cassette on herbal plants of Tirumala

By Our Special Correspondent

TIRUPATI, June 29

The TTD today released a video cassette with commentary in Telugu on the therapeutic aspects and medicinal value of some of the important medicinal plants found in and around the sacred Tirumala Hill ranges.

The cassette, first in the 5-album series, entitled "Sri Venkateswara Vanamoolika Vignanam" contains commentary on 51 herbs and medicinal plants compiled in consultation with the renowned Ayurveda exponent, Mr. Balaraju Maharshi who is also the Chief Advisor to TTD's Ayurveda Pharmacy and herbarium set-up 20 kms near here on a sprawling campus skirting the picturesque hills.

According to a TTD release, there were as many as 300 identified species of medicinal plants in the forests in and around the hill temple.

The TTD by launching the video-project seeks not only to instil into the minds of the the public the significance and therapeutic value of the precious herbs growing on the Tirumala Hill ranges, but also to promote a scientific research and exploration of the phyto-chemicals by researchers.

The Hindu
30 June 1998

'Tehri dam designed to withstand quakes'

DEHRA DUN, June 30.

Tehri dam in the Garhwal Himalayan region was designed to withstand earthquakes upto eight points on the Richter Scale and would prove to be a harbinger of prosperity in the years to come, according to Tehri Hydro Development Corporation (THDC) general manager (projects), Mr. S. C. Sharma.

He has said the promise of 6,500 million units annually from the dam was a bright one for the power-starved Indian economy. These prospects had, however, been dimmed to some extent by the yet unresolved controversy over environmental issues leading to a delay in the project's implementation, he added.

Mr. Sharma said the focus of the THDC was now on the rehabilitation measures for the people of the 109 villages affected by the first phase of the project. People of 13 villages had been entirely relocated to various THDC colonies and

to New Tehri under urban and rural categories, he said.

Completed works in the project included the four diversion tunnels, while the foundation of the dam had been constructed upto a length of 1.1 kilometres. The coffer dam had been raised to 661 metres. Four head race tunnels had been dug upto 5.2 kilometres and the first stage of lining had been completed, Mr. Sharma said.

In the second phase of the rehabilitation programme, the THDC would require approximately 5,000 acres of land to settle the 2,845 affected rural families. Some areas had been identified in the Dehra Dun and Hardwar districts and proposals for their acquisition had been submitted to the State Government authorities concerned.

Work on the 260 metres high rockfill dam, which would be the highest dam in the Asian region, was currently underway. The raising of the main dam was also in progress. Works worth

Rs.51 crores had been executed upto March 1998.

It was envisaged that from stage one of the project itself, 3,568 million units of energy would become available annually which would add flexibility and reliability to the power system generation. A substantial amount of power would be made available in Uttar Pradesh from the power generated by the Tehri Dam.

Benefits from the dam included additional irrigation to the extent of 2.7 lakh hectares in Uttar Pradesh and the stabilisation of irrigation in another 6.04 lakh hectares. The project would also provide 300 cusecs of additional drinking water for Delhi and 200 cusecs of drinking water for Uttar Pradesh.

The Tehri dam is a joint project of the Central Government and the Uttar Pradesh Government with a 60:40 sharing of costs respectively. Project works were transferred by the State Government to the THDC in June, 1989. — UNI

The Hindu
1 July 1998

Illustration / Amit



All for a CAUSE

If satisfaction
ranks higher than
money in your
work, a career in
social work is
meant for you,
says RITU RAIZADA

Remember those moral science classes in school – lot of talk and very little action? Remember, how as a teenager you wanted to do something for that shabby-looking, wrinkled man sleeping on the street? And how you desperately wanted to do something for those street urchins living in the nearby jhuggis? If you've practically grown up longing to do something for the deprived, a career in social work is tailor made for you.

No easy career this. Pursuing social work demands single minded dedication, determination and oodles of patience.

Till the 80s, there was little awareness about this career option. The only organisations active in this field were government aided. It was only in the early 90s that non-governmental organisations started coming into the picture.

Tapan Chawdhury, senior co-worker, SOS Children's Villages, says: "I have seen a sea-change in the last decade or so. In fact, social work is now called the third sector. People have started becoming a lot more professional."

This is more so because people from various backgrounds have started switching over to social work. From computer geeks to marketing pros, from celebrities like Hollywood star Richard Gere to former beauty queens like Nafisa Ali, the bandwagon has a never-ending list of followers.

What is social work about?

Social work is essentially a philanthropic activity. It is a service extended to assist people lacking economic security and general well-being.

It is also an art. One has to co-ordinate various resources to help individuals, groups and the

community. This can be done by the application of scientific methods to help people support themselves.

Nature of work

Erstwhile social workers were philanthropists. Today, social problems having become complex, workers with special skills in preventive and corrective methods are in demand.

For example, there can be a labour welfare service, a social welfare service for the handicapped, a women's welfare organisation, an institute for child care, another for family planning, medical social workers, village workers, rehabilitation workers, environmental activists, industrial relations workers, vocational guidance workers etc.

Qualities required

A resourceful person with good communication skills is best suited for this job. The person should be somebody with commitment, drive and zeal to do good for others' sake. For a social worker, the motto in life should be, "Service before self."

An essential characteristic required for a social worker is to be a selfless person who considers others' needs first and then tries honestly to meet them. A deep concern for humanity and an understanding nature is also vital. One must also be action-oriented.

Admission

Institutions and universities offer BSW (Bachelor of Social Work) which is a three-year course. This

is open for all senior secondary (10+2) students. The MSW (Master of Social Work), on the other hand, is open for all graduates.

Opportunities

There is a plethora of opportunities in social work. These are as follows:

Psychiatric social worker: The individual should have completed a programme in social work or sociology with a diploma in psychiatric social work.

Labour welfare service: You can be posted as a labour welfare officer in government offices or as an industry labour inspector, or even as a personnel officer.

Probation services: You can be a research officers or a director at Central Bureau of Correctional Services or a probationary personnel executive. **Guidance and counselling service:** You can be a counselors in a government department at the district level. Another option is becoming a senior technical counselors or director of a guidance bureau. One can also become a rehabilitation counselors.

Village-level social service: You can work as an extension officer, aanganwadi worker, baalwadi sevak or as a baalsevika. You can also become a project officer, field assistant or supervisor. **Social welfare service:** Here there is no designation, but you are referred to simply as a social worker.

Emoluments

Salary scales vary depending on the organisation. As an Aangan-

wadi worker, those working with slum children, the salary would be Rs 1,500 per month.

A post-graduate in Social Work working in a NGO will get between Rs 4,500 and Rs 5,000.

They are also suitably reimbursed for any travel or related expenses.

Employment prospects

Any programme to reach the people needs committed and dedicated social workers to implement it. So the future prospects of the job are good as each area of social work is becoming a specialised field and the specialisations are also developing everyday.

Drawbacks

One may wonder what makes this career so lucrative if the monetary returns in this field are poor and the working conditions so appalling?

"It's that feeling of satisfactions that you tend to seek all your life," asserts Tapan Chawdhury, Senior co-worker, SOS, Children's Villages. On the other hand, social work also enhances one's social esteem and status, "There has been a sea change in this profession."

People have become a lot more professional. You don't get paid like those in multinationals, but one must consider the fact that one is doing something constructive for humanity," he quips. He quickly adds, "Remember, there's a lot of frustration in this career as well. There's an overdose of ideology and Utopia in this line."

The Indian Express (Youth Express)
3 July 1998

WHERE TO LEARN

Delhi School of Social Work,
3, University Road, Delhi.

Jamia Millia Islamia,
New Delhi.

Tata Institute of Social
Sciences,
Sion Trombay Road,
Chembur,
Mumbai,
Maharashtra.

Madras School of Social Work,
Casa Major Road,
Egmore, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu.

JK Institute of Sociology and
Human Relations,
Lucknow University,
Lucknow, (UP).

Institute of Social Sciences,
Kashi Vidyapeeth,
Varanasi, (UP).

Department of Sociology,
Labour and Social Welfare,
Patna University, Patna, Bihar.

St. Xavier's Institute of Labour
Relations,
Jamshedpur, Bihar.
Institute of Social

Service,
Nirmala Niketan,
New Marine Lines, Mumbai,
Maharashtra.

Post-graduate School of
Social Work
Peelamedu Post,
Coimbatore,
Tamil Nadu.

Bombay Labour Institute,
Gooindji Keni Road,
Nai Gauni, Dadar, Mumbai,
Maharashtra.

N.E. This list is not complete

■ **HOME REMEDIES: A HANDBOOK OF HERBAL CURES FOR COMMON AILMENTS** (Penguin, Rs 250) by **T.V. Sairam** strikes a blow for the dying art of herbalism. Though alternative medicines has become quite faddish in recent years, herbal lore has been handed down the generations for thousands of years. This book profiles 40 herbs, some of them used practically every day — cumin, turmeric, cinnamon, chilli — while others such as liquorice, amla, khushkhus and sesame are meant for special uses. Apart from providing the regional names of the herbs concerned, the profiles list the various ailments and corresponding herbal prescription. A most handy book to have about the house, with bibliographies for the more scholarly minded thrown in.

The Telegraph
3 July 1998

Awareness on vaccine potency lacking

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 2.

It is now about a year since imported vials of oral polio vaccine are equipped with a monitor that changes colour when exposed to temperatures above the ideal conditions, thus indicating that the vaccine could have lost its potency and should be discarded. But, knowledge about this basic precautionary measure is yet to percolate down to the field level of the health sector.

The sorry state of affairs came to light after a large number of children under the age of one were found to have been administered the vaccine in the Ghaziabad area of Uttar Pradesh despite the monitor on the vials changing colour.

A high-level technical committee, which was set up by the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry to probe the incidence, had confirmed that lack of awareness on the part of the field-level health workers in Ghaziabad was responsible for the incident. Some of the health personnel thought that the monitor, that was in the form of a label stuck on the vial, was the logo of the vaccine manufacturer.

Admitting that it was a matter of serious concern, a spokesman of the Ministry said steps had been initiated to mount a nation-wide awareness campaign to ensure that such a thing did not recur. The Centre had been advising the State Governments to disseminate knowledge about the vaccine vial monitors and now, fresh instructions had been given to intensify the orientation activities for all the field staff.

The Ghaziabad case study would be one of the issues to be focussed at the meeting of State health officials to be held next month as a run up to the next round of Pulse Polio Immunisation

programme scheduled in December and January, he added.

The spokesman reiterated that there was no danger to the health of the children, who had been administered the vaccine, as it had only lost its potency and there was no contamination. The children would not develop immunity against polio and they need to be re-immunised. The probe panel had also confirmed that there was no danger to the children, he added.

The committee was headed by Dr. J. C. Samatarray, Head of the Department of Microbiology, AIIMS, and had Dr. N. K. Arora, Additional Professor of Paediatrics, AIIMS, Dr. S. K. Srivastava, Joint Director (Immunisation), Uttar Pradesh Government, and Dr. V. K. Manchanda, Assistant Commissioner (Child Health) in the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry as other members.

In all, about one lakh doses of the vaccine had been received at the Ghaziabad district vaccine stores and of that 40,000 doses had been actually used. But, since it was possible that a part of it would have got wasted, it was estimated that 28,000 children had been administered the vaccine, he added.

The experts panel also tried to probe as to how the vaccine lost its potency, but could not reach a firm conclusion. There was no indication of any break in the elaborate cold chain that had been developed to ensure that the vaccine remained at the right temperature.

The vaccine was also found to have been checked for potency and cleared at both the storage centres at Lucknow, from where it was despatched to Ghaziabad and at the Medical Supplies Depot at Karnal, which is the main supply centre for north India and from where

the stock was moved to Lucknow. The state of the cold storage facility for the vaccine at Ghaziabad too was found to be satisfactory at the time of inspection.

Further, the vaccine was found to be well within the expiry date. There were several batches of the vaccine and their expiry date varied from September 1998 to May 1999, the spokesman added.

The Hindu
3 July 1998

Cabinet okays central child adoption agency

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The Union cabinet on Thursday approved the setting up of a central adoption resource agency as an autonomous body under the ministry of social justice and empowerment to facilitate child adoption procedures.

The proposed body will be a registered society. The supreme court had gone into the issue in 1989 following reports of adoption of Indian orphan children by foreign nationals and agencies. The procedure streamlined for adoption of children has been recommended by a task force under Justice P.N. Bhagwati. In another decision, the government approved the continuation of the centrally-sponsored scheme of post-matric scholarships for students belonging to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in the ninth plan. In 1998-99, the total estimated expenditure will be Rs 405 crore. Of this, Central assistance will be Rs 108 crore, an official spokesman said.

The Times of India
4 July 1998

Rs. 100-crore scheme for girls' education proposed

NEW DELHI, July 3.

Rs. 100 crore has been earmarked for the current year to institute a scheme of free education for girls upto college level including professional courses.

Giving this information to the Rajya Sabha during question hour today, the Human Resource Development Minister, Mr. Murli Manohar Joshi said the proposed scheme is being framed and necessary details in this regard were being worked out. The Minister said a total literacy campaign, which is the principal strategy of the national literacy mission for eradication of illiteracy, has been launched in 442 districts of the country.

The House was informed that there was no proposal with the Government for establishing a Sanskrit university in the country.

"The Government will continue to provide grant to the State Governments for the promotion of Sanskrit language," the Minister said, adding that the Government has also established a number of institutions for the purpose such as the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan for development and propagation of the language.

The Hindu
4 July 1998

Iodised salt is not essential, declares IMA

By A Staff Reporter

MUMBAI: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has stated there is no need for consuming iodised salt, and urged the Maharashtra government to lift its ban on common salt.

IMA president Dr F.S. Desai in a letter on Wednesday declared that compulsory use of iodised salt was not necessary.

Elaborating, he said goitre (a swelling in the neck because of iodine deficiency) existed only in areas hit by an epidemic where a supplement of iodine was necessary.

"Consumption of extra iodine might create other complications and so the government should not make use of iodine compulsory and lift the ban on common salt," he added.

The Times of India
4 July 1998

Tripura's tribal laws to be codified

AGARTALA, July 4 (PTI)

Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council is taking steps to codify old customary laws and remove facets of the superstition-based system of punishment still practised by some tribes in the state.

TTAADC chairman Mongsajai Mog said here today that a state-level committee has been formed under his leadership and all the tribes have been urged to form

committees at different levels to discuss and suggest suitable changes in the laws.

Mr Mog said most tribals have already formed their committees and began discussions at the grass-roots level.

A joint sub-committee meeting of two major communities — Tripuris and Debbarmas — was held on Wednesday. In the meeting, State Tribal Welfare Minister Aghore Debbarma stressed the

need for a reorientation of tribal customary laws to suit changes in a dynamic society.

Other major communities like Reang, Jamatia, Kaipeng and Lush have submitted their draft papers with suggestions to the TTAADC, an autonomous body of tribals.

Tripura has about 21 tribal communities, each with its own customary laws, lifestyle, culture and method of punishment.

Tribal leaders feel that at times

the punishment is unduly harsh, forcing many downtrodden families to give up their property.

Deccan Herald
5 July 1998

Rs. 100 cr. allocated for water conservation

By Our Correspondent

HASSAN, July 4.

The Government has allocated Rs. 100 crores for conserving underground water, Mr. Thippeswamy, Minister for Minor Irrigation, said here recently.

He was inaugurating the work on restoration of Mavanur tank in Mosale Hosahalli in Hassan taluk.

The Minister said there had been rapid depletion in the water table in the district and the need of the hour was to harvest the rain water. The construction of minor tanks not only provided water for irrigation, but also helped in preserving tanks in the district.

He said there were 36,679 minor, medium and large tanks in the State. The Government planned to increase the irrigation potential by desilting these tanks and also improve the water table. The Government would provide the equipment for desilting tanks and the farmers would

have to transport the silt removed from the tanks.

Mr. H. D. Revanna, Minister for Housing and the district in-charge Minister, said the Government should release Rs. 500 crores to the Minor Irrigation Department because many works, which were beneficial to farmers, were to be taken up by the Department.

Mr. Revanna requested Mr. Thippeswamy to release Rs. 50 lakhs to renovate the Mavanur tank in Holenarasipura taluk. He said that a community building would be constructed at Mavanur at a cost of Rs. five lakhs. He said the farmers would be assisted to take up dry land farming such as horticulture.

Mr. H. S. Prakash, Hassan MLA, presided. Mr. H. R. Javare Gowda, MP, spoke. Mr. H. D. Puttaswamy, former president of the Hassan zilla panchayat, Mr. Kenge Gowda, president of the Holenarasipura taluk panchayat, and Ms. Kamalamma, Hassan zilla panchayat president, were present.

The Hindu
5 July 1998

Polluting firms to fund afforestation plan

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 4

Creation of an Environmental Fund to be financed by fines collected from polluting industries, 15-Year Perspective Plan for rehabilitation of forests and wastelands, and an institutional mechanism for joint forest management were some of the important decisions taken at an expert committee meeting chaired by Minister for Environment and Forests Suresh Prabhu here today.

The meeting was attended by Mr Mohan Dharia, former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, the Secretary Environment and Forests, Mr A. K. Mukherjee, IGF (Retd.) chairman of the Mukherjee Committee, senior officers of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Secretary Rural Areas and Employment, Secretary Rural Development, General Manager NABARD.

The meeting discussed strategy to increase forest cover in the country. The minister stressed the need for a national awareness campaign for this purpose.

Mr Dharia laid emphasis on preparing a 15-year perspective plan for integrated land development based on scientific watershed management.

Mr Vishwanath Anand, Secretary Environment and Forests said there was a need for involving forest department employees in

rural development activities.

The Rural Development Secretary and the Secretary Rural Areas and Employment promised full cooperation to the Ministry of Environment and Forests for increasing the forest cover.

The meeting took the following decisions:

- * To involve the people in afforestation activities. A separate institutional arrangement will be made in 2 lakh villages situated in and around forest areas through a joint forest management and development agency on the lines of DRDAs. This agency will receive funds from Rural Development Ministry directly to undertake afforestation activities and also for all rural developmental activities in these villages.

- This would ensure a better understanding between forests and the people on the one hand and involvement of the people in the management of natural resources on the other. This would require a change in the attitude of the forest department to act as catalyst for development and will reorient the peoples attitude towards forest conservation and the role of foresters.

- * A national perspective plan will be prepared to rehabilitate the forest and non-forest wastelands in the country in 15 years.

- * Institutional arrangements will be made for channelling bank finance through NABARD in order to provide soft loans to the farmers, cooperatives

Flyash for farm use

HUBLI: Flyash which comes out of the Raichur Thermal Power Station (RTPS) could be used for agriculture purposes for more yield, according to Raichur Agriculture College director of instruction C.V. Patil.

He said that a decade-long research in fly ash management had proved the presence of several nutrition in it which could be useful for plant growth if the fly ash was used as manure for crops like paddy, groundnut and jowar.

The Sunday Times
5 July 1998

The Hindustan Times
5 July 1998

AIR series on environment

- All India Radio, in collaboration with the State Public Instruction and Research Department, will broadcast a special series on "Environment Education" for teachers, at 2.30 pm, on all the stations of the state, from August 13.

To listen to this 13-episode series, teachers can register their names at the District Institute for Education and Training. There will be an examination at the end of the series. For every district, 25 special prizes will be awarded. Those interested can register their names with DIET. For further details contact DIET or AIR.

Deccan Herald
5 July 1998



Defying ULFA

It is exactly a year since social activist Sanjoy Ghose was abducted by ULFA militants from Majuli in Jorhat district. ULFA leaders later claimed that he died in Arunachal Pradesh while trying to escape from their captivity. Sanjoy's family members and friends, however, believe that the general secretary of Avar-NE is still being held. That Sanjoy's wife Sushmita Ghose should brave ULFA's warning to stay away from Assam and visit Majuli island speaks volumes of her courage and her commitment to the pioneering work that Avar undertook in the State against heavy odds. A few days ago, ULFA sought to intimidate Sushmita Ghose and other members of the organisation 'Friends of Sanjoy Ghose', maintaining that the non-government organisations working in Assam were destroying "the liberation struggle of the people of Assam". One is of course familiar with ULFA's fatuous espousal of the Assamese people's "right to self-determination" and its grandiose claim to work for the creation of a "Swadhin Asom". In fact, if Assam has suffered long years of disruption, it is thanks to the self-serving ULFA leaders' campaign of terror and blackmail.

At a time when Assam is retreating from several of its previous commitments and is perennially faced with a resource crunch, the NGOs have a crucial role to play in the promotion of education, health, social awareness and skill development. Sanjoy Ghose's abduction and the pressure built by ULFA on Avar to leave Majuli have dealt a severe blow to the NGOs. Given ULFA's campaign of violence and intimidation, the NGOs find it difficult to work in the State. Sushmita Ghose's visit to Assam and the rallies planned by "Friends of Sanjoy" in the State on Saturday were an expression of solidarity with the people of Assam who have suffered years of violence and public dislocation. Extortions and blackmails have become part of the daily life in Assam and elsewhere in the North-East and State leaders are largely responsible for failing to check their chauvinist planks and occasionally conniving in the intimidatory politics of the militant groups.

The Hindustan Times

6 July 1998

'Green guards' for forests mooted

MUMBAI, July 5.

The Union Environment and Forest Ministry has mooted appointment of "green guards" in every village of the country to protect forests with the participation of the people.

The Environment Minister, Mr. Suresh Prabhu, disclosing this during an informal chat with presspersons here yesterday, said there was a need to launch a national movement to save forests and increase the forest cover, which had dwindled to 19 per cent of the total land mass.

He said according to the 1984 forest policy, one third of the land should be covered by forest, but the forest cover at present was only 19 per cent.

Mr. Prabhu said the Government was aiming at involving the people in large numbers to protect the environment and forests and undertake massive afforestation programme in the country.

The proposal of appointing 'green guards', who would act as volunteers, had been made to achieve this goal, he said.

He said he had met the Forest Ministers of various States recently to gather their views on the subject. — PTI

The Hindu

6 July 1998

NHRC introduces summer internship

By Our Special Correspondent

HUBLI, July 5.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has introduced from this year a summer internship programme in which students from India and abroad, who are enrolled in graduate and post-graduate courses in law, political sciences, criminology and sociology, will be accepted for internship in summer vacation.

Six students, working in the areas of iron deficiency, bonded labour, conditions of juvenile homes, and analysis of the complaints received by the NHRC, have been selected for the programme.

At the beginning of each calendar year, the Commission had decided to announce details of that year's summer internship programme.

The notification will be circulated to law universities, law colleges in India and faculties of criminology, political science and sociology. Leading universities outside the country will also be advised when the programme commences.

The summer internship is intended to provide deserving and qualified students an opportunity to gain experience in working with the Commission's members and its departments.

It is also expected to define the areas of work in which internships can be provided. The interest of interns will not only be sustained, but ongoing projects of the Commission will be reviewed.

They can attend and participate in meetings of core and working groups of various projects and programmes of the Commission and follow up the agenda and their deliberations.

They will recommend and engage themselves in a broad interaction with the upper echelons of the Commission's functionaries. The interns will be paid stipends, which will be indicated in the notification.

The Hindu

6 July 1998

Ban on sale of seeds sans certification

By Our Staff Reporter

HYDERABAD, July 6.

As an emergency measure to contain sale of spurious seeds and pesticides, the State Government has invoked Section 11 (C) of the Insecticides Act, 1968, and Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, both Central laws, banning sale of seeds without certification and opening special courts to try those indulging adulteration of pesticides, insecticides and fertilizers.

The Agriculture Minister, Mr. K. Vidyadhara Rao, announced this at a press conference after a review of the situation on Monday. The review meeting were attended by Mr. Jannath Hussain, Secretary, Agriculture, Mr. K. R. Kishore, Commissioner, Mr. H. S. Brahma, Commissioner for Civil Supplies, and Mr. C. Anjaneya Reddy, Additional GDP, Vigilance and Enforcement, and a host of office-bearers of the associations of traders and dealers.

The immediate provocation was the incident in which officials stumbled upon 100 per cent spurious pesticides during a raid on a private firm's godown at Kondapalli, near Vijayawada recently. Six samples taken out from bags in four batches showed that "phorate granules" did not contain even one per cent of genuine material. It was "misbranded", he said. In another instance, cotton seeds labelled as "Hybrid Cotton F 2" were found on the sale counters in parts of Guntur and other districts and they did not germinate at all. The Minister said that hybrid strains of cotton was always available as "Cotton Hybrid" and never under a tag "F2".

The Minister also announced, with immediate effect, ban on sale of seeds of any crop with the tag "truthfully labelled" as was allowed for the past 20 years. Without insisting on the certification, the Government had hitherto allowed such sales if only the suppliers made a self-declaration about the quality in one word "truthfully labelled" but they took undue advantage and continued to indulge in spurious seeds. Hereafter, sale of any seeds without certification would be liable for prosecution, the Minister declared. Wherever necessary, the Preventive Detention Act would be invoked against the guilty.

Mr. Vidyadhara Rao said from today, a control room would operate at the Commissionerate of Agriculture in Hyderabad with telephone No.231814 and fax 237545.

He said special courts could be established through an executive order under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act. The High Court would be approached for the necessary action. Teams of personnel from the departments of Agriculture, Revenue, Civil Supplies, Police and Vigilance and Enforcement would intensify raids on suspected godowns and ensure action. The raiding teams would be empowered to make searches of godowns belonging to manufacturers, traders and transporters, effect seizure and order stoppage of the sales.

The Union Government, following a representation made by the State, had agreed to amend 11 (C) of the Insecticides Act of 1968 under which traders could continue their sales merely after filing an appeal before the competent authority even when the material was found spurious. Under the amendment the competent authority—Secretary of the Agriculture Department, could dismiss the petition and order stoppage of the sales.

Mr. Rao and the officials affirmed that there was no shortage of seeds and the position was comfortable. The position of fertilizers was also "safe and comfortable" except in the case of murate potash, sulphate potash and single super phosphate. The DAP was available in plenty as there was a ready stock of 1.4 lakh tonnes right now. While the requirement of murate potash was 65,000 to 70,000 tonnes, stocks were available to the extent of 12,000 tonnes. Two ships came with this fertilizer but Andhra Pradesh was allocated only 500 tonnes and in view of this, the Chief Minister had addressed a communication to the Union Agriculture Ministry. As against a requirement of 10.55 lakh tonnes of urea for kharif, the State received 5.6 lakh tonnes. A total quantum of 50,000 tonnes of single super phosphate was available as against a requirement of 1.4 lakh tonnes.

The Minister said that during raids so far, 287 tonnes of spurious seeds were seized.

The Hindu
7 July 1998

Women's helpline

At 11:45 pm. Seema calls up 100 to get police help as her in-laws and husbands regularly beat her. Within five minutes a PCR van arrives and saves her from her in-laws and takes legal action against them for torturing Seema. In a similar case police once again helps a yet another woman from being victimised.

Crimes against women are mounting at a rapid speed. In order to save them from all kinds of exploitation and discriminatory practices like dowry deaths, rape cases, sexual harassment, harassment by in-laws, the Delhi Police has introduced Women's Distress Helpline. Many women like Seema are helped daily by Women's Distress Helpline.

This helpline which was established one and a half year ago has received 913 calls out of which 382 calls were tackled by giving counselling and guidance to women in distress and PCR vans were sent immediately to intervene and rescue the distressed for the rest of the 531 calls, says Mr Ranvir Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), PCR.

'Helpline', solely dedicated to handling distress calls from women, is manned by one sub-inspector and 20 other constables at a time. These sub-inspectors are fully trained in tackling problems of women and are legally sound as well. Constables handling calls are trained how to be sympathetic towards them and to keep in mind the condition of 'distressed' women who is calling for help. They also have knowledge of what type of suggestions should be given to the caller.

Problems which women have varies from dowry demands to harassment by in-laws, family disputes to post-marital problems, eve-teasing and dispute over property. "Ninety per cent of the cases are harassment by in-laws. After we receive the call, we send a message to the PCR vans through wireless in the area where the complainant resides. The PCR vans in turn reach at the spot within five minutes. We also inform the local police who reach the spot within 15 minutes. If the caller wants to take strict action against the people who she has complained against then they are arrested and taken into police custody, otherwise a compromise is worked out," said Mr Singh adding that around 10 calls are received everyday.

He said, "If a complainant does not want to take any legal action for fear of society or for some other personal reason then she is given suggestions and guidance or advised to contact various non-government organisations (NGOs) which can help them in their distress."

Vibhuti Mehta

The Hindustan Times
8 July 1998

Progressive measure

The Karnataka Government's decision on Monday to issue title deeds in the joint names of both husband and wife under the various Government-sponsored housing schemes for poorer sections of society deserves to be welcomed as it would be a socially progressive measure, aimed at ensuring gender justice. There is every reason to believe that the Government has taken this decision mainly to prevent misuse of sites and houses allotted to the beneficiaries under the various welfare schemes. Though it is doubtful to what extent the measure will help ensure gender justice, the significance and purpose of the measure are beyond dispute. In the present male-dominated society, women have been an oppressed lot. The condition of women in the countryside is particularly miserable because they do not have any social security worth the name. In many cases, illiterate husbands sell off, often without their spouses' consent or even knowledge, the sites and houses allotted to them by the Government. The Government's latest measure is expected to provide greater security to women as their husbands would not be in a position to sell the sites or houses by taking such an arbitrary and despotic decision.

The Government intends to introduce the new khata norm through a suitable amendment of the Karnataka Land Revenue Act as also changes in the rules governing the Ashraya and other housing schemes. The Government also proposes to include the new khata norm to all sites and houses allotted by the Karnataka Housing Board, the Bangalore Development Authority and other urban development authorities in the State. However, while going ahead with the new measure, it would be worthwhile if the Government also evolves a suitable mechanism to ensure regular and effective monitoring of all the schemes aimed at the emancipation of women. This has become all the more important following the Government's decision on Monday to utilise one-third of the pooled development funds for the welfare and development of women under the Mahila Abhiruddhi Yojana.

Deccan Herald
8 July 1998

We can make a difference

CRY involves school and college students in its work among needy children

We all know how CRY Child Relief and You - began to work. From the dining table-cum-office of Rippan Kapur in 1979, it spread its wings to reach out to 7,00,000 children through various child-centred projects that it supports across the country. CRY believes that each and every one of us can make a significant difference in the lives of children in need. Not only corporate houses and wealthy individuals but even the youth of our country can do a lot. With this belief was born the Youth Wing Division of CRY.

The focus of this division is to make the youth aware of their counterparts. By reaching out to them today, CRY believes that these young people will grow up



with values that can bring about social changes. The Youth Wing Division, at Calcutta, is a fledgling division, born only last year. It has already reached out to a few schools and colleges which are sensitive to the cause of needy children.

This division approaches educational institutions to sensitise privileged youngsters. This is done through audio-visual pre-

sentations, interactive games, camps and project visits. They also have a few likeminded volunteers. They help the Youth Wing organise presentations and events, getting resources for CRY

activities etc.

The task may be daunting but with the sincere effort of every individual, CRY believes, we can make a lot of difference in the lives of underprivileged children.

For details:

CRY, Youth Wing Division,
234/N D.H.Road, Jana
Kalyan, Calcutta 700008.
Phone: 4476324

The Statesman
9 July 1998

North-east Book Fair

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, July 8. — The All Assam Publishers' and Booksellers' Association will organise the first North-east Book Fair in Guwahati from 30 October to 10 November.

The fair will be held at the Judges Field in collaboration with the Publishers' and Booksellers' Guild, Calcutta, Mr Ramen Dutta, the secretary of the AAPBA, said today.

Arunachal Pradesh will be the theme of the book fair, he added.

Mr Anil Acharya, secretary of the guild, said that a pavilion of the Calcutta Book Fair, will be stalled in the Guwahati fair.

About 200 book stalls will be accommodated at the fair.

The Statesman
9 July 1998

Millions of births not registered in India: Unicef

SCHOOL ENROLMENT: THE GENDER DISPARITY

Countries with large disparities between boys' and girls' secondary school enrolment...



... where ratio is higher for boys than girls by 10% or more		... where ratio is higher for girls than boys by 10% or more	
Zimbabwe	10	Colombia	10
Morocco	11	Namibia	10
Egypt	12	Spain	11
Uzbekistan	12	Lesotho	12
Bangladesh	14	Venezuela	12
Cambodia	14	Dominican Rep	13
Iran	14	Trinidad & Tobago	13
Pakistan	16	South Africa	15
Iraq	19	Uruguay	15
India	21	Finland	16
Turkey	22	Guyana	17
Nepal	24	Mongolia	18
Yemen	28	United Kingdom	22

Source: The Progress of Nations, 1998

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, July 8: About 40 million births go unregistered in the world every year, with one-third of them in India, says the *Progress of Nations — 1998* report released by the Unicef on Wednesday.

Registrar-general Vijayan Unni, while jointly releasing the report along with the secretary, ministry of labour, Dr L Mishra, said though birth registrations in the country date back to 1886, there was a widespread lack of awareness among the people on the procedure. Though states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Punjab have achieved 100 per cent registration of births and deaths, others like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan covered only 20 per cent, he said.

Introducing the report, Ms Razia Ismail, representing the Unicef, said registration of birth was a primary, civil and human right of every child. "When 40 million children go unrecognised, they are also denied development opportunities, security and identity," she explained. Ms Ismail said the report addressed four issues — birth registration, the successes and challenges of immunisation of children, the special problems of adolescents and those of the homeless.

In India, between 30 to 49 per cent of births are registered and, unlike many countries, a birth certificate is not required for purposes of immunisation, health care or marriage, says the

report. According to the government, only 50 per cent of births and 46 per cent of deaths are registered in India.

In Asia, countries like China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore, Thailand and Sri Lanka have registered over 90 per cent of births. India ranked below Pakistan in this regard and the Philippines and Indonesia have registered between 50 and 89 per cent of all births, the report says.

According to the report, more than 800,000 children under the age of five die of measles each year out of which 230,000 children are from India alone. Criticising the developing countries for not taking birth registration seriously, the report says that an effective system of birth registration is fundamental not only to the fulfilment of child rights but to the rational operation of a humane government in the modern world.

Without proof of birth, a child cannot be legally vaccinated in at least 20 countries while over 30 countries require birth registration before a child can be treated in a health centre. Many countries do not have statistics about the proportion of children registered and that some do not even have a registration system, the report says.

The rates differ widely within many developing countries, it adds.

Obstacles to registration are mainly the product of misplaced priorities and bureaucratic inadequacies, the report states.

Low Birth Registration: A Cause of Concern

Country	Level of registration
Brazil	90% and more
China	90% and more
United States	90% and more
Sri Lanka	90% and more
Pakistan	70% to 89%
Philippines	70% to 89%
Indonesia	50% to 69%
India	30% to 49%
Myanmar	30% to 49%
Bangladesh	Less than 30%
Afghanistan	No birth registration

Regional disparities: Unregistered births

Sub-Saharan Africa	9.6%
Middle East & N Africa	1.9%
Central Asia	1.2%
East/S Asia & Pacific	23.5%
Americas	1.1%
Europe	0.2%

Source: The Progress of Nations, 1998

The Asian Age
9 July 1998

Govt, UNFPA start district-based population projects

DH News Service

NEW DELHI, July 10

With a fresh accent on decentralisation, the government and the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) have started several district based population projects in six states, namely Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Gujarat.

These Integrated Population and Development Projects (IPDs) have been spread over 40 districts and enjoy about 50 per cent (\$50 million) of the total UNFPA support in its fifth country programme (1997-2001).

Addressing a press conference on the eve of the World Population Day, Mr K S Sugathan, joint secretary in the department of family welfare, and Dr Wasim Zaman, UNFPA's representative for India said that the Interna-

tional Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 clearly emphasised the linkages between population, human development and sustained economic growth. Calling the UNFPA an important partner in the country's population programme, Mr Sugathan said that the new programme had taken into account the broad strategies of the ICPD '94. The thrust would be on a district-based approach, improvement of family infrastructure, improving access to reproductive health services and training of local functionaries.

The role of NGOs will also be enhanced. The whole district programme has not been designed by people in Delhi but by local leaders, municipal workers, panchayat representatives and people working at the grassroots level. The criteria for selection of districts was based on sex ratio, infant mortality rate, female literacy, crude birth rate and percentage of births attended by trained persons. Mr Sugathan and Dr Zaman stressed that the accent would be on improving the quality and efficiency of services. He added that there had been a sea change in family planning in the country and issues had begun to be addressed. He added that UNFPA was not just a funding agency but offered vital advocacy support and state of the art techniques.

The fifth country programme in India was the biggest UNFPA programme in the world. Under this programme there were six sub programmes, one was that of reproductive health, population development and advocacy with a focus on quality improvement, social marketing of contraceptives and the IEC (inform, educate and communicate) component. In reply to a query, Mr Sugathan said that the draft population policy would have one more round of consultations by experts and would be introduced in parliament with some fresh inputs.

World resources report released

UNION MINISTER for Environment and Forests Suresh Parhu on Friday released the World Resources Report (1998-99). Releasing the report at a function organised by the World-Wide Fund, Mr Prahua said this report will help in identifying and prioritizing the area of major concern, where environmental degradation is to be checked urgently. The book will be ready reference to policy-makers while formulating plans and scheme in the area of eco-conservation, he added. The Minister disclosed that a committee would be formed to look into the issue of formulating solutions to the environmental problems and to go into the recommendations of the Conference of Health and Environment, which was held recently.

Deccan Herald
11 July 1998

The Pioneer
11 July 1998

The demographic bomb

The first World Population Day today is also occasion for stock-taking and review and an opportunity to assess what the future has in store. Every sixth person in the world today is an Indian, and as statisticians have pointed out, with 2.4 per cent of the world's land area, India is home to 16 per cent of the global population. India was also the first country to formulate an official population policy in 1952, but after the chaos of the Emergency excesses of 1975-77, little has been done to systematically contain high growth rates. In States like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan both fertility and infant mortality remain abnormally high. India adds 17 million to its population annually. The last 100 million of the population have been added to the overall national figure in the last six years. By the year 2016, urban population alone is projected to reach 425 million. The country's population explosion has deprived its people of substantial developmental benefits, leaving it behind others with one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world. But what is even more disturbing is the thought of more pressure on the over-extended infrastructural sector, where housing, drinking water supply, electricity and transport are already falling short of demand.

Yet the scenario is not uniformly dismal with States like Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu having almost solved their population problems. Government initiatives like the reproductive and child health care programmes have made inroads in many areas. Their methods can be emulated in regions where growth rates and fertility levels continue to rise. For instance, couples can be given incentives to restrict their family sizes. Information and quality reproductive health services must reach the people on time. Women should be bestowed the right to decide the size of the family. But studies have also pointed out that the proportion of vasectomies in the total number of sterilisations must be increased to more than 50 per cent to guarantee success. (In 1992-93, the last year for which information is available, the proportion of vasectomies in sterilisation was 3.5 per cent). Even without laying too much stress on figures, it is clear that much greater voluntary male participation in these schemes is important. It is noteworthy that the States which have been relatively more effective are also those with higher indices of social development. It is clear that when literacy, hygiene and health are given higher priority, family planning stands a better chance of success. Women also attain greater freedom, right of choice and even empowerment. This is an area in which government investment has to rise. The lack of political will and poor programme implementation, which have been named as the chief wreckers of planned growth in the past, could both be remedied with greater consciousness and involvement on the part of the people themselves.

Deccan Herald
11 July 1998

Little sister's watching



SELF-WORTH: Young girls in the Uslampatti block no longer think themselves as liabilities

Young girls in
villages near
Madurai prevent
parents from killing
their new-born
daughters.
Malini Nair
tells the story of the
'teen brigade'

She was the third — and very unwanted — girl child. Her mother, 21-year-old Shakuntala, knew she would kill the baby if it were a girl. Which is why Shakuntala had not registered herself at the primary health centre of her locality — Uslampatti, a block notorious for female infanticide near Madurai.

But unlike hundreds of baby girls before her, Shakuntala's third daughter is still alive. Those who have saved her from an early death by being fed with oleander extract are a few young girls.

Sixteen-year-old Rajapandi heads this small vigilant group of teenagers. The enlightened bunch of girls detect likely attempts at female infanticide in their village and do their spirited best to stop it. The girls, aged between 14 and 18, had guessed that Shakuntala would resort to the practice common in the community. "I smelt a rat when she refused to take the injections, which is mandatory in the last semester of pregnancy, from the local primary health centre. It obviously meant that she did not wish to put her pregnancy on record," says Rajapandi.

The group threatened to report the attempt to commit infanticide to the police, kicked up a row and immediately contacted the volunteers of the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) for help.

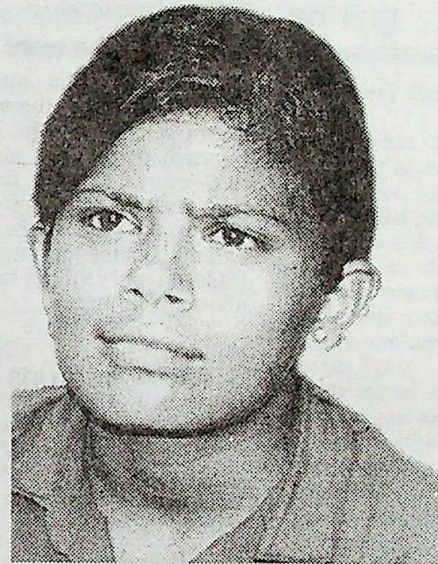
Rajapandi and her friends are mostly school drop-outs. Few of them know the world beyond Uslampatti. But they are part of a spirited bunch of youngsters that the ICCW is training to battle female infanticide in the Uslampatti block. From 200 cases of female infanticides a year reported in the mid-Eighties, the number is now down to 22 a year.

Today, 19 groups of teenagers are working across Uslampatti combatting female infanticide. "We have all seen baby girls being killed in the village. Earlier, we would shrug it off," says Maheswari who heads the teenage group in Nallaochanpatti. "We thought since it was stressful for parents to bring up girls, what they were doing was alright. But now we know we are as good as boys. So we won't stand it."

A long journey

But these efforts are like a drop in the ocean. For the last four years, the annual figures for female infanticide in Tamil Nadu has stubbornly stood at 3,000. While the number of infant girls to be poisoned or gagged to death has not shot up, war-scale efforts have not pulled it down either.

Says Sheela Rani Chunkath, project director of the Danida-funded health care project, "The problem is spreading — the core areas where it existed are now



'If my husband tells me to kill my baby girl I'll tell him to go jump'

Manimekhalai, a teenager fighting against female infanticide

expanding and in more and more communities, the practice is being legitimised."

Chunkath, a bureaucrat, has researched intensively on the subject along with Dr V.B. Athreya, department of social science, IIT. She says that traditionally, the core problem areas were Dharmapuri, Salem and Madurai. But over the years, the practice has spread across to form a continuous belt running from Madurai through Dindigul, Karur, Periyar, Salem and Dharmapuri to North Arcot. Today, seven blocks spread across Dharmapuri and Salem report more than 200 female infanticides per year. In all, around 130 blocks show cases of deaths of new-born baby girls. And a problem which was once considered restricted to the denotified Kallar community was being practised by

nearly a 100 castes.

The only heartening factor is that the state government has chosen not to sweep the problem under the carpet. Rattled by the statistics, it recently unleashed a massive street theatre campaign across Dharmapuri. Nineteen troops are touring various blocks in the district giving some 3,000 performances.

Spreading the word

Chunkath, who put the roadshow together, says that the artistes have been drawn from the villages. The plays focus on common perceptions about girls — that they cannot support their parents, that they need fat dowries to be married, that they cannot perform the last rites for their parents. During the shows the community leader in every village takes an oath not to allow any killings.

The plays have an impact. In Kalkumaranpatti village, Chunkath recounts, a woman had given birth to her fourth baby girl when the play-group was touring her village. Her father and sister were deeply affected by the shows. When the husband sent a bottle of Folidol (a pesticide) to poison the new-born, they refused to oblige.

Handle with care

The plays show a distinct maturing of the state government's stance on the problem. In 1986 a magazine report on female infanticides in Uslampatti had shocked the country. Caught in the glare of international exposure, the state ordered severe police crackdown. But instead of stemming the crime, police action drove it underground.

"When we visited the villages in Uslampatti asking for information, the villagers slammed the doors on our faces," recalls Valli Annamalai, ICCW's honorary joint secretary for Madurai. ICCW decided that the only way to get the villagers to open up was to win their trust with some exemplary social work. They started with counselling for pregnant women and day-care centres.

It was nearly a year before the women in the counselling groups opened up,

speaking about the pressure to kill female babies. Women's groups counselled them repeatedly to help them realise their self-worth. Scholarships were given for the education of girl children in the high risk categories.

The women were encouraged to save as a group and take bank loans. This gave them financial clout and their opinions value and gradually but perceptibly infanticide figures slid down.

It was then that the idea of similar adolescent groups took root. "For sustained success we realised that it was necessary to instill a sense of self-worth in the teenagers so that they could later stand on their own against social pressures," says Annamalai, project officer for the adolescent group programme.

A new beginning

To start with there had been stiff opposition, particularly from the men. The girls had all led quiet, sheltered lives, readying for the ever-impending marriage and motherhood. Premavati, the project officer recalls that the villagers feared that the girls would turn "loose (read immoral), bold and unfit to be married to decent families."

It took door-to-door counselling for the girls to join the groups. They were trained to become group animators and leaders so that they could instill confidence among other girls. They were also taught to save their meagre earnings and run a group account.

The ICCW experiment in Uslampatti has so far avoided using law to deter the villagers for fear of alienating the villagers. But Chunkath feels that one-to-one methods of the kind being used in Uslampatti cannot really root out the problem. "These are micro-level solutions. We have to mete out exemplary punishments to the men who instigate their wives to eradicate female infanticide," she says.

The girls of Uslampatti village, however, are not waiting for any social revolution to happen. "If my husband tells me to kill my baby girl I'll tell him to go jump," says young Manimekhalai with a confident grin. Her group nods in acquiescence.

The Telegraph
12 July 1998

Harvesting Rain water

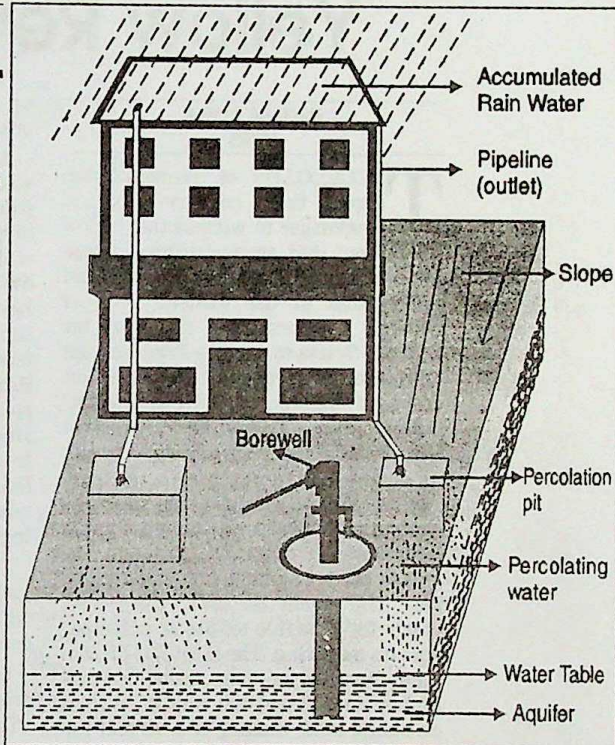
BY T. V. DEVI PRASAD SRIVATSASA

THE country reeling under severe heat conditions can now bank on monsoons to improve the depleting groundwater tables. Excessive tapping for multi-storey buildings, new colonies, agricultural needs, droughts and climatic changes are responsible to the receding water table. The solution lies in adopting better water management techniques like conserving rain water.

Rain water collected on roof tops can be diverted to percolation pits which in turn direct the water to 'aquifers'. Aquifer is a saturated permeable layer present in the earth's crust. Rainwater from terraces can be diverted through pipelines to the percolation pit.

Percolation pit recharges water. A low lying area or a foothill of a slope is ideal for a percolation pit. To construct a pit, sand, small size road metal and gravel are required. There should be distance of at least 10 feet between two pits. Each pit should have three feet depth and a circumference of one-and-a-half feet. Two thirds of the pit has to be covered with soil. The top, middle and bottom portions should be filled with road metal and gravel. Bathing water can also be directed to these pits or tress. The connecting pipe should have a 'U' bend which acts as a waterseal by not allowing bad smell and insects in the bathroom.

Percolation pits can be dug in standiums and parks. Sand from the pits should be cleared every six months. This is because organic particles get accumulated in between the pores. Rain



water can also be directed to a dried up well. Care should be taken to dig the pits away from the sewerage pipelines.

These pits in agricultural lands help percolation of stagnant water. Dig six feet cubical pits and connect them to wells with pipes. The two ends of the pipes have to be covered with net to prevent clogging, contamination and silting of the wells. Percolation pits recharge water, raise water tables, reduce salinity, crack formation on building walls and enhance crop yield.

The Indian Express (Science Express)
14 July 1998

Yellow Revolution

BATUK VORA
IANS

TRUCKLOADS of farmers from across the country come to Bhavnagar to witness the 'yellow revolution' that an agricultural scientist has brought about on the dry and saline land in the western state of Gujarat. Farmers from states as far apart as Orissa to Andhra Pradesh visit Surendra Baag to see the abundant crops of yellow Tuver Dal ('arhar' pulse) that agricultural scientist Vithalbhai J. Patel has raised.

Located 14 km from here on the highway to Rajkot, the semi-dry Bor Orchard run by Patel has now become a laboratory of sorts for growing the pulses, seeds of which originated in Japan. The strain he uses, T-08-P-9490, yields three to five tonnes of pulse per acre on maturing. The farm has broken other records too, like growing eucalyptus, sandalwood and teak wood trees on saline land, making it a virtual pilgrimage spot for progressive farmers from all over the country.

Over the last few years, India has made a great leap in food production - from 52 million tonnes in 1950 to 180 million tonnes in 1996-97. But as for production of pulses, India's record is not as impressive - from eight million tonnes in 1954-55 to 18 million tonnes at present, asserts Patel. Prices of pulses in the same period have gone up sharply. "This made people like me sit

up and think hard as to how this serious problem could be solved," he says.

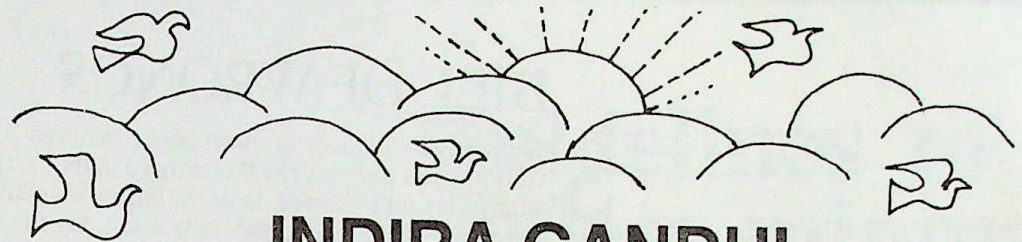
A particular breed of yellow pulse was once brought to him by a friend from Japan. "I got only half a kilogram of this seed, mixed it with both red and white seeds," Patel recalls. "I had my own doubts whether this could grow here, but I sowed it. Within a short time, I found that this was really a different kind of normal 'arhar' pulse. First of all, its plant grew very tall; it split into so many more branches on a single plant; its flowers and crop grew in bunches; most of its branches had five to six corns instead of three to four normally seen in India; and its harvesting was easier," he says.

The next year, he got an even bigger yield as only seeds of that variety in which branches had given five to six corns were sown.

On its first harvest after 140 days, the crops were given fertiliser and water. "To our pleasant surprise, branches were found growing ground to top from the round hard balls, and sub-branches again grew from them. Production in the third year increased to four tonnes in an acre," he says.

Patel comes from an illustrious family of scholars and leaders. His elder brother, Surendra Patel, is a well-known economist. His sister, the late Niruben Patel, was a famous Communist leader. Another brother, a kidney surgeon works in Germany.

Deccan Herald
14 July 1998



INDIRA GANDHI PARYAVARAN PURASKAR 1998

An award for significant scientific or field work
for the protection of environment

In grateful and reverential memory of the services of Smt. Indira Gandhi to the cause of environmental protection, the Government of India has instituted an annual award entitled "Indira Gandhi Paryavarán Puraskar" (Indira Gandhi Award for Environment). This annual award is bestowed on a citizen as well as an organisation of the country in recognition of their outstanding scientific or field work relating to environmental protection. The work may relate to any area pertaining to the protection of environment, environmental education or awareness.

An award of Rupees **One Lakh** would be given each to the selected individual and the organisation.

Nominations are, therefore, invited for the award for the year 1998 from citizens and organisations of the country. Any citizen or organisation of India can send the nominations complete in all respects on the lines of the proforma given below:

Self nominations will not be considered.

Name and address of the nominee/organisation:

Name of the proposer:

Age of the nominee (in case of individuals):

Present employment of the nominee (in case of individuals):

Type of Organisation (In case of organisation):

Details of previous awards received, if any, and details of significant contributions made by the nominee/organisation proposed.

The last date for receipt of nominations is **October 15, 1998**. Nominations received after the last date will not be considered.

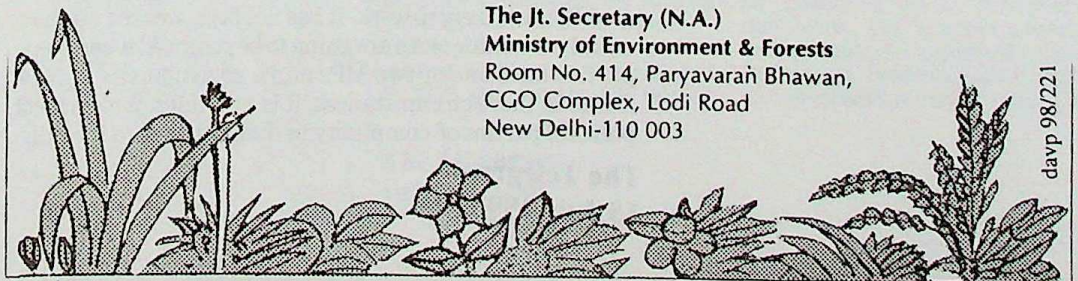
The Award Committee may suggest/select any individual or organisation for which the nomination might or might not have been received for the year(s) under consideration.

Enclosures, if any, sent along with the nominations will be entirely at sender's risk and shall not be returned by the Ministry.

The nominations may kindly be sent to:

The Jt. Secretary (N.A.)
Ministry of Environment & Forests
Room No. 414, Paryavaran Bhawan,
CGO Complex, Lodi Road
New Delhi-110 003

The Hindustan Times
15 July 1998



davp 98/221

BILL OF WRONGS

Seldom have members of parliament behaved as badly as some did over the Bharatiya Janata Party led government's efforts to table the bill for women's reservations in legislative bodies. It is a sad day for a democracy when a bill cannot be placed in Parliament for discussion. The deliberate disruption of proceedings and exhibition of disrespect towards all norms and chairs, led by Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav and Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav, have created a history that should never be repeated. That Messrs Yadav have tendered apologies since is some reason for relief. But it cannot be forgotten that the leaders of the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Samajwadi Party have also managed to get what they wanted to some extent. The bill has been deferred. The disruption on the first day has paid dividends. This is most alarming from the point of view of parliamentary conduct and procedure. The problem Messrs Yadav faced was simple. The BJP, the Congress and the left were backing the bill in its present form. The Congress had issued a party whip to facilitate its passing and the BJP already had a general whip in place. Together these three groups could get the bill passed. Debate would not change things. Hence Messrs Yadav decided to make it physically impossible for the bill to be placed at all. Whatever the arguments for and against the bill, its deferral ultimately has to be seen as the result of brute force. By raising the issue of reservations for other backward classes women, Messrs Yadav achieved something more. They made Congress MPs unsure about the stand the party should take. There is not much the BJP can do but defer the bill since agreement about it has been undermined.

In the competition for political correctness, the Congress cannot afford to be seen as anti-OBC. The situation has become even more difficult with the demand for a special quota for Muslim women within the reservations. Messrs Yadav, meanwhile, are sending positive messages to their OBC and Muslim votebanks back in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. What is apparently being demanded is that the present bill be modified to make space for "reservations within reservations". In other words, deferral, debate, and various parties or groups digging their heels in at various points. The unprecedented hullabaloo over the women's reservations bill raises certain suspicions. For example, no one really wants it, but everyone wishes to appear politically correct and increase the size of different votebanks. And since no one has come out with methods of implementation, perhaps it is silently understood the bill is unlikely to work. It has not been worked out how exactly constituencies are going to be reserved when some parties have one or two MPs and a coalition sits in New Delhi. In these circumstances, it is difficult not to suspect political parties of complicity in their attitude to the bill.

The Telegraph
15 July 1998

Virus-free banana saplings raised

New Delhi, July 14: In a significant achievement, Indian scientists have developed a workable technique to micropropagate virus-free saplings of the elite Nanjangund Rasbale variety of banana from diseased plants through tissue culture.

According to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, scientists at the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, raised 300 virus-free saplings from the infected plants of the variety using aseptic tissue culture technique. These saplings are presently being field tested at the institute's campus.

This elite local variety of banana is known for its sweetness, but is also susceptible to diseases, especially viral diseases, which affect its growth, reduce the fruit yield and ultimately kill the plant. The viral diseases persist through generations, reducing the productivity of the plantation crop.

Adaptation of the technique developed by the plant cell biotechnology department of the CFTRI will help farmers to grow virus free crops of the fruit, the CSIR said.

In this technique, cells from the apical meristem of the diseased banana plants are taken as they are free from virus and cultured on a nutrient medium in aseptic conditions in test tubes. The cells proliferate on the nutrient medium and a callus is formed. (UNI)

The Asian Age (Bangalore Age)
15 July 1998

NGOs need to enrol disabled candidates

Staff Reporter

New Delhi

THE FINDINGS of a study conducted by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) and the National Association for the Blind, Delhi, to create a gender-segregated database on the role of organisations working in the disability sector was released in the Capital on Tuesday.

Out of the 150 non-government organisations (NGOs) that were contacted for the study, 87 NGOs replied.

Among the executive body members in the 87 participating organisations, 78.58 per cent are non-disabled decision makers and only 21.42 per cent are persons with disabilities.

Presence of men in executive bodies is 70.50 per cent while women comprise 29.50 per cent. Disabled men in the decision making body are 18.17 per cent while disabled women account for a mere 3.25 per cent. NCPEDP executive director Javed Abidi urged the concerned NGOs to encourage more disabled people to join the field of rehabilitation as professionals. "NGOs need to make a special effort to take disabled candidates for the training courses which they conduct," he said.

The Pioneer
15 July 1998

Govt. will enact law to protect bio-diversity

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Conscious of the farmers' apprehensions over bio-piracy by foreign commercial interests, the Union government is to enact a law to protect indigenous plants.

Attorney-general Soli J. Sorabjee on Monday told the supreme court that the legislation — called the "Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Protection Act" — was at the stage of formulation.

The government, Mr Sorabjee said, was also formulating the "geographical indications Act" to ensure the name of plants and animal products of Indian origin — like Basmati rice or Darjeeling tea — were not exploited by foreign corporations.

The draft outlines of the proposed laws were already formulated and had been circulated among different ministries, expert groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for their comments.

He said the comments on the draft laws had already been received from environmental activist Vandana Shiva. The comments, along with other inputs received, would be duly taken into consideration, he said.

Mr Sorabjee was responding to the court's query on a public interest petition by the Research Foundation of Science, Technology and Ecology and two others.

A bench of justice A.S. Anand and justice D.P. Wadhwa had asked the government to inform the court about the steps being taken to protect bio-diversity in the country.

The petition has sought a direction to the government to protect bio-diversity in the country in wake of patenting of Basmati rice by an American firm.

The Times of India
15 July 1998

Women's groups demand action against US doctors for 'Q' trials

By ANN NINAN
Inter Press Service

New Delhi, July 14: Activists here have demanded that the government immediately enforce a Supreme Court order to stop the import and distribution of the illegal female sterilisation drug, Quinacrine, used against malaria in World War II.

One year ago, women's groups and health activists filed a public interest litigation case in the Supreme Court to stop the unethical use of the chemical contraceptive, which is known to cause irreparable damage to the reproductive system.

In Parliament last year, the government said the World Health Organisation opposes Quinacrine trials without proper toxicological studies — which can last 20 years and cost millions of dollars, and that the Drugs

Controller of India had refused permission for either trials or import of the pellets.

Yet, over the last two decades, the promoters of the process — US doctors Elton Kessel and Stephen Mumford — and their Indian partners have flouted rules and conducted trials, exposing thousands of women to risks, health activists told the Supreme Court.

In March this year, the Supreme Court upheld the ban by the Drugs Controller, but to the disappointment of activists failed to take retrospective action while the Drugs Controller claimed it could not take punitive action.

"So those involved in illegal Quinacrine sterilisations are going scot-free," laments Saheli, one of the groups which have been fighting the illegal Quinacrine trials in a letter to

the Union health and family welfare minister last week.

"Women continue to suffer the pain, menstrual abnormalities and complications caused by the procedure... without the followup that is expected with clinical trials," the letter states, urging the government to take urgent action.

Tens of thousands of poor women have been persuaded in parts of India and across the border in Bangladesh (Saheli says "trials" were also conducted in Pakistan, Iran and Vietnam) into trying the 'Q' method, involving the insertion of seven small Quinacrine pills in the uterus, often leading to severe scarring and inflammation.

The trials have been "marked by utter disregard for informed consent and follow-up," and concern for the need for further trials in laboratories

on the potential of the drug to cause change in tissue, Saheli stated in a report published last year.

Studies conducted at the Johns Hopkins University in the US reported some data on Quinacrine's potential to effect the foetus and cause cancer. The Indian Council of Medical

SPOTLIGHT

Research abandoned Quinacrine trials six years ago when four out of eight women undergoing them became pregnant.

However, that did not stop the zealous among doctors, who are ready to push for population control at any cost, from promoting the method, which costs only \$1 in each case, and requires no surgery, no anaesthetic and no real followup.

Even though the method is likely to make pregnancies fatal, and is irreversible, a doctor in Delhi's Lady Hardinge Medical College, a teaching hospital, and a researcher, last year admitted in a documentary film that they used the 'Q' method.

The makers of the film, *The Yellow Haze*, also interviewed three women: none of them was told of Quinacrine's risks or side effects, two of them said they suffered side effects like swelling of feet, severe abdominal pain and depression.

One of them, a mother of four, got pregnant, and had to undergo surgical abortion.

The Quinacrine pellets distributed in India and Bangladesh have been supplied to Indian doctors by US right-wing lobbies, through the International Federation of Family Health and Centre for Research on Popula-

tion and Security which claims it is fulfilling the huge unmet need for contraception in developing countries and reducing population growth.

According to Saheli, Dr Mumford of the International Federation of Family Health has gone on record saying, "If the borders of the US are not closed, the US would become a Third World country."

The two US doctors and other colleagues travel with Quinacrine tablets in their suitcases, urging gynaecologists at meetings and conferences the world over to try the chemical sterilisation drug, as it was ideal for Third World countries, the Saheli report states.

Dr Sneh Vishwanathan, a consultant at the Parivar Seva Sanstha of Marie Stopes India, told Saheli that she met Dr Kessel at a conference in Karachi in 1994 and became convinced about

the Q-method.

Among the most vociferous proponents in India has been Delhi-based Dr J.K. Jain, one-time Bharatiya Janata Party member of Parliament.

In a written statement to women's groups in May 1997, Dr Jain said: "Population is a major problem for this country and neither the government nor World Health Organisation have come up with workable solutions. It has, like so many other development exigencies, been left to others to tackle."

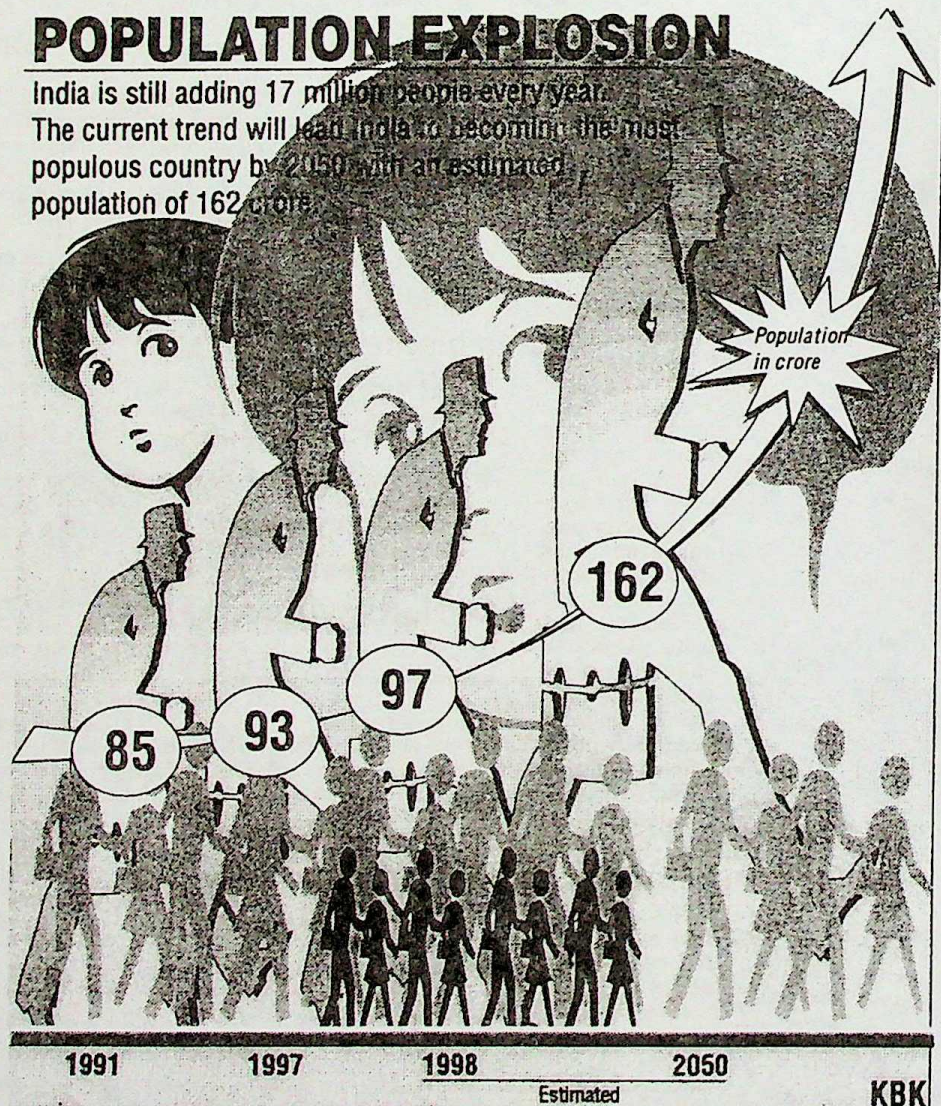
Women's groups and activists want the government to draft clear-cut rules on medical trials and take action against violators.

"If the government continues to turn a blind eye to such malpractices, the guilty will continue to gain strength, while women continue to pay the price," Saheli says.

The Asian Age
15 July 1998

POPULATION EXPLOSION

India is still adding 17 million people every year. The current trend will lead India to becoming the most populous country by 2050 with an estimated population of 162 crore.



The Hindu
16 July 1998

Are teachers too blind to help?

Not to be able to see can be tortuous, but not more than the knowledge that hardly anyone else cares particularly. Not strangely, most blind students are not as bitter about not being able to read and write as they are about the apathy displayed by our educational organisations in their efforts to educate them.

The discrimination starts right at the nursery level. The teachers don't have a clue how to deal with a visually impaired child. While there are special blind schools, children can often be integrated into normal schools with just a little effort on the parts of the teachers. Especially those children who are not totally blind.

Schools such as Springdales which have integrated visually handicapped children beautifully into the school curriculum.

Generally, unless a child is totally blind, it will merge into the throng of students with only a little help and encouragement from the teachers.

The first step is to identify a child who is visually impaired. Not all children

are totally blind. There are some who can see partially.

Such students can often come across as dim or careless. They will sometimes be able to identify things, at others times they won't. For instance, they might not be able to recognise a tomato which they have identified several times before. This might simply be because the picture placed before them is too small and not because they are forgetful or disinterested.

The book, *Education of children with seeing problems*, released by NCERT, gives specific guidelines to teachers about how parents and teachers can identify a child with remaining eyesight.

- ☐ Does the child hold himself rigid while reading?
- ☐ Does the child frown when looking at pictures?
- ☐ Does the child blink excessive-

ly when reading?

- ☐ Does the child become frequently inattentive when reading?
- ☐ Does the child lose or skip his place when reading?
- ☐ Does the child move head or book instead of eyes while reading?
- ☐ Does the child become fatigued while reading or writing?
- ☐ Does the child use a finger as line-marker to guide the eyes while reading?
- ☐ Does the child close one eye when reading?
- ☐ Does the child face problems in pointing to the title of a lesson or lines in bold print in the book?
- ☐ Is the child unable to get information from the black board even

when the teacher does not speak while writing?

- ☐ Does the child request the teacher to change his seat in order to see the black board clearly?
- ☐ When name of a child is called out by the teacher or a classmate, can he/she locate the caller (look in the direction of the caller)?
- ☐ Does the child avoid window in the classroom?
- ☐ Does the child

face problems in location of his/her friends while playing?

- ☐ Does the child hesitate in moving around in bright light?

If a teacher observes any complaint associated with the appearance and use of the eyes along with any five seeing behaviours out of the eleven italicised ones, as "yes," the child needs functional assessment for his/her vision.

There are specific guidelines for identifying remaining eyesight in children up to four years of age.

- ☐ Do the child's eyes appear to be in constant motion?
- ☐ Does the child turn towards the source of light frequently?
- ☐ Does the child also move his eyes back and forth along with the source of light?
- ☐ Does the child show confusion in recognising people?

A child who has partial eyesight can be integrated into mainstream schools — if only teachers could learn to identify their problems and understand how to help them, says
Harbir Arora

The Pioneer
17 July 1998

New agricultural policy Crop insurance to be made compulsory

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 16 Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee stated here today that the new agricultural policy would make crop insurance compulsory for farmers taking loans. It would also permit the leasing of land to the owner's kin and provide for the consolidation of land holdings in order to ensure optimal use of land.

Addressing the 69th annual general meeting of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Prime Minister said that the nation's new agricultural policy would be finalised soon.

Mr Vajpayee observed that farming was still a big gamble as it was largely dependent on the monsoon. All kinds of risks dominate the farmers lives and "insurance against these risks is important if the lives of farmers have to be improved," he added.

He said a comprehensive insurance scheme was being chalked out in which the smaller farmers would have to pay a lesser premium.

The Prime Minister further stated that a new method of settlement of non-performing assets in the agricultural sector was being worked out "to de-clog credit flow to this sector." The rural infrastructure development fund of NABARD will be given an additional Rs 500 crore to provide a thrust to the credit flow.

The Prime Minister stated that the new agricultural policy would have a three-pronged thrust on the optimal use of land, water and bio-resources in a sustainable manner.

He pointed out that the green revolution had "left out our dry-land areas which constitute nearly 63 per cent of the total cultivated area." In these areas conservation and scientific use of water must receive a very high priority, he added.

Mr Vajpayee said the Government "will soon unveil a major initiative to integrate wasteland development, watershed management and bio-resources development in an integrated manner, as many as 80 million hectares of marginal lands and wastelands would be brought into use," he added.

He said the involvement of people, women's groups, NGOs and panchayati raj institutions has to be ensured on a wider scale in various land and water management programmes like tree planting, contour bunding, construction of small storages levelling and reshaping of land, construction of field channels and controlled grazing etc.

Mr Vajpayee exhorted the ICAR scientists to master the latest developments in biotechnology for their application in agriculture and animal husbandry so that farm productivity is boosted.

The Prime Minister observed that the GDP growth target of 7-8 per cent for the Ninth Five Year Plan cannot be accomplished unless agriculture grows at a rate of 4 to 5 per cent.

He said while the dire predictions of large-scale starvation in India, made by some western experts had been falsified there was "no scope for self-congratulation".

Mr Vajpayee pointed out that yields per hectare of major crops in India are considerably lower than other countries with comparable climatic conditions and food production "has not kept pace with the growth in population."

"Government policies and programmes have helped but far more could have been achieved on the farm front, had all our agencies adopted a less bureaucratic and more farmer-friendly approach.

The Hindustan Times
17 July 1998

Rotary award to focus on literacy

NEW DELHI, July 16 (HTC) This year's Rotary India Award for service to humanity will focus on promotion of literacy.

The award which carries a cash component of Rs two lakhs and a citation is the highest recognition given by the Rotary in India for excellence in humanitarian service. It is open to the Indian citizens and voluntary organisations engaged in activities and programmes aimed at promotion

of literacy, particularly among the economically Backward and deprived sections of society.

The nominations received will be evaluated by a high-level jury. The last date for sending of nominations is Sept. 30, 1998.

Further information about the award can be had from the office of The Rotary Award for Service to Humanity Trust located at A-1/49, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi.

The Hindustan Times

17 July 1998

Right of Hindu widow: SC sets aside HC judgment

By T. Padmanabha Rao

NEW DELHI, July 16.

The Supreme Court has held that "the right to maintenance of a Hindu female flows from the social and temporal relationship between the husband and the wife and that right in the case of a Hindu widow is "a pre-existing right", which existed under the Shastric Hindu Law long before the passing of the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act 1937 or the Hindu Women's Rights to Separate Maintenance and Residence Act 1946.

These acts merely recognised the position as was existing under the Shastric Hindu Law and gave it a 'statutory' backing.

Where "a 'Hindu widow' is in possession of the property of her husband, she has a right to be maintained out of it and she is entitled to retain the possession of that property in lieu of her right to maintenance", the Bench said.

Dr. Justice A. S. Anand, who delivered the judgment of the Bench, set aside a judgment of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

The High Court held that a Hindu widow (predecessor-in-title of the appellants before the Apex court) had "no pre-existing right to the suit land but only a restricted right under the 'will' (executed by her husband in June 1946) and that the 'compromise decree' (in a related court proceeding) created only a 'life interest' in her favour for the first time.

Therefore the 'Hindu widow' never became a full or absolute owner of the property in dispute even after the coming into force of the Hindu Secession Act, 1956 and as such, after her death (in 1969), the plaintiffs (who are respondents before the Apex Court) became entitled to possession of the suit property, being reversioners of the late husband of the 'Hindu widow'.

The Bench, which included Mr Justice V N Khare, noted that the judgment of the High Court "suffers from a misconception about the nature of the 'pre-existing right' of a Hindu widow"

"The opinion of the High Court that there

could be no "pre-existing right" vesting in the Hindu widow (in this case) because of the non-applicability of the 1937 Act in Rewa State is clearly erroneous," the Bench observed and added that her right to maintenance existed under the Shastric Hindu Law and was not created by the 1937 or 1946 Acts and that those Acts merely gave statutory backing to her existing rights.

The High Court also "fell in error", the Bench noted in holding that the case of the 'Hindu widow' was covered by Section 14(2) of the 1956 Act and not by Section 14(1) of the Act.

It is by force Section 14(1) of the 1956 Act, that a Hindu widow's limited interests "gets automatically enlarged into an absolute right" notwithstanding any restriction placed under the document or the instrument, the Bench said.

So far as sub-section (2) of Section 14 is concerned, it applies to instruments, decrees, awards, gifts etc., "which create an independent or a new title in favour of the female for the first time" and that it has no application to cases where the instrument/document either declares or recognises or confirms her share in the property or her "pre-existing right to maintenance" out of that property, the Bench noted.

The 'Will' (executed by her husband in 1946) "declared and the compromise decree recognised the right of the Hindu widow as an "owner in possession" of the suit property with all the "rights and control" over it and that the 'compromise decree' did not create any independent or new title in her favour for the first time", the Bench observed.

The 'Hindu widow's' husband died a few months after the execution of the 'will' in 1946.

The Bench, in reversing the judgment of the High Court, restored the judgment of the trial court which dismissed the civil suit of 'reversioners' (of her late husband) filed after the death of the 'Hindu widow' in 1969 claiming the property covered in the 'will'.

The Hindu
17 July 1998

Tackling armed opposition

The primary aim of human rights groups has been to monitor, highlight and struggle against human rights abuses perpetrated by state agencies. But with the emergence of armed opposition groups like the Sendero Luminoso in Peru and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, human rights NGOs confront a new problem which did not traditionally fall under their mandate, writes SUHAS CHAKMA

ON 4 July 1997 Sanjoy Ghosh, an NGO activist of Avar-NE, was kidnapped by the United Liberation Front of Asom from Majuli island. Since then, there have been contradicting statements from the Ulfa about his fate. Ghosh's case raises many questions about the role of the human rights NGOs vis-a-vis the violations by armed opposition groups.

The primary, if not exclusive, mandate of human rights groups all over the world has been to monitor, highlight, and struggle against human rights abuses perpetrated by state agencies. The state, as the legally constituted entity in control of the territory under jurisdiction, has the sole legitimate right to use force to maintain law and order and security, and guarantee the protection of fundamental rights. The United Nations Bill of Rights binds governments to follow international human rights standards.

However, with the emergence of numerous armed opposition groups like the Sendero Luminoso in Peru and LTTE, human rights NGOs confront a new problem which did not traditionally fall under their mandate. While the People's War Group in Andhra Pradesh terms NGOs as agents of imperialism, the Maoist Samyukta Jana Morcha in impoverished mid-western Nepal bans the operation of international NGOs on the same ground. Many armed opposition groups, even if they do not control territory per se, exercise substantive control over the lives and rights of people in the areas they operate. In the 1980s, in El Salvador and Guatemala, and presently in Colombia, Peru and India, activists not only face the wrath of the state but also non-state political entities.

In India, violence is perpetrated by four groups of non-state political entities. First, there are numerous overground political groups like the Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, Durga Bahini, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Ranbir Sena. Their involvement in wanton violence needs no introduction. Yet, the government turns a blind eye to their activities.

Again, there are numerous politically-motivated armed opposition groups in the grey areas of the North-east, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Many of these groups often engage in criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, drug-trafficking and extortions.

Many criminals and criminal groups try to politicise their activities. Criminal organisations in Dhanbad engage in trade union-like activities. The lower-caste dacoit gangs assume the mantle of social justice in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Veerappan often attempts to espouse Tamil sentiments. Phoolan Devi was seen as a protector of the backward castes and a scourge of the upper castes. Even her gunning down of innocent villagers in Behmai was justified as simple retribution by many backward caste politicians.

However, it is difficult to classify such acts. The problem of categorising is further complicated by the fact that the government tends to classify all acts of violent protest as criminal; conversely, "subalternists" interpret all challenges made by oppressed classes and groups as political.

But, the mere iteration that the state should maintain law and order does not satisfactorily address the problem. Hence, human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre have begun to address the problem. The People's Union for Democratic Rights and People's Union for Civil Liberties condemned the killing of Hindus at Doda in June 1998. The Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties earlier said "all revolutionary parties had a right to chalk out their policies. This should not undermine the civil liberties of the people even in the name of revolutionary struggle".

There was no visible public outcry against the arrest, detention, interrogation and torture of LTTE sympathisers who were accused of assassinating Rajiv Gandhi. In the infamous "Bhagalpur Blinding" case, local citizens, led by the local Traders Association, supported the blinding of suspects, arguing that the criminal justice system was too slow in meting out justice to those who threatened society.

However, these incidents cannot be an excuse for the state to take recourse to unlawful "law and order measures" in dealing with any protest. The government has been constantly using draconian laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, National Security Act and Disturbed Areas Act. Through these activities, the state not only removes itself from the ambit of any democratic accountability, but, worse, it contributes to criminalisation of state agencies.

It is difficult to classify what activities of armed opposition groups should be tolerated as legitimate protest. By and large, human rights groups have chosen to restrict their mandate to issues like torture, hostage-taking, political killings and violence against civilians. Such a framework might, however, appear restrictive since it classifies populations into "legitimate" and "illegitimate" targets of political violence. This would tantamount to justify systematic annihilation of "class enemies" who may include women and children, or torture and kill suspected police informers and government officials by revolutionaries and freedom fighters.

Amnesty International faced a dilemma whether to consider Nelson Mandela a "prisoner of conscience" because of his links with the violent activities of the African National Congress in the 1960s. Mandela was not considered a "prisoner of conscience" and the decision was severely criticised and resented by many.

Human rights groups will have to take an unequivocal stand against wanton violence even if it is committed by those who, in the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression". The state must also protect human rights by the rule of law and not adopt unlawful means.

The Statesman
17 July 1998

HOW TO PREVENT CHOLERA

Cholera is a serious disease of the intestine. It is caused by a germ. It spreads quickly through contaminated food and drink and may cause epidemic in areas of poor sanitation.

HOW IT SPREADS ?

Water becomes infected by the stools and vomits of a patient.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CHOLERA ?

The patient starts passing frequent loose motions which turn watery like rice water. There may be vomiting. Due to quick loss of fluid through stools and vomiting collapse sets in. The patient develops extreme thirst, sunken cheeks and eyes, cold and dry skin. He passes less urine and even it may stop. If not treated in time he becomes unconscious and may die.

HOW TO TREAT CHOLERA ?

If medical attention is given early Cholera can be effectively treated. But the most important thing is its prevention. If there is a suspected case of Cholera report it immediately to the local health authority.

DOs AND DON'Ts

- * Protect foods and drinks from infection
- * Take anti-Cholera injection to prevent the disease
- * Take drinking water from a safe source
- * Protect food and drinks from flies
- * Eat only fresh and hot foods.
- * Boil milk before use
- * Wash hands well with soap and water before eating
- * Do not eat stale food and cut fruits
- * Avoid taking mineral water and ice cream of doubtful purity.

dayp 98/223

The Pioneer
18 July 1998

Rise of the Bangla NGO: a lesson there for India?

The conventional wisdom in development economics now holds that economic success occurs only where the state does an excellent job in non-market areas like education, health and rural development. Bangladesh has come up with an original alternative.

It has a corrupt, inefficient state incapable of delivering basic services. But its non-government organisations (NGOs) have become so strong that they rival the state in reach, and perform far better. Their successes, and limitations, hold important lessons for India.

Improbably, Bangladesh has emerged as the world leader in NGOs. The Grameen Bank, BRAC, Proshika and Association for Social Advancement are among the largest rural development organisations in the world, working in 60,000 of the country's 86,000 villages. The biggest, BRAC, runs schools, health centres and micro-credit schemes in 50,000 villages, has over 19,000 permanent employees and 33,737 part-time teachers.

Foreign donors, tired of seeing aid wasted by the Bangladesh government, are delighted to channel funds to NGOs instead. Yet, within Bangladesh, criticism of NGOs for waste, corruption and exploitation is spreading. Top NGO leaders live in palatial houses and have become international jet-setters. They are expanding out of traditional social areas: BRAC is becoming a dairy giant, and runs an international chain of handicraft shops. Grameen Bank has diversified into cellular phones, textiles and

Internet services. Critics say NGOs have become a parallel state financed by foreigners, accountable to none.

Few contest the fact that NGOs provide services far better than the state. NGOs have provided small loans to no less than 6 million poor people, of whom over nine-tenths are women. Commercial banks lend only to those with collateral, the micro-credit societies lend only to those with no collateral. Yet, their rate of recovery exceeds 90 per cent while India's nationalised banks cannot cross 50 per cent. Beneficiaries form groups, and loans to individuals are guaranteed by the groups, who oblige borrowers to repay. Ninety-six per cent of BRAC's borrowers are women, who have proved far more creditworthy than men.

BRAC has no pukka school buildings, and only rents thatched rooms. At least 70 per cent of its students must be girls, and 96 per cent of its teachers are women. These are all local folk who have typically not completed high school themselves, and are paid just 600 takas (Rs 540) per month. BRAC schools give no homework, have no regular exams, and have flexible hours to enable working children to attend. Despite having inferior facilities, technically unqualified teachers, and enrolling only dropouts from government schools, BRAC provides better education than government schools. UNICEF has hailed its non-formal educational model as the most cost-effective anywhere (around \$20 per child per year).

BRAC also covers primary health, poul-

SWAMINOMICS

Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar

try, livestock, vegetable cultivation, human rights and legal education. It says schooling and credit are not enough, people also need skills. So it is expanding training and going commercial (its dairy wing is a large, full-fledged corporation).

Grameen Bank has entered into a joint venture for cellular phones. It argues that telecom is absolutely vital for rural development, and there is no chance of getting regular telephone services. Cellular phones provide an answer: village women can buy such phones with micro-credit and rent these out for calls.

NGOs in Bangladesh have not followed any foreign model. They are global innovators who have performed what once looked impossible. Why, then, are they criticised so much in Bangladesh itself?

Some criticism reflects vested interests (politicians and bureaucrats hate a rival power centre that exposes their own shortcomings). Some reflects dead ideology. Socialists in India and Bangladesh always swore by concessional credit for small borrowers. But BRAC charges 15 per cent interest on loans, Grameen up to 22 per cent. Socialists call these rates exploitative. Yet the high repayment rate proves that socialists are simply wrong in emphasising low interest rates rather than access to credit.

Besides, some women who borrow from BARC at 15 per cent simply re-lend the

money at 20 per cent. Concessional interest simply increases the probability that the beneficiary becomes a money-lender rather than entrepreneur.

Top NGO leaders are often rich men with lavish lifestyles. I personally have no objection. People who achieve such great economic feats deserve as much reward as the heads of multinational corporations. No system based on self-sacrifice by penniless socialists can ever grow much. I far prefer an organisation like BRAC which pays market-rate salaries to over 50,000 employees. Maybe, there is some corruption and embezzlement, but that happens in MNCs too. I find ridiculous the charge that 600 takas per month for part-time rural teachers is exploitative. The very fact that BRAC has so many applicants proves otherwise.

Some NGOs are pure rackets. But why tar all NGOs with the same brush? On balance they have done a marvellous job. Indian NGOs need to learn from this. Many in India consist of a charismatic leader surrounded by admiring chelas, and such organisations collapse when the leaders depart or lose interest. Bangladesh too has charismatic leaders (like Mohammad Yunus of Grameen), yet its NGOs are notable for efficient managerial systems that will survive the death of its leaders.

Despite their good work, Bangladesh remains poor. The poverty ratio has declined from 59 per cent in 1991-92 to 53 per cent in 1995-96, says the World Bank, yet it could take a century to eradicate poverty. Dr

Wahiduddin Mahmud of Dhaka University says micro-credit has helped beneficiaries, but the benefit to the economy could be far less (if a sluggish economy gives scope for only a limited number of shops or bullock carts in a village, Grameen beneficiaries taking up such activities may simply displace others rather than add to village GDP). Ultimately, only a dynamic economy can eradicate poverty.

The really big achievement of NGOs, says Dr Mahmud, is their empowerment of women. By focussing education, jobs and credit on women, NGOs have transformed women from illiterate chattels to entrepreneurs who challenge and beat men in the workplace.

For some jobs, BRAC requires that women applicants must ride a motorcycle, the ultimate rural symbol of empowerment. No wonder the mullahs are so angry with NGOs, and have attacked and burned BRAC offices.

Female empowerment has spurred Bangladesh's dramatic success in reducing fertility. This does not show up in GDP growth rates, but contributes greatly to the rise in per capita income. Above all, it constitutes a social revolution.

So, while NGOs cannot end poverty, they can greatly mitigate the failings of an ineffective state, and transform society at the grass roots. Everybody in India should learn from this, especially, Leftists who for too long have seen the state as the solution for all ills.

The Times of India

19 July 1998

It took a village

"I've spent 60 years in this village. Nothing had been done before the women came to power. Nothing."
— Parvati Ramnath Jaiswal, Metikheda, Yavatmal.

IN 1989, nine women were elected to govern Metikheda, a muddy village that cockily straddles one of the main highways of Maharashtra's Yavatmal district. Although the village is surrounded by fluffy white fields bulging with cotton, most of its 2,000 tribal residents own no land. They work as farm labourers, somehow surviving on the Rs 240 they earn each month.

"Only one family had ruled our village for so many years," says Maiah Wankhede, a Shetkari Sanghatana activist who headed the women's panchayat. The Sarodays — who had controlled

Metikheda's panchayat for 27 years — were virtually its Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. They also owned or ran everything in sight; acres of land, seed shops, fertiliser agencies, the sole flour mill, even the village school.

Unable to bear the prospect of being defeated by *women*, the opposition rolled out the Dirty Tricks Department in full force during the elections. Maiah, an urban-born activist, was derided for having short hair, village men were cajoled to swap their wives' votes for liquor, cash bribes bloated, and whisper campaigns buzzed hungrily. Nothing worked.

After trouncing the opposition, nine jubilant women — including tribals and landless labourers — went on a victory lap around the festooned village. Many of them were startled; they'd never seen the

whole village before.

The first thing the women's panchayat did was to tackle the water problem. A tap scheme had been sanctioned during the previous panchayat's tenure, but two wealthy farmers had cornered all the water. The rest of the village clustered around eight community taps where water was available for one hour every day. "There used to be fights at the community taps every day," remembers Wankhede. Desperate villagers had even started cutting the water pipes: If I can't get it, neither can you!

Taking this on meant taking on entrenched power structures. A simple valve was used to block the diversion of community water to the two farmers, community taps were built, and private water connections sanctioned to any family that could pay Rs 400. The result:

three times more water for *everybody*. Community taps now run for three hours and the village gets 120,000 cubic litres of water, instead of the previous 40,000 cl. "For 40 years, nobody had paid attention to the issue of water," says labourer Marutrao Atram. "But nine women were elected and the water problem became much less."

Providing fuel and toilets were other items on the panchayat agenda, two basic needs whose absence affects women most. "It really is a problem for the women to go to the toilet," explains Majah, "since Metikheda is on the highway."

Free smokeless *chulhas* were distributed to every house; however, these are rarely used, a rejection that the women attribute to a design defect. The panchayat also added more rooms to the village school so that girls could study up to a higher grade; in rural areas, sons may be sent to finish their schooling in other villages, but never daughters.

Change never occurs in a vacuum; it usually has a ripple effect. Simply by taking up issues that other panchayats ignore, this all-women panchayat has given women a voice.

In 1992, during a major drought, village women fought — and won — the right to collect fodder from the neighbouring forests. The whole village benefited, since cattle stopped dying. Inspired by these

Metikheda was a dusty little village of landless tribals where male panchayats had done no work for decades. And then in 1989, nine women took over and changed its face. **Bishakha Datta** records the astounding success story

successes, another group of women have come together to successfully negotiate a group loan to rear and sell goats for a living; another move that benefits the whole family,

In its five-year tenure, the women's panchayat got two officials suspended for manipulating village funds

whose income increases.

Perhaps the headwomen's most ambitious venture has been its drive to check corruption, something that panchayats rarely touch. Corruption runs so deep that Rajiv

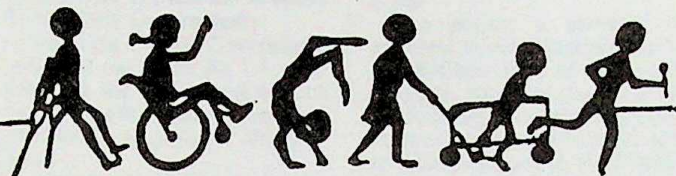
Gandhi once estimated that only 15 per cent of the amount sanctioned for rural development actually reached beneficiaries.

In its five-year tenure, the women's panchayat got two officials suspended for manipulating village funds. The panchayat also combats corruption through sheer common-sense measures: checking the prices of goods, challenging inflated bills, and ensuring that all material bought is consumed, not wasted.

Five years later, the village is willing to acknowledge the women's contribution to development. Like Syed Valiuddin Syed Moinuddin, one of the few Muslims in the village. "The amount of work that the ladies did," wheezes the 90-year-old, slowly, painfully, "the men will never do."

The Sunday Times (The Times of India)

19 July 1998



ATTENTION

MANUFACTURERS/FABRICATORS/ SUPPLIERS OF AIDS AND APPLIANCES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is organising an international exhibition of assistive devices available in the country and abroad for the benefit of disabled persons at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi during September 14-20, 1998. The exhibition space will be made available free of cost to the exhibitors.

Please send for consideration a detailed list/catalogue alongwith brief write up and photograph/pamphlet of the aids and appliances being produced/marketed by your organisation indicating your requirement for space latest by August 14, 1998 at the following address;

Mr. Rakesh Arora
Director (DD-I)
2nd Floor, Room No. 216-D,
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Shastri Bhavan,
New Delhi-110 001

Tel: 3387073 Fax: 3232412 davy 98/183

Deccan Herald (Sunday Spotlight)
19 July 1998

Terminator — big threat to Indian agriculture

NEW DELHI, July 19.

Terminator-III is not the sequel to an Arnold Schwarzenegger blockbuster. It is reportedly the greatest threat ever faced by Indian agriculture.

"It is nothing short of biotechnological warfare," says leading food expert, Mr. Devinder Sharma, in reference to the Terminator, a plant gene which allows seeds to "self-destruct" after producing a single crop.

Terminator was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in collaboration with "delta and Pine Land," a seed company now acquired by the bio-technology giant, Monsanto, which already has extensive interests in this country.

The Union Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr. Som Pal, admitted in Parliament this week that the Terminator's self-destructive traits could spread through cross-pollination and cause the gradual extinction of India's traditional crop varieties.

"It has been concluded by a number of crop geneticists that there is a likelihood of pollen carrying the Terminator gene to crops in adjoining fields," Mr. Som Pal said.

India, Mr. Som Pal said, had responded by banning the import of seed containing the Terminator gene and directed the quarantine office to ensure that no seed with "trans-genic material" be released without the approval of the plant protection authority.

But the Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Dr. R. S. Paroda, said there was no way to ensure that the Terminator does not cross Indian borders as this could happen by accident or by design. "It is a customs problem," he said.

Mr. Devinder Sharma criticised the steps announced by Mr. Som Pal as "cosmetic," and said it was always possible for someone to smuggle in seed samples for whatever reason.

Besides U.S. seed companies had high stakes in replacing Indian seeds with their own. There were also obvious security issues since the country's hard earned self-sufficiency in food production was under serious threat.

For millennia Indian farmers worked independently on their small plots of land averaging an acre or two in size and supported the economy of this predominantly agricultural country.

But such independence is anathema to the United States which had built up a huge bio-technology industry and wanted to sell not only genetically engineered seeds but tailor-made fertilizers and pesticides that go with it as well as cotton farmers in Andhra Pradesh had discovered so painfully.

According to the well-known activist, Dr. Vandana Shiva, agriculture based on globalisation, genetic engineering and corporate monopolies on seeds will eventually establish a food system and world view in which multi-nationals will control everything grown and eaten.

Private bio-technology from the U.S. would spell doom for India's estimated 400 million farmers unless the issue is taken to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and a moratorium obtained on the application of Terminator technology, she said. — UNI

The Hindu
20 July 1998

Credit-cum-subsidy scheme for the poor

By Our Special Correspondent

New Delhi, July 20

The Government proposes to launch a credit cum-subsidy scheme for people just above the poverty line.

Under the scheme, the upper ceiling limit will be restricted to assistance limited under the Indira Awas Yojna (IAY), which is at present Rs 20,000 for the plains and Rs. 22,000 for hilly or difficult terrains. The subsidy will be restricted to a maximum of 50 per cent of the IAY limit.

It is proposed that the loan portion will be provided on the analogy of the Integrated Rural Development Programme by commercial banks. The subsidy will be contributed by the Centre and the States in the 80:20 ratio. Housing has been identified as one of the priority sectors for lending by commercial banks.

The Hindu
21 July 1998



National Awards for Welfare of People with Disability-1998

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, invites applications from outstanding employers of the disabled in the Central/State Government Sector, Public Sector Undertakings of the Central/State Governments and Private Sectors and outstanding employees in the Sectors, including self-employed persons for the National Awards for Welfare of People with Disability for the year 1998. Applications are also invited from Placement Officers of the disabled and Individuals and Institutions who have rendered good work for the cause of the disabled. The applications should be sent in the prescribed proforma to be collected from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

- Applications are invited for technological inventions in India for aid or appliance which will ameliorate the disabled and substantially help persons suffering from these disabilities.
- Applications should be sent through Directorate of Social Welfare of State Governments and through Departments of Central Ministries etc. in the case of Public Sector Undertakings. Suitable photographs may be attached with duly filled in applications forms.
- Please also enclose the following two documents;
 - (a) Summary of bio-data
 - (b) Material for Citation
- The last date of receipt of applications is August 31, 1998. For further details please contact: Shri Rakesh Arora, Director (DD-I), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Shastri Bhawan, (Room No. 216, 'D' Wing), New Delhi-110 001

davp 98/94

The Hindustan Times
21 July 1998

Dreams of poor children will now take wing

Sriranjan Chaudhuri

BANGALORE: Called 'Free a Dream' it will be an attempt at giving wings to the dreams of hundreds of underprivileged children in India. Leading watch manufacturers Titan Industries Limited and shoe makers Dr Martens of UK will sponsor two Quantum 912 microlites on a journey that will cross the seas to raise Rs 1 crore for Child Relief and You (CRY).

The aircraft will take off on August 1 and arrive near London at the Farnborough Air Show on September 8. They will be piloted by two ace British pilots, Storm Smith, business development manager of Rolls Royce in India, and Rory Jeffes who is chief executive of Youth Net in London. En route the duo will stop over at 36 other cities and towns in India, Pakistan, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, France and the UK.

"We are attempting to do that extra bit instead of presenting a cold cheque in the name of charity. We chase targets throughout the year, this time round we decided to chase money for a different cause," says an exhausted but obviously excited Ranjana Ghosh,

Titan's Manager -Market Development and Promotion International Operations who forms part of the core team which has been working round the clock to make the dream actually take off.

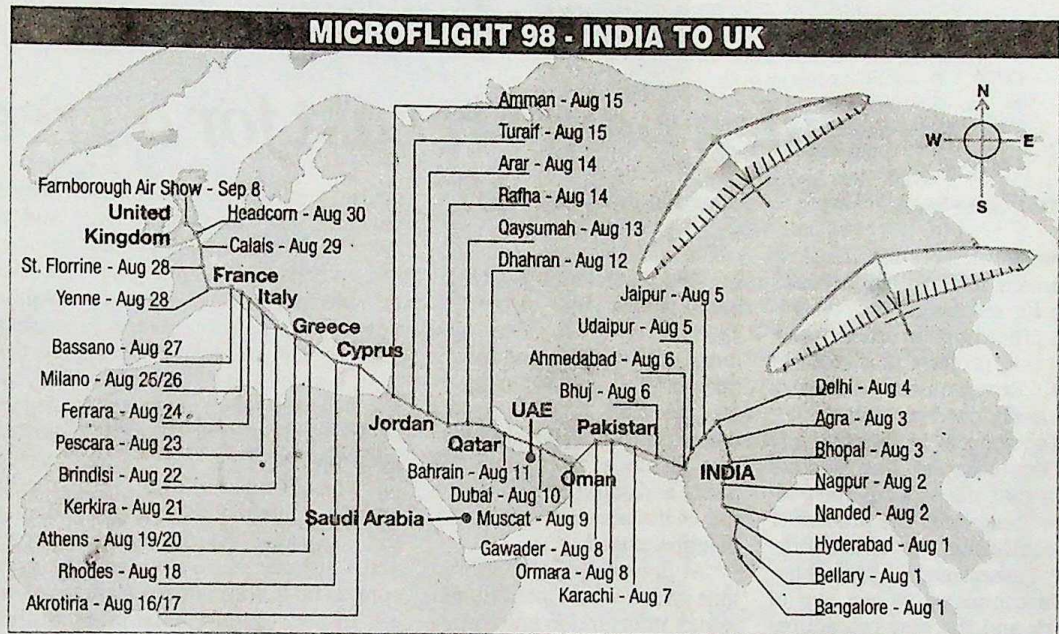
The flights will not be all there is. A string of other dos have been lined up as part of the fund raising endeavour. For instance, Bangalore, Mumbai and New Delhi will play host to three charity dinners on July 31, August 4 and Mumbai on August 29. Among the diners

will be Bollywood czars, corporate bosses and star cricketers.

Even as the microlites touch down in Hyderabad, Udaipur and Jaipur mini events featuring children from these cities will be staged. These Titan-CRY events will attempt to not only raise funds but bring more awareness about children, their status and needs.

"Our effort will be to set up a corpus fund for CRY. In addition to the Rs 1 crore which will be handed over to them this year, we are chalking out events through which we will raise funds every year for children's education routed through CRY," says Ranjana.

Titan has also been endeavouring to forge corporate partnerships to ensure the success of 'Fly a Dream'. And the response has been nothing short of 'touching'. Rolls Royce, TISCO, Taj Group,



TOI Graphic: Sony

The Times of India
21 July 1998

Rules being recast for a green clearance

By DAMANDEEP SINGH

New Delhi, July 21: The Government is completely recasting its environmental clearance procedures in order to ensure that projects that come to the Environment Ministry are sanctioned speedily.

Top sources in the Ministry of Environment and Forests said that the officials have almost completed the process of streamlining the entire impact assessment procedure. "We completed 90 per cent of work and the new procedures

should be ready within a month," they said.

The officials are re-designing the questionnaire which accompanies the companies application form. The new form will exclude redundant information and add categories relevant to the project under clearance like site details, distance from national parks and socio-economic profile of the people living in the neighbourhood.

"At present we get applications with a whole lot of unnecessary information and the ap-

praisal committees have to invariably ask for additional data. This leads to delays and cost overruns. By standardising the process we have to tide over these problems," sources said.

As it stands, both the industrialists and environmentalists are unhappy with the clearance norms. They have violent disagreements over the pace and methodology of giving clearance to industrial and infrastructure projects coming up in the country. Caugh in between are important

projects that tend to drag on and on and sometimes become canon-fodder for political battles as in the case of the Dabhol power project.

Recently the Government further decentralised process for granting clearance in order to avoid delays in clearing power, ports and other coastal projects. This had also raised the hackles of many environmentalists as they say it did not address the problems of delay; rather it just handed over the whole process to the state authorities who are only too eager to see the project of the ground.

Currently, proposals in 29 categories of industries above an investment of Rs 50 crore are examined by Environment Appraisal Committees (EACs) set up by the ministry. Most of these six committees (transport, tourism, miscellaneous; nuclear; mining; river valley; industry and thermal) are staffed by retired bureaucrats and sundry politicians. Some EACs do have "independent environmentalists" but that is more the exception.

The Indian Express
22 July 1998

Equality in Law

The Supreme Court has struck yet another blow for women's rights with its ruling reinforcing a Hindu widow's absolute right to her husband's property. This sets aside an earlier high court verdict which sought to alienate her from it. In fact, the apex court goes as far as to quote from Shastric law to highlight the woman's right to maintenance, saying that modern laws merely give statutory backing to this. However, irrespective of such Vedic laws, it must be underscored that it is the many far-reaching rulings handed down by the Supreme Court which have strengthened the legal position of women today. The latest ruling is yet another in a series of gender sensitive verdicts formulated in recent times. A while ago, the apex court permitted a widow and daughter of a deceased coparcener equal right to property left by him and in another ruling granted a divorced Hindu woman the right to sell, use for income or dispose in any way she likes the land given to her in lieu of maintenance. In all cases, the latest one included, the court has only insisted on the application of existing legislation. The Women's Right to Property Act, 1937 clearly states that "where joint property passes to a single coparcener by survivorship, it shall so pass subject to the right to the share of the classes of females enumerated in the provision." Likewise, Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act is unequivocal about the Hindu woman's right to property bequeathed as maintenance.

In the latest case, the Hindu Married Women's Right to Separate Maintenance and Residence Act 1946 was also invoked to strengthen the widow's case. Taken with an earlier Supreme Court verdict withholding the claims of a husband to the inherited property of his wife who had died intestate, women are now legally in a position where there is very little discrimination against them in matters related to property inheritance. Yet, most often justice is denied to women by their own families on property matters. In many instances, the women concerned are either illiterate or unaware of these enabling laws and are, therefore, duped or coerced into signing away their legal rights. Often, they give in without a fight in order to preserve harmonious relations within their families. Women are also hampered in their quest for justice by the fact that necessary documents and deeds are withheld from them by a patriarchal local administration or panchayat, weakening their case in the lower courts. This often leads to the final verdict going against them. It is also regrettable that, in many cases, the appellants have had to wait for decades before obtaining justice. However, even a belated decision is welcome and now efforts have to be made to ensure that such information on legal rights reaches its potential beneficiaries. The judicial sensitivity we have witnessed in recent times not only serves to empower the woman, but will also force changes in societal attitudes which have so far been weighted against women.

The Times of India
22 July 1998

AIDS threatens survival of truck drivers

By Pranava K. Chaudhary
The Times of India News Service

PATNA: Thanks to the nexus between local policemen and dhaba owners operating on National Highway No 28, the flourishing flesh trade has put many a truck driver at risk from AIDS.

Many sex workers interviewed by a Patna based NGO, Centre DIRECT, during a recent survey revealed that almost all the truck drivers and cleaners were suffering from one or the other STD on a large scale. Even truckers revealed that they knew many of their ilk who were suffering from AIDS.

According to the survey, commercial sex workers are easily available at two main halt points at Bairiya near Muzaffarpur and Pipra Kothi, 13 km from Motihari. The latter is an important point connected with Delhi, Nepal and Muzaffarpur.

Thirty-six per cent of the drivers and 32% of the cleaners of the 200 respondents interviewed, pointed out easy availability of sex workers as the prime reason behind having sex with them. The sex workers are

available at the local level while many of them cover long distances for this purpose.

The survey conducted at a stretch of 68 km of NH 28 said these sex workers were mostly supplied by the three brothels situated at Chaturbhujsthan in Muzaffarpur, Phulwaria Chagraha and Sugaon in east Champaran.

In the operational area of the study, truckers could have sex in many of the dhabas, but seven of them are specially known for the sex trade. In addition to this, the flesh trade goes in all the resting places.

Prominent resting places on this stretch included Gandhi Motel, situated at the distance of 43 km from Bairiya and 25 km from Pipra Kothi, and Gajraj Motel, 6 km from Bairiya.

The NGO expressed its concern over the risk behaviour of the truckers as most of them are in their productive and active period of their lives. While 16% of them were found in the age group of 21-25 years, 18% belonged to the age group of 26-30, 14% in 31-35 years, 20% in 36-40 years, 26% 41-45 and

only 6% belonged to the age group of 46-50 years.

Truckers, who cross these main halt points, belong to Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar.

The survey found that each dhaba owner, supposed to be supporting the sex trade, pays Rs 500-600 to the local police station on a monthly basis. Sex workers, who are protected by the pimps, come under the age category of 20-35 years. A few of them belonged to the age group of 35-40 years.

The truckers were found to be ill aware of the risky nature of their behaviour. While 82% of them had heard the name of AIDS and had some rudimentary knowledge of factors causing the deadly disease they, however, did not restrain themselves and indulged in unsafe sex.

Only 24% of the truckers claimed using condoms while as much as 72% admitted not using them. Many have the notion that since they do hard labour and live in adverse conditions, gaining pleasure either

through drinking or having sex should not be a matter of concern.

Pushed all the time to keep driving and hardly having time to go back home to their wives and families the easy availability of these sex workers were found to be the main factor responsible for their behaviour.

The survey further discovered that use of alcohol, peer group pressure, low-level of awareness, hedonist philosophy and careless attitude towards life also affected their behaviour.

It revealed that 21.4% of the drivers and 4.7% of the cleaners have 5-10 sex partners each month, 3.5% drivers and 57.1% cleaners have 3-4 sex partners whereas 10.7% of them have only 1-2 partners each month. However, 57% of the drivers informed that it did not matter to them as they are unable to recollect the exact number.

Expressing its serious concern, the NGO report stated that if the spread of the virus is not slowed down as early as possible and if those affected by it are not adequately supported, the very survival of the community is threatened.

The Times of India
22 July 1998

Lime soaking boosts cane yield

The yield of sugarcane is dependent on the millable cane population which in turn is decided by the percentage of bud germination, effective tiller production and its establishment. Soil moisture stress during the formative phase of cane will reduce tiller stand and cane yield.

Though some management practices are available for moisture conservation for sugarcane viz., trash mulching, spraying of antitranspirants such as Kaoline (6 per cent) and application of an additional dose of potash (150 kg/ha) along with last irrigation in the formative phase, they do not ensure uniform germination of buds under moisture stress.

Field experiments were conducted in a cane farm (Jawaharlal Nehru Sugar Mills Ltd., Perambalur) with cane cultivars CoC. 671 and CoC. 6304. The soil type was sandy loam in texture with neutral pH. The trial was laid out in a split-plot design in three replications.

In the mainplot, setts of both cultivars were soaked in saturated lime solution (at 40 per cent) and compared with control. In a sub-plot, irrigation intervals of 10, 20, 30, 45 and 90 days during the formative phase (commencing from 60 to 150 days after planting) were experimented. Before 60 days and after 150 days, the crop was treated as normal crop regarding irrigation scheduling. Setts were soaked in lime solution for one hour with periodical stirring without damaging the buds.

Results revealed that the mean germination in lime soaking was maximum (76.7 per cent) compared to the unsoaked plants (63.3 per cent). The number of tillers on the 150th day and during harvest were also higher (1,61,000 and 1,37,000 per hectare compared to that in control which yielded 53,700 and 45,500 ha).

Lime soaking recorded maximum cane and sugar yield 79 and 10 tonnes per hectare which was 14.4 and 16 per cent more than the control crop's yield.

G. Kathiresan, G. Manickam
Regional Research Station, Vriddhachalam
and R. Chellaiiah
Chengalrayan Co-operative Sugar Mills
Periyasevalai, TN

The Hindu
23 July 1998

Cauvery still on clash course after 191 years of contention

By V.J. Thomas

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Every year in June-July, when the rivers run dry, Cauvery waters become 'turbulent' in southern India. The 191-year-old discord is over 740 thousand million cubic feet (TMCs) of water estimated to be flowing through this 'southern Ganga'. Three states — Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala — and the Union territory of Pondicherry are staking claim on the waters. But the main fight is between Karnataka, where the river originates, and Tamil Nadu, through which it passes.

The present flare-up has its genesis in the non-implementation of an interim order passed on June 25, 1991, by the Cauvery tribunal which was appointed by the supreme court. The tribunal directed Karnataka to give Tamil Nadu 205 TMC of water every year. The tribunal also asked Karnataka that it should not expand its area irrigated with the Cauvery waters beyond 11.2 lakh acres.

When the Centre notified the tribunal order in December, 1991 there were widespread riots in Karnataka. Many lives were lost and a large number of families lost everything in the violence.

The riots forced the Bangarappa government to issue an ordinance

nullifying the notification. On July 18, 1993, then Tamil Nadu chief minister J. Jayalalitha went on a fast demanding the implementation of the award. She ended the fast after four days when the Centre assured to set up monitoring and implementation committees.

The Jayalalitha government on June 1995 moved the supreme court asking the it to direct Karnataka to release Cauvery water and save crops in Tanjore delta, one of major deltas of the world.

The apex court asked the Centre to decide on the matter. Then prime minister Narasimha Rao sent a three-member expert team to study the conditions in the two states. The team later directed Karnataka to release 11 TMCs of water to Tamil Nadu but Karnataka released only seven TMCs.

During 1996-97, the chief ministers of the two states had three rounds of talks but failed to reach any agreement. In 1997, the apex court asked the Centre to formulate a draft scheme to set up a Cauvery river authority. The Centre had drawn up a draft scheme and circulated it to the four southern states. Tamil Nadu is now asking the Centre to notify the scheme.

Though the Cauvery tribunal's interim order does not give any water to Kerala and Pondicherry,

these two also became a party to the dispute. Kerala says it contributes 20 per cent to the Cauvery flow and demand 147 TMCs. Pondicherry demands 10 TMCs.

Tamil Nadu argues that the Cauvery accounts for more than 50 per cent of its surface water potential and 33 per cent of its population lives in the Cauvery-fed areas.

The Cauvery discord started in 1807 with the former Mysore state rejecting the Tanjore collector's claim that the construction of bunds in Mysore led to the decline in the flow of Cauvery. In 1870, Madras presidency and Mysore battled over the formulation of an irrigation scheme.

In 1892, the first agreement between Madras and Mysore was signed saying that Mysore cannot take up new irrigation projects without approval from Madras.

In 1916, Madras disputed Mysore's plan to build Krishnarajasagar dam across Cauvery. In 1924, a 50-year agreement was signed between the two parties. In 1974, Karnataka refused to abide by the agreement anymore.

Repeated talks between Tamil Nadu chief minister M.G. Ramachandran and his Karnataka counterpart fail to break the deadlock. This forced the issue to end up in a tribunal.

The Times of India
23 July 1998

Environment to be made compulsory in schools

Pioneer News Service

New Delhi

THE GOVERNMENT has prepared an action plan which makes the study of environment compulsory in schools.

The action plan aimed at generating awareness on environment at the school level will be discussed with various state governments at the earliest, Union Minister for Environment and Forests Suresh Prabhu said in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Replying to a debate on the "Working of the Ministry of Environment and Forests", Mr Prabhu revealed several significant measures taken by the Ministry.

He said the subject of environment cannot be discussed in isolation. Concerted efforts are needed to generate awareness on the subject at the school level.

Mr Prabhu said the Government

has discussed with the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) on the introduction of environment in school curricula.

Promising to introduce the crucial bill on biodiversity in the next session, Mr Prabhu stressed on the importance of protecting biodiversity.

Admitting the growing menace of air pollution, he said the Government has instituted an authority on pollution control. He emphasised the need for independent boards at the state levels and the need to decentralise powers from the Centre.

A separate action plan to achieve the 33 per cent forest cover has been formed, he said, adding that at present the total land under forest cover is a mere 19.25 per cent.

Mr Prabhu reassured the House that funds were made available for developing forests and taking

care of the environment. He said it would not be difficult to meet the required target within 10 years.

Instead of focussing on the new plantation and reviving the greenery, the Government will make efforts to regenerate the forests in a natural way, the Minister said.

Mr Prabhu added that to tackle the problem of rain forests, the Government has instituted a separate cell for the North-East.

Referring to a members query on adverse impact of pesticides on health, the Minister said it was definitely a cause for concern. According to him the Government has appointed a committee of secretaries to study the matter and accordingly suggest remedial measures.

In an effort to minimise vehicular pollution, it will be compulsory for automobile manufacturers to comply with the laws, use clean fuel and engine as stated under the Act, the Minister said.

Only gender bias can make woods lovely:
Suresh Prabhu

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The Union environment ministry feels that forest-protection and regeneration programmes are not going to succeed unless they are deliberately structured around women's needs and motivations.

"We've realised this and decided every forestry programme has to have a gender bias," environment minister Suresh Prabhu told the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday evening. "Unless women are motivated, there will be no success. We'll have to reorient all our programmes," he said.

Mr Prabhu was replying to a debate on the ministry's budget allocations for the coming year. This was one debate which, as the minister noted, rose well above politics. This, he appreciatively said, should remain so, reflecting the nature of subjects the ministry had to deal with.

Among his first decisions, he noted, was to get environmental education into a compulsory part of the school curriculum; a group was already working on it. Then, for the first time, a pollution control authority had been gazetted by executive order, not a judge's order, in this case for the city of Mumbai. They would go on to gazette similar authorities in other big cities.

This was an important step, he noted, since much of the ministry's activity had, over the years, come to be dictated by orders of judges, particularly the supreme court. "Judicial activism has come because of the failure of the executive... my ministry is now going to take on a pro-active role," said Mr Prabhu.

A notification on comprehensive management and safe disposal of wastes from hospitals is coming in a couple of days, the minister promised. Mr Prabhu also said that he would table in the next session of Parliament a bill to protect and manage biodiversity. If that happens, India would probably be the first country to do so.

The Pioneer
23 July 1998

The Times of India
24 July 1998

Adolescents seek a voice

DH News Service

NEW DELHI, July 23

"We want to be heard. And we also want correct, relevant and useful information," said young Nayantara Kakshapati, an adolescent participating at the South Asia conference on the adolescent which concluded here today.

Addressing a press conference here today, Dr Wasim Zaman and Ms Imelda Henkin said that adolescence was an issue not adequately focussed upon and that the constant cry of the adolescents participating in the conference was that adults did not listen to them. Dr Zaman added that there was an urgent need to address their needs and for an innovative, new approach. Literacy and the discrimination against the girl child was a major issue along with that of reproductive health.

Dr Bina Pradhan, Unfpa, Nepal said that the issue of violence came across very strongly during the conference and the use of students in politics and they falling a prey to violence during political rallies was cause for concern.

Dr Pradhan added that other issues which needed to be addressed were pornography and youth, drug addiction and trafficking, reproductive health and sexuality. She added that several policies and programmes had been made but the plans of action had not been implemented effectively.

She added that sexuality and reproductive health were not the main problem. It was important to understand the whole socio-cultural scenario and the various problems being faced by the adolescents.

The preamble adopted by the adolescents stressed the need for attention, care and support from all. It states: "We feel we do not have the right to make our own choices, after knowing all the alternatives — choices relating to our careers, our friends, movements and life partners....we are not given ample opportunities to ascertain our individuality. We feel that the dreams and aspirations of our parents should not be imposed on us."

The preamble appeals to parents to be their friends, to understand

the adolescents, not to hide things related to them from them, to give them privacy and space to grow.

"We need you to listen to us...to our dreams, our experiences, our explanations, our insecurities and our achievements, we want to fight life's battles together, and not as opponents. So what if we are boys or girls, we're you after all."

Nayantara said when she went back to Nepal, she along with other friends, planned to create a network of adolescents, to discuss each other's problems and to create more awareness. She added that the conference had helped in making the voices of the adolescents heard and given them a chance to voice their grievances.

Deccan Herald
24 July 1998

Child labour banned in 43 more industries

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 24

The number of industries prohibited from using child labour has been substantially raised from 19 to 62, and the banned employments include automobile workshops and gem cutting and polishing.

Announcing this, Labour Minister Satyanarayan Jatiya told newsmen today that the notification for the benefit of child labour was issued yesterday. Dr Jatiya said he had written a letter to the Chief Ministers of various States asking them to mobilise their enforcement machinery to implement the notification.

The Labour Minister drew the Chief Ministers' attention towards the problem of bonded child labour. He said this problem had to be faced effectively so that it was not used to impose adverse trade conditions on India.

The new occupation where child labour has been banned is "handling of toxic substances, inflamm-

The Hindustan Times
25 July 1998

able or explosives". The new processes where children cannot be engaged include garages, welding units, potteries and ceramic industry, utensil making, glass bangles making, tyre making and repairing, foundries, zari making, lead-based processes, agarbatti making, lockmaking and detergent manufacturing.

The Minister said the additions had been made on the basis of the advice given by the Child Labour Technical Advisory Committee, constituted under Sec. 5 of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. At present, the committee is headed by Director-General, Indian Council of Medical Research.

Referring to the allegations of bonded child labour in several industries, the Minister said these could be investigated and, if children below 14 years of age met any of the conditions spelt out for bonded labour, they would be got released and rehabilitated under the Bonded Labour Abolition Act.

Branded For Life

Magsaysay award-winning Bengali author Mahasvetadevi is in the city to file a public interest petition relating to the atrocities committed against the nomadic and denotified tribes. The intrepid writer and social worker is determined to find justice for these hapless tribals given the repeated incidents of violence against them across Maharashtra. Her cause has been strengthened by a landmark judgment in the Calcutta high court on the custodial death of Budhan Shabar from the Bhedia Sabar tribe with which she works. Besides asking for a CBI inquiry into the death, the court has ordered that the compensation of Rs 1 lakh, given to the family of the deceased, should be recovered from the concerned police officers if they are found guilty. The case filed by Mahasvetadevi in the Mumbai high court happens to be the first of its kind in India where a murder charge has been filed against the

policemen allegedly responsible for the custodial death of Pinya Hari Kale, a resident of Tandulwadi in Baramati.

In this case, some action has already been taken against the alleged culprits thanks to the intervention of the CID, the national human rights commission and Mahasveta Devi's DNT Action Group. However, most other tribals have not been as lucky. The long-standing prejudices against certain 'criminal' tribal communities runs deep. Around 160 tribes were notified as 'criminal tribes' by the British—reportedly because they were the first to raise arms against the colonial rulers. Fifty years after Independence, despite repealing the British notification of the Criminal Tribes and Castes Act, attitudes toward the Pardhi tribe, for instance, have not changed much. The denotified tribes still face discrimination, alleges Mahasvetadevi. Whenever there is a crime in their area, the tribals are the first to be arrested on flimsy grounds as well as tortured. Their settlements are routinely attacked. For example, railway policemen allegedly burned down 20 huts and destroyed Rs 3 lakhs worth of fishing boats and nets belonging to this community in Diksal in Pune. Mahasvetadevi is now demanding that the government take more concrete measures to reduce poverty among the tribals through employment, land distribution and education schemes. In the meantime, members of the Pardhi community, among others, will very likely continue to eke out a living by selling balloons or flowers on Mumbai's streets.

The Times of India
25 July 1998

Mayor inaugurates school-on-wheels

By A Staff Reporter

MUMBAI: The city's first school-on-wheels was inaugurated on Friday by mayor Nandu Satam.

It is a regular-sized bus meant to serve as a mobile school for children of the poor. Primarily aimed at street children and kids of construction workers, the idea is to bring education to the doorsteps of those who cannot regularly attend school.

"The main reasons of these children's absence from school are family problems, lack of an impetus and a low history of education in

the family," said Bina Sheth, secretary of the voluntary organisation Door Step School (DSS), which is behind the project.

The DSS also works with municipal schools, apart from conducting balwadis and non-formal literacy classes for children between the ages of three and 18. "We identify children before they reach the school-going age and enrol them once they are eligible," a spokesperson said.

The non-governmental organisation (NGO) aims at teaching slum children the three R's. Volunteers

visit the homes of dropouts and persuade them to go back to school.

Reading material is made easily accessible to the poor through the five mobile libraries the NGO runs. "Reading material helps to sustain and build existing literary skills," said Ms Sheth.

The bus for the school-on-wheels project was donated to the NGO by Japanese Consul General Y. Yamagishi and is also equipped with a library. "The bus can provide a classroom at any place for street children at a time convenient to

them," said Ms Sheth. It will also be used as a school bus to transport young children who stay far from school. "Many slum children do not attend school because their working parents cannot escort them to school. This transport facility will ensure that classrooms are now filled," said an NGO member.

Mr Satam admitted that municipal schools were inept at ensuring that their students remained in classrooms. "It is difficult for them to keep track of the children, most of whom hail from the poor strata," he said.

The Times of India

25 July 1998

WINNING STROKE

A cricketer who cares

JUST a year ago, the Swedish tennis star Mats Wilander discovered that there was more to Calcutta than unlimited enthusiasm for sport. An NGO made good use of his stay to bring hope to the poor and the destitute. In trying to do something for the thousands of the city's street children, he knew he was making a significant gesture, nothing more. The sincerity and concern that prompted Wilander have now spilled over to the world of cricket where Steve Waugh, the senior Australian batsman, ought to know more than anyone else that an individual contribution can change the course of a match. Calcutta's great gift is that it touches hearts not just with a desire to alleviate distress, of which there is plenty, but to leave a permanent mark of the love it spreads even on a tight tour. Steve overcame the sorrow of Australia being defeated by India comprehensively in the Test at the Eden Gardens to use the fifth day to visit two centres doing rehabilitation work for leprosy patients? The joy in shared human concerns obviously prevailed over failures with bat and ball.

What was more rewarding for everyone in the cricketer's love affair with the city was that he not a celebrity roped in by an organisation, Udayan, for a brief halt on a hurried journey. The commitment made in March has developed into a mission that has included fund-raising programmes in Australia these last few months, a personal donation, an auction of a bat signed by Sir Donald Bradman and, above all, the message that the disease from which 40 million people in the world suffer is curable. Steve's caring has not just brought new hope to women who will be housed in the new girls' wing; he has won hearts in the city well beyond the historic Eden. Nothing short of a winning stroke.

The Statesman

25 July 1998

Government drags feet on quinacrine threat

By NIRMALA GEORGE

New Delhi, July 25: Five months after the Supreme Court banned the import, manufacture or use of quinacrine, the controversial drug for sterilisation in women, the Health Ministry continues to drag its feet over issuing an official notification. This has kept the threat of the drug being used alive.

In fact, the apprehension that it is being used has been confirmed by recent reports that the two American promoters of the drug worldwide have said they would continue supplying it to Indian doctors till the Government issued a gazetted notification banning its use.

In India, quinacrine pellets are supplied by an organisation called International Family Health (IFH), which is headed by J K Jain, a former BJP MP.

The delay in issuing the notification has led to a public outcry and Health Minister Dalit Ezhilmalai told Parliament recently that the Government was in the final stages of processing the notification.

The apex court's decision on March 16 this year followed a public interest litigation filed by the women's group, All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), and the faculty of the Centre for Social Medicine and Community Health at the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The Drug Controller of India had informed the Court that it was in the process of taking steps to ban the import, manufacture, sale and distribution of quinacrine for use in non-surgical sterilisation of women.

No legal action can be initiated against those who continue to conduct quinacrine sterilisation since the Central and State Governments need to prohibit its use first.

According to the Drug Controller of India, P Dasgupta, the

process for the notification has been initiated.

"We are awaiting translation into Hindi," he said, explaining the delay.

Originally quinacrine was being used to prevent malaria.

Later, a Chilean doctor found that when pellets of the compound were inserted in the uterus, they caused a severe inflammatory reaction, scarring and eventually causing sterilisation by blocking the fallopian tubes.

The two American doctors who have been actively promoting quinacrine sterilisation in countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Vietnam, among other developing countries, on the ground that it is a low-cost, non-surgical answer to population control, are Stephen D Mumford and Elton Kessel. J K Jain gets his supplies from them.

Quinacrine is not considered to be safe as a sterilisation agent because of evidence that it causes mutation of cells, encouraging cancerous growth. Since the blockage of the fallopian tubes is never complete, there is a higher chance of ectopic pregnancies endangering the lives of women, especially those in the rural areas who may not have access to emergency surgery.

The Indian Express
26 July 1998

The Hindustan Times
27 July 1998

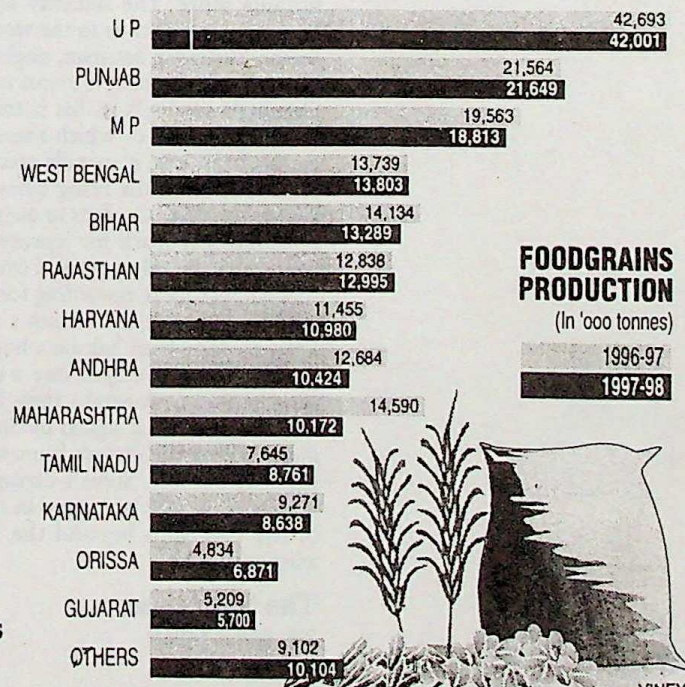
In Aid Of Aids

USHA Multipurpose Cooperative Society, set up by the sex workers of Sonagachi, celebrated its third anniversary at a function at Salt Lake stadium on Wednesday last week. The society is the only of its kind in the country. Started by the sex workers three years ago the society now has 265 members. The society has successfully launched an anti-Aids campaign like the STD/HIV Intervention programme in the red light areas in North Calcutta and has set up a group of sex workers called Dasanti Sena to sell condoms through social marketing. The society has been giving loans, including short term loans, to its members and now proposes to set up a house at Madhyamgram. A plot measuring over 12 cottahs

has been purchased and construction of the proposed building will start soon. The proposed building will house a creche for the children of sex workers. Also, a unit to train the sex workers to produce jute and plastic bags will be set up to make them economically independent. A non-formal training course for the sex workers will be taken up at the new unit.

The society which received tremendous opposition from various groups with vested interest and the state government has today been successful in overcoming them. The state government refused to recognise the cooperative on the ground that the "members do not have good moral character". But finally the State Cooperation Directorate succumbed to pressure and gave the society registration after amending the Cooperative Act. The society has curbed the torture and oppression of the money lenders. The venture has been welcomed by all the NGOs and it is now working as a model not only in India but in various countries in South East Asia.

The Statesman 27 July 1998



VINEY

The Best 'Tonic' For Newborns

BY ANURADHA SUBRAMANIAN

THE first week of August is celebrated as 'Breast Feeding Week'. This is to create awareness among women about breast feeding. Most women feel that breast feeding affects their beauty. In fact, breast feeding reduces the risk of cancer. Doctors and dietitians, in case of normal delivery, advocate breast milk to the infant after one hour of delivery and two days for a Caesarean operation.

Advantages over Bottle Feeding

Immunity: Mother's milk has more resistance power, since it contains lysozymes, viral, bacteriocides and para amino benzoic acid components which fight against microbes. These components are present in large amount only in colostrum which is secreted from breast after the delivery and lasts up to three days. It is a light yellowish thick fluid.

Digestion

It is easily digestible and contains fat splitting enzyme lipase. This enhances the absorption of calcium and fatty acids which in turn helps in physical and mental development of infants. Therefore, deposition of fat is prevented and the baby is safe guarded from atherosclerosis in future.

Low cost and easily available

Mother's milk is natural and readily available. Artificial milk formulations cost more and also the feeding bottles have to be periodically sterilised. Breast feeding, for more than a year, delays the next pregnancy.

Adoption of a lactating mother

Just like a blood bank, a lactating mother can be adopted for a period of six months. Some points to be considered before adoption:

- ☐ The mother should accept the lactating woman who is going to feed her baby.
- ☐ Due to insufficient milk secretion, the own mother and the lactating mother can arrive at a compromise to feed the infant only for a stipulated period.
- ☐ The lactating mother should undergo 'Aids negative test' and also for communicable diseases. She should be kept under observation for a period of six months.
- ☐ If the mother is very particular about the diet, (vegetarian and non-vegetarian), she can provide food for the lactating mother.
- ☐ The lactating mother has to feed her own baby also. So, she has to consume more food rather than the recommended allowances.
- ☐ The period of adoption should be discontinued after six months because the infant begins to identify the mother who feeds it.

Bearing these in mind, mothers and the mothers to be should try to understand the essential features of breast feeding. Breast feeding decreases the mortality rate and the children grow up to be mentally and physically strong.

(The author is a lecturer of Nutrition and Dietetics, Vellalar College for Women, Thindal, Erode)

Nutrients Composition of Mother's milk and Cow's milk

Milk	Energy (K.cal)	Protein gms.	Fat gms.	Carbohy drates gm.s.	Calcium gms.
Mother's Milk	71	1.2	3.8	7.0	33
Cow's Milk	69	3.3	3.7	4.8	125

**The Indian Express
Science Express
28 July 1998**

Environment award for Surat

DUBAI, July 27.

Surat in Gujarat has won the prestigious Dubai international award for best practices in urban governance, environment and public management.

Surat was selected for producing an integrated programme of 47 projects, addressing issues of transport, water supply, sanitation and environmental management. The jury, headed by the former U.N. Vice-President, Dr. Arcot Ramachandran, judged Surat, whose name was earlier sullied by the plague scare, as the second cleanest city in India in the past 18 months.

India was among the 10 countries selected for the \$30,000 award instituted by the Dubai Government for contribution to poverty eradication, gender equity and equality. The award will be presented at a special ceremony here coinciding with the global celebration of the World Habitat Day on October 5. — PTI

**The Hindu
28 July 1998**

Govt for death sentence to rapists

Pioneer News Service

New Delhi

THE GOVERNMENT intends to amend the criminal law to provide for capital punishment for rapists and is also willing to bring in a legislation to increase the minimum maintenance to a divorced woman from the existing Rs 500 to Rs 5,000.

Replying to a marathon discussion on increasing atrocities on women, Union Home Minister L K Advani said that his Government considered rape a much more serious crime than the murder of a woman.

"If capital punishment is awarded once Section 302 (murder charge) is proved, I see no reason why death sentence should not be given in cases where rape is proved," Mr Advani said.

He added that since criminal law was a concurrent subject, the States would have to be consulted before changing the law. "I am sure the Parliament and Assemblies will agree and we will be allowed to change the law," Mr Advani said.

Referring to reports of rape of a 90-year-old woman and a three-year-old girl, he said that the country was witnessing a general degradation. "It is a serious matter of concern not just for the Government but for the entire country," he said.

The Home Minister added that he would call a meeting of Home Ministers and director-generals of police from all States to discuss the atrocities on women.

He referred to suggestions by a magistrate regarding rape victims -- that the statement of a victim be recorded only at her residence; that in case of a minor, the statement be recorded only in the presence of her parents or relatives; and that the victim be examined only by a woman doctor. "Our government wants all these three suggestions to be made part of the

law," he said.

Mr Advani appealed to all the wings, including the judiciary, to take note of the feelings of the House. "Let the judiciary realise that prolonged litigation becomes another problem for the victim," said Mr Advani.

The Home Minister said that the minimum maintenance of Rs 500 for divorced women was too little. He recalled that in 1994, the then Government had brought a bill to raise it to Rs 1,500 but the legislation was not passed. "Our Government wants to raise it to Rs 5,000 and we will accordingly bring a bill," he said.

Urging MPs not to drag politics into the issue of crimes against women, Mr Advani said political empowerment alone could not stop social injustice against them.

Referring to MPs' demand for introduction of the Women's Reservation Bill, he said though over two-third members of the House supported the Bill, the

Government was in a dilemma as it was not sure of its fate.

Referring to Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Mulayam Singh Yadav and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Laloo Prasad Yadav, the Home Minister recalled that some leaders had some reservations to the Bill, following which Prime Minister A B Vajpayee decided that it would be introduced after an all-party meeting.

"At the all-party meeting, there was a broad consensus that the Bill be introduced in its present form. But we all known what happened in the House later," he said, referring to the fracas by SP and RJD members on the day the Government tried to introduce the Bill in the Lok Sabha.

Mr Advani said that the Government's commitment to the Bill was the same "but we are hesitant after the warning on the consequences if we attempted to introduce the Bill again. No one would like to see the same scenes being repeated."

The Pioneer

29 July 1998

MP govt. stops aid to NGOs after adverse reports

The Times of India News Service

BHOPAL: Home minister Harbans Singh informed the state assembly on Tuesday that financial assistance to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the state had been stopped following adverse reports against NGOs during the last one year.

The Times of India

30 July 1998

Replying to a call attention motion on an encounter between the Peoples War Group (PWG) and the police in Balaghat recently, the minister said that the role of NGOs in the growth of organisations like the PWG was examined and it was found that they had been encouraging violent organisations.

The minister said that the issue of putting a ban on the PWG was under consideration and the state government was awaiting the report of the chief ministers' meeting held at Hyderabad last month.

In the last 10 years, 25 policemen and 75 civilians had been killed by the PWG in Madhya Pradesh.

New rehabilitation scheme for disabled planned

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 29.

The Government has planned to launch a national programme for community-based rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The pilot phase covering 11 districts in States where District Rehabilitation Centres are already existing will be launched soon.

Announcing this while addressing the first meeting of the Consultative Committee of Parliament here today, the Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ms. Maneka Gandhi, said the scheme would have built-in-flexibility to allow use of existing institutions, including the non-governmental organisations (NGO). She said the programme has been formulated with an emphasis on community-based rehabilitation at the panchayat level.

According to estimates, 80 per cent of the disabled population live in rural areas and are deprived of various services. The new programme will aim at plugging the gaps in service and meeting the requirement of this section of the population in a more sensitive and efficient manner.

Addressing the meeting, Ms. Maneka Gandhi also declared that from now on no NGO would get any financial assistance from the Ministry for any welfare project unless the District Collector of the targetted area recommended and forwarded the project proposal to either the State Minister or the Chief Minister.

Ms. Maneka Gandhi, however, had a word of praise for the work being done by NGOs across

the country. She assured that all members of the Consultative Committee would be informed by her ministry about the details of financial assistance disbursed by every Department or Ministry to NGOs in various States and Union Territories every three months to ensure transparency.

The hike in the allocation for the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry in this year's Budget will help in reviewing and introducing changes in order to make the schemes more flexible, she felt. The allocation for various schemes for the year 1998-99 has been increased to Rs. 2,045.65 crores as against the actual expenditure of Rs. 1,247.94 crores during 1997-98. Ms. Maneka Gandhi said, the enhanced budget would help in overall improvement and efficiency in implementation of schemes.

She informed the committee members that all centrally sponsored schemes were being updated and a booklet containing details of the schemes with relevant forms would be produced and distributed soon for the benefit of the public.

Ms. Maneka Gandhi also highlighted the setting up of Financial and Development Corporations to cater to specific requirements of the Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities, Handicapped and Safai Karamcharis. The main objective of these corporations is to promote economic development activities of the target groups and to assist the poorer sections among them in skill development and also encourage self-employment ventures by advancing concessional finance for economically and financially viable schemes.

The Hindu

30 July 1998

DNA tests conducted to curb exploitation of tribal women

By P.K. Surendran

The Times of India News Service

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Breaking a new path in curbing exploitation of unwed tribal women in the state, Vanitha commission has begun conducting the DNA tests to decide the fatherhood.

Commission chairperson Sugatha Kumari said conducting the DNA test was a major step in containing the exploitation of tribal women. In all, 86 tests have been conducted since the commission was set up in 1996, she said.

The Wynad-Palakkad tribal areas have for sometime been reporting increasing incidents of teenager tribal women bearing children out of wedlock. The mischief was traced to the migrant plainmen and rich businessmen. But there was no easy way to bring them to own the fatherhood of such babies.

The legislature committee on women and children had brought out in 1995 that some 250 unwed

women could be identified in Suryanelli alone, which is a tribal locality of Wynad. As the media attention turned towards the incidents, cases of suspected deaths began to be heard where the women involved found their gory deaths in circumstances most foul.

In some cases the young women who were in their early 20s had two or more children born out of wedlock.

Noted social worker and leader of the All-India Women's Federation D. Devi said the tribals had their own ethical codes and custom which were liberal to a fault by the urban standard. This factor enabled unscrupulous elements taking advantage of the young.

However, when efforts were made to get them maintenance or compensation from the men who sired the kids, the latter disowned fatherhood. The only sure way out to pinpoint the paternal link was conducting the DNA test.

As the women activists became more and more strident on the issue, the state government agreed

to conduct tests. The state today pays for the test of tribals and scheduled castes. Each test costs Rs 30,000.

Ms Kumari agrees that this was only fraction of the problem. The commission has received 6,884 petitions from women on various atrocities and human rights violations during 1997.

The total petitions on crime against women came to 10,004 during the two-and-a-half year of the commission's existence.

Deputy inspector-general of police Alexander Jacob told this newspaper that so far eight cases had been successfully solved, where the unwed mothers received their fair share for bearing children. "This is a difficult area of work and the result is not quick to achieve," he pointed out. However, Mr Jacob pointed out, a significant beginning has been made to check the sexual exploitation of the weaker sections.

This, he hoped, will have a deterrent effect on the unscrupulous elements.

The Times of India

31 July 1998

TN bans eve-teasing, vows harsh sentences

Chennai, July 30: Tamil Nadu governor M. Fatheema Beevi on Thursday night promulgated an ordinance banning eve-teasing, and providing harsh punishment for those indulging in it.

The ordinance comes into force with immediate effect. Those who commit, participate or abet in eve-teasing would be sentenced to rigorous imprisonment upto one year or a fine up to Rs 10,000, or both, the ordinance said.

Persons in charge of public places should take steps they deem fit to prevent eve-teasing within their precincts.

They should also pass on the complaint lodged with them from the aggrieved persons to the police for action, it added.

The Tamil Nadu government brought in this measure in the wake of the death of a city college girl, Sarika Shah, who became a victim of eve-teasing.

In a shocking incident, the girl, Sarika Shah, suffered head injuries while being teased by a gang of youths on July 18. Sarika Shah succumbed to her injuries in a hospital. The ordinance followed appeals from various quarters, including the public.

The police have already arrested nine persons, including some college students, in connection with the eve-teasing of Sarika Shah.

The accused in the eve-teasing case have been remanded to judicial custody. (PTI)

The Asian Age

31 July 1998

This issue of News You Can Use has been compiled from

The Observer (Mumbai)

The Times of India (Mumbai and Bangalore)

The Hindustan Times (New Delhi)

The Pioneer (New Delhi)

The Statesman (Calcutta)

The Telegraph (Calcutta)

The Asian Age (Bangalore)

The Hindu (Bangalore)

The Indian Express (Bangalore)

Deccan Herald (Bangalore)

THE TIME

WEEK

for our children?

achieving target

Govt plans to
for agriculture
insurance

Pioneer News Service
New Delhi

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ARE INJURIOUS TO

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Green cover

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P T Bopanna
Bangalore

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reservations for women belong-
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appealed to the government to

Help youngsters

graph EMPLOYMENT

GENERATION

Frontline

DRINKING WATER

Women's Bill
to be tabled
on Monday

World Population
July 11, 1998

rise to 2,000

happy & prosperous future

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house of representatives anywhere in the world.
It is neither scientific nor logical

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Dharna held
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BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

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