

ENROL AS A MEMBER

International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)

Indian Association for Volunteer Effort (Iave)

In consultative status with United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Civil Participation

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

Way back, in 1937, the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi gave the concept of Nai Talim (New Education) to the country. Also called Wardha Scheme, it envisaged primary education, compulsory and universal, for seven years, covering all subjects except English plus a vocational skill. Primary education was to take the place of classical primary, middle and high school plan initiated by the British. In view of the new developments during the past seven decades since then, Nai Talim has to be continuously evolving, taking in its stride new human knowledge and developments.

When PIDT Lokshala (People's School) came to Jagdishpur in mid-1980s, the rate of literacy in the area was extremely low. Disturbed at the prevailing state of education in the area, Lokshala started holding Prabhat Pheries (morning walks) for awareness generation about the necessity of raising education level of the people. The start of Government of India-funded Non-formal Education program by Lokshala paved the way for education of those children who were deprived of formal, mainstream education as they had to work with their parents for earning a living. In the meanwhile, the District Resource Unit (DRU) made arrangements for training instructors and supervisors of NFE program and preparing teaching-learning material taking into consideration local culture, religious sensibilities and language.

Anandalaya (House of Joy) was the people's initiative in education. When they no longer could manage and run it, Lokshala had to take responsibility for it. During the last more than a decade, it has developed into an English Medium Coeducational Senior Secondary School. 75 per cent students of the first batch which appeared in the boards in 2005 secured first division. While adopting CBSE pattern, the School is trying to combine the ideals of Gandhiji, Tagore and Swami Vivekananda. It aims at all round development of its students, while inculcating human values among them to make them better human beings.

The lead article in this issue entitled 'A new culture for Nai Talim for ever' by Prof. Subhachari Dasgupta gives you a gist of thinking behind Anandalaya.

Happy reading.

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FRONTPIECE

The milkmaid and her pail

After milking the farmers' cows, a milkmaid was carrying the pail of milk on her head to the dairy and thinking to herself, 'With the cream that I shall get from this milk I can make some butter, which I shall take to the market and sell. I shall buy some eggs with the money and when hatched I shall have chickens for the poultry yard. I can sell the poultry and with the money I shall buy a fine gown to wear to the fair. All the young men will admire me and make advances, but I shall toss my head and dismiss them'.

At which, lost in ambitious thoughts, she did toss her head, dropping the pail and the milk on the ground, dashing her dreams.

Moral of the story – **Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.**



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FEATURE ARTICLES

A new culture for 'Nai Talim' for ever

Subhachari Dasgupta

Education is a biological necessity for human survival and growth. A human child requires a very long time to become physically independent compared to most other life forms. Learning remains essential at all stages of human life. Human child is born as one of the most fragile of all life forms. Mothers' lap to the first step for a child is a process of learning — the first steps for a child's education which all of us have gone through. The first lessons to walk are given with extreme care and protection by the mother.

In rural conditions, children become foragers and look for food early. They soon become useful persons in the family. In the rural societies, the variables that the child and even the adult has to learn are fewer than that in the cities. Due to complexities of life, the leaning period is extended in the city dwellers compared to the children from rural societies. Thus, the village children become useful partners of the society much earlier. The prolonged period of learning creates a period of adolescence during which there is a contradiction between the child's needs and things that he or she has to learn. An adolescent teenager has little room to participate in the social life. Thus, there is a period when education does not meet a teenagers' needs. An adolescent is physically an adult, but restricted by educational and societal impediments that deny him adult level of participation.

Then what is learning all about? Krisnamurti has asked the question by formulating the question that gives clue to the answer. He asked 'is it the function of education to help us understand the whole process of life or is it merely to prepare us for a vocation, for the best jobs that we can get?' Surely the goal of humankind is not only survival, but enlarging the human space inside people's hearts and in social space. The urban societies based on industries and commerce, divorce living from production. Thus, the cultural complexities become essential by virtue of which people are forced into a condition of poverty of an unknown kind that takes away community and nature from the individual and thus makes him/her powerless in a careless society.

The basic education

Communities that live in harmony with nature allow children to grow up to become adult without an intervening period of learning in which adolescence behavior is rooted. Children become contributors very early. This is more pronounced in

case of female children as they learn to be mothers. A three-year-old child learns to mind an-year-old sibling or attend to a new-born. This is Basic education. Yet we can not have the simplicity of life any more as much as we may long for. The human living conditions are changing. India is poised to become an urbanized country. Agriculture is no more a business of the repetition of the past. More and more specialized skills are required. Urbanization of the countryside is an inevitable reality.

At a ripe old age, a human being also has to learn that his/her tenancy in this beautiful world is limited. And every person has to leave life that has been so dear to him/her gracefully without remorse and without longing for the all that was dear. Hindu ashram concept teaches us so. Vinobaji has taught us by demonstrating and inviting his own demise. It was not unknown for 'Ichha-mrittu'¹ to be practiced. This learning was derived out of life-long practice of devotion to duty. Thus, death is a duty.

We must distinguish between the two aspects of human life in our education. One relates to physical well-being and the other for want of a better word, the spiritual well-being. Satisfaction is the key to understanding of the condition. In the present condition of the world, expanding dissatisfaction is rooted at divorcing the spiritual element that is a reality of life. Meeting both the elements of physical and spiritual needs is a challenge to the wayward humanity.

Continuously evolving 'Nai Talim'

Human gains of understanding of nature and it's manipulation started with the first flints that were made for survival. Education was born with knowledge. Transmission of ideas started with every invention and created what we call education. In Altamira caves, in Spain, that are fifteen thousand years old, evidence has been found that painting was taught in a systematic way. The training in painting was not required for survival, but for aesthetic satisfaction which in a way is worship. I would like to call it 'Nai Talim' (New Education) of those days. The Talim was not directly related to survival strategies. That was the Nai Talim then. Nai Talim has advanced with every new knowledge gained by humanity and must keep on advancing as we go on.

¹ Hastening death by wishing it after completing earthly duties. To be clearly distinguished from suicide.

In India, in Bhimbetka, near Bhopal, cave paintings reflect curiosity about the process of procreation. Internal anatomy of animals has been studied and recorded. In later phases, these paintings also depict change in cultural and political environment. These paintings are reminder of gradual progression of knowledge. Nature has been the greatest teacher that has given rise to knowledge of cosmos and also to the knowledge of what goes inside of bacteria.

Thus, there has been a Nai Talim always incorporating new human knowledge. The changing nature of knowledge gives rise to new education to face a changed human environment either through natural changes or because of cultural change. The spiritual change again arising out of gains in human enquiry depends on educative process and another essential conditions for human species.

Birth of spirituality

On the other hand, what we have observed earlier is characterized by an example given here. The Neanderthals were one branch of human tree that was considered as predecessors of humans, but they invented customs that even to this day are followed by humans all over the world. Neanderthals used to offer flowers on the graves of the dead and had developed a rudimentary flute. This tradition has survived over millions of years and has come down to us through transmission from one generation to another which has become a symbol of affection to express grief and love in human societies all over the world. The Logo of our Institute remembers the heritage of the past.

Flute of the Neanderthals may be the first step to the creation of great music which in no way is related to physical well-being, but directly to satisfaction from feelings that have never been adequately expressed. From the three-holed rudimentary flute has opened all that are gateways to heaven – love, music, literature, God and all that what is spiritual.

The meaning of Nai Talim

The material and the spiritual are both elements of being human. These two are equally important. If we restrict Nai Talim to the Government's definitions, we will be doing gross disservice to the objective and process of education. One must build even a modest home on the strong base to let Mahatmas' idea to live in. Mahatm's 'Roti' has to be redefined not only to include Roti, Kapda aur Makan, but also those indescribable things that bring human living satisfaction.

The emphasis on the physical well-being has not lead us to satisfaction, but greed. Reflection of the dissatisfaction with life is well pronounced whether it is the US or the South Sea Islands. All are well entrenched in the run-up to achieve physical

needs. When instead of fighting will we cooperate to reach what we must? I would urge to look at the significance of Neanderthal's action which clearly demonstrates the value of life that created more life than death. The world is better today because of music and respect for human life. These values are being ignored. Twenty five thousand Iraqi men, women and children have perished along with two thousand Americans.

The survival of the fittest theory when applied to human behavior is a death trap. The theory is true to a great extent as far as physical evolution is concerned, but the finer feelings that have created all that is good in human minds is lost if we apply it to human behavior. The heritage point of basic human values of peace has been observed by historians as real and not violent. Human desire to live in peace is at the base of human organization. Often survival of the fittest theory applied to human behavior by historians to human mind has lead to faulty interpretation of history. This theory of survival of the fittest has been challenged by many a observers of behavior, be they human or animals. Peace is the goal. Prince Kropotkin clearly expressed this view in his book 'Mutual Aid' thus:

'The world, as we enter the 21st century, is one of greed, of gross inequalities between rich and poor, of racist and national chauvinist prejudice, of barbarous practices and horrific wars. It is very easy to believe that this is what things have always been like and that, therefore, they can be no different. Such a message is put across by innumerable writers and philosophers, politicians and sociologists, journalists and psychologists.

'They portray hierarchy, deference, greed and brutality as 'natural' features of human behavior. Indeed, there are some who would see these as a feature throughout the animal kingdom, a 'sociobiological' imperative imposed by the alleged 'laws' of genetics...'

'Yet such Flintstones caricatures of human behavior are simply not borne out by what we now know about the lives our ancestors lived in the innumerable generations before recorded history. Accumulation of scientific evidence shows that their societies were not characterized by competition, inequality and oppression. These things are, rather, the product of history, and of rather recent history.²

True origin of Gandhian aspiration for peace is not characterized in Indian history, but in prehistory, if we interpret history by viewpoint of survival of the fittest. Greed of one man, Alexander, cannot be interpreted to be the view even of his soldiers, many of whom settled down in this land

² *A people's history of the world - Chris Harman, published by Bookmark, 2004*

of ours and made it their home. They did not do this with guns, but they sang and danced their way to Indian hearts. Many of their musical instruments have now become integrated in our culture and are used in our holiest moments. Actors and actresses of Kalidasa's plays were often of Greek origin. Where the swords failed, the music survived.

Teach children with care

Amir Khusru, the great musician, had lived long enough to see the rise and fall of eleven Sultans of Delhi. These Sultans are, but a few lines in books of history, but Amir Khusru and his sitar live on in the hearts of all of us. Such is the power of music, love and affection. Often visitors to the Lokshala are surprised to see so many flowers in the garden. They ask whether we sell them to make money. They do not appreciate that children that grow up in this environment, will always love flowers and our goal is to teach children with the care that flowers require.

It is possible that God was invented in pre-ice age and lingers on in religions and religious dogmas. Swords have become the symbol of religions replacing the flower or the flute.³ Everything that humanity owns today is derived out of educational process. Education, in its various forms, has in turn, determined human organizational forms, behavior and mechanisms for survival. We may not be sucked in by the tradition, but look ahead from the stand-point of different directions to aspire for meeting the great human desire for equality and love for peace. To this end we will direct education though the concept of Nai Talim without restrictions like the Shiksha Satra⁴.

Education is a treasure chest that has no locks to shut it out. This is also a chest that holds treasures that fill up as soon as it is given away. This chest was opened in the sixteenth century in Europe. It is essential that we open the repositories of the chest now. We have no right to open it partially and decide what is good for which person by artificial barriers of money or any other reason. After all, the glitter of the country is based on self-sufficiency.

There is a boy in Anandalaya from a village nearby who came to sell puffed rice sitting by the roadside with some of the simplest of condiments. We enrolled him in the school to sit in the class room and study. He sells his ware during Tiffin break. He does it and pays his fees. He will grow up to be a model child when he goes out.

Education today

Education today is passing through an artificial situation and is forcing a new caste system by introducing education that creates an uneven society following a custom of the past by excluding the poor from the rich by promotion of education by cost and concentration of educational institutions in

metropolitan areas. This approach to education must be undone to avoid creation of another caste system superimposed over the earlier one.

The role of education is to liberate and unshackle people to conform to the past. If we wish to liberate people from the debris of the past, Krishnamurti remarks, 'Is it the function of education merely to help you to conform to the pattern of the rotten social order or is it to give you freedom to grow a different society and create a new world.' The fast changing world and knowledge base must give way to past solutions such as Maya or Gods, but by free thinking and new knowledge. Extreme condition of the hanging on to the past is that several States in the USA refuse to teach Darwinian theory of evolution. Consequently, biology can not be taught in these States.

In this country, we have discussed a great deal about caste system and no person in the right frame of mind would accept that inequality is ingrained in the system. The caste system is closely linked to the economic class organization. The ruling classes have taken hold of the largesse of production and have been very tardy in sharing it with the lower castes and classes of people. The most treasured Jewel in the chest is Knowledge. No one should be allowed to deny knowledge to any person. A great sin in this country has been immortalized and glorified in the story of Ekalabya. This view is now restricting Primary Education in the ruse of Nai Talim for the poor.

The word 'primary education' is being equated today with basic education and interchangeably with Nai Talim which is conceptually improper. Compulsory primary education will be restricted to class seven. There is no mention of what should happen next. What manner of teaching that will follow? Already the CBSC has given surprise by reducing the quality of education that has given some place for India among the wealthy nations some of which are dependent on young Indians.

Thus, creating a subservient class in contrast to master race coming out of international schools that is a new plague added to the country's expensive schools. It is hard to believe that the Government means business, especially when it comes to educating the poor. It has taken sixty years to come to compulsory primary education.

Lokshala and Anandalaya

The premises of Lokshala, in which we are sitting to discuss the future of education has been built up by Aparna, the

³ When a visitor comes to the Lokshala campus and looks at our garden in bloom he invariably asks whether we are in flower business.

⁴ Shiksha Satra was created by Tagore in Sriniketan which had no fixed pay and anybody could come, sit down and learn.

FEATURE

universal 'Didi' in 100 villages that surround us. The name of the center implies that the center is a people's school.

We have developed the concept of the school through our long involvement with the very poor in many parts of the country. The school may look like any other school, but it embodies the underlying aspirations of people of all Jatis⁵ and Dharmas⁶ cutting across barriers of sexual division. It has achieved a great deal in these 25 years that we have been involved. The school and greening of this part of Madhupur block is a testimony of unleashing of people's dreams.

The school gives equal importance to the learning of three Rs as to the physical education, fine arts, dance and music. These are the ways to unlock the best that lies in slumber and imbibe all that love, peace and spirit in them. Their uniform has been designed carefully to denote the spirit of 'Tyaga'. Most of our children are from poor families of many Jatis and Dharmas. They are growing up together as friends.

What we wish to give them is Nai Talim. All the best of that is Nayagyan⁷. They will not be left behind in knowledge and skills. They learn some more than that is not in the curriculum. In a changing world, they will not be lead, but would lead. These are the goals of the school. We consider Nai Talim should break the shackles of the past, making these children good and leading persons who will neither be Hindus, nor Muslims, nor Christians, but good human beings. They will enjoy the music whether it is Middle-Eastern or emanating from the church of Vatican in praise of God. They will enjoy the music emanating from the Vedas to the song of the boatmen of the river Padma. They should thus become truly cosmopolitan citizens embracing the world within.

When they become an open person they will be able to learn all that is to be learned as our sages, including modern-day sages such as Mahatma, Gurudeva and Swamiji had done and take the country forward so that according to the predictions of these sages Bharat is moving into the world from backwaters to be the mainstream.

I would like to quote Mahatma Gandhi here to emphasize the need of liberal education : 'The ancient aphorism, 'Education is that which liberates' is as true today as it was before. Education here does not mean mere spiritual

knowledge, nor does liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life.

On another occasion he had said 'Persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness are the first requisite for acquiring learning of any kind. Inquisitiveness should be tempered by humility and respectful regard for the teacher. It must not degenerate into impudence. The latter is the enemy of the receptivity of mind. There can be no knowledge without humility and the will to learn'.

Tagore in a discussion with H.G.Wells had said 'I believe the unity of human civilization can be better maintained by linking up in fellowship and cooperation of the different civilizations of the world'.

I quote Swami Vivekananda below to see the unity between the three sages 'Education is a light that shows the mankind the right direction to surge. The purpose of education is not just making a child literate. Education adds rationality to ones thinking, makes one knowledgeable and self-sufficient'.

If education fails to inculcate self-discipline and commitment to achieve in the minds of children, it is not their fault. The school, the teachers and parents are responsible for not giving the child quality education. Indeed, the quality of ones life stems from the quality of education one gets in the childhood.

We have to convert education into a sport. The learning process has to generate interest in the students and motivate them to stay back in the institution than to run away from it. Education should become a fun and thrill to them rather than a burden and boredom. It is an integral part of their growth and helps them become good citizens'.

Having quoted the three sages nothing more is for me to write. Their speeches and their deeds may light our future even in triumph of science and arts.

5 I prefer to use Jatis because Caste is a word introduced by the British so is the Schedule that has become a basis of Indian politics hence untouchable.

6. Religion

7. New knowledge

Workshop on Nai Talim for the Eastern Region

Will be organized jointly by Gandhi Peace Foundation and People's Institute for Development and Training

On

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At

PIDT Lokshala

Village and Post Office Jagdishpur, Via Madhupur, District Deoghar-815353, Jharkhand

Renowned Gandhian Acharya Ram Murti is expected to participate

Will they remain adivasis for life?

Sudha Subramaniam

Whenever we speak of adivasis or refer to the need to improve their lot, we seem to be affixed with the notion that they are an uncivilized people, they are the people with insufficient education who have to be tackled and reckoned with harshness and they are tribes who are to some extent savage and brutal. This is far from the truth. In fact, it is the educated, civilized, powerful, rich and the people in authority who perpetrate atrocities on the poor adivasis who are nothing more than original inhabitants who have continued to lead a simple life, unmindful of the technical and scientific advances and changes in the world around them.

Yet they harbor a heart and soul far more true, divine and sacrificing than that of their posh counterparts who live by the dictum of running the rat race, so much better than power hungry nations which are constantly at each other's throats, so much better than those who chase all the comforts of life, caring two hoots for ecology or environment. From whatever personal experience I have had with the adivasis, whether in the interiors of Dahanu or the hill station of Matheran or the interiors of Coorg, they live a simple life, they depend on the land for nourishment and the nature is their book of learning.

Today, their life is no longer secluded. People keep on prying on them, tour operators bring busloads of tourists just to show them the adivasi settlements. Rather than use them as a tourist attraction, we should try to give them the essentials of good education and proper amenities without taking advantage of their simplicity. At the same time, we should simultaneously try and maintain fabric of their simplicity. Let us first ask ourselves this question, 'Who are the adivasis?'

Adivasis – the original inhabitants of India

Around 8.08 per cent or 67.6 million of the population of India has been designated as 'scheduled tribes' and are referred to as 'adivasis'. Article 342 of the Constitution of India states that these communities are characterized by 'geographical isolation, distinctive culture, primitivity, shyness and economic backwardness'. Basically, they are 'indigenous', the 'original inhabitants', the 'natives'. Certain committed social activists and NGOs work for their welfare and upliftment by providing education, health camps, opportunity, enlightening talks etc.

However, here too, unhealthy elements surface quite often and make false promises in order to secure their votes, kindle false hopes to get mega projects, dams etc. sanctioned in

their areas. Although scholars have not attributed much thought to the descendants of adivasi tribes over the passage of history, it seems quite evident that many of the early adivasi tribes had embraced Buddhism. This seems to hold good also on the analysis of the fact that after Harshavardhana, strong Buddhists ruled nearly the whole of North-East. These areas belonged to the Nagas and are now a major adivasi tract.

The adivasi belt courses through the North-Eastern provinces, lower Bihar, parts of Bengal and Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, adjoining parts of Chandrapur, Gadchiroli and parts of Andhra Pradesh. The Gond kings who ruled over some of the areas stretching from Andhra Pradesh to Madhya Pradesh were tribals. Interesting legends of love, bravery and demons are associated with tribals. Some of them are very popular and can even be traced to ancient poems and folk songs.

The passage of time saw that these tribals needed support to rise. Their claim to land rights enraged many-a-Government and it has not been unusual to read of adivasis being taken to task and in a few instances even shot at when their demand for land rights became too vehement to ignore. In October 2003, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) received information that the adivasis of Rahata tehsil of Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra had gone on a hunger strike, demanding land ownership rights since Maharashtra State Farming Corporation (MSFC) had destroyed about 200 adivasi huts and nearly a 1,000 acres of crop.

In most of adivasi areas, the tribals have cultivated the land for years in a very productive manner. Though confined to themselves, they have never infringed on the rights of the general public. It is, therefore, only fair that the public at large does not infringe on their rights and recognize them as a unique race of people waiting to be discovered. True, we have organizations like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the Bhoomi Hak Andolan Samiti (Land Rights Movement Committee), the AHRC and the Nagaland Human Rights Activists, yet much needs to be done for the adivasis.

In the year 2000, Maharashtra police forcibly caught and beat up several activists who championed the cause of the adivasis in Nandurbar district who faced eviction. Many of them were not offered Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R and R). Yet the Indian Government persists in viewing the development of possible higher international standards on indigenous people with concern, because these echo the

PIDT SHGs: A Case Study

Krishan Kumar and Chandan Kumar

In recent years, formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with micro finance facilities from commercial banks through NGOs has become one of the main modes of providing loans to poor people in the rural areas for developing rural, non-farm small enterprises. People's Institute for Development and Training (PIDT) Lokshala, Jagdishpur, district Deoghar, Jharkhand has developed a three-phase strategy for financing the rural poor. During the first phase, women groups were provided loans through Mahila Kosh, a Bangladesh Gramin Bank-type program for micro-credit. During the second phase, emphasis is being given to formation of SHGs of rural women and in the third phase, multi-state cooperative societies will be formed for providing credit facilities and bring about some measure of self-sufficiency as far as credit needs of the rural people are concerned. While the first phase has been completed, the second and third phases are under implementation.

Most of the families in the rural areas around PIDT Lokshala belong to four religious and ethnic groups – Santhal adivasis (tribals), Muslim, Christians and SC, OBC and general caste Hindus. Before the intervention of PIDT, most of the families depended on agriculture for their livelihood. Majority of holdings were small, marginal and mono-cropped. They depended on rainfall for irrigation. Per unit productivity of land was small. The introduction of organic farming techniques by PIDT involving non-usage of inorganic fertilizers and agro-chemicals, but increasing use of bio-fertilizers, vermi-compost, blue-green algae (BGA), cultivation of local varieties requiring minimal doses of external inputs has made farming somewhat remunerative. Development of Water Harvesting Structures (WHS) has made it possible to grow two, even three crops a year, when only one grew before. The cropping sequence now includes a crop of green vegetables for health and nutrition of farm families as well as a means of ready cash through sales of vegetables in the local market.

Yet pressure on land remained. Either too many hands worked on it or went to nearby towns to work as daily laborers where the wage rates were very low. Whatever they earned ended up in meeting family requirements and nothing was left to meet future contingencies. Formation of SHGs proved to be one sure way of preventing out-migration of village folks and providing employment opportunities in the village itself. Thus, when the Lokshala came to the villagers with its SHG scheme, they took to it like duck to the water. This is corroborated through the statement of one of the beneficiaries, a woman, belonging to Jhilua village, when she said, 'We have started saving whatever little amount we can and are using it to start small income-generating activities'.

With the assistance of PIDT staff, a number of groups were formed, i.e.:

- Kalpana SHG in Jhilua village, Panchayat Dhamni,
- Asha SHG in Pratappur village, Panchayat Dhamni and
- Chameli SHG in Sugapahari village, Panchayat Dhamni.

Each SHG has 10 members, mostly women. The groups were formed about three years ago and have since then been engaged in different income-generating activities like vegetable production and sales, agriculture-related activities, construction of WHS plantation, floriculture, regular savings and inter-lending. They are interested in solving women and social-related problems.

With the working of the SHGs, respect for women in their families has gone up as they are now earning members of the family. They are consulted in matters related to household decision-making. The level of self-confidence and empowerment among them has gone up tremendously. Incidence of wife-beating is the thing of the past. The standard of nutrition among the children has improved. Most of the children go to school, some even attend Anandalaya English Medium Coeducational Senior Secondary School being run at the Lokshala campus.

growing political demands of adivasis which the Government is unwilling to concede in practice.

True, job reservations and reservations in academic fields have been created for scheduled castes and tribes, but the effective and proper utilization would require constant monitoring so that somewhere in the near future they would be at par with their general counterparts. The adivasis are spread over 26 States and Union Territories. They are not evenly distributed over the Indian land mass. There are pockets of adivasis across the country – mainly in the forested, hilly and mountainous areas – populating nearly 20 per cent of the geographical area of the country.

Their habitat runs from Thane district of Maharashtra to Tengenoupal district of Manipur. It also stretches southwards along the Sahyadri ranges to Orissa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and southwards. Definitely, there are Constitutional and legal safeguards for the adivasis. The Indian Constitution has incorporated most of the contents of the Government of India Act, 1935. This allows for the classification of adivasi areas into 'partially-excluded areas' and 'excluded areas' by creating the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution. The Fifth Schedule applies to much of the adivasi areas in the mainland of India and the Sixth Schedule to the North-East region of India. Both of these Schedules were envisaged to protect the socio-cultural identity of the adivasis and to provide them with some measure of autonomy in their administrative affairs.

Too little, too late

But at the State Government level, more needs to be done and there has to be more orientation towards development at the grassroots stage. Parliament enacted the Panchayats (extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 which has become law. This suggests that the original and broad provisions of autonomy that were conferred on adivasi areas were inadequate. Today, this situation has changed further with certain adivasi groups being headed by activists and demanding change. True, Indian Constitution provides for positive discrimination or affirmative action in employment and higher education and even for political reservations for seats in Parliament and State Assemblies, but this is not enough.

The above benefits are available if a community is included in the 'Scheduled' category. While this system of reservation was intended as a positive measure, it is increasingly being seen as merely fulfilling certain Constitutional formalities rather than serving the interests of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes which are provided with similar reservations. In most of the educational institutions, departments and offices, where reservation rules are supposed to have been followed meticulously, even there

representation of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes is poor.

When it comes to political reservations, the adivasi Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs), are constrained by party ideologies because almost all of them belong to larger national and mainstream parties. Those belonging to regional parties which are more conversant with adivasi interests or those who have more independence are very much in a minority. These positive discrimination measures – whether on political reservations, education or jobs – have not worked to benefit those who are really in need of such measures.

This is because the whole system is following a development, economic and social agenda that is not only inimical to the adivasi ethos, but also detrimental to the survival of the adivasis. The Land Acquisition Act, 1894, is still being used to legally take over adivasi lands in the name of 'national development' and 'national interest'. Heavy industries too, have impinged on adivasi homeland and relegated them to unorganized and unskilled sectors of wage labor.

The Indian Forest Act, 1927 and the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 restricts the rights of adivasis in wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. Growing efforts to carry over eco-development projects and promote eco-tourism with the financial backing of multinational agencies like the World Bank have heightened the crisis of adivasis leading them to further restrict or abandon their survival activities in the forest areas of the country.

The struggle of adivasis seems to be an inexorable suffering without any platform to address the issues concerning them, all avenues having been either politicized or more often than not taken over by vested interests. Quite often, their struggle is viewed as a 'law and order' problem. Thus, they live lives of relegated people within our so-called civilized, modern society.

December 5 is the World Volunteer Day

Volunteering is the fundamental building block of the society. It brings to life the noblest aspirations of humankind—the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety and justice for all people. Volunteering—either through individual or group action—is a way in which human values of caring and serving can be sustained and strengthened and individuals can exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of communities, while learning and growing through their lives, realizing their full human potential – Dr. Kenn Allen, Ex. World President, International Association for Volunteer Effort.

Celebrate volunteering

NEWS

Priestly opening for Dalits

The winds of change are blowing in Rajasthan's Kota district. People from backward communities, who till a few years back were even forbidden from entering temples, are today being trained to become priests. All this is happening at the instance of the Rajasthan Sanskrit Academy and Sanskritam, a Kota-based institute. Dalit boys are being exposed to various disciplines in Hindu priesthood and related subjects like astrology and training camps are being organized for them. Their aim is to motivate them so that some of them do go on to become priests.

At a recently-concluded 20-day camp, a dozen-odd boys from backward communities participated in the program with boys from forward communities. The 'Parohitya Prashikshan Shivir' introduced them to various traditional and religious rituals. If there was an objection to the backward communities being involved, it was muted. Sanskritam Convenor, Pandit Shyamanand Mishra said, 'The right to the knowledge of Vedas is not the sole authority of any sect or caste as it is the ultimate truth and the interest of the backward community youth in learning priesthood is good for social change'.

When Rakesh Kumar, a student, was asked what he felt about the change, he said, 'All people are Shudra by birth. It is only later that they are known as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya or Shudra'. He said, he would add 'Pandit' to his name when he became a priest. According to Sanskritam spokesperson, Sanjay Sharma, the institute has seen a rise in the number of Dalit students. Although not a single Dalit priest has been appointed yet, yet he is hopeful that all will change soon.

*

Common Cause

Long before social activism became fashionable, he was out on the streets championing the cause of the common man. His NGO, Common Cause, was a one-man crusade, set up 25 years ago and inspired by his conviction to safeguard the rights of the ordinary citizen. H.D. Shourie, who died at the ripe old age of 93, selflessly battled the Government, bureaucracy, local agencies and corruption till the last. Father of three children, including former Union Minister, Arun Shourie, 'HD' was, ironically, a bureaucrat with 30 years of service before he launched his NGO. Over the years, he filed 70 writ petitions and Public Interest Litigations (PILs) on behalf of various sections of the society.

Today's Right to Information Act is a reality for the citizens of India because of his crusade to puncture the secrecy

surrounding the working of the Government. He was instrumental in the Supreme Court declaring strikes by lawyers as illegal. A soft-spoken man who led a simple life, his PILs always attracted immediate attention from the courts because of his reputation. Citizens of Delhi will be grateful to him for his successful battles against pollution, the Delhi Rent Control Act and the poll expenses by political parties. His biggest achievement was the detailed inquiry ordered by the Supreme Court into the misuse of official position by the then Petroleum Minister, Satish Sharma over allocation of petrol pumps. Delhi is much the poorer with his passing away.

*

Only seven, but author of three books

Inku Rahmat is just seven years old. She entered the world of letters when she was five. Now, she is an author of three books. Her third book, Mookkuthipatty, a collection of 34 stories, was released by Kerala's Public Works Minister, M.K. Muneer. Inku, a class III student, started writing at an early age. She wrote her first story Tha Enna Aattinkutty when she was just five.

Inku follows a unique style of narrating stories where innocence and simplicity meet. Her stories depict the purity of little minds and those who read her tales can recall their memories of childhood and nostalgia associated with it. Inku Paranja Kathakal is her first book which was released when she was five and the second book, Poovam Puzhayum was released early this year.

Inku's main hobby is reading and her favorite books are Aesop's Fables, Bala Kathakal, Unni Kathakal and children's magazines. She has a passion for reading and draws inspiration from the books she reads. 'I write stories whenever I feel like writing and I get the idea from daily life'. She comes across as a matured person. Her favorite is Mookkuthipathy, a story about an arrogant dog, named Chimu. When it enters a gold shop, it finds a golden nose ring in its nose and gets the name Mookkuthipathy. Her parents have done a great job by supporting her and nurturing her talent.

*

Women end Saurashtra's water woes

In parched Saurashtra, it is water that is bringing about social change. Women who walked miles to fetch a pot of water are now providing succor to hundreds of water-starved. Unlettered women of Sayla and Chotila talukas of drought-prone Surendranagar district have begun the business of providing water through tankers selling to villagers at nominal rates in the face of fierce competition. In the process, the

have also stormed the male bastion of tanker business in Saurashtra.

Using an Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan, these women have made a splash, literally in just 20 days sparking a price war with those in business slashing their prices to take on the women brigade. The business is driven by a Core Committee of 11 members supported by other women in two talukas. 'We charge Rs. 150 a tanker, half the market rate, while a pot of water is supplied for just Re. 1. As demand pours in from various villages, we send hired drivers with a letter. People deposit the money along with the order', said Samuben Dhalvaniya, member of the Core Committee.

In Chotila, the women's group has started supplying water to 25 villages. Each of these talukas has one tanker each. Samuben, who has never been to school admits that the going was not good to begin with. 'We had to convince people that we mean business'. Surendranagar is a drought-prone district with average rainfall of 17 inches per annum leaving the villages in the clutches of drinking water scarcity. The women are worst hit, having to walk miles under blazing sun to bring water. The situation only worsened with the erratic and poor quality water supplied by the Government thereby providing an opportunity to private tanker owners to make a killing.

'The women realized that the private tanker owners were fleecing the people. This prompted them to start their own business and an impressed ADB provided the tankers free', said Vitthal Kikania, Cluster Manager, Aga Khan Rural Support Program in Sayla that lends support to the women who are part of the Mahila Mandals and Mahila Manch established by the Program.

The tanker owners are already seeing red. They have begun a fierce price war to prevent the women from carrying on their business. 'Twenty days ago, we began by charging Rs. 250 a tanker, Rs. 50 lower than the market rate prevalent then. We were forced to cut it down to Rs. 150 soon as they slashed rates further, said Lakhunde Vashrambhai of Chotila Mahila Manch.

*

Tribals have better sex ratio than urban India

If you associate healthy social indicators with economic well being and education, here is a reason to discard such simplistic notions. At least one such indicator – the sex ratio – does not quite work out that way in India. On the contrary, an analysis of Child Sex ratio (CSR) shows almost unambiguously that backwardness means a better CSR. This holds true across the urban-rural, literate-illiterate and caste divides.

CSR, which measures how many girls are there per 1,000 boys in the 0-6 age group, is a better indicator of gender equality than the overall sex ratio, since the latter could be distorted by migration. India's overall CSR is a lowly 927, but that of Scheduled Tribes (STs) is much healthier 973. Scheduled Castes (SCs) too do better than the average with a CSR of 938. That is a whole lot better than the CSR for non-SC/ST population which is a dismal 919.

In all, 233 of the 593 districts in India at the time of 2001 census had a tribal population greater than the national average of 8.2 per cent and these, in turn, account for 86.6 per cent of total tribal population in the country. The CSR in these districts is 949, significantly higher than the 919 averaged by the remaining districts. The gap between tribal and non-tribal CSRs is so high that Chattisgarh, a predominantly tribal State, has a higher CSR of 975 than the 960 for Kerala, easily the best State in India in terms of all social indicators.

Again East Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh which has a 87 per cent tribal population has the highest CSR (1,035) among all districts in India. The caste difference in sex ratios shows up quite clearly in States like Punjab and Haryana which have the worst ratios in the country. Both have sizeable SC populations (about 29 per cent in Punjab and 19 per cent in Haryana). While CSR for SCs in Punjab is 861, it is woeful 767 for the rest of the population. In Haryana, too, the CSR is 865 for SCs and 807 for the rest of the population.

The average CSR for 150 backward districts of the country was 947, while the average for the rest was 921. If you thought urban India would represent modernity and a broader outlook, think again. The CSR of 934 for rural India is much higher than 906 in urban India. Literacy too does not seem to work the way you would expect. A comparison of the most literate districts and least literate ones within each State strengthens the conclusion that on this social indicator the less aware and technologically challenged population does better.

The top 10 literate districts of Uttar Pradesh, for instance, have a CSR of 887 compared to the bottom 10 for which the same indicator reads 937, a difference of 50, but Tamil Nadu is one clear exception to the rule with its CSR of 959 in the 10 most literate districts, far superior to the same figure of 913 in the least literate districts.

*

Always on duty

It is 10 PM. Ruchi Chaudhary has been home for only two hours. Having helped her mother-in-law serve dinner, she is

just about ready to call it a day when the phone rings. The next forty minutes are spent talking to a rape victim's mother who is worried about an upcoming court hearing. She tells Ruchi about the threats and the offer of money from the alleged rapist's relatives. Ruchi offers to be present at the hearing.

'How can you tell a person in need that you are off duty'. Asks Ruchi, a Program Officer with Pratidhi, an NGO that looks after victims of crime. Bringing work home takes on an entirely new dimension when you factor in the emotional demands of the job. The first rape victim Ruchi counseled was a five-year-old girl. 'The girl who had been raped by her neighbor was playing very normally with a group of kids. Her pain emerged only when I spoke to her and we developed a very special relationship. It became very difficult for me to withdraw from that case', recalls Ruchi. The case ended in a conviction and was a moral victory for her.

'I have cried nights recalling the stories of some of the girls I have met. Listening to them is enough to make you lose faith in men. In fact, now when I talk to groups of school or college girls, I make it a point to tell them not to trust anyone – not even your own father. This work has really made me suspicious of any kind of physical contact that I see around me. If a child is sitting on a man's lap, is it an innocent contact or is the child being abused is the first thought that comes to my mind!', she says.

*

Vidya for all

For Rahul and Supriya Akhauri, life is much more than just about career and family. Rahul, an IT professional and Supriya, a chartered accountant, share a common dream – to educate poor children. The couple run their school, Vidya and Child, in the Harijan Basti of Sector 37, Noida. Most of their students come from families whose parents are vegetable vendors, tea stall owners or domestic servants. 'When we saw these small children loitering about aimlessly, we felt very sad and thought of doing something for them', says Supriya. They began by teaching the daughter of their maid servant who is in class V today. 'Word of mouth publicity brought more children and we had to shift to the Basti', she recounts.

'I have been brought up in an environment where people around me were actively working for various social causes. So, I always wanted to do something for the under-privileged. When I got married to Rahul nine years ago, we discovered that we share the same dream. This was how the journey towards Vidya and Child started'. Today, the school has more than 200 students. In order to be able to devote more time

How to be a good team leader

As a CEO, it is your responsibility to lead your team, motivate your staff and ensure that everyone is performing to the best of his/her capability. However, very often, in the daily grind of your professional life, your leadership qualities tend to suffer. Here are a few tips to become a good team leader.

- ☆ A leader must have integrity. Openness and honesty are key elements to a person's integrity.
- ☆ Even when things go wrong, always be honest. Never put blame on someone else.
- ☆ Developing trust is essential for a leader to influence others. Being able to follow through on promises, sharing hardships with others, treating others with respect are keys to developing trust.
- ☆ A leader must be decisive, but also have the patience to not make hasty decisions. There are times when a 70 per cent solution will finish the job. There are other times when a leader must be patient in order to gather all the facts.
- ☆ Be open to the best of everyone, everywhere has to offer. Transfer learning across your organization.
- ☆ Get the right people in the right jobs – it is more important than developing a strategy. Understand where real value is added. Put your best people there.
- ☆ An informal atmosphere is a competitive advantage. Make sure everybody counts and everybody knows that he counts.
- ☆ Work has to be a fun – celebrations energize organizations.
- ☆ Know where to meddle and where to let go – this is pure instinct.
- ☆ Communication is critical. Listen, consult, involve, explain why as well as what needs to be done.
- ☆ Some people lead by example and are very 'hands on', others are more distanced and let their people do it. Whatever – your example is paramount – the way you work and conduct yourself will be the most you can possibly expect from your people. If you set low standards, you are to blame for low standards in your people.
- ☆ Select good people and help them to develop. Develop people via training and experience, particularly delegating responsibilities that will interest and stretch them and always support people while they strive to improve and take on extra tasks.
- ☆ Good leadership principles should cascade down through the whole organization. If you are leading a large organization, you must check that the processes for managing, communicating and developing people are in place and working properly.

to their school, the couple has even sidelined their respective careers. While Supriya is content with only a three hour shift and has only a handful of clients, Rahul has quit his hectic IT job and is now a software consultant.

*

Enormous organic watermelon - a winner

A farmer, winner of the Maharashtra Government's Krishi Bhushan award, has grown a watermelon weighing 30 kg using organic manure. Govindrao Pawar, a resident of Naichakur village in Omerga on tehsil of Osmanabad district, brought the watermelon to Mantralaya and showed it to State Agriculture Minister, Babasaheb Thorat. Mr. Pawar grows watermelons at his Sharad Aamrai Farm. He has been

able to get record production this year.

*

Kid journalists show the way

'Udayachal' is a small newspaper that prints only a 1,000 copies, but has managed to achieve what most mainstream newspapers have failed to do – getting Khanpur, a crowded settlement in the Capital to count. Making a difference with their stories, these are children who could teach most scribes a lesson in real journalism. 'The mainstream media is often dependent on advertising, but our paper brings out the problems of the local community. We talk to residents, ask them about their problems and then print stories about them', says 16-year-old Yogesh, who is the Editor of the paper.

Form IV (See Rule 8)

Statement of ownership and other particulars about Civil Participation

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I, Prof. Subhachari Dasgupta, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief

Sd/-

(Prof. Subhachari Dsgupta, Publisher)

A result of the Summer School organized by Gandhi Samriti and Darshan Samiti as part of the Gandhi Media Literacy Program that aims to get children to read between the lines and equip with skills to empower them, 'Udayachal' aims to carry on the tradition of journalism started by the Mahatma in 'Indian Opinion' with the next generation. 'We train kids not only so that they become journalists, but also to develop their personalities. Many of the children we work are from the marginalized sections of the society and this program helps them voice their problems. It is also about community action and the power of the people', explained Vedabhyas Kundu, Program Officer at Gandhi Samriti and Darshan Samiti.

While these kids have managed to prove their prowess with the paper, they are now being trained in another potent medium – the radio. The Gandhi Media Literacy Program has roped in an expert to give them lessons in sound. The programs recorded will hopefully be aired on the community radio station started by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC).

'When we first started working with the newspaper and asked for time with the Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), they did not even see us. Now, we have managed to get dust bins put in our area. We set an example for the adults by ensuring that people use them and also by picking up the rubbish that they throw out. We hope that the radio will reach out to the people who do not understand the language in our paper', says Yogesh

*

A school girl turns innovator

Remya Jose was giving her X standard exams when her mother fell ill. In addition to studies and the four-hour bus journey to and from school in Malappuram, Kerala, Remya had to do the household laundry. They did not have a washing machine at home, so she simply decided to make one. At 14, Remya designed a washing-cum-exercising machine, an ingenious idea that makes one wonder why no one thought of it before. The answer probably lies in its very simplicity – a sparkling idea that meets the necessity and cost factor. Remya's machine costs less than Rs. 2,000.

The machine's structure is a box with a cylinder made of wire mesh that is connected to a cycle chain, pedals and a seat. The box is filled with detergent, clothes and water. On pedaling, the cylinder rotates cleaning the clothes which can also be rinsed and spin-dried. Remya is one of the recipients of the Grassroots Technological Inventions and Traditional Knowledge Awards given by the National Innovations Foundation (NIF). The innovation came to light through the efforts of Honey Bee Network that collects data through NGOs,

students, institutions and volunteers.

*

Tribal girls rise against child marriage

Call them rebellious or defiant, but these children have a lesson or two for their parents. Over a 1,000 minor girls in Rajnandgaon district of Chattisgarh have turned against their elders saying they are too young to be married off. Amita, a class VIII student, now heads a band of girls scampering around, getting signatures for a petition against child marriage. And they acted just in the nick of time, days ahead of the *Teej* festival when every year, dozens, often hundreds, of young girls, barely into their puberty are dragged to the altar by their parents.

'My marriage was fixed to a boy from Mandla. I am in class VII only and want to continue my studies. Hence I protested', said Amita. Some of the young rebels motivated other minors to resist the wedding plans made by their parents. In a unique initiative, the girls have formed a 'Kishori Vahini' (Adolescent Brigade) and are visiting villages urging their 'sisters' to reject marriage proposals. They have also collected over 1,000 'oath papers' from minor girls saying they would not marry

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Prof. Subhachari Dasguptaji and Indira Dasguptaji,

I just received a copy of Vol. 2, No. 1 January-March issue of Civil Participation. I was happy to go through the editorial and the feature article 'Another initiative in primary education'. I am sending a copy of the feature to the Principal of the School at Sabli (Ranichauri) in Tehri Garhwal. I am encouraging them to expand their on-going school for village children. I trust such an advice and encouragement will promote them to have greater number of village children, many of them cannot afford education. We have child sponsorship plans and we have already received some sponsorships.

I was glad to attend the second preparatory meeting for the International Conference of IAVE in November, 2006. I noted that you are preparing for the International Conference so well and efficiently. As I mentioned, I am ready to be of help and service to the cause of voluntary effort which is needed more and more in India, almost everywhere.

M.L. Dewan, Chairman, HIMCON

till they are 18. The oath papers are authenticated by the area Sub Divisional Magistrates and prominently displayed in their drawing rooms. The girls approached Rajnandgaon District Magistrate, Mr. G.S. Mishra and District Child and Women Development Officers and informed them about child marriages in their villages.

*

Women social workers make a debut in politics

When an overwhelming number of villagers of Kurri in Kanker, Chattisgarh, elected unopposed Devantibai, Shushila Sahu

and Kaushalya members of the village panchayat, it capped the good work done by the three of them as *mitanin* (friend). These women, attached to a local NGO, would advise villagers about pre and post-natal care and childcare. 'We would visit the home of an expectant mother and explain to the family how to take care of her so that the progeny is healthy', says Devantibai. They also interacted with anganwadi workers and ensured that the family got its rightful share of about two kg of free *dalia* (broken wheat) every week. All this without any monetary rewards, either from villagers or NGOs. For these women, their new-found status only reflects a growing reality in a State where mitanin,

XIX IAVE World Volunteer Conference

NEW DELHI: Indian Association for Volunteer Effort (Iave) and People's Institute for Development and Training (PIDT) are organizing the XIX World Volunteer Conference of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) from 10 to 14 November 2006. United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and industrial bodies like Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) are actively involved in organizing this Conference. The Conference is expected to host about 800 participants from at least 80 countries around the globe. The participants would include volunteers, volunteer managers, volunteer leaders, professionals, academics, corporate and Government representatives among others.

The theme of the Conference is '**Volunteering for Peace in Multicultural Societies**'. Besides, the main theme, a number of sub-themes have been chosen for the Conference. They are :

1. **Environment, ecology and development for peace**
2. **Education and governance in multi-cultural societies**
3. **Human rights and fundamental freedoms**
4. **Spirituality, morality and attitudes**
5. **Media, advertising and peace**

For registering and sending papers, please contact for Conference brochure and other information at the following address:

Ms. C. Indira Dasgupta, Coordinator or

Prof. K.K. Sen, Executive Secretary

Conference Secretariat

XIX IAVE World Volunteer Conference

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Website: www.volunteerindia.org, www.iave.org

encouraged by NGOs, are venturing into the political area.

The first NGO to take up educational programs in the State was People's Institute for Development and Training (PIDT) which started as part of the Rural Action Project (RAP) of the National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM) in late 1970s. During all the three panchayat elections in the State, it launched educational programs for voters and budding panchayat leaders about their rights and duties and asked the electors to elect right types of candidates who were not hand-in-glove with contractors and corrupt block machinery. Its last program in Shankargarh, Surguja was attended even by the District Deputy Director, Panchayats and the local MLA.

Other NGOs too have realized that community leadership could be developed at the grassroots level through encouragement and empowerment. This empowerment could be taken to a higher level by helping community leaders contest local body polls. In February panchayat elections, 5,000 mitanins were successful. It is a number that has made political parties sit up and take note.

The sweet fruit of graft

Until four years ago, illiterate growers of water-intensive cash crops of Jiradgaon village of Maharashtra's Jalna district were held to ransom by touts, erratic monsoons and poverty. Today, 425 acres of blooming Kesar mango orchards are steadily changing the landscape of the village. They plan to grow 5,000 tons of mango for export by 2008. Their peers in nearby villages have joined them with another 325 acres of orchards. Together they are spearheading their own development, knowledge dissemination and water revitalization programs.

Most of the credit for this transformation goes to Dr. Bhagwanrao Kapse, the expert who introduced the king of fruits to Jiradgaon. Head of Horticulture Department at the Badnapur Agriculture College, Kapse is a proponent of low-cost, high-tech farming. He began using the in-situ technique of growing mangoes in 2001. He dug pits, planted 4-5 saplings of inexpensive local variety in each pit and tied them by side grafting. Subsequently, he grafted Kesar mango scions on the best plant in each clump. Thus, energized by many plants, each Kesar mango sapling grew briskly even during parched summers.

The idea took the area by storm. The farming practices he was propagating helped the farmers save water and retain the richness of the soil. Not just mangoes, Kapse also taught the farmers to plant pomegranate in the vacant spaces in the orchard to generate income till such time that the mango trees yield fruit. Some are also growing sweet lime,

Become a 'Civil Participation' volunteer correspondent

'Civil Participation' invites social workers, volunteers, activists, concerned individuals and collectives, young and the old, men and women from India and abroad to become its correspondents.

We would like to publish short pieces on people's endeavors to make the world a better place to live devoid of misery, wars, poverty and want.

You may find numerous efforts in this direction by individuals and members of the civil society in all parts of the world. If you have done or come across such a recent effort, write and e-mail it to us through at pidd@del6.vsnl.net.in in English.

You may send newspaper clippings, but the source of publication from which the clipping has been taken should be clearly mentioned. All the material for publication should have an inscription on the left hand side 'FOR PUBLICATION IN CIVIL PARTICIPATION'.

We also solicit your opinion regarding this publication and your suggestions for improvement of its content. These too can be sent on the above e-mail address.

Editor

amla, chikoo and custard apple. The little village of 1,526 people now boasts of 250 acres of pomegranate and 700 acres of sweet lime plantations.

Meanwhile, the village youth have built over 35 earthen and contour dams to arrest water and have pared drip irrigation expenses by procuring the equipment in bulk and installing it themselves. With an astounding tree survival rate of 97 per cent, the effort is paying off. By teaming up as 10 Self-help Groups (SHGs), the women are preparing to set up cashew-processing and cardboard box units. The villagers have raised Rs. One lakh to buy a two-acre plot for a school. Rich dividends of collective action have made factional feuds a thing of the past. There is a new drive to better the lives of the villagers.