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THE GOOD, BAD AND THE UGLY

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THE JAIN TOWNS OF CHANDRAGIRI
AND SHRAVANABELAGOLA

REINING THEM IN!

FACE TO FACE

DHVANI DESAI

CRY FOR A REASON

DIFFERENT STROKES



HOW MODI APPEARS TO THE WORLD:



HOW THE WORLD APPEARS TO MODI:



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Civil society's NGO conundrum

The crackdown on foreign-funded NGOs by the current government has raised many brows in India. Gajanan Khergamker quotes examples from Russia and China to prove why foreign NGOs must work under strict limitations.

“**D**OING good work does not give civil society groups immunity from the law”, said Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, while defending the Indian government's crackdown on foreign-funded NGOs (Non-Government Organisations). This, simply put, summed up the mood of the moment: That India, under the present-day Narendra Modi government, was no longer going to put up with illegality.

Oddly, the very critics of India's laid back, *chalta hai* attitude towards law-breakers and life in general, were up in arms over the government's attempts to curb illegality in funding and other activities perpetrated by a section of the civil society.

Foreign contributions have been coming to India for a range of activities. Disclosure of the nature of activities and the quantum, and source of funding are also mandatory by law, and failure to comply can lead to cancellation of the NGO's Foreign Contribution Regulation license.

The Foreign Contribution Regulations Act (FCRA) has legal requirements that an organisation receiving funds, for a 'particular' purpose, has to use it for that alone and file annual returns. It was found that many groups did not follow the procedures, and action was being taken against them, Jaitley said.

The funding factor

India came under tremendous pressure from the US government over restrictions placed on multi-million dollar remittances by a Christian missionary organisation, Compassion International, that claimed on its website, that for strategic reasons it works with local churches to provide Christian teaching to children that it aids.

So, on 15 March 2017, the Colorado-based Christian charity closed its operations here after 48 years, “informing tens of thousands of children that they will no longer receive meals, medical care or tuition payments”.

Incidentally, with Compassion International engaging in religious activities, the Ministry of External Affairs had offered that the entity could re-register as a religious organisation on the lines of its activities, but the offer was declined. That way, Compassion International could have been allowed to continue its work in India.

Incidentally, thousands of NGOs lost their licenses

to accept foreign funds since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014. George Soros's Open Society Foundations, and the National Endowment for Democracy, too were barred from transferring funds without permission from Indian security officials.



Do NGOs have a big role to play in poverty alleviation?

The law regulating the use of foreign aid has been in existence in India since long, but Modi government applied it for the first time, canceling the registrations of more than 10,000 NGOs, mostly small ones, in 2015.

The group's 500 Indian partners also had to shut down their operations, including the Bethesda Charitable Endeavours, which funds a community centre in a town called Haldwani, in the Himalayan foothills. And the projected 'stakeholder' again being children 'deprived of education', which were predictably projected as 'hit the worst' by the Modi government.

But, the current government's take on the funding West isn't exactly unique.

Ditto, Putin

After Putin's return to presidency in 2012, in a second term, after months of large-scaled anti-government protests, the Russian government began tightening its regulatory control over civil society. Foreign-funded groups undermining Russia's national sovereignty and, concurrently affecting the collective good, were now being systematically discredited.

Russia, under Putin, embarked on efforts to fund and promote apolitical and pro-government organisations as socially useful, while maintaining a strict state control over the entire sector. Putin also extended executive control and promoted a corporatist vision of the civil society, thereby quashing its pseudo-altruistic demeanour.

In the 1990s, it was primarily a group of Western donors who would support a small group of reform oriented organisations who formed Russia's civil society. These organisations would usually hold the state accountable to global norms of governance, yet would regularly and consistently reject any close collaboration with the government.

And then, Putin came to power in 2000. He stressed on the need to build a strong civil society, but his vision was at direct conflict with the interest of independent groups which mushroomed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. These independent groups were mostly funded by foreign entities, and were directly alien to Russian society and culture.

It was after the 2004 Beslan school hostage crisis that Putin created the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, an advisory body of 126 individuals appointed from various social and professional domains, and entrusted with providing expert inputs on legislative proposals.

In mid-2000s, in response to the 'Colour revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine, Russian officials stepped up verbal attacks on foreign-funded groups, and initiated imposing legal constraints on civil society. In 2006, an NGO law gave authorities the power to deny registration to any organisation whose goals and objectives "create a threat to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, national unity, unique character, cultural heritage, and national interests of the Russian Federation."

For groups receiving foreign support, the Russian Federation implemented a host of reporting requirements and expanded the power of government authorities to interfere in the creation and operation of NGOs. The law was justified as Russia now found it necessary to foster greater transparency in the sector and encourage the development of domestic funding sources.

In order to strategically restrict foreign funding flows, Putin in 2008 issued a decree that reduced the number of foreign and international organisations allowed to give tax-free grants in Russia from 101 to 12.

Russian officials used a 2002 law on countering extremist activity — defined broadly to include charges such as "inciting racial hatred" and "accusing a public official of acts of terrorism"— to inspect NGOs and investigate their activities. A lot of pro-government media outlets upped their campaign against foreign-funded NGOs, portraying them as tools of Western intelligence services working to overwhelm the Russian government. The 'independent civil society' particularly with an agenda 'perceived' to 'de-stabilise', was being checkmated by Putin, and successfully too.

In 2012, a new NGO law was fast-tracked through the Federal Assembly (the Russian Parliament), and came into force. The so-called Foreign Agents law required all organisations engaged in 'political activities' and receiving or planning to receive foreign funding to register with the Ministry of Justice as "carrying functions of a foreign agent."

The designated foreign agents were obliged to follow a new set of burdensome administrative requirements and could be subjected to surprise audits. They were required to identify themselves in all public communications, presentations, and publications.

And now, like in India, according to the law, organisations that fail to voluntarily register as foreign agents risk suspension for up to six months, while failure to comply with registration, auditing, and reporting rules can be punished with fines of up to 500,000 roubles. Predictably too, the law's original definition of political activities was perceived by the West as extremely vague, raising concerns that "the provision could be selectively used against any organisation critical of the government". The West conveniently overlooks the fact that failure to register and comply with legal norms was, finally, a felony in Russia.

In response to widespread complaints, the Ministry of Justice produced a more precise definition of the term political activities, supposedly to reduce the scope for arbitrary enforcement. The amendment defined the political activities of NGOs so broadly encompassing any advocacy, public outreach, or research activity. A further amendment has ensured even funding received from a domestic NGO can be considered foreign funding if the donor organisation in question has previously received external support—a measure that has dramatically broadened the circle of potential foreign agents.

China's tryst with foreign NGOs

China has been accused of criminally detaining hundreds involved in defending human rights since time immemorial, not that it matters. The 2016 annual report by Chinese Human Rights Defenders, an advocacy coalition of non-governmental organisations maintains that security laws and rules for overseas NGOs give the Chinese state "draconian" new powers to "expand already strict control over independent organisations, including their funding sources, staffing, and activities".

China has been targeting groups apparently "seeking to combat corruption, uphold Chinese law and improve the treatment of women". A public campaign has been waged by the Chinese authorities against what they have called foreign and hostile forces, accusing the West, and the US in particular, of pumping money into China to foment unrest and destabilise society in the name of undermining the Communist Party.

The Chinese Constitution says, citizens "enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration." Contrary to Western allegations, authorities maintain they treated human-rights lawyers according to the law, in an effort to prevent conspiracies that could drag China into chaos.

(Continued on Page 7...)

Reining them in!

The central government has started cracking down on the misuse of funds by NGOs in India, after an extensive audit. This is a good step towards better accountability, says Manu Shrivastava.



NGOs should be audited for better accountability

A section of the civil society in India is a cautious lot now. The Indian government has strengthened its noose on the activities, operations and funding, particularly foreign funding, of NGOs to regulate and ensure transparency in the sector that has managed to stay away from government scrutiny and the public eye.

Staggering numbers

In 2015, an affidavit filed by the CBI in the Supreme Court before a bench led by Chief Justice of India H.L. Dattu, revealed the presence of a startling 29 lakh NGOs in India. This data was compiled from 26 Indian states (Karnataka, Telangana and Odisha did not submit the information), and was part of a 'first' such exercise following a 2013 Supreme Court order in response to a PIL filed in the Apex Court. An additional 82,000 NGOs were registered in the seven Union Territories (UTs) of India, of which Delhi alone had 76,000 registered NGOs.

This staggering number meant there is one NGO for every 400 people, in a country with one policeman for 709 people. This also meant that the number of NGOs in India is more than double the number of schools, and 250 times the number of government hospitals! The CBI affidavit also stated that this number could go up once information from the remaining three states is received.

More importantly, only about ten percent of the registered NGOs in the states filed their annual income and expenditure statements, i.e., only 2,90,787 of the 29,99,623 registered NGOs file their returns. Of the total number of NGOs in the UTs registered, only 50 file their annual financial statements.

In its efforts to ascertain whether NGOs are complying with

the accountability norms by filing their balance sheets, etc., the CBI reported that some states lack the necessary laws to enforce transparency in the financial dealings of the civil society. For example, the 3.7 lakh NGOs in Kerala do not file returns, as it is not mandatory to do so.

Lack of a proper auditing process to track funds dispersed by the government and those received from foreign entities has served as a catalyst in the mushrooming of thousands of NGOs engaged in misuse of funds for personal interests and advantage, money laundering, misappropriation of public money, even anti-national activities.

There is also a growing segment of 'virtual' NGOs that exist only in files, with no real grassroots existence. The expertise lies in drafting reports and proposals to show 'problems' in the areas where donors are willing to 'invest'. So basically, 'real' issues are created to attract interest of rich foreign donors.

Then there are NGOs that may have a substantial grassroots presence with a strong stakeholder network and working on 'real' issues on the ground. Many such NGOs are increasingly diverting their personnel and resources on 'participating' in 'stakeholder' conferences organised by the United Nations, its subsidiary bodies or other organisations around the world to feed 'grassroots realities' into global discussions. Unfortunately, mere participation, with or without a fruitful outcome, is portrayed and perceived as accomplishment by the fraternity. This is preceded and followed by 'managing' accounts where expenses are often misrepresented and misappropriated for personal enrichment, improving institutional infrastructure, travel expenditure, etc.

The real purpose?

Across the world, civil society has often been used by foreign entities to destabilise countries and regions. India is no exception. Foreign funds received by NGOs are regulated by the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). In 2015-16, Christian NGOs received the highest amount of foreign contributions, mainly diverted to two organisations in Kerala. The Ayana Charitable Trust in Kerala received the highest foreign funding in India amounting to ₹ 826 crore. With stricter regulations and implementation, foreign funds flowing into the country has declined sharply. By December 2017, following a crackdown on NGOs violating FCRA regulations, foreign funding received by non-profits in India fell from ₹ 17,773 crore in 2015-16 to ₹ 6,499 crore

in 2016-17 (a decline of ₹ 11,274 crore).

Originally and ideally, the civil society is an instrument to bridge the gap between development goals and grassroot-level implementation, and a stakeholder-driven critique of government policies. However, a scrutiny of finances and accounting, increasing transparency and stricter regulations are resisted on the pretext of “government interference”, “control” and a way “to suppress dissenting voices”. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had cancelled the licences of 18,868 NGOs between 2011 and 2017, of which 4,842 NGOs had lost their registrations in 2017.

In the past few years, many governments including those of Israel, India, Russia, Hungary, Ethiopia have been implementing mechanisms to curb foreign contributions to domestic NGOs. Owing to dependence and habit of excessive foreign funds, many NGOs often forego the ‘real’ issues of their stakeholders and align their goals with the interest of the donors. Several NGOs, for example, have caused hindrances to developmental projects in the country marring growth and fuelled protests at the behest of their foreign donors causing instability. There are approximately 25,000 active organisations registered under the FCRA, 2010. Foreign contributions worth ₹18,065 crores were

received by such organisations during financial year 2016-17. The government has aggressively and meticulously cracked down on NGOs receiving and misusing foreign funds. The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order that said “for offence punishable under Section 37 for transferring any foreign contribution to any other person in contravention of Section 7 of the Act, a penalty of ₹ one lakh or 10 per cent of such transferred foreign contribution, whichever is higher.”

Several associations and NGOs of prominence have come under the scanner of the government and have been issued notices. These include Delhi University, IGNOU, JNU, ICAR, IIT Madras and famous international NGOs such as Ford Foundation and Compassion International. In December 2016, the MHA cancelled the renewal of FCRA licenses of Greenpeace India for FCRA violation. Most recently, the MHA filed a complaint against corporate lobbyist Deepak Talwar and his NGO Advantage India for alleged misuse of foreign funds of about ₹ 90 crore, criminal conspiracy and forgery. The government is keeping up with the pace and scale of misuse of foreign funds and public money meant for developmental activities. The launch of ‘Online Analytical Tool’ by the MHA on 1 June 2018 to monitor flow and utilisation of authorised foreign contributions is a step further in the direction.



Manu Shrivastava is a Media Legal Researcher with Draft Craft International, and co-convenor of ‘The Woman Survivor’ initiative that documents abuse of women and children within families.

(Continued from Page 5...)

On the website of the Chinese Supreme People’s Court was posted a militaristic video featuring images of war and dead refugee children. “If one day China turned into what it looks like in Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, Turkey, what will our children suffer?” says the video, which has been watched more than 17 million times. The video is said to have listed dissident leaders and human-rights lawyers as “agents of Western powers.”

CSR in India

Coming back to the Indian scenario, it may be mentioned here that just before India went to the polls in 2014, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was made mandatory for businesses. From 1 April 2014, it became legally binding for companies in India to be ‘socially responsible.’ Corporates here, have to match the efforts of the State and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in initiating activities

for the economic growth of the underprivileged and similarly marginalised groups as well as social causes such as animal welfare and environment. Every company with a net worth of at least ₹500 crore, or a minimum turnover of ₹1,000 crore, or a minimum net profit of ₹5 crore, has to constitute a CSR committee dedicated to undertake initiatives such as promoting women’s empowerment, improving maternal health, education, gender equality or ensuring environmental sustainability.

Soon after, the Modi government enforced Foreign Contribution Regulations Act 2010 (FCRA). Now, many members of the Civil Society and a section of NGOs did not follow the procedure and desisted from acting even when given a notice period and requisite time. This led to the government cancelling the FCRA licence of all those NGOs found to be flouting certain norms laid out in the Foreign Contributions Registrations Act, 2010.

And, the Indian government isn’t in any mood to relent.



Gajanan Khergamker is an independent Editor, Solicitor and Film-maker. He is the founder of the International Think Tank DraftCraft.

CRY for a reason

Kreeanne Rabadi gives us a glimpse into the 40-year-long journey of India's leading non-profit, CRY – Child Rights and You, and how it paved the way for building cadres of child rights champions in India.



Team CRY; they have redefined the role of the NGO in India

It all began with a simple belief – simple, yet extremely powerful. That belief was ‘people care’ – and all that was required was to express that care in action. That belief was held by an ordinary citizen, in his youth, during his career as a flight purser, who went on to become the founder of CRY – the late Rippan Kapoor.

That belief still runs through the DNA of CRY – Child Rights and YOU. Who would have imagined that this simple idea had in it, the seed to transform the way in which philanthropy is practiced for children in India?

The birth of the small Indian philanthropist

In the eighties and the early nineties, when foreign aid was thought to be the only available resource enabling the work for the underprivileged in the country, the Late Rippan Kapoor stood by this idea that every individual Indian can change the destiny of children in our country. CRY not only scaled up the model of individual giving in a paradigm shift for the development sector, but this pioneering effort paved the way for numerous other organisations to raise funds this way.

“CRY is an opportunity for you to do something to make a better future for our children,” Rippan told every single Indian. This unique model did not only help raise money, but also created a space for people from all strata to contribute for the cause, thereby giving an identity to the ‘small Indian philanthropist.’ Donations came from the working class – the secretaries and peons, donations came from first salaries, donations came from lunch box savings. CRY was inspiring ordinary citizens to become a part of a larger social equity project and to think about issues that normally they would consider out of their reach. A certain Rippan Kapur was pushing them to recognise the need to do something. And as a result, over a million people stepped up to ensure lasting change in the lives of children.

The youth as co-travelers

“The responsibility for change lies with all of us” – at CRY this is a quintessential value that defines our very existence. CRY partners with over 6,000 youth from eminent colleges and working professionals who take voluntary action in communities, organise campaigns and raise resources for children, and they do it...simply because they believe that they have a responsibility to bring about change.

Raison d'être

From seven people sitting around a dining table and a collective fund of ₹50, to a 40-year-old institution that has supported over 300 grassroots level projects in 23 states of the country, reaching out to over two million children – this is a journey that would never have been possible with that firm belief in 'You.'

When a friend of Rippan's had asked him why he named this organisation CRY and not laugh, Rippan had replied – "the name 'Child Relief and You' (the name CRY had before it was rechristened as CRY Rights and You) particularised the problem quite succinctly. It was this individuation of the action – the 'you' with a finger pointing towards society at large – that was crucial to its success and hence to its name."



The late Rippan Kapoor

To every person who has ever been associated with CRY in any way, another of Rippan's thoughts stand central to their actions – "It's not important why I got into this work. What is important is that it needs to be done."



A post graduate diploma holder in Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) from Sophia College Polytechnic, Kreeanne Rabadi began her career at ORG-MARG designing market research projects for children. She was with the company for six years, conducting qualitative and quantitative research for a diverse set of clients – MTV, Colgate Palmolive, Godrej Foods etc.

She joined CRY- Child Rights and You in 2000 to lead the Resource Generation team in the Western region. Kreeanne spent five years with CRY in India, enabling her team to consistently exceed its revenue targets. In 2005 she was assigned the challenge of setting up the marketing function for CRY America, for which she moved to the US.

In 2010, Kreeanne returned to India to head the Western Region as Director, headquartered in Mumbai. In her current role, she is accountable for the formulation and implementation of the regional strategy, objectives, action plans and policies. Also, as part of the CRY leadership team, she is responsible for the development and implementation of CRY's vision, mission and strategy.

WHO AM I?



Different strokes

The youngsters today are not driven only by their narrow, selfish interests, as is widely believed, but many are trying to play a positive role for social upliftment. Anvi Mehta profiles two such youngsters and their efforts for the weaker sections of the society.



The young team of Mitti Ke Rang, truly dedicated

A conventional degree, a secure job and a settled life – the young generation is always expected to follow this cycle to lead a successful life. While the '70s and '80s generation struggled to question the norms, the ones born after the 90s have started seeking different answers.

The youth of today does not believe in money-making, but aspirations have evolved from living luxuriously to adapting a minimalistic life that helps in building happy communities. This realisation among the youth of today has resulted in a developing interest towards the social sectors. There is a rise in sensitised youngsters who work for a cause, be it a donation drive for the needy, or a cleanliness drive for the environment around them. What is more interesting is the section of youngsters who have gone a step ahead and instead of volunteering for a short period of time, they have left their career paths and opted for social work as their calling.

There is a different zeal that drives this category and their passion is a motivation for the coming generations. I have come across two such heroes from our society, one who has started an NGO to work for widows in Pune, and another, who quit her IT job in Bangalore to work for a backward rural community in the hills of Uttarakhand.

Mitti Ke Rang: Spreading colours in monochrome lives

Amit Jain (27), had come to Pune with 1000 rupees in hand and a B.Com degree. It was the year 2012, and getting a good job was not a cake walk. After struggling for a month and appearing for many interviews, he landed his first job. "I come from a lower middle-class family and have faced many hardships. My father passed away when I was four, leaving behind his wife and two sons, and a loan. Due to the outstanding loan, from a very early age, I was familiar with words like *nilami* (auction) and *jhapti* (struggle). I worked hard for academic success throughout school. I wanted to be an engineer, but had to choose the Commerce stream due to financial constraints," says Jain.

Conditions began to improve once Jain started working. He climbed the corporate ladder rather quickly, and had a lucrative career to look forward to. Amidst this, he started a social venture in 2014 called 'Mitti Ke Rang' (MKR) that conducted weekend activities related to social causes. "We had corporate contacts and together, we organised for book donation drives, cleanliness drives, awareness drives on traffic and so on. But, it was in the last few months that the NGO's goals and missions started to take a concrete shape," he adds.

Since the beginning of 2018, MKR in partnership with iVolunteer, a veteran in the field of involving volunteers in social work, started the 'The Malwadi Project', a community centre focused on the community of Malwadi, aimed at training young children and widows. Since childhood, Jain had to face challenging situations because his mother was a widow. "Just because my mother was a widow, she was not allowed to take part in prayers/rituals, marriage ceremonies, or apply *mehendi* (henna). After my father passed away, my mother didn't know what to do to run the house. She was not aware of her rights. In a fraction of a second everything changed after my father's death, and she was completely unprepared for the life ahead. Raising two children with no financial stability was not an easy task. This was my trigger to start working towards widow's empowerment, because I do not want any other woman to feel as helpless as my mother did. I could not find any organisation that could help our family, and because I know the impact on women and children when the only breadwinner in the family dies, MKR now focuses mainly on improving lives of widows by empowering them - one step at a time," he concludes.



The happy members of Himalayan Blooms, an all-women social enterprise

MKR has been allotted two large rooms in Pune by the state government, where it plans to start a library with over 2,000 books in June 2018. This library is the start of sensitising widows and educating them about their rights. MKR aims to provide knowledge about the world strong women leaders of the society, and create awareness about the potential each woman has through books, human library sessions, and storytelling methods. Alongside, MKR will train widows in vocational skills like tailoring, stitching, etc.

As of today, they have partnered with twelve local, four national and six international organisations to advocate the cause of widows, and to support them with required material and also involve more than 100 volunteers in social service offline. By 2020, MKR aims to expand their work across India, especially in places like Vrindavan, where widows reside together and have no means for earning except asking for alms.

Himalayan Blooms: An all-women social enterprise empowering the hill communities

A Bangalore resident, Pratibha Krishnaiah (33) enjoyed volunteering in ashram schools over the weekend while working for a MNC (Multi National Company). One day, she came across a rural development fellowship called SBI Youth for India Fellowship (YFI), and her life changed. Never had this Bengaluru girl imagined that she would be one day living in the hills of Uttarakhand, a state that is

thousands of kilometres from her hometown.

As a YFI fellow, Pratibha was placed in the Khetikhan block of Champawat district, one of the 250 backward districts in the country. She had to live with the community, understand the gaps and start a project with an implementation period of 13 months. It is during this time that she started Himalayan Blooms, a venture to empower the hill communities.

She had noticed that women in the hills were the sole drivers of their households, men either worked as labourers or drivers. Despite this, they were often undermined.



The enterprising Pratibha Krishnaiah



These hill women have become massively empowered

“Women there knew how to knit and crochet, that was something they did during their free time. I knew I wanted to work on something that empowers these women and give them financial independence. Hence, I started teaching them designs that can work in urban markets,” explains Pratibha. Himalayan Blooms participated in its first exhibition in Bengaluru in 2015, where they sold knitted and crocheted hair accessories, scarves and winter wear.

There was no looking back for Pratibha or her women after that. She had started with a SHG (Self-Help Group) of 10-12 women, and today she has over 80 women associated with HB. With the help of angel funders from the USA, Pratibha expanded her project and stayed back in the village even after completion of her fellowship tenure of 13 months. “I had started it and I did not want to leave it orphan. I had decided to keep working for the venture until the women are trained to handle all the operations,” she added. It has been four years and Pratibha continues to stay in Khetikhan. The locals no longer see her as an outsider, she has become a *‘pahadi’* (mountain woman) and enjoys the customs and lifestyle of the hill community more than the cities.

Pratibha’s enterprise has started working with designers in India, producing exclusive winter and baby wear for them. “We have started receiving good orders from designers. We are trying to make new designs of crocheted cotton dresses, home décor and baby wear. Our women are improving and we have a set of them who are experts at

finishing and packaging. Two of the women who weren’t acquainted with English, emails or laptops, are today using a system for accounts, inventory and sending emails to customers. They send me daily updates on WhatsApp in English when I am out of the village,” states Pratibha proudly, who has seen these women’s confidence levels increase.

Now entering the tailoring and stitching section, Himalayan Blooms is reaching out to other remote villages in the district where the living conditions are worse. “Women in a few villages are uneducated, but have a lot of passion for doing something. We have already started a tailoring centre at one such village, and are expanding to two more soon,” she concluded.

Speaking of how a change in her career path has affected her life, she added, “It is much more fulfilling than working in a city. At the end of the day, Himalayan Blooms is empowering women who were never given much importance in their households. Now, one of the women is an equal earning member of her family, and one widow is living respectfully, earning for herself rather than asking for money from her family.” There are many such success stories that Pratibha has seen come true because of her one intervention.

All you need is the integrity and dedication towards the cause – is the message from the young social entrepreneur blooming lives in the hills of Uttarakhand.



After completing her engineering, Anvi Mehta interned for a newspaper and was freelancing. She worked in Uttarakhand as a SBI Fellow for a year. She loves to travel and document different cultures and arts.

Are NGOs the answer to development?

Anvi Mehta spent a year working with an NGO, and realised that we still have a long way to go when it comes to development, especially in rural India.

AS of 2016, India had 31 lakh NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) registered and counting; the numbers had startled the Supreme Court and procedures of registration had been made more stringent. As per media reports, a legal framework to monitor the activities of these NGOs was to be framed.

It is not as if the report card of NGOs is bad or they have failed to deliver. According to studies, there has been substantial decrease in mortality rates, death of pregnant women, polio cases, etc., thanks to NGOs working in rural areas, but the slow pace of growth needs to be accelerated.

A country which has NGOs more than the number of schools or hospitals is still low on its social indices, and a majority of its region is backward. This makes me think of the gaps that the development sector has when it comes to NGOs and their working pattern. Speaking to a few active members in the development sector, I have come across three issues that have delayed processes and development as a whole.



With the Prime Minister leading the way, civil society needs to buck up

Improving social indices to show impact

It is not that India has not developed in any of its social indices or NGOs have not contributed to its growth. The problem observed is our social indices are not clear and updated. NGOs have contributed in making improvements in various fields: health, education and other sectors, but our country being large with a lot of challenges, makes the task difficult. Sharing his views, social entrepreneur Liju George says, “A substantial challenge for India is that there are no clear indicators for social indices and neither is there ownership amongst its practitioners. For example, India was widely appreciated for its performance in Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) – where it achieved a lot in the above mentioned areas. MDGs was a narrower focus and India worked towards it. Now, where Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are concerned, the focus is very broad. During discussion of the topics at United Nations (UN), India clearly expressed its displeasure on number of themes (of the 17 mentioned). India is not concerned beyond SDG 11. And even within 11, there is no clear ownership among governments (for various reasons) and neither are SDGs layman-friendly for adopters to work with it.

Bridging the gap between government and society

There is our government and their policies which need external bodies like the NGOs to implement the schemes on the ground and monitor the performance of the policies. Unfortunately, in most cases, I have observed this does not happen in synchrony, which often leads to a haphazard and delayed working of the government agencies, as well as the NGOs.

“It is a difference of opinion between the administration and the civil society. The societies are struggling to bring innovative solutions for developmental problems and the government is looking for the scale. The need is for both these bodies to come together to create a new India,” opined Naman Bansal, Fellow at Vision India Foundation. This is a problem that is area specific, some states have NGOs performing better than others because of the support provided. Agreeing to Naman, I believe there is a need for everyone to keep differences aside and work together for a better India.



The core team members of Manav Uthal Manch, a community NGO of Nashik

Impetus on community-based NGOs

Change begins from within, and charity begins at home – following these two phrases, I believe that instead of the national and international level NGOs working across larger areas, it is a benefit to increase community and city-based and city NGOs. “For any society to exist we need a government, socialist or capitalist. However, for the welfare of the society, only governments are not enough. There are many gaps that governments are not able to fill, and this is where the role of an NGO begins. NGOs that help the government irrespective of the political party, are the need of the hour and this usually happens in community driven NGOs where citizens volunteer to improve their surroundings. Such NGOs serve the purpose of faster development in all sectors,” says Pankaj Joshi, core team member of ‘Manav Uthal Manch’, a community driven NGO in Nashik. Even with my experience, I have realised that as the NGO grows, the principles and vision of the founder dilutes over time. It is not necessary that the NGO staff working on a certain project in a remote field location shares the same vision of the founder to be a change-maker. He/She could probably be having different aspirations, and that does not augur well for the community’s development.

The best example of a community driven programme is the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan. It has brought residents and societies together on one platform. We also have the famous beach clean-up in Mumbai started by an individual Afroz Shah. The community driven initiative had such an impact that the Versova beach which was infamous for the dirt has seen turtles come to the beach to lay eggs.



After completing her engineering, Anvi Mehta interned for a newspaper and was freelancing. She worked in Uttarakhand as a SBI Fellow for a year. She loves to travel and document different cultures and arts.

This is an incredible achievement according to me and I think community driven NGOs are the way forward to achieve better growth and development of our country. These initiatives ensure development and implementation of policies at micro level. Once the ground work is done successfully, it gets easier for the holistic progress of a scheme.

Working on self-dependency of NGOs

Liju George explains how NGOs are critical for social development as the government cannot be present everywhere. “But I see challenges faced by NGOs as a straight forward case of ‘chicken or egg’. Since the NGOs are dependent on donor’s money, it is torn between donor and beneficiary. And in maintaining a balancing act, neither stakeholder reaps the entire benefit,” he says. It is very difficult to maintain the balance between the end beneficiary and the donor, as the donor expects change as quickly as possible but every beneficiary has a different mind-set. They may or may not accept the change and despite the money from the donor, the projects implemented will not take the shape as expected.

Speaking of the path forward for NGOs, it is important to have a clear objective spelled out. They need to achieve some level of independence to generate cash for operational costs, and NGOs have to be more participatory and bring all the stakeholders together at all stages of planning and implementation of the project. Monetary independence can also serve as a motivation to work better.

NGOs and deaddiction

Alcohol and substance abuse are rampant in Indian society, and it's left to the private sector to provide adequate support systems like deaddiction centres. The state is simply not equipped to provide the necessary infrastructure, says Ashwin Honawar.

ALCOHOL and drug addiction in India are becoming a very serious concern, indicate statistics compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau. One Indian dies every 96 minutes due to alcohol consumption. Over 85 percent crimes against women are committed under the influence of alcohol. Over 7,000 road traffic accidents were a result of drunken driving last year.

Statistics from various sources state, over 10 persons across India commit suicide daily due to drug abuse related problems. A much older report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment pegged the number of drug addicts in India at nearly 10.7million. Though these reports are compiled by government and foreign organisations, figures can be grossly outdated due to difficulties in gathering data. In fact, the number of alcoholics, drug addicts and crimes due to substance abuse could be colossally higher.

The Indian government is working in collaboration with World Health Organisation, various bodies of the United Nations, International Police Organisation (Interpol) and other entities to curb alcohol and drug menace in India. However, the greatest role in curbing alcohol and drug addiction in India is played by countless Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). These NGOs operate addiction recovery and rehabilitation centres, often with funds from donors and former addicts, as well as government grants.

Understanding alcohol and drug addiction

Addictions of any nature have many causes. Till date, scientists and the medical fraternity continue to grope in the dark over why some women and men become addicts, while others can consume alcohol or even a drug occasionally without the risk of becoming dependent. Broadly speaking, three factors are suspected to cause substance (alcohol and drug addiction) abuse among women and men:

- *Genetic propensity:* Despite insufficient scientific evidence, genetic factors are suspected of causing addictions among some people. There are various theories about genetic propensity, but none have been conclusively proven.
- *Induced addiction:* This is most likely the real cause of addiction. The human brain has a 'pain' and 'rewards' or 'pleasure' function. Hence, a person who consumes alcohol

or drug for the first time usually experiences pleasure or 'reward'. The brain's innate nature of seeking 'reward' compels the body to consume addictive substances. Till a time that such consumption becomes a 'pain' due to dependency of the brain and body on the substance.

- *Hormonal dysfunction:* This theory may have some credence. Various hormones or chemicals in the brain trigger exhilaration, joy, anger, sorrow and other emotions. People who suppress these emotions for any reason find they can easily express their feelings after consuming an inebriating substance. However, they need drugs or alcohol everyday to vent their emotions.

Enter the NGOs

Unfortunately, a majority of physicians and psychiatrists, family members, friends and the general public are unaware that an addiction is a sickness. It is a disease like no other, since there are no specific parts of the human anatomy that can be targeted for medication. The World Health Organisation, International Labour Organisation, and other world bodies recognise addictions as diseases, but this knowledge has not percolated to grassroots of the Indian society. Hence, addicts are ridiculed and shunned.

A majority of people, including close family members and friends, believe the addict is enjoying her or his indulgence. The stark reality is, the person is in immense physical and mental agony, and cannot find a way to overcome the all-powerful grip of alcohol or drugs.

This is where NGOs play a vital role: They understand that an addict needs external support and help to arrest the disease. NGOs are well equipped to help an addict recover from all evil effects of substance abuse, and rehabilitate them into mainstream society.

Generally, alcohol and drug addicts suffer from physical, mental and spiritual bankruptcy. Physical bankruptcy can be best defined as ill-health suffered by all addicts due to adverse impacts of alcohol and drug abuse. Mental bankruptcy is similar to physical, but of a serious nature. Addicts generally indulge in insane acts under the influence or have lost overall control of their life.

Spiritual bankruptcy occurs because addicts are unable to distinguish between right and wrong when it comes to fulfilling their cravings for alcohol or drugs. Hence,

they assault family members for money, engage in petty thefts, or lie to borrow cash despite knowing they cannot repay.

NGOs help addicts overcome these three forms of bankruptcy. They operate rehabilitation centres. Here, addicts undergo a 90-days resident programme that helps them recover physically, mentally and restores them spiritually.

The process of detoxification

It is imperative for any addict to stay away from alcohol or drugs for a prolonged period of time. The World Health Organisation and other forums aver that a period of 90 days to 120 days is sufficient to wean away an addict from a substance. However, willingness and active participation of the addict is of prime importance. Hence, all NGOs offer a three-month resident programme for de-addiction and rehabilitation.

Once an addict is admitted to a rehabilitation centre, the first step is detoxification. This is of prime importance. An addict is housed in a closed room with other patients and kept under constant medical supervision. The detoxification facility at a rehabilitation center helps addicts to stay away from the substance, and provides medical assistance required to overcome withdrawal symptoms. Alcohol withdrawal symptoms such as Delirium Tremens can be life-threatening. NGOs provide the necessary medical support to counter such symptoms.

Once an addict has recovered from the initial effects of staying away from alcohol or drugs, NGOs have elaborate programmes that consist of various training sessions and lectures. In India, most NGOs use the 12-step programme of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

Lectures based on personal experiences of addicts who have stayed sober for long periods, training programmes on how to say no to drink or drugs, classes on personality development, group games aimed at team building and some menial tasks are assigned to all recovering addicts. Rehabilitation centers operated by NGOs usually pack several activities in a 12-hour schedule for resident addicts. This helps them stay busy while keeping their mind off the substance.

Nutrition and fitness: Since NGOs operate on donations from individuals and charities as well as government grants, they charge very nominal fees for rehabilitation of addicts. A typical rehabilitation center operated by an NGO will charge about ₹30,000 for a 90-day resident

programme. This works out to a little over ₹ 300 per day.

The amount is very affordable since it includes food, shelter, training and all other essentials such as toiletries, books and study material. NGOs also have provisions to admit addicts from economically weaker sections of the society free of cost, or charge highly subsidised fees. Rehabilitation centers operated by highly reputed NGOs offer very nutritious meals to recovering addicts. They also provide free nutritional supplements. Yoga and meditation is taught to all recovering addicts residing at rehabilitation centers operated by reputed NGOs. Additionally, recovering addicts are also given ample time to engage in sports such as cricket, football and volleyball within the centre premises.



Preventing high risk behaviour: NGOs also help addicts avoid high-risk behaviour. Casual sex is one of the largest fallouts of addictions. Addicts could contract Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). NGOs do not turn away addicts afflicted with HIV or AIDS. Instead, they are treated with equal respect and their medical condition is kept confidential. Care is however taken to prevent others residents from getting infected due to inadvertent contact with blood or other body fluids.

Rehabilitating addicts: Some NGOs have tie-ups with companies for employing recovering addicts that graduate after the 90-day programme. Others offer in-house jobs, which are very useful for addicts who are disowned by family, and are destitute.

Conclusion

The Central or state government cannot combat addiction menace alone. They lack adequate resources. For example, Mumbai has just one detoxification center run by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai in Andheri (West), for the entire city. In Goa, a sole ward at the Institute of Psychiatry and Human Behaviour in Bambolim provides detoxification facilities. However, detoxification is only the first step towards recovery from any addiction. Hence, NGOs and their rehabilitation centres play the much needed role.



Ashwin Honawar is a journalist, content writer and blogger based in Mumbai. He has worked as a journalist with reputed newspapers, TV channels and digital media in India and abroad over the last 25 years. He has varied interests and writes on diverse topics.



The Jain towns of Chandragiri and Shravanabelagola

The towns of Chandragiri and Shravanabelagola are sacred as both, tourist hotspots, and as very important centres of Jainism. Immerse yourself in the folklore and stories of the 24 Tirthankaras, and complete your pilgrimage while taking in the ancient sights.



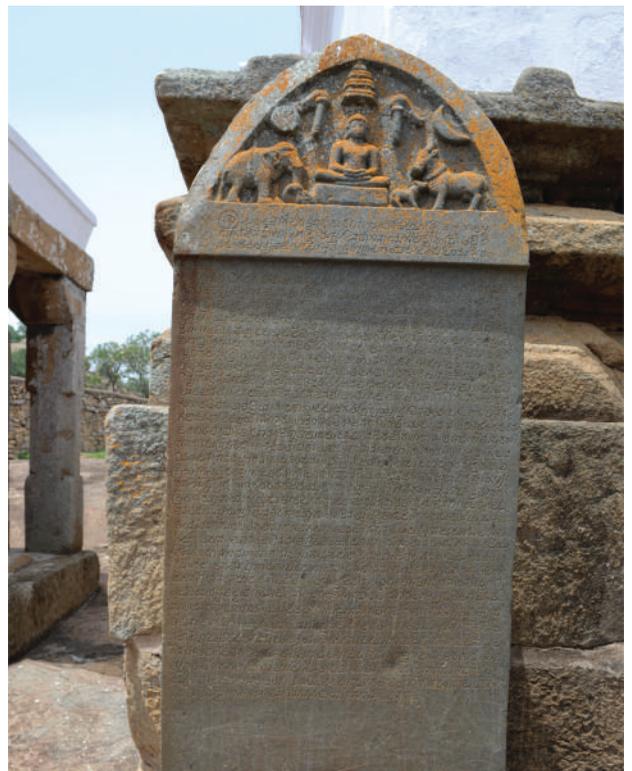
Chandragiri, the oldest Jain pilgrimage centre in South India

Chandragiri

The sacred hill is right in front of me. Called by various names – Chandragiri, Katavapra, Rishigiri, Chikka Betta etc., it is one of the oldest Jain pilgrimage centres in the South. I had read that many Jain devotees had taken 'Sallekhana' here. Sallekhana is the religious practise in Jainism of fasting to death. Hence Chandragiri is witness to numerous Jain temples, rather basadis, memento pillars, and inscriptions. `

Chandragiri is located 143 km from Bangalore. It is so named because as early as 290 BC, Chandragupta Maurya – the great Mauryan Emperor resided here and breathed his last. Now why would a Mauryan Emperor migrate to such a remote location in the South? There is an interesting story behind this.

When Chandragupta Maurya was the King of Pataliputra he had vivid dreams. One night he dreamt of setting sun, black elephants fighting, a 12-headed serpent approaching, etc. Disturbed by the dreams, the king discussed this with a Jain Acharya, Shrutakevali Bhadrabahu. Bhadrabahu Muni predicted a gloomy future and also forecast a 12-year famine in the area. Thus the Muni and his disciples decided to migrate. Bhadrabahu along with 12,000 followers and the Mauryan Emperor shifted south. When Bhadrabahu reached Katavapra he realised that his end was approaching and so he asked his disciples to move



The inscriptions on the *basadis* talk about Sallekhana by Jain Devotees



The *basadis* of Chandragiri



The Marasimha Manastambha, constructed in honour of the Ganga king, Marasimha

further south. The Guru along with Chandragupta Maurya remained back and resided at a cave atop the hill. He observed Sallekhana, and after his death, Chandragupta remained at Chandragiri worshipping the footprints of Bhadrabahu. The cave is still present with the footprints etched inside the cave.

A set of 190-plus steps are carved on Chandragiri Hill. It does not take more than half an hour to reach the top. Apart from the Bhadrabahu Cave, there is a huge courtyard housing numerous basadis and memorial pillars at the top. The basadis were built during Ganga and Hoysala times. There are numerous inscriptions mainly in *hale* Kannada or old Kannada that gives details about the Jain devotees observing Sallekhana and gaining salvation here.

Attractions at Chandragiri

There are 14 *basadis* inside the big compound. There are also free standing pillars, memento pillars and numerous inscriptions protected by thick glasses. As you enter the courtyard, at the entrance you will find the Kuge Brahmadeva Pillar – a 30-feet high decorative pillar with the image of Brahmadeva in the sitting posture. The pillar is also called as Marasimha’s Manastambha as it was constructed in honour of the Ganga King, Marasimha, who died in 974 AD. The inscriptions at the base of the pillar detail the life and events of the king.



The Chavundaraya Basadi

Shantinatha Basadi

Just next to the Manasthamba on the left, is the Shantinatha Basadi. It is dedicated to the 16th Jain Tirthankara – Shree Shantinatha. Tirthankara are Jain religious *gurus* who are responsible for preaching Dharma (righteous path). Jainism has 24 such Tirthankaras. The idol of Shantinatha Tirthankara is 11-feet high and is inside the inner sanctum of the temple. Adjacent to this *basadi* and to the north lies the statue of Bharateshwara, two metres in height. He is the elder brother of Bahubali. The statue which is unfinished, faces the Vindhyagiri Mountain that has one of the largest monolithic statues of Gomateshwara/Bahubali. The statue of Bharateshwara is said to have been built during the Ganga period by sculptor Arishtanemi. To the east of this statue, there are twin towers that are memento pillars raised in honour of the dead.

Suparshvanatha and Chandranatha Basadi

The Suparshvanatha temple is dedicated to Parshvanatha – the 23rd Tirthankara, while the Chandranatha Basadi that comes next has the idol of the eighth Tirthankara known as Chandraprabha. The image of Parshvanatha has a seven-headed serpent behind his head, and is also flanked on either side by Chamara bearers.

Chavundaraya and Megala Basadi

The Chavundaraya Temple was constructed by the son of Ganga chieftain - Chavundaraya Jina Devanna, in 982 AD. It is a beautiful Dravidian structure dedicated to the 22nd Tirthankara known as Neminatha. The horse-shoe shaped arches, the parapet, the reliefs of Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Tirthankaras near the tower are all very artistically done. The Neminatha idol – five feet high is seated in a Padmasana posture, and was sculpted by a Hoysala artist known as Gangachari. Observe the Yaksha and Yakshi outside the inner sanctum. They are the beautifully carved images of Sarvanha Yaksha and Kushmandini Yakshi, probably of the Hoysala period. Yaksha and Yakshis are guardian deities with supernatural powers. They are believed to look after Tirthankaras. And are worshipped as well.

The narrow carved stone steps at the entrance of the Chavundaraya Basadi takes you to the Megala Basadi at the top that has the image of Parshvanatha. The idol is said to have been built by the son of Chavundaraya.

Eradukatte Basadi

This *basadi* is dedicated to Adinatha – the first Jain Tirthankara. Adjacent to this *basadi* there is an inscription of Queen Shantaladevi, consort of Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana.

Savati Gandha Varana Basadi and Terina Basadi

The Savati Gandha Varana Basadi was built in 1123 AD by Queen Shantaladevi. It has the idol of Shree Shantinatha Tirthankara and has an inscription inscribed on the pedestal that mentions about the *basadi* being built by the queen.

Terina Basadi is so called because the altar in front of this *basadi* is in the form of *theru* or chariot. The *basadi* dedicated to Bahubali – 4-feet in height - was constructed in 1117 AD by Machi Kabbe and Shanthi Kabbe, the mothers of two royal merchants during that period.

Other *basadis* nearby are Shanteeshwara Basadi dedicated to Shantinatha Tirthankara, Majjiganna Basadi dedicated to Ananthanatha – the 14th Tirthankara, and Shasana Basadi, that has the idol of Adinatha. Near the entrance to Shasana Basadi is a large stone inscription (Shasana in Kannada), and so the *basadi* got the name. It was built by Gangaraja, a general of King Vishnuvardhana, who is assumed to have built the *basadi* for his wife.

Savati Gandha Varana Basadi and Terina Basadi

This is one of the biggest *basadis* in this hill. Built

by Gangaraja, it has the statue of Adinatha. The *basadi* is also known as Padmavathi Basadi, as it has the image of Yakshi Padmavathi in it. The *basadi* was built for Pochikabbe – Gangaraja's mother.

The Chandragupta Basadi nearby is the oldest, probably constructed in the ninth century, and has three shrines housing the images of Parshvanatha, Padmavathi and the Kushmandini Devi. The relief panels at the lattice windows inside are very beautifully carved by Dasoja, and details the events of Bhadrabahu muni, his migration to the South, and also about Chandragupta Maurya.

Parshvanatha Basadi

Near the exit is the Parshvanatha Basadi that has the 15-feet high statue of Parshvanatha. A seven-headed serpent lies behind him. The statue, the serpent and the canopy are all carved out of one single block of Schist mentions a signboard. In front of this *basadi* is a late 17th century Manastambha – 65-feet high, that has the images of the 24 Tirthankaras.

As you exit the courtyard, you can check the Bhadrabahu Cave on the left. There are plenty of benches to help you relax. Signboards are plenty inside the courtyard, and will help you understand the significance of this place better. Take note that you will have to remove your footwear before climbing the steps. This is a pilgrimage centre and hence wearing shoes while climbing is not permitted.



The relief panel at the Chandragupta Basadi, which describes Bhadrabahu *muni*'s migration to the South

Shravanabelagola

As I stand beside the Gomateshwara/Bahubali statue, I feel very humble. Devotees are pouring vermilion filled water, flowers and rice over the head of Bahubali. The 58.8-foot tall grey granite statue of Bahubali has turned red. The Jain Acharyas nearby are chanting the texts, devotees in saffron coloured garments are filing in to touch the feet of Bahubali who is standing on a lotus pedestal. Amidst the chants and faith, I am lost or rather in trance for a moment, before the loudspeaker starts blaring in with instructions not to crowd near the statue.

Every 12 years the Mahamastakabhisheka or head anointing ceremony of Bahubali takes place. On this day, the statue is given a bath – water, milk, rice flour, vermilion, turmeric paste, sandalwood paste, saffron etc., are poured on top of the statue. This consecration is said to be very auspicious and thousands of Jain devotees from all over the world come here to be a part of this ceremony. Though the main anointing ceremony got completed in February this year, for the next six months similar rituals are performed every Sunday. And this is what I witnessed when I visited Shravanabelagola on a Sunday.

A bit of lore

Rishabhanatha was the first Tirthankara in Jainism. He used to rule Ayodhya and he had a hundred sons – Bharata and Bahubali were two among them. After ruling his kingdom justly for many years, he decided to go on a spiritual quest. When he decided to become a monk, he divided his kingdom among his sons. Bharata was given the northern portion with Ayodhya as capital, and Bahubali the southern half with Podanapura as capital.

Soon Bharata became ambitious, wanting to become an emperor. Though he subjugated all opponents, Bahubali refused to acknowledge his supremacy. Thus there was a battle between the two brothers. They engaged in eye-fight, i.e., a battle of glances, water fight, and wrestling. In all the three challenges Bahubali won. In anger Bharata hurled a divine wheel to destroy his brother. But instead of attacking, the wheel circled Bahubali and did not harm him.

Though Bharata surrendered, Bahubali felt disgusted with the whole episode, and renouncing everything, he went in search of peace. It is said that he meditated for a year in a standing posture without food and water. Anthills grew around him, creepers enveloped him, and serpents roamed all around him. On the last day of the year it is said that Bharata came to him and worshipped him. With this, the final regret that Bahubali had, that of humiliating his elder brother disappeared, and he soon attained liberation.

This meditative stance is depicted in the carved Gomateshwara statue atop Vindhyagiri Hill/Dodda Betta. The statue was installed by Chavundaraya, a minister of a Ganga King in 982 AD, at the behest of his mother. The

figure was carved out by the famous sculptor Arishtanemi. It depicts the contemplative and meditative mood of Bahubali. On either side are the Chamara bearers of Hoysala period. The surrounding mantapa, monastery etc., came up only later in the 12th century.

Other attractions in Vindhyagiri Hill

At the centre of a town there is a pond known as white pond or Billi Kola. Just across the pond there is a main entrance that points the way forward towards Vindhyagiri Hill and Gomateshwara. There are more than 600 steps carved in the hill to help you reach the top. There are plenty of basadi, pillars and elegant doorways en-route the trek. For people who cannot climb, there are *doli* services as well. One of the first doorways you encounter is the silver doorway; before that there is a small *basadi* for Parshvanatha.

Odegallu Basadi

After crossing the doorway you get a Trikuta Basadi called Odegallu. The name Othekallu is due to the fact that the temple is supported by stone pillars (*kallu* in Kannada means stone) that are kept in a slanted position at the basement. As it is a Trikuta structure, there are three sanctums inside the *basadi*. Each sanctum has the statue of Adinatha, Shantinatha and Neminatha Tirthankara. The *basadi* was built in 10th century by minister Chavundaraya.

The Sacrifice Pillar

As you move upwards you will find the sacrifice pillar or what is known as Thyagada Khamba. It is a four-pillared small structure with an upper storey at the top. The pillar was erected in memory of minister Chavundaraya, who gave generous gifts to the poor. Another version is that Chavundaraya renounced everything here, and hence the name sacrifice or Thyaga in local language. A *yaksha* image can be spotted on the top of a pillar.



An idol of one of the Jain Tirthankaras



The monolithic statue of Gomateshwara, considered one of the largest which exists.

Chennana Basadi

If you go slightly west you find the Chennana Basadi. It has the idol of the eighth Tirthankara. Hence it is also known as Chandrana Basadi in honour of the Jain Tirthankara. This structure was built in 1667 AD by Chennanna, son of Puttaswamy Setti. Nearby is a Manas-tambha – a 30-feet high pillar, and an open *mantapa* with 24 pillars.



The twin towers are memento pillars raised in honour of the dead

After some ascent you will find the main doorway said to have been constructed in 980 AD. As it has the image of goddess Gajalakshmi on the doorway, it is also called as Gajalakshmi doorway. There are two elephants on either side of her holding a pot in their trunks. On either side of the doorway you will find shrines of Bharata and Bahubali. They were added in 1130 AD by a general of King Vishnuvardhana named Bharathamayya. After this you will get two more doorways before you hit the outer compound of Gomateshwara. Here you will find Siddhara Basadi, Odeyara mantapa and Gullekayi Aji mantapa.



Usha Hariprasad is a freelancer who is fond of travelling, discovering new places and writing about travel related destinations around Bangalore at Citizen Matters. Currently, she works in a trekking organisation.

Gullekayi Aji mantapa

The Gullekayi Aji *mantapa* has the figure of a five-feet old woman carrying an eggfruit, hence the name Gullekayi Aji. She is said to have taught the minister Chavundaraya a lesson on humility. The story goes that after erecting the Gomata statue the minister was very proud of himself. To break his pride and teach him a lesson Yakshi Padmavathi took the form of an old woman (*ajji* in Kannada). When the first Mahamastakabhisheka took place the minister generously gave offerings to cover the statue, but whatever he gave failed to cover the statue. However, when the old woman gave her humble offerings, the statue got completely covered.

Getting there: Chandragiri and Vindhyagiri Hills are located in Shravanabelagola town near Channarayapatna of Hassan district. Buses and trains are available to the town from Bangalore city. Taxis too are available from the city, and will normally take around four hours to reach the place. There are plenty of hotels en-route the Bangalore-Hassan Highway.



A view of the Vindhyagiri Hill

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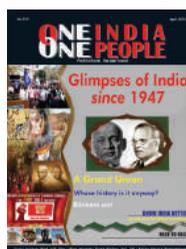
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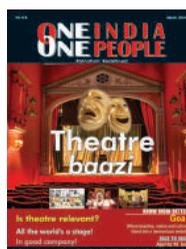
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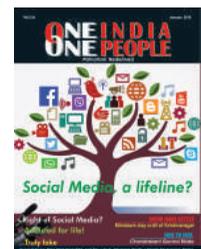
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“Hailing from a writer family, I believe that the soul of any film, be it animation or live action is the ‘story’.”

Dhvani Desai is a young, passionate, animation filmmaker. Hailing from a creative family of writers and filmmakers, she runs her own animation company, and has already garnered accolades and awards. She spoke to **A. Radhakrishnan** about her craft, her hopes, and what makes the animation industry such an interesting one.

How did you get into animation film making?

Since my childhood I was enticed by the creative arts. Creativity is in my genes, I guess, as my father Dr. Sudhir Desai is a well-known Gujarati poet and scholar, my mother Tarinibahen Desai is a distinguished writer, my elder sister Sanskritirani is an established poet, while my elder brother Sanskar, is a senior documentary filmmaker.

I started drawing as well as writing poetry at the early age of four. My mother, in order to create a quiet artistic space for writing her stories, would buy me some crayons and ask me to draw/paint and even encouraged me to write whatever came to my mind. I would get deeply engrossed in my own world for hours together. This is when she identified my distinctive colour sense and strong creative instincts.

Also, a lot of my father's friends who were leading poets, writers, painters and musicians, often came home and there would be discussions on Samuel Beckett's plays, Ezra Pound's poetry and on Salvador Dali, Pablo Picasso, as well as artists of the Dadaism and Surrealism movement. In my free time, when kids my age would go out to play, I would prefer to read poetry of modern poets like Baudelaire and Rilke, even write poetry or paint. Hence I must have entered the artistic world at a very early age, just like my other siblings.

Tell us about your journey so far.

When I was less than five years old, I won my first special prize in a drawing contest organised by the Lion's Club. Later, with awards at interschool and state level competitions, I got passionately driven for the creative arts.



Dhvani Desai is a passionate, animation filmmaker

Education, however, was a priority for my family. My parents wanted me to have a good professional degree to fall back on. Therefore I pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Statistics (BSc), then a Post-graduation Diploma in Computer Management (DCM), and later a Master's Degree in Business Management (MBA) from the Mumbai University, with specialisation in Finance.

I believe in the Indian philosophy of 'Aham Brahmasmi', i.e., I am God. I felt like a small God when painting or writing poetry and enjoyed creating different independent worlds of my own! Gradually, I convinced my parents that I wanted to chase my dream in the animation industry.

In 1991, with few animation institutes around, I directly joined a small animation studio as a trainee. I picked up 2D animation, and later took formal training in 3D Animation from Xavier's Institute of Communications, Mumbai. After a couple of years at two animation studios including a pioneering studio called 'Computer Graphiti' which did advertising films, I decided to be on my own and started my own animation studio, "Metamorphosis," where I do animation and special effects for advertising films.



Some of the animated films made by Dhvani Desai (above and next page)

Who has been your inspiration in animation?

I was exposed to Russian, Czech, Croatian, Japanese and several other European animation films by my father. The two animators who have particularly inspired me are the Polish master Jerzy Kucia for his surrealistic films, and Indian Canadian animator Ishu Patel for his spiritual approach. I even visited the animation studio of Kucia in Krakow, Poland.

What according to you is the requisite of a good animation film?

Hailing from a writer family, I believe that the soul of any film, be it animation or live action is the 'story'. Enticing storytelling with powerful visuals is most important for a good film.

As director of animated films, what do you do?

Well, I start with the concept, then illustrate my visualisation into a storyboard with shot divisions. I then design the look of the film, which would include character designs, layouts, backgrounds etc. I sort of create a library of it, if my film is stylised, and then work on the sound design. Once that is completed, work on animation, compositing, visual FX if any. Then move on to post-production for edit and music/sound.

Do you usually work with animators, sitting down with the storyboards and describe exactly what you want, down to the smallest gesticulation, sometimes even act it out?

Animation filmmaking is team work. Depending on the intricacies, style and duration, it takes a long time to complete an animation film, i.e., several months or even years in some cases. Before I start my film, I work on the pre-production very carefully to avoid pitfalls and not waste time. Several tests have to be done before the final sequences are ready, in terms of colour schemes of characters, backgrounds, movements, timing, etc.

I do a lot of research and if need be, even travel to places for references. As an animator myself, it becomes easier to explain every detail I need for the scenes and movement. Oh

yes, I act it out to my artists. Just a bit of trivia, having acted in professional children's plays as a child, I have learnt the craft of acting and dramatics. So it is fairly easy for me to bring out the correct emotion wherever required.

Do you depend on others for the story, casting and recording the characters' voices?

As I write my own scripts, it's always easier to animate your own story as there is more control. Depending on the treatment of story, there could be more voiceovers or even just a narration or simple background music. I select the voices myself, and even guide the voice-over artists at the recording studios by explaining to them the expressions and emotions needed for the dialogues.

Are you a generalist animator or are you one of those who is specialised in one technique?

An artist cannot be contained or restricted by any style or technique. I like experimenting and using different styles as per the need of the subject and the story. I have even used conventional style in my films.

Do animation films have to have a message, or should they merely entertain?

It is purely up to the animation filmmaker to have his/her creative freedom to experiment. I have seen some brilliant work which was abstract animation, purely experimental, without a story... which is also powerful and unique, and also animation films driven by message.

Can social messages be delivered through animation more effectively?

I realised that when I made an animation film *Chakravayuh* (The Vicious Circle) to bring awareness about the 'Right to Information' (RTI), a serious subject, and difficult for the layman to understand and enjoy.

Having myself used RTI extensively, I knew exactly how powerful it was, and so was very keen to make a film on it. It was a Herculean task for me, but it created a movement among masses which inspired them to use RTI in their lives to solve their problems regarding corruption or



non-governance. In fact, it was voted the Most Popular Film Award at the Mumbai International Film Festival in 2014.

A film produced by the Films Division and Government of India (GOI), it was also publicly released by the Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT) headed by Padmabhushan Shri Julio Ribeiro. It was also uploaded on the official RTI web portal of GOI and shown in the theatres across India before the feature film.

What do awards mean to you?

I have won some international awards like the Gold Remi Award at the Worldfest, Houston, at the New York Film Festival, Prix Danube Diploma Award at Bratislava, etc., and also in India, the Most Popular Film Award at the MIFF 2014, from DOPT and Yashada, IDPA Awards, etc.

Awards encourage me to keep doing good work, reconfirms that I am on the right path, and that my work is being appreciated by people globally. It is a positive motivator since I had taken a big risk by entering the animation industry, even when I was professionally qualified to join the MNCs.

What project in your portfolio are you most proud of?

The project that is closest to my heart is *Manpasand* (The Perfect Match), produced by the Children's Film Society, as it gave me my identity. I used a unique and very difficult style in animation, not done hitherto. It not only won international awards but was officially selected at over 22 international film festivals. It is indeed an immense pleasure when animation experts from overseas recognise that film by just seeing a frame, even today, which even found me a place in some encyclopaedias on animation.

What is the scope for animation film making in India? How does it compare with foreign films?

There is a plethora of talent and innovative ideas and hence good scope, but what we seriously lack is funding for films. Indian narratives and treatments are very different from foreign films with their own distinctive flavour, visually as well as execution-wise, and hence I would not want to compare them. Dedicated slots for animated short films on various TV channels, would see a lot of good quality work and scope for experiments.

How important is music in animation films?

Music, I believe gives the film completeness and an explicit flavour. I get music composed specifically for my films. My film *Manpasand* has two songs, when the film is only of 12 minutes duration. I wanted to give the flavour of classical *raga-s*. With the help of my mother and my elder brother Sanskar who are trained in Indian classical music, my film has *raga-s* like *Darbaari*, *Pahadi* and *Miyan Malhar*. I was also keen to use the percussion instrument *Pakhawaj* in some portions.

What fuels your creativity?

Whenever I see beautiful pieces of art, be it paintings, poetry, stories, films, or dance forms, it inspires me. I love to travel, and whenever I am invited as a jury member or to give lectures on animation, I make it a point to try and understand the culture, architecture, mundane life of people of different regions. These scenes and experiences invariably peep out in my films. Creativity gets activated within me, when I relish some spicy deep fried *pakoda-s* and several cups of tea! Maybe that's the secret of my creative juices!



A. Radhakrishnan is a Pune-based freelance journalist, poet and short story writer.

Adrift in Kashmir?

The situation in Kashmir continues to boggle most attempts at a solution, and the politicians are to be wholly blamed for the mess, avers Lt. Gen. Vijay Oberoi.

DESPITE the announcement of a ceasefire in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) during the month of Ramzan, the situation in the state continues to be the same. Immediate reactions to the ceasefire were largely negative, as it was mostly seen as a breather for the terrorists, who have suffered considerable casualties at the hands of the army lately.

While the Centre agreed to Mehbooba Mufti's ceasefire proposal, the state unit of the BJP opposed it. Earlier, the BJP had slammed Mufti for being 'soft' on stone pelters, which resulted in the law and order situation deteriorating considerably. Opposition politicians and many others have stated the same. The militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba had rejected the policy within hours of it being announced; and the United Jihad Council, the umbrella body of militant groups operating in Kashmir, also rejected it. The separatist Joint Resistance Leadership comprising Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Yasin Malik also took a dismissive approach.

What is this ceasefire?

Clarity is first needed regarding the term 'ceasefire, in context of Kashmir. In J&K, the army, along with the CAPF (Central Armed Police Force) and the J&K police has been conducting highly successful counter-insurgency operations against terrorists and insurgents, particularly in the Valley. This has been going on since 1989, and such actions have disturbed the peaceful life of the citizens.

The army's deployment in the state is for two distinct tasks. Firstly, ensure the sanctity of the Line of Control (LoC), which includes free flow on its lines of communications, and secondly, to assist the civil administration in neutralising the terrorists and insurgents, so that violence is



A common scene in Kashmir

down to such low levels that the political and administrative processes are restarted. In the past, the army has done so on many occasions, but sadly, both the political leadership and administrative officials (who take their cues from the political masters), have failed miserably.

In counter-insurgency operations, there are no warring factions. Even though some of the infiltrating insurgents are Pakistani nationals, essentially, the army is trying to neutralise/subdue those citizens of the country who have picked up arms or resorted to violence. This is because from the very beginning, the state's politicians have failed the *awam* (general public) in providing good governance.

Pakistan has watched the situation carefully and taken initiatives to stoke the fires of insurgency by employing all means, from liberal doles of money to the politicians and their overt proxies, to motivating, training, arming and equipping disgruntled elements to create violence, panic and

mayhem.

Coming to more recent times, the neutralising of an insurgent, Burhan Wani, in July 2016, who had created an image for himself as a dashing and swashbuckling hero through the social media, became a flash point of sudden increase in violent activities. Pakistan and its proxies upped the ante, and sadly, the PDP government merely watched; it did nothing to cool tempers, and in many cases, joined in with the perpetrators.

Thereafter, the situation went downhill, with organised stone pelting on the security forces, attacks on single vehicles, and lightly protected installations. Simultaneously, Pakistan re-commenced infiltrating terrorists on a larger scale. Inevitably, army's operations had to be enhanced. Soon, the army emerged on top, attaining high levels of neutralising terrorists. On the other hand, the state government was on an appeasement spree, releasing law breakers in thousands, who were back on the streets with their nefarious activities.

In 2001, while I was the Vice Chief of the Army, at the behest of the then political leadership, we had unilaterally restrained our operations on two occasions, but the results were zilch. On the other hand, this led to complacency on the part of the political leaders. One of the fall-outs was the Agra Summit, where we nearly gave away everything, till we were rescued by a whisker by the very capable Jaswant Singh, by happenstance, an ex-army officer!

The dismal scenario today

Even in days of drift in Kashmir during the time of P.V. Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh governments, there was a semblance of political control; and the moderate elements of the Hurriyat had been sufficiently tamed. The scene now is purely anarchic and there is little administrative control.

Avoiding collateral damage while fighting terrorists has been an article of faith with the Indian Army, but when civilian men, women and children interfere in the operations of the army, despite many warnings, and no action by the police, presumably on the directions of the state government, some civilian casualties are inevitable.

Since 1989 when troubles started, it is only the army that had brought down the militancy to such low levels that the political process could re-commence. This was done a number of times. Unfortunately, the politicians of all parties who came into power did nothing except sit in their guarded houses and offices, and took no steps to go in the countryside to interact with the *awam*, listen to their problems, and take actions to ameliorate them. There was no dearth of funds as all governments at the Centre have poured funds into J&K. The local administrators, including the police, were no better, for the attraction of lucre was overwhelming. The situation remains the same.

An added, though not oft-stated reason is that all ruling clans in Kashmir, from the Abdullahs to the Muftis, have always had one foot in Pakistan, and have made appropriate noises when ordered by their mentors from the other side of the LoC.

“Even in days of drift in Kashmir during the time of P.V. Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh governments, there was a semblance of political control; and the moderate elements of the Hurriyat had been sufficiently tamed. The scene now is purely anarchic and there is little administrative control.”

When the present coalition government was formed in J&K, the PDP had stated that their ideology was of self-rule, as distinctly different from the issues of autonomy. They wanted to engage in debates over the new political territoriality of J&K. Meaningful words indeed, but the last few had ominous implications. Their actions, however, only emphasise talks with Pakistan! While the dichotomy is obvious, so are the reasons – a perpetuation of the status quo, where the *awam* continues to be at the mercy of Pakistani-controlled self-appointed leaders masquerading as the messiahs of the masses, and the Kashmiri elite accumulating power and pelf for themselves and their clans.

Many believe that it was a blunder for the BJP to become a junior partner in the coalition, but then electoral and power considerations prevailed, and ideology plus highertraits were

abandoned. Except for a smaller share of power and pelf, all they have earned is opprobrium, especially in their stronghold of Jammu. They are now riding a tiger, and do not know how to get down. If they were not partners, the PDP government would have been dismissed a long time back. Reverting to the ceasefire, it is just a time-buying tactic. The separatist leaders, both overt and covert, get their orders (and funds) from Pakistan, and despite many analysts, including this writer, suggesting moving out all these so-called leaders out of J&K, neither the Central leadership nor the state politicians have done so. The reasons are of course electoral and in our country, electoral reasons over-ride all others; a great pity indeed!

Our leaders have been shouting from the rooftops that Pakistan has no locus standi in the internal affairs of J&K, yet now they are not averse to recommence a dialogue with Pakistan. Media reports say that a dialogue at the Track II level has already started. A hush-hush delegation has already visited Lahore and Islamabad, and the moth-eaten ‘Neemrana Dialogue’ is due to commence any day.

It appears that we either do not read history or ignore it deliberately. I was part of a high-powered Track II delegation to Pakistan in 2003. I did not discern any reason then or now that makes me hopeful of any forward movement. The reasons are obvious. The Pakistani elite (mostly the army), are loath to relinquish power, and the political scene in Pakistan is chaotic. There is no change of attitude about our substantive concerns, nor any action against the burgeoning Jehadi terrorists, who keep multiplying. The next government in Pakistan may well be formed by the overt Jihadists, God forbid.

(At the time of going to press, the BJP had pulled out of the alliance with PDP.)



Lt. Gen. Vijay Oberoi is a former Vice Chief of Army Staff.

The verdict

The recently concluded election to the Karnataka Assembly was seen as a precursor for the general polls next year. While the BJP emerged as the single largest party, they couldn't form the government, as the opposition closed ranks. Is this a harbinger of things to come in 2019? asks C.V. Aravind.

THE southern state of Karnataka went to the polls on 12th May to elect a new Assembly. With elections to the Lok Sabha due in May next year, this election assumed strategic importance as the BJP, which is part of the NDA government at the centre was keen to prove that it still had its decisive footprint, at least in one state south of the Vindhyas.

The party which had been in power in the state from 2008-2013, blotted its copybook very badly with a series of scams surfacing, and the Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa having to resign from his post and cool his heels in jail for some time due to his alleged involvement in a de-notification scam. The Congress seized the opportunity and was voted to power with a decisive mandate winning 122 seats out of 224. The BJP unleashed a blitzkrieg this time around, and its campaign was led from the front by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi himself. Modi the BJP's ace campaigner addressed as many as 21 election rallies crisscrossing the length and breadth of the state. Modi never wasted any opportunity to launch a tirade against the opposition parties, the Congress and the JD (S), and even accused the Congress of running a 10 percent government with rampant corruption in every department.

The PM didn't produce an iota of evidence to substantiate his charges, as the Congress government led by Siddaramaiah had not been enmeshed in any major scam during its five year tenure. Able support for Modi came from another fiery speaker, the BJP President, Amit Shah, who too struck a negative note right through his campaign. The Congress, not to be left behind, also had its President Rahul Gandhi campaign, who continued with his temple hopping, and also

delivered hard hitting speeches highlighting the misrule of the BJP when it was in power in the state. The third party in the fray, the JD (S) led by its patriarch, former PM Deve Gowda and his sons H.D. Kumaraswamy and H.D. Revanna knew their strengths and weaknesses well, and though the leaders predicted that they would be voted to power, they were mentally prepared to settle for a distant third place.

BJP caught unawares

Most pollsters had predicted that the polls would throw up a fractured verdict, but one or two had predicted that the BJP would get a majority on its own. Elections were countermanded in one constituency due to the death of the BJP candidate, and deferred in another after thousands of voter ID cards were found in a flat. The final tally was 104 for the BJP, 78 for the Congress and 38 for the JD (S) (actually 37 as H.D. Kumaraswamy won from both his constituencies). The Governor, Vajubhai Vala, an old RSS hand and former Gujarat minister, exercised his discretion and invited the single largest party, the BJP to form the government, though he was fully aware that the party was short of a majority by eight, and the only way it could get the numbers was through unethical means like horse trading. He also magnanimously allowed the BJP's CM B.S. Yeddyurappa, whom he had sworn in by then, 15 days to prove his majority on the floor of the house, though the CM had only requested for seven days. But the BJP was in for a rude shock as the Supreme Court, hearing a petition by the Congress, trimmed the period from 15 days to just 24 hours. Caught unawares and unable to launch its second version of Operation Lotus to wean away



Citizens indeed have power!

opposition MLAs, CM Yeddyurappa resigned before facing the poll test. In an unprecedented development, the Congress and the JD (S) which had no pre-poll alliance and were pitted against each other in the elections, came together and were invited by the Governor to form the government.

The coalition

In yet another strange turn of events, the Congress which had won double the seats as compared to the JD (S), offered the CM's post to the latter, and H.D. Kumaraswamy took oath as the CM with Dr. G. Parameshwar of the Congress taking over as the Deputy CM. The cabinet has since been expanded, and 25 more ministers from both the parties have taken office, and the portfolios too have been announced. Dissent has surfaced in a big way in the Congress camp as a number of seniors who had been ministers in earlier governments have been overlooked and there have been a series of agitations by their followers. While the new government has won a vote of confidence it now has a wafer thin majority in the house as the combined strength is only 115 as against a requirement of 112. So it is imperative that the rebel MLAs are pacified and the dissent is nipped in the bud.

(continued on page 35...)

Déjà vu!

The Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) has revived some of its old classics to celebrate its 75th year. Prof. Avinash Kolhe reviews one of those plays, 'Bilkis Begum ka Baada', which was performed in Mumbai recently.

THE Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) is a leftist body, established during 1943-44 to propagate progressive ideas through art and theatre. Stalwarts like Prithviraj Kapoor, Balraj Sahani, Pandit Ravi Shakar, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Ritwik Ghatak were behind this venture. Those were the days when the Quit India Movement was at its peak, and the Bengal famine was claiming millions of helpless Indians. In due course, IPTA mothered many other progressive theatre groups in India. Sombhu Mitra, Trupti Mitra formed 'Bohurepee' in Kolkata, and Jana Natya Mandir of Delhi is run on the ideology of IPTA. This is the 75th year of IPTA and as part of the celebrations it has revived some of its classics which are attracting huge crowds. *Bilkis Begum ka Baada* is one of them, which is an adaption of Spanish poet and dramatist Federico Garcia Lorca's (1898-1936) famous trilogy. Lorca wrote *The House of Bernarda Alba* in 1936. Lorca was leftist and fought during the Spanish Civil War, and was finally shot down by the supporters of General Francisco Franco on 20th August 1936, in Granada.

Lorca's last play

The House of Bernarda Alba is Lorca's last play. The play centres around the events of a house in Andalusia during a period of mourning. In this house, Bernarda Alba (aged 60) wields total control over her five daughters – Augustias (39), Magdalena (30), Amelia (27), Martirio (24) and Adela (20). In addition to these six women, the house also has La Poncia (the housekeeper) and Maria Josefa (Bernarda's elderly mother). Is it any wonder that the lack of male characters in the play builds up high levels of tension? Lorca has weaved the story so smartly that even

Romano, the love interest of Bernarda's daughters and suitor of Augustias, never appears on the stage. This is very interesting and in the end, a very effective tool by which Lorca builds palpable tension among the sisters and her mother. The play opens when the domineering matriarch Bernarda Alba has just lost her second husband, and has imposed eight years of mourning in accordance with the family tradition. This isolation further separates the unmarried who are pining for male company. Augustias, the eldest daughter, has inherited a fortune from her father, Bernarda's first husband, whereas Bernarda's second husband has left very little for his four daughters. As is expected, Augustias's wealth attracts Romano, who is much younger than her. The youngest, Adela, is rebellious by spirit and defies her mother's tight discipline. It turns out that Adela and Romano are having a secret affair. All hell breaks loose, and Bernarda pursues Romano with a gun. A gunshot is heard and Bernarda comes back. Adela feels that Bernarda has killed Romano and runs into her room. Then Bernarda tells others that Romano fled on his pony. Adela hangs herself in her room. To maintain the family reputation Bernarda tells all that Adela died a virgin, and no one is to cry. The play ends on this sad note.

The Indian adaptation

IPTA has presented the play in Hindi under the title of *Bilkis Begum ka Baada* and located it in Nawab's haveli in Uttar Pradesh. This is why the adaptation (or rather it's Indianisation) is so convincing. Family pride and virginity of a woman are issues dear to our heart even in this 21st century. The adaptation has been done by Raghubir Sahay and Shama Zaidi competently.



A still from the play

It is directed by Masood Akhtar and sets, lights and sound are designed by old IPTA hand M.S. Sathyu. It has a huge cast that includes Malishka Mendonsa, Ruchi Sharma, Manju Sharma, Priya Sahdev, Manisha Mondal, Nisha Gupta, Saumya Raghuvanshi, Anuradha Shabadi, Namrata Dalal, Kamna Pathak, Ranjana Srivastava, and Neha Bam.

Lorca's play holds relevance even today as we still witness remnants of feudal culture and mindset. We read daily about honour killings and lack of freedom for women to make sexual choices. And the most important is the issue of family property. Romano is willing to marry Augustia for her wealth, while he loves Adela. Then there is a powerful undercurrent of feminine jealousy. Adela and Augustia cannot stand each other as Augustia suspects rightly that Romano loves Adela and not her. The remaining three daughters take delight in gossiping about Adela-Augustia-Romano. Almost each scene in the play is palpable with unsatiated sexual desires.

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Locally global

How does globalisation affect the local handicrafts industries? A case study from Rajasthan gives some answers to this oft-debated topic. Varsha Joshi does an analysis.

In the last half of the 20th century, there have been fundamental shifts in the world economy and in the structures of societies. The growth in size and proportion of the informal economy has been one part of the overall change in the nature of the work that has accompanied globalisation. Various studies indicate a number of reasons for the decline of crafts.

As per a study by SRUTI (Society for Rural, Urban and Tribal Initiative), one of the important causes is the decline of demand for rural artifacts due to the fact that artisanal products are unable to compete with modern substitutes. Apart from this, cultural factors have also been responsible. Some of them are shifts in “tastes and preferences”, demands and new occupations are being created, withdrawal of traditionally skilled labour as a reaction to the low social status attached to the practice of these occupations, and also the collapse of the *jajmani* system. But the real concern for many of us is, can the ‘local’ really meet with the ‘global’ by truly sustaining its localness?

The real concern

The biggest problem in the Indian handicraft industry is that the village craftsmen remain concerned that with free trade and mass production, hand-made products from other parts of the world will out-price the products of their hard labour. So the basic question arises, is globalisation a solution? This article looks at globalisation’s increasing impact on Indian handicrafts and craftspersons, especially in the sector of jewellery and block printing. It tries to assess how far globalisation serves as an opportunity and threat to artisans.

Although, craft production

was widespread and not confined to a few centres, by the 17th century certain towns in Rajasthan had become well known for a particular style of craft. For instance, Sanganer, a small town near Jaipur, was known for its *bandhej* and block printing. There are references to its product being sent to the wider markets.

“The major shift that has taken place in this industry is the fact that to a great extent, the manufacturing has shifted from houses to factories. The artisans are now employed on a regular basis in these factories. This has not only shifted the manufacturing to mass scale due to machines, but has also majorly changed the relationship between the artisan and the trader.”

It suggests that although the craft was embedded in the local community demand, its growing links with the wider world were leading to a gradual concentration of artisans in a particular place, and specialisation in a style. The artisans living and working in such townships had better access to markets, and were more prone to changes in their product than their rural counterparts.

The dynamic jewellery sector

In the jewellery sector, a lot of changes have occurred. These changes are largely market induced, and have now become part of the

manufacturing system. Initially, they were using the blowing method to melt the metal, after which they shifted to kerosene, and now to small gas cylinders. There has been a massive shift towards lightweight jewellery, the designs of which are also computerised. In order to cater to the new designs, they have now acquired tools which help in the making of lightweight jewellery, e.g., moulds, etc. Moreover, the designs are now catalogue based.

The major shift that has taken place in this industry is the fact that to a great extent, the manufacturing has shifted from houses to factories. The artisans are now employed on a regular basis in these factories. This has not only shifted the manufacturing to mass scale due to machines, but has also majorly changed the relationship between the artisan and the trader. The industry now has shifted from a household mode of production to a capitalist mode of production. One of the artisans mentioned that “at one point of time we had a trust and loyalty relationship with the traders, but now that we have to work in the factories, we have to undergo security checks at both entry and exit, this was never there earlier.” This indicates a clear breaking down of the loyalty structures of traditional society.

The other important shift has been in the tools of the craftsmen. Instead of blowing air, they are now using gas stoves, and also, the tools for making the shell (*khokha*) are now all machine made. Similarly, for cutting and straightening of wires, machines are used. Now chemicals like Borex and Copper Sulphate are used for melting of gold. The traditional “Phukni” has given way to blowers, which, according to the artisans is good for their health.



Indian crafts are facing winds of change

The printing sector

In the printing sector, a village called Bagru, a sandy, windblown village 35 km from Jaipur in Rajasthan, is famous for its unique handprints that use wood blocks and natural dyes. The very fabric of life depends on collecting tonnes of inedible pomegranate skins, turmeric, molasses, iron and alum (fitkari) are all crucial components, as is Bagru's water.

There is no authentic record for reference on backdating Bagru's block printing practices. It is estimated that this art form was introduced 450 years back when a community of Chhipas (literally meaning people who stamp or print) came to Bagru from Ramgarh (Jaipur), Sawai Madhopur (Alwar), and settled here. The family work has now grown into big units and no more is the labour limited to the family only. Alongside the handwork, screen-printing units have also mushroomed in Bagru.

Screen-printing works out to be less expensive and less tedious than the original hand-block printing. This has brought in competition among the printers in Bagru. The printing earlier was done on *pattiyas*, that is low base tables, whereas, now tables are used which are 3ft high, 4ft wide and 18-20ft long. This has displaced women from the printing work. Today, the use of Bagru print is not limited to only traditional dresses, but has also expanded to furnishings like table cloth, runners, bedspreads, tray covers, napkins and table mats.

Use of computer technology has certainly gone up, as computer designing is now common. Since there is a large market of export to Europe and the United States of America, the designs and colour combinations come from the export houses abroad. The expansion of market has also changed the designs and use of colours— pinks, oranges, bright red and browns are commonly used now. This further has led to introduction of

chemicals for colours like pinks, green and oranges and pastel shades.

Some units have also started screen-printing due to cost and competition. New caste groups have also entered the scene. There are two reasons for this; one is the high demand of work as the orders are needed to be fulfilled in time, and the other is the fact that the younger generation of the family has taken up the administration and marketing of the unit. Therefore, labour is needed for printing and other processes. Bagru also has migrant labour from Uttar Pradesh. But they are small in number. Women are involved in printing *khari* (silver and gold block) on the cloth. Nathulal, aged 70 years has been working in this field for past 57 years. He narrates that these years he has seen many changes in designs and colours. But this does not disturb him at all as he says at least they are continuing this tradition and are also able to earn enough for survival. Thus, he does not mind changes.

Another important printing sector is Barmer which is located in the western part of the state forming a part of the Thar Desert. The district is surrounded by Jaisalmer district in the north, Jalore district in the south, Pali and Jodhpur districts in the east, and Pakistan in the west.

Azarakh has existed in Barmer/Kutch/Sindh since the Mohen-jo-daro civilisation, or even before that. The true origin of the word 'Ajrak' is unknown. In Arabic, it means

blue or indigo. The authentic Azarakh is printed on both sides by a method known as resist printing. Sindh was traditionally a large producer of indigo and cotton and exported both to the Middle East. The colour blue is also used extensively in Azarakh.

It is now a well-known fact that due to globalisation and the technological revolution, ideas, images, and information are moving worldwide freely, and very rapidly. Many claim it as the process of cultur-

al interconnectedness and as a sign of global cultural integration.

Commercialisation of media and the cultural symbols, as well as artifacts and the global wave driving for the pursuit of profit using 'culture' as a commodity, constitute the sole force of 'cultural imperialism' theses. Introduced by Herbert Schiller, the term 'cultural imperialism' is referred to the way in which large multinational corporations, including the media, of developed countries dominated developing countries.



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(continued from page 31...)

Impact on the BJP

Karnataka is the only state in the South where the BJP has a footprint, and has even been voted to power, albeit only once. With the BJP's losing streak in bypolls to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies continuing, and with

the opposition parties gearing up to present a united front in the 2019 elections, Karnataka which sends 28 members to the Lower House would be a vital state for the BJP as far as the South is concerned. While announcing his resignation from the CM's post, the BJP state President B.S. Yeddyurappa vowed that he would ensure that the party wins all the 28 seats in next

year's general elections. This seems to be a case of wishful thinking as the new alliance partners, the Congress and the JD (S) have already firmed up plans to hold their alliance for the 2019 elections as well. As far as the state government is concerned, it has to be seen whether it will be able to weather all storms and provide a stable rule for a full five years.



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The daughters always discuss matrimony, husband, kids and other related issues, while they keep themselves busy with old feminine skills like weaving, stitching, etc. This

lends credibility to the plot which takes place in the early decades of the 20th century in a small village of Uttar Pradesh. Often the tension on stage is reduced as there is enough song and dance. These unmarried girls have La Poncia as their guide, friend and philosopher who keep sharing her

knowledge of men with these girls who are eager to lap up every single piece of information about males.

This play mounted by IPTA is a masterpiece by Lorca, and has been competently presented by India's famous and committed theatre group.



Prof. Avinash Kolhe retired as Associate Professor in Political Science from D.G. Ruparel College, Mumbai.

SURENDRA NIHAL SINGH

A doyen of Indian journalism (1929-2018)

A long, enduring and eventful journey of nearly seven decades came to an end when Surendra Nihal Singh breathed his last in Delhi on 16 April 2018. Nihal Singh was a very popular journalist and columnist who helmed three newspapers, penned a number of books, and also contributed syndicated columns to many newspapers in the country. The biggest feather in his cap, however, was the courage and determination he displayed during the dark days of the emergency in the year 1975. Singh who was then a Resident Editor with the Kolkata daily *The Statesman*, stood up to the rigours of the emergency, refusing to be browbeaten and even published a front page in black in his daily. Nihal Singh was born on 30 April 1929 in Rawalpindi, now in Pakistan. After completing his school and college education with a Bachelors degree with Honours from the Delhi University, he opted for a career in journalism, and his first piece was published at the age of 18 in a paper called *The Tribune*.

Singh's innings in print journalism began in 1951 when he joined *The Times of India* as a sub-editor. But his longest tenure was with *The Statesman* where he served for over two and a half decades in various capacities as a Resident Editor of the paper in Delhi, and then as the Chief Editor in Calcutta (now Kolkata). After an acrimonious parting of ways with the owner of *The Statesman*, the redoubtable C.R. Irani, Singh joined *The Indian Express* and was its Editor-in-Chief for a year from 1981-82. Here again differences cropped up between him and another well-known media baron and the proprietor of the *Express*, Ramnath Goenka, and Singh put in his papers. He then found an opportunity to steer a freshly minted daily *The Indian Post* promoted by reputed industrialist Raymond Singhanian. The stint was just for a year, and the paper too soon folded up. Singh's last port of call was the *Khaleej Times* of Dubai. During his tenure as a journalist he also served in several countries abroad, and was considered an authority on foreign affairs as well. As an editor he was liberal, very democratic, and he was also a mentor to many budding journalists who worked with him, putting them through their paces, instilling in them a sense of ethics and fairplay.



Right through his life as a journalist, Singh remained a trenchant critic of the establishment and opposed the draconian measures undertaken by the Indira Gandhi regime during the emergency to muzzle the press, tooth and nail. His pioneering efforts to protect the freedom of the press was recognised at the international level as well, and Singh was awarded the prestigious International Editor of the Year award for his robust opposition to the Emergency. The award was presented to him at a function held in New York. Singh along with leading journalists like Kuldip Nayar and Khushwant Singh was a hugely popular syndicated columnist and his columns were virtual treatises on national affairs, foreign policy and so on. A fierce critic of the Modi regime, Singh often came down heavily on the central government, highlighting issues like intolerance, majoritarianism, the unfettered rise of the Hindutva lobby, and so on. He also authored a book *The Modi Myth*, which again was a scathing commentary on the ills that were plaguing the system.

Nihal Singh also wrote as many as fourteen books including 'I discover America', *My India*, *The Rocky Road of Indian Democracy*, and *The Yogi and the Bear*. His autobiography *Ink In My Veins – A life in journalism*, which was released in 2011, covered a long span in his life and offered readers vignettes of his halcyon days as an uncompromising journalist. Like his contemporaries and fellow columnists the late Khushwant Singh and M.V. Kamath who continued to write columns even after they had reached their nineties, Nihal Singh too continued to write till he reached his late eighties, and avid readers of his columns are certain to miss his erudite scholarship and meticulous research into his subjects.

C. V. Aravind is a Bangalore-based freelance journalist.

Brigadier N.S. Sandhu, MVC

A brave and committed officer (1932-2018)

N. S. Sandhu was born on 1 September 1932, and studied at Khalsa College, Amritsar. He joined the National Defence Academy and was commissioned in 3 Cavalry in 1953. He served in Gaza for a year on deputation to the United Nations Force, and joined his unit subsequently.

In the 1965 Indo-Pak War, Pakistan launched an offensive into Khemkaran and captured it on 8 September. 1 Armoured Division of Pakistan moved into Khemkaran on 8 September with a view to advance to Harike and Beas bridges. 3 Cavalry was part of the Force moved to block Pakistan's armoured thrust. 3 Cavalry shadowed the outflanking move by Pakistan's 4 Cavalry and attacked it from three directions. Several Pakistani tanks were destroyed. Sandhu was the C Squadron commander which destroyed 14 Pakistani tanks. He was awarded 'Mention-in-Despatch' for his courageous act.

He opted for transfer to Infantry and was the Commanding Officer of 10 Dogra Battalion in 1971. Dera Baba Nanak is a small town on River Ravi. It has a rail-cum-road double bridge across the Ravi and is of strategic importance, as it connects several Indian towns (Gurdaspur, Beas and Amritsar), with Sialkot and Narowal in Pakistan. In 1971, Pakistan occupied the eastern part of the bridge. It gave the enemy a choice of objectives which could unbalance our defences. Moreover, the Sikh community had a strong attachment to the place as Guru Nanak had spent the last eleven years of his life there. A historic Gurudwara is located there and the robe presented to Guru Nanak by the people of Mecca and Medina is kept there. Pakistan could have used occupation of this place to woo the Sikhs. The area is covered with thick *sarkhanda* growth and is marshy. The enemy defences consisted of 18 MMG concrete pill boxes, eight RCL emplacements, six three inch mortar pits, and 640 metres long communication trenches. The defences had been planned skilfully, concealed and developed into a strong defended area like a fortress. Minefields had been laid to cover the frontal approaches. The enemy had two companies of 38 Punjab, two companies of Rangers, a field company of Engineers

and two troops of tanks. Artillery and air support was also available on call.

The attack was launched on the night of 5 December 1971. It was pitch dark, making control difficult due to poor visibility. The tanks of 71 Armoured Regiment allotted for support got stuck in the stream. Sandhu did the right thing and took charge, leading from the front. He decided to go ahead without armour support since time was of paramount importance. The unit was split into groups of about twelve men each, 3 kms short of the bridge. They armed themselves with grenades and approached the bridge from two sides. Major Yadav was successful in capturing the initial objective along the river bund after midnight. The Dogras rushed in and captured the objective by 5 a.m. on 6 December, after an intense hand to hand fight. Captain Ahlawat caught a red hot enemy barrel by hand. Twenty-two Pakistani soldiers were killed and 14 captured. Considerable arms and ammunition were recovered.

Sandhu led from the front, guiding and encouraging his men, ignoring the bullet injury in his leg. Immediately after the capture of the bridge, he rushed forward to organise defence against enemy counter-attacks. He displayed great courage in the face of the enemy and was awarded an MVC (Maha Vir Chakra) for his deed. Captain Ahlawat was also awarded an MVC. The bridge was back in control of India, and Pakistan's plans for advance into Punjab had been foiled.

Sandhu took premature retirement in 1986. He was a keen sportsman and always a cheerful host. He took interest in the welfare of ex-servicemen. He was suffering from cancer and he dealt with it bravely. He passed away on 30 March 2018 in Chandigarh. His wife had passed away earlier, and he is survived by his son and daughter.

- Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd.)



Arun Date

A soulful singer (1934-2018)

ARUN Date, the tall, bespectacled gentleman who always wore the hint of a smile on his rotund face, was a well-known leading Marathi playback and singer of Bhavgeet (lyrical poetry). Known for his soulful voice and soft tone, he yet seemed to ascend the heavens when he hit the high notes in his full-throated style.

He entered the field of music slightly late, inspired by his father, Ramubhaiyya Date, a renowned classical music connoisseur and singer from Indore, after having worked as textile engineer with the Birla group for 28 years. His brother, Ravi Date, incidentally, is a well-known *tabla* player. After learning music vocals from Kumar Gandharva and K. Mahaveer, from 1955, he began singing with All India Radio. But it was Shukrata Mandawara, a duet with Sudha Malhotra that released in 1962, which became his signature song. It later grew into a successful concert series spanning 2,500 shows. It was also adjudged as 'song of the month' by Mumbai Radio Station in 1962.

Arun Date's iconic songs won the hearts of music connoisseurs and included *Hya Janmavar Hya Jaganyavar, Bhatukalicha Khelamadhale, Asen Mi Nasen Mi, Yeshil Yeshil Rani, Shatada Prem Karave, Shapat Tula Aahe, Shriram Jairam, Dolyat Sanjveli, Bhet Tujhi Majhi Smarate, Akherche Yetil Majhya, Dilya Ghetlya Vachananchi, Dole Kashasathi, Dis Nakalat Zae, Zhalil Fule Kalyanchi*, and of course, his memorable duet with Lata Mangeshkar, *Sandhikali Hya Asha*.

The first recipient of the State Government's Gajananrao Vatave Puraskar, in 2010, as also the first recipient of the Mahendra Kapoor Award in 2001-02, he also won the 11th Ram Kadam Award in 2016.

Affectionately called Arubhaiyya, a man with a big heart, affable nature, caring attitude, simple with no vanity, he treated everyone in his team with respect and gave wholehearted praise. During tours, he would always make sure that each team member was comfortably

accommodated, and only then would he see to his own lodging arrangement.

He even had a habit of throwing small parties after the success of a live show. Apart from old age-related complications, he had issues with memory and often forgot the lyrics, but yet insisted on performing. He interacted with the audience during live shows, sharing his past experiences and anecdotes about songs. What's more, as long as music director Shrinivas Khale lived, Arun would visit him annually and hand over a part of his earnings from his stage shows, as he felt most of his popular songs were composed by the former. Every show was houseful and each of his songs used to cast a spell on the audience, be it *Bhet Tujhi Majhi Smarate, Bhatuklichya Khelamadhali* or the evergreen *Shukrata Mandawara*. Even if he decided to skip any of his popular songs just to bring in variety, the audience would insist that he sing each of them. Sadly, every life has its dark periods too. Though a gem of a person otherwise and a good singer, his 48-year-old younger son Sangeet passed away in 2016 after being found living on the streets in Pune, shunned by his family for his reckless lifestyle, and addiction to liquor.

Though ailing for some years, it was shocking for everyone when Arun Date passed away on 6 May 2018, just two days after turning 84. He had been very happy when the family played his songs on his birthday. Date contributed to the Marathi music industry for more than 50 years. With his demise, there is a vacuum, a shining star lost to the music industry. He holds a special position in the minds of the Marathi people. His contribution with his soft and tender voice immortalising the Marathi *bhavgeet*, is immense. A very talented singer who continued to remain underrated, despite giving so many gems in Marathi, his is an irrevocable loss to the Marathi music world.

A.Radhakrishnan is a Pune-based freelance writer, poet and short story writer.



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-

WHO AM I?

Am I a Hindu first or an Indian first?

Am I a Muslim first or an Indian first?

Am I a Christian first or an Indian first?

Am I a Buddhist first or an Indian first?

Am I a Brahmin first or an Indian first?

Am I a Dalit first or an Indian first?

Am I a South Indian first or an Indian first?

Am I a North Indian first or an Indian first?

Am I the President of India first or an Indian first?

Am I the Prime Minister of India first or an Indian first?

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Sadanand A. Shetty, Founder Editor
(October 9 १९३० – February 23 २००७)
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