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*Let noble thoughts come to us from every side
Rig Veda*

CONTENTS

ELEVENTH PLAN	5	TREATING THE MALAISE	31
HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN INDIA	8	Interview: Gary Lewis	
Kiran Bedi and P M Nair		SANGINI...A RAY OF HOPE	34
ON LEGALISING PROSTITUTION	11	Harshal Pradhan and Sudhakar Kulkarni	
Madhu Kishwar		J&K WINDOW	38
ANTI-TRAFFICKING INTERVENTIONS AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS	16	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHERN INDIA SINCE 1857	41
Ratna Kapur		M Naganathan	
AMENDMENTS TO THE ITPA	18	DO YOU KNOW ? KINDS OF DEFICITS	43
Bharathi Ghanashyam		UNION BUDGET 08-09	44
UNVEILED TRAVELOGUE	21	G Srinivasan	
Interview: Nalini Jameela		SHGS AND MICRO-CREDIT	47
COMMUNITY POLICING	23	Archana Dwivedi	
P M Nair		LOOK EAST POLICY	49
SEX WORK IS NO CRIME	28	Sumathi Vishwanathan	
Bishaka Datta and Siddharth Dube		IN THE NEWS	51
BEST PRACTICES PRAJWALA	30		
V Balakrishna			

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(Front Cover Photo depicts rehabilitated women who have formed self help group in Forbes Gunge in Araria district of Bihar. Pic. courtesy Apne Aap Women Worldwide)

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A
DEVELOPMENT
MONTHLY

YOJANA

Special Issue
On
BUDGET 2008-09

MARCH 08

- **The March Special Issue brings to you an indepth analysis of the Union Budget 08-09 by experts. The issue also carries write-ups on the Economic Survey 07-08, Railway Budget 08-09, People's reactions and.... much more!**
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The March Special Issue will be a delayed one, as it will be printed after the presentation of Union Budget 08-09 to Parliament.

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About the Issue

With the formal approval by the National Development Council (NDC), the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) is now complete. The finalization of Plan before the end of its first year is appreciable. Let us consider two important issues which are crucial. The first is the importance given to the private sector in the areas which have been the domain predominantly of the public sector. The most important is the infrastructure on which the Prime Minister has focused from the initial days of the UPA government. Apparently involvement of private sector in education is also on the cards. The role of private sector is through public-private partnership model (PPP). The second issue is on recognizing the importance of increased government expenditure on services in social sector and the focus on improving the public delivery of services. Yojana reports on the deliberations of NDC.

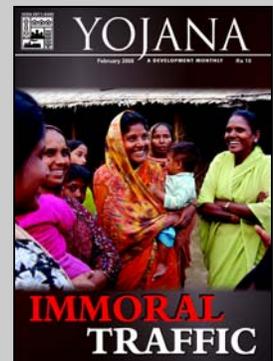
Now on the theme "Immoral Traffic". The Union Government is all set to amend the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act. In India, the legal regime on sex work is laid down under the ITPA. In this issue of Yojana, experts look at the proposed amendments and also analyse social, health and economic issues relating to sex work. Sex work in India, as in the rest of the world, employs a large number of people. Most of sex workers enter the profession involuntarily, being forced into it either because of poverty, abandonment or violence by husbands, or the other family problems. They are usually contractually obligated, in a form of bonded labour, to work in a brothel under the ownership of a madam or pimp.

The profession has received increased attention from social scientists in recent years because of the AIDS epidemic. This is particularly true in India where sex workers are at very high risk for the disease and transmitting it among other clients. Promoting the use of condoms and other safe sex practices among sex workers is considered perhaps the most effective method of preventing the spread of the disease.

The findings of "The Oxford Companion–The Economics In India", indicate an interesting fact on the economics of sex work. Returns to education in this profession are comparable to those of women who work in more conventional occupations. Sex workers with primary education earn about 4% more than those with no education, while those with middle schooling earn about 22% more. This reflects the segmentation of the market with more educated sex workers catering to more educated clients. However, unlike other professions, age shows a sharp negative relationship with earning capacity.

The former RBI Governor and Chairman of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, C. Rangarajan has been actively involved in the Pan-Asian Commission studying the impact of HIV/AIDS in Asian region. He met sex workers in Kolkata, Chennai, Bangladesh, Thailand and Phillipines. He visited the Sonagachi Sex workers' Project in Kolkata, which has been hailed as a model project for bringing down the rate of HIV infection and stopping child trafficking because of the active participation of the sex workers. Such results highlight the need to intensify programmes that create an enabling environment for sex workers.. The need is to have a development approach.

The government through ITPA should encourage self-help groups that will monitor trafficking in sex work and organize the community to manage its own health needs, education for dependent children etc. There is a need for systematic training and capacity building and further strengthening the legal process for the protection of victims.



ECONOMIC INDICATORS

ANNUAL INDICATORS	Units	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08 (Proj.)
Population (as on 1 Oct)	in crores	101.9	103.8	105.5	107.3	109	111	112.2	
GDP at current market prices (new series)	Rs.crore	21,02,375	22,81,058	24,58,084	27,65,491	31,26,596	35,67,177	41,25,725	
GDP:Per Capita (current prices)	Rupees	20,632	21,976	23,299	25,773	28,684	32,224	36,771	
Gross domestic savings (current prices)	% of GDPmp	23.7	23.5	26.4	29.7	31.1	32.4		
Gross domestic capital formation (cur. pr)	"	24.3	22.9	25.2	28.0	31.5	33.8		
Central Govt. Gross Fiscal Deficit	"	5.7	6.2	5.9	4.5	4.0	4.1	3.7	
Sectoral shares (of GDPfc at current prices)									
Agriculture & allied	% of GDPfc	23.4	23.2	20.9	20.9	18.8	18.3	17.5	
Industry	"	26.2	25.3	26.4	26.1	27.5	27.6	27.9	
Services	"	50.5	51.5	52.7	52.9	53.7	54.1	54.6	
Prices (Annual Average)									
WPI of All commodities (wt 100.00)	Apr 1993=100	155.7	161.3	166.8	175.9	187.2	195.5	206.1	
CPI-IW General index: India	Jul 2001=100	95.93	100.07	104.05	108.07	112.2	117.2	125.0	
Agriculture: Production									
Foodgrains	mln. tns.	196.8	212.9	174.8	213.9	198.4	208.6	216.1	217.2
Cereals	"	185.7	199.5	163.7	198.3	185.2	195.2	201.9	202.6
Rice	"	85.0	93.3	71.8	88.5	83.1	91.8	92.8	91.4
Wheat	"	69.7	72.8	65.8	72.2	68.6	69.4	74.9	75.6
Pulses	"	11.1	13.4	11.1	14.9	13.1	13.4	14.2	14.6
Oilseeds	"	18.4	20.7	14.8	25.2	24.4	28.0	23.9	27.0
Sugar cane	"	296	297.2	287.4	233.9	237.1	281.2	345.3	345.6
Industry & Energy									
Index of industrial production (wt 100) (Annual Average)	Apr 1993=100 % change	162.7 5.1	167.0 2.6	176.6 5.8	189 7.0	204.8 8.4	221.5 8.2	247.1 11.5	
Commercial energy production	MTOE #	230.9	237.9	246.9	259.2	272	281.4		
Electricity generation by public utilities	bln. kwh	501.2	517.4	532.7	565.1	594.5	617.5	662.5	
External Transactions									
Exports	US \$ mln.	44147	43958	52823	63886	83502	103075	126246	
Imports	"	50056	51567	61533	78203	111472	149144	190438	
Forex reserves (March-end) ^	"	39554	51049	71890	107448	135571	145108	191924	
Foreign direct investments in India (net)	"	4031	6125	5036	4322	5987	7661	19442	
Portfolio investments in India (net)	"	2760	2021	979	11356	9311	12494	7004	
Rupee exchange rate	Rs / USD	45.61	47.55	48.30	45.92	44.95	44.28	45.29	

Indicators: Monthly	Units	Sept '06	Oct '06	Nov '06	Dec '06	Jan '07	Feb '07	Mar '07	Apr '07	May '07	Jun '07	Jul '07	Aug '07	Sep '07	Oct '07	Nov '07	Dec '07
Prices																	
Wholesale price index (All Commodities)	1993-94= 100 % change	207.8 5.4	208.7 5.5	209.1 5.5	208.4 5.7	208.8 6.4	208.9 6.3	209.8 6.6	211.5 6.3	212.3 5.5	212.3 4.5	213.6 4.7	213.8 4.1	215.1 3.5	215.2 3.1	215.5 3.1	
Agriculture																	
Actual rainfall (All-India)	Millimetres	169	44	50	12	2	30	32	27	48	153	259	299	194	75		16
Dev. from normal rainfall	Per cent	0	-47	33	-24	-92	32	14	-20	-31	8	0	-2	14	-22		1
Stock of Rice (Central pool)	mln. tns.	6.0	12.5	12.1	12.0	12.6	14.0	13.2	13.5	12.6	10.6		6.7				
Stock of Wheat (-do-)	mln. tns.	6.4	6.0	5.6	5.4	5.4	5.1	4.6	11.6	13.3	12.8		10.9				
Investments (CMIE CapEx database)																	
Project investments	Rs.crore	14,28,449	15,12,975	14,10,828	15,28,611	19,73,426	28,12,111	44,77,398	51,59,875								
outstanding* (as on)	project count	4,539	6,108	7,196	9,070	9,822	10,050	12,725	13,832								
Note: (a) % change is year on year (y-o-y) basis; (b) # MTOE: Million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent; (c) ^ Total value of foreign currencies held by Govt. of India (excl. gold & SDRs); (d) * It is the sum total of the project costs of all the outstanding (Live) capital expenditure projects happening in the country. These projects may be announced or under-implementation stage.																	
Source: ¹ (i-cube) at Planning Commission, New Delhi, Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)																	

ELEVENTH PLAN

NDC Endorses XIth Plan Draft

A plan for the poor and it doesn't divide people: Manmohan

The National Development Council (NDC), the country's highest policy making body, endorsed the Eleventh Plan document. It envisages an average nine per cent GDP (gross domestic product) growth in the first four years and a growth of 10 per cent during the terminal year 2011-12.

Briefing journalists after the conclusion of the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia said: "The NDC has blessed the Eleventh Plan document. It is now time for its implementation, and that would be reflected in the annual Plan discussions with the States."

With an overall investment of Rs 36,00,000 crore, the Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) has been fixed nearly 115 per cent higher at Rs 10 lakh crore to help the states in ushering in "inclusive" growth through the development of social infrastructure such as health education and eradication of poverty by generating more jobs.

For this, the Plan has specific national and state-level targets to help in monitoring the progress of the various social sector programmes.

In all, 27 targets have been proposed at the national and 13 at the state level for poverty eradication, education, health status of women and children, infrastructure and environment. The incidence of poverty is to be reduced by 10 percentage points by

generating seven crore new jobs, while electricity connection is to be ensured to all villages.

- **It envisages average nine per cent growth**
- **Ahluwalia: Chief Ministers hailed growth targets but felt measures were not "inclusive enough"**

Inclusive growth

Dr. Ahluwalia pointed out that while the Chief Ministers hailed the growth targets, they felt that the measures proposed to be adopted for inclusive growth were not inclusive enough. While some sought specific steps for increased irrigation, others pointed to the difficulties being faced in implementing projects through the public private partnership route.

Responding to the Chief Ministers' observations, Dr. Singh in his concluding remarks, announced a number of steps aimed at removing such hurdles. Nothing that the country was close to living up to its full potential and that all the constraints and challenges were internal. He said each speaker (Chief Minister) "only reaffirmed my belief that all of us share a common concern about the welfare of our citizens and are in agreement that inclusive economic development is a national goal,.... Launching of a Plan is only the beginning of a process."

While the Plan tried to maximise investment in priority sectors such as agriculture, irrigation, rural

development, education and health, "there is a general desire for more resources. ... However, we must realise that the resource cake is a limited one."

Task force on irrigation

On the issues raised by the Chief Ministers, Dr. Singh said there was feeling that more resources were needed to speed up irrigation projects. To this end, he announced the constitution of a task force in the Planning Commission to examine the resource needs for expanding irrigation and identifying a new approach to implementation.

On agricultural indebtedness, he said; "The Finance Minister, in consultation with the Agriculture Minister, is finalising a scheme for addressing the issue of debt burden of farmers" in keeping with the report of the Radhakrishna Committee.

On the clearance of projects delayed due to cumbersome procedures, Dr Singh said he would request the Finance Minister to set up an expert group to go into the system of statutory clearances for industrial and infrastructure projects and suggest concrete ways for speeding these up.

To ward off criticism on development Plans on the basis of religion, Dr. Singh said: "This Plan is a Plan for the poor. Its focus is on the most marginalised section of society. The goal of this Plan is to invest in our people to enable them to become active participants in economic growth process. The Plan does not attempt to divide people on the basis of caste, creed or gender or religion."

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh warned that prices and availability of basic food items could come under increasing pressure and India could be impacted by “the clouds on global financial market” and a slowdown in the US and other leading economies.

“I will be failing in my duty if I do not draw your attention to the impending problem of food security... Global trends in food production and prices and our patterns of consumption are going to put increasing pressure on both availability and prices of basic food items,” he said.

At the National Development Council meeting, convened to approve the 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-2012), Singh said there was a need for enhancing stocks of food grain and consider buffer stocks for pulses and edible oils.

While exuding confidence of a 10 per cent economic growth during the 11th Plan, Singh said the sub-prime lending crisis in the US may impact India’s growth through reduction in exports and capital inflows.

“There are some clouds on global financial market following the sub-prime lending crisis. There are worries that the growth of the US

and other leading economies may slow down and some may even go into a recession. This may impact both our exports and capital flows.” he said.

“Our economy is now increasingly integrated into the global economy with external sector now accounting for almost 40 per cent of GDP. Hence we cannot be fully immune to international development,” Singh added.

Annual growth rate dipped to 8.9 per cent in the quarter ending September 2007, falling below 9 per cent for the first time in three-quarters. During the April-October period in the current financial year, exports in dollar terms grew 20.89 per cent to \$85.58 billion, lower than the 25 per cent growth recorded in the same period last year. Analysts have also maintained that the \$160 billion export target set by the commerce ministry for the current financial year is difficult to achieve, given the rupee appreciation and the decline in global demand.

However, Singh said we need not be pessimistic about the country’s growth targets. “It only implies that we need to re-double our effort to maintain the domestic drivers of growth and ensure that policy facilitates an even faster growth,” he said. The Planning Commission

targets to achieve 9 per cent average GDP growth rate during the 11th Five year plan (2007-12) and 10 per cent in 2011-12.

The PM said the high growth rate has become possible due to high savings and investment rates, “These high rates, which are based on improvements in both private and public savings, are likely to go up in future because of our young population profile. This will be adequate to support a growth rate of 9-10 per cent.”

PM’S CONCERN

- ▶ Need to focus on urban-rural disparity
- ▶ Dip in share of agriculture in GDP below 20%
- ▶ Majority of population still dependent on agriculture
- ▶ Quality of education in rural areas
- ▶ Infrastructure and health services in rural areas
- ▶ Large scale migration from rural areas
- ▶ Rate of reduction in poverty, child malnutrition
- ▶ Increase budgetary support to farm, health, irrigation
- ▶ Saturated supply of merchandise
- ▶ Technology upgrade

Agriculture, Education, Health get top priority

Attaching utmost priority to agriculture, education and health, the National Development Council (NDC) approved the 11th Five-Year Plan, which earmarks more than half of the gross budgetary support (GBS) towards these areas.

The priority sectors have been allocated almost 70% of total GBS. In the 10th Plan these sectors were given about 53% of the GBS.

The 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-12), approved by the NDC amid demands by chief ministers for greater flow of funds to states for tackling regional imbalances, aims at sustaining a 9% economic growth during the period, and 4% agriculture growth, Plan outlay for the education sector was raised from 7.68% of the GBS in the 10th Plan to around 19% in the 11th Plan. The total outlay for

the Plan is Rs 36,44,718 crore, of which budgetary support is pegged at Rs. 14,21,711 crore.

However, the government did not accord the same priority to infrastructure development, which economist feel holds the key for economic growth. Allocation to the energy sector has also been reduced, a move which goes against the larger interest of the economy.” Plan is for

the poor. We aim for inclusive growth and would do everything necessary to upliftment of marginalised groups,” Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told while addressing the NDC meeting.

He also expressed confidence of

achieving and sustaining 9% growth rate and pointed that country may achieve 10% growth by the terminal year of the current plan. However, he cautioned that prices of food product and global economic situation would test the resilience of

the Indian economy. Manmohan Singh also proposed to set up two task forces and an expert group to deal with issues concerning hilly areas, expansion of irrigation and expeditious clearance of infrastructure projects.

THE GROWTH CURVE - 11th Five-Year Plan

9% growth rate is 11th plan target; PM says 10% growth within reach by 2012.

9% was average growth rate in last 3 years

Rs 36 lakh crore is total outlay for 11th plan, of which central GBS will be Rs 14 lakh crore

OUTLAY

Education

- Up from 7.7% of central GBS in 10th plan to over 19%
- In actual terms sector will see fivefold increase

Agriculture, Health, Rural Development

- Outlay to triple

Infrastructure

- Proposal to up total annual investment from 5% of GDP to 9%
- Public investment being raised from 2.4% of GDP to 4%

Health

- Major expansion proposed, doubling expenditure for Centre and states from 1% of GDP in base year to 2% by end of Plan

Centre and States

- Total Plan expenditure to go up from 9.4% of GDP to 13.5%

- Keep technical and commercial losses to 15% in 2-3 years Public investment being raised from 2.4% of GDP to 4%

Health

- Major expansion proposed, doubling expenditure for Centre and states from 1% of GDP in base year to 2% by end of plan

Centre and states

- Total plan expenditure to go up from 9.4% of GDP to 13.5%

TARGETS

- Create environment for investment in power sector
- Keep technical and commercial losses to 15% in 2-3 years

STATES' TAKE

Simply by reducing the money that might otherwise have been available to the states as untied central assistance, the states are made dependent, as it were, on the Centre-**Vasundhara Raje, Rajasthan CM**

Increased availability of viability gap funding for various public private partnership (PPP) projects worth Rs 25,000 crore.

Many infrastructure development projects in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region need Central assistance.

Speedy approval from the railway ministry to the second phase of the Mumbai Urban Transport Project costing Rs 4,500 crore-**Vilasrao Deshmukh, Maharashtra CM**

Need to increase central outlays to redress infrastructure inefficiencies and access to raw material like coal blocks to improve power generation remains unaddressed.

Schemes for the state having far-reaching impact are very often announced without any prior consultation.-**Nitish Kumar, Bihar CM**

The correct criteria for flow of funds for various schemes and programmes should be based on the principle of equity by taking only socio-economic criteria alone.

The implementation of such welfare schemes should be left to the state.-**Narendra Modi, Gujarat CM**

Interlinking of rivers should be declared as a national project with a time-bound implementation schedule. The Centre should not insist on financial contribution from state governments for Central projects.-**M Karunanidhi, Tamil Nadu CM**

Clearance to the two proposed mega infrastructure projects-the Rs 30,000 crore Greater Noida -

Ballia expressway and the Greenfield Taj International Aviation Hub in Jewar. Ultra mega power project in the UP considering the size and population of the state.-**Mayawati, Uttar Pradesh CM**

The Delhi government is not in a position to make a blueprint for development of the state on its own as neither land nor its development authority come within its purview. Better integration for all round development of the national capital region and removal of barriers to growth by bringing uniformity in policies like transport and taxation.-**Shiela Dikshit, Delhi CM**

Incentives as a reward for fiscally well-managed states. Common regulatory framework for unrestricted movement of vehicles, cutting down on time and resources being wasted at inter-state borders.-

Bhupinder Hooda, Haryana CM
(Compilation by Yojana Editorial Unit)

Human Trafficking in India

*Kiran Bedi
P M Nair*



Anti-Human Trafficking is everybody's business. The question is whether one is part of the problem or whether one is part of solution

MS. MONA (name changed) is a girl of 15 years. At the age of 13, her mother died and father remarried. The second mother was uncomfortable with Mona and wanted to send her away for some job, where she would be able to look after herself. There came a 'contractor', who arranges for employment to young person as domestic help, etc. This man paid an amount to the lady and took Mona away, moved her to a far away town, and 'employed' her in a massage parlour as 'receptionist'. Even before Mona got to know the work profile, she realized that she was trapped into commercial sex exploitation, and made to be sexual slave to the 'customers' who come to the place for 'full body massage'.

After four months, there was a 'police raid', when Mona was arrested on charges of 'prostituting'. She was charge-sheeted and eventually convicted by 'fine'. The parlor owner paid the fine and got

her back to the same place and told her that her 'debt' to him has gone up, as he had to pay the fine, the fees for the lawyer, the transportation cost, etc. He also 'directed' her that she will have to 'service' more 'customers' from now on so that he can recoup the money he spent on her release from the case. Mona had no way of escape. However, shortly there was another 'rescue operation' by police along with NGOs. Today, Mona has been rehabilitated and is a fire-brand activist assisting police in anti human trafficking work.

Mona is no exception. She is one of the millions of women and children who have been trafficked and are being exploited. Mona's case presents a typical example of the trafficking scenario and the response. Human trafficking (HT) is one of the gravest violations of human dignity and human rights. Trafficking can be classified into three groups, (a) for commercial sexual exploitation, i.e. CSE, (b) for exploitative labour, i.e. EL and (c) for other forms of exploitations, like

Dr Kiran Bedi wrote this article when she was DG, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) till recently before taking voluntary retirement from IPS.

Mr Nair is with UNODC, New Delhi

organ sale, camel jockeying, etc. CSE could be in brothel or anywhere, even under the façade of massage parlors, beer bars, etc. Of late, some of the 'marriage bureaus', especially in places where the female population is highly skewed, have been trafficking women under the façade of marriage. Trafficking of EL could be for labour in industries, agriculture, domestic ambience, entertainment industry etc. It could include men and women too.

The cause of trafficking is two-dimensional. One is the demand factor and the other is the vulnerability of the person trafficked or likely to be trafficked. Irrefutable is the fact that human trafficking, in any form, is demand driven. More demand, more crime. Vulnerability of the trafficked person is another dimension. Vulnerability, as often quoted, is not exactly poverty. It is a culmination of several factors, including lack of awareness of rights, lack of access to rights, illiteracy, disparities in income, scope of exploitation of the person, poor law enforcement, lack of public awareness, existing 'culture of silence' to violations of rights of others etc..

Constitution of India, under article 23, prohibits trafficking in any form. We have special legislations like Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), Bonded Labour Abolition Act, Juvenile Justice Act, etc., and local legislations like Goa Children's Act, etc., in addition to the provisions in the IPC (Indian Penal Code). Government of India is taking steps to amend ITPA, to make stringent provisions for penalizing the offenders.

The law enforcement scenario, seen from the traditional view point, presents a dismal picture. The Action Research conducted by the National Human Rights Commission, during 2002 - 2004

shows that the major issues in the existing scenario of law enforcement are as follows:-

- Lack of priority: The law enforcement agencies and justice delivery agencies, for various reasons, give lowest or nil priority to HT issues.
- Insensitivity: Lack of sensitivity is a major challenge in response to human trafficking. It is more of an attitudinal issue.
- Victimization of the victim: More often trafficked women have been arrested and penalized as 'soliciting persons'. The NHRC study shows that around 85 to 90 per cent of the arrested persons are women and most of them are victims of trafficking.
- Improper investigation: Whereas a trafficking crime extends across a large canvas as the scene of crime, starting from the source point and extending to the transit places as well as the destination areas, the investigation is more or less confined to the place of rescue. Victims remain more often unheard and unrepresented.
- Organized crime perspective is lacking in investigation; Whereas a crime of HT involves several offenders like recruiters, transporters, traffickers, harbourers, exploiters, conspirators, abettors etc., more often investigation is limited to those persons available in the place of rescue. Human trafficking being an organized crime requires sharing of intelligence and in-depth investigation into all linkages, but this is rarely done.
- Database: One of the major drawbacks in law enforcement is the fact that there is no database of traffickers and other exploiters. There is no sharing of intelligence among the stake

holders and therefore, the offenders indeed act with impunity.

- Lack of synergy among the various departments of Government: The response to human trafficking requires coordination among various departments like police, welfare, health, women and child, etc. The gap is a major challenge in the response systems.
- Lack of coordination with, NGOs: The ITPA and Labour Laws do provide specific roles for NGOs. However, there is no institutionalized system of coordination between law enforcement agencies and NGOs. Both act independently and the synergy is only exceptional. There may be several conferences on this issue and more said. All said and done, more done than said is good. And that is what is needed too.
- Lack of Appreciation: There are several examples of good work done by police officers, researchers, NGOs, etc. in anti human trafficking. However, such actions do not get acknowledged and therefore are not disseminated. Often, good news is no news and bad news is good news.
- Lack of Emphasis on Rehabilitation: This is a major challenge which leads to not only victimization of victims but also re-trafficking of the rescued persons. Despite the fact that several corporates have large funds for their corporate social responsibility (CSR), yet lack of synergy with the law enforcement agencies and NGOs has been an impediment in effective dovetailing of such resources for rehabilitation of trafficked persons.

However, the emerging scenario is certainly positive and prospective. There are several initiatives across the country in addressing human trafficking from a comprehensive and effective manner. Some of these initiatives may be initiated by individuals who are committed to the cause, yet due to their initiatives, such steps are getting institutionalized. In fact, during the last six years of this century, there is a growing momentum against human trafficking. The reasons may be many. First of all credit should go to NGOs who have brought HT issues into the national agenda. Secondly, several law enforcement officials and human rights activists have provided leadership and proper orientation in achieving best results in anti human trafficking (AHT). The UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) has brought out a Compendium of Best Practices by Law Enforcement Agencies and another one by the NGOs. These documents showcase outstanding examples of the response by several stake holders in the country to issues of HT. In brief, some of the important responses are as follows:

- Increased awareness: There is a national momentum on AHT, involving the various stake holders, especially media, corporates, Government agencies including law enforcement wing, human rights agencies, business houses, celebrities, political personalities, etc. One of the excellent examples is seen in the global initiative in fighting human trafficking (GIFT), initiated by the UNODC. The GIFT Asia conference held in New Delhi during October, 2007, has been instrumental in creating tremendous public awareness and efforts by all concerned to bring AHT as 'everybody's business'.
- Synergy: The GIFT Asia

conference brought several stake holders together, all of whom committed themselves to the cause and dedicated themselves to work in synergy. It is a commitment that each one has to contribute their role in preventing and/or combating HT. Each one has a complementary role to play and all the stake holders together can have the best delivery, leading to reduction/prevention of HT.

- Holistic approach: Several agencies working together and attending to the issues of 'PPP' (Prevention, Protection and Prosecution), in a concerted manner has been one of the landmark features of the new response system. While Police undertakes rescue operations along with NGOs, other Government departments immediately move in to provide interim relief to the victims, the NGOs take over post-rescue care and attention in association with concerned Government agencies as well as corporates and business houses. Such harmony has been noticed in several places and therefore, the holistic approach is getting institutionalized.
- Synergy in action: The UNODC, New Delhi, in partnership with Government of India and State Government agencies as well as civil society partners has set up anti human trafficking units (AHTU) in several states. AHTU is special task force set up under the State Police, by involving selected police officials, NGOs and others who are specially trained for the purpose. UNODC has provided training and empowerment to these officials with focus on knowledge, skills, attitudinal orientation and required resources. Several

tools like handbooks, manuals, and protocols have been prepared in a user-friendly manner and provided to them. UNODC has also provided vehicles, cell phones, computer systems, and contingency funds to all these AHTUs. These units are making tremendous impact in the law enforcement scenario for example in a span of six months, the AHTUs in Andhra Pradesh have rescued more than 700 victims of which more than 100 are children under 18 years. They have also arrested more than 1000 offenders including 300 'customers'. Four traffickers have been convicted and 8 hotels where CSE was noticed have been closed down by the SDM (Sub-Divisional Magistrate) under Sec.18 of ITPA. The victims who are rescued are being promptly taken care of by the Government departments as well as NGOs, most of them having been rehabilitated with the help of corporates and business houses. Excellent examples of rehabilitation have been contributed through this synergy in action.

Anti Human Trafficking is an area which beckons all those who are concerned with human rights. There is much to do and something to be done by everybody. It is everybody's business. The question is whether one is part of the problem or whether one is part of solution. There is no third option. Therefore, all who are committed to human rights much join hands in this global initiative in fighting human trafficking. We can together ensure that Mona is safe in our home and community and that Mona lives with dignity, like all of us, and that so is the case with all Monas. □

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On Legalising Prostitution

Madhu Kishwar



***People are
considered respect
worthy if those
whom they serve or
work for hold their
contribution in high
esteem***

WITH THE likelihood of a new Bill to amend the Act being introduced in Parliament, we are witnessing the usual emotive debate on whether or not prostitution should be legalized. However, in the last decade and a half we have witnessed a major shift in the nature and in the content of debate on this issue both within India as well as worldwide.

Till the early 1990's defense of the right of prostitutes came mainly from feminist groups and those gender sensitive men who argued that laws penalizing prostitutes amounted to punishing the victims while letting of their male clients who exploited their poverty and vulnerability. Many of them demanded laws that punished men who trafficked in women as well as men who live off prostitutes as

pimps and those who visit them as clients.

In the writing of such campaigners as also in progressive films (e.g. *Sadhna*, *Pyasa* and *Chameli*) and literature (e.g. stories of Manto and Munshi Premchand) prostitutes were presented as women wronged by family and social circumstances, and therefore, deserved social sympathy rather than victimized by laws that treated them as criminals.

However, by the time our law-makers tried to catch up with this mindset and decided to amend the laws against prostitution to include punishment for clients, pimps and those who live off the income of prostitutes, the discourse on the subject as well as the ground reality have undergone sea-changes due to the following factors:

The scare of AIDS in the first world countries has led billions of

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dollars, pounds and euros as well as other resources being directed towards "safe sex practices", with special focus on condom use among sex workers. From Prince Charles to Bill Gates Foundation to Hollywood stars like Richard Gere as well as some western government and major donor agencies have all joined the campaign to legalize prostitution. Many of them are also helping them organize for their rights because they feel that is the only way condom use, regular health check ups including HIV tests can be promoted among sex workers and their children and customers.

Earlier sleazy lawyers helped sex workers get bail when arrested. Today, some of the best lawyers in India are devoting their energies towards HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and have emerged as defenders of the rights of prostitutes. They argue that the old fashioned approach to "rescuing" prostitutes through police raids on brothels or the strategy of police trapping sex workers who may not openly work in brothels through decoy customers is socially counter productive because it sends the whole trade underground and makes it impossible for government or NGO's to carry on with outreach programmes for controlling AIDS through "safe-sex" campaigns. They also argue that the "rescue-and-arrest" strategy is also morally and politically wrong because it denies

sex workers the right to make their own choices regarding the means and mode of earning their livelihood.

While some still stay with the old-fashioned view that sex workers are trapped in the profession due to poverty related circumstances, many argue that sex work should be treated like any other profession. They assure us that renting out one's body to a customer for a few hours is no different from a doctor, teacher or an architect renting out his intellectual skills to his or her employers for a monthly salary or to a client for a specific time bound service. Therefore, they demand that sex work should be legalized and treated with the same dignity and respect as any other profession. Many of them challenge the popular stereotype and hitherto avertable data which asserts that the vast majority of women (over 86%) end up in this profession through force or fraud, or are there out of sheer poverty and lack of viable options to earn a livelihood. Therefore, we are told to respect the choice of sex workers instead of treating them as objects of pity or disdain.

With moral and material support from national and international celebrities and educated middle class professional activists providing sex workers with platforms to air their views, in a few cities of India we find a new confidence and assertiveness among sex workers who say "we are there because we

prefer this lifestyle. Give us the right to openly practice our trade." They have together with high profile social activists and lawyers launched a campaign to oppose the proposed amendments to PITA laying down stringent punishments for clients of sex workers as well as those who traffic in them or work as pimps.

They have several valid arguments.

- By hitting out at their customers, the government is in effect hitting at the right of prostitutes to earn a livelihood.
- Also how can "customers" tell the difference between a "willing" prostitute and the one who has been trafficked or coerced into the profession. Moreover, once in the trade many accept it as the only viable choice. The law has in fact widened its net to include more people for punitive action rather than "liberalized" its approach towards this occupation. Apart from children below 18, many sex workers support aged parents, older siblings. This way they will all be targeted by the police.
- Arrests and rescue operations by the police are mostly a theatrical exercise to keep the terror alive so that the sex workers and pimps dare not resist paying bribes. In actual fact, almost all brothels and those who run the sex trade function under the "protection"

of or with the connivance the police who fleece the sex workers of a good part of their incomes. An arrest means essentially more bribes to the police and additional legal expenses for getting bail and hiring lawyers with cases dragging on for years without any conclusion. Police terror has not succeeded in curbing this trade. All it has meant is greater insecurity for the sex worker and greater corruption and vested interest of the police in sex trade. The more the sex trade flourishes, the more money the police make. Therefore, draconian laws put in the hands of the police add to the problem instead of curbing prostitution. The police-pimp nexus makes it much harder and more dangerous for those women who are being coerced into prostitution to try and escape from sex slavery.

However, those who demand that prostitution should be "legalized" and treated with "respect and dignity" at par with all other professions and occupations need to answer a few basic questions:

- What does the term "legalize" actually imply? Does it mean that a prostitute can open a brothel or sex parlour anywhere she likes and advertise her services? Does it mean men or women supplying call girls should be able to set up an office in any

neighborhood they like, just as doctors set up their clinics, and put up a hoarding outside the house proclaiming that call girls are available between such and such hours?

- Since sex trade inevitably comes with sex slavery and violent forms of pornography and sex trafficking it is essentially mixed up with criminal mafias even in those countries where it is legalized. If a brothel owner is free to set up shop in my neighborhood, does it not endanger my life? How many even among those who are empathetic towards the plight of prostitutes are willing to allow a brothel right next to their own house? How many of us are willing to let our young children grow up amidst an atmosphere where renting a woman's body for sex is considered a perfectly legitimate activity?
- If the vast majority of people in India do not want to have brothels functioning openly and legally in their neighborhoods, the only way to make provision for "legal" sex work is if sex workers agreed to operate in specially designated areas traditionally known as red-light districts. Sex workers can then seek individual licenses or licenses for registered brothels. But every sex worker does not want to leave in openly identified sex zones.
- Most women, especially those

who operate as high society call girls prefer to operate surreptitiously, especially those who want to wear the mask of respectability. Most men who run sex rackets, including trafficking of women would also not want to be openly known as pimps and procurers. How does the law handle such persons? If people come to know that a person of their neighborhood is using his premises to run a call-girl racket, do they have the right to seek its removal or demand that the call-girl centre be shifted to a red-light district after the trade is legalized? Or does it mean other citizens have to suffer the presence of such activities in the name of "respecting" the rights of sex workers to an occupation of their choice and thereby endanger their own lives?

- Those who demand that sex work be given the same "respect" as any other profession, need to explain whose duty it is to give or ensure "respect" for prostitutes and pimps who are their "helpmates"? Is the government expected to enact a law requiring people not to shun prostitutes, as for instance it did to ban the practice of untouchability? One can prove that one does not practice untouchability by freely intermixing and inter-dining with castes condemned as untouchables. How does one

prove one's "respect" for a prostitute? Do we have to send our children to brothels to intermix with the children of sex workers or do we hold special functions to socially honour the most successful among them?

- People are considered respect worthy if those whom they serve or work for hold their contribution in high esteem. For example, doctors as a group are held in esteem because society by common resolve respects those who work as healers. But doctors who turn exploitative or unethical cease to be respected. Policemen as a group may be respected in Australia or England but in India, the police force is feared and hated for their lawless behaviour and corruption even though individual police

officers are often respected for doing their job with integrity.

As far as prostitution is concerned, the world over and this occupation has been held in disdain simply because even those men who rent the services of prostitutes usually do not respect them. Most do not even respect themselves for procuring sex through money and generally do so on the sly. If prostitutes cannot win the respect of the clients they service, how can the rest of society be made to respect them?

- We are told that at least feminists have a duty to respect women for making this choice. If feminism is about respecting each and every choice women make, then why are we not willing to respect women who choose to worship at sati shrines or who choose a life of self

negation and slavery to the izzat and honour of their family? Why can't we "respect" the choice of women who abort female fetuses because they prefer being mothers of sons rather than daughters?

Let us not fool ourselves into thinking that most women are in the business of selling or renting their bodies out of free choice in the same way that architects or doctors provide their services for a fee. The overwhelming majority get sucked into sex work due to poverty related compulsions or abusive family circumstances. Even in those countries where sex work is legal prostitutes do not command social respect. These countries are also not free from dehumanizing forms of sex slavery. Therefore, copycat solutions will not work. □

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UJJAWALA

A new Central Scheme, Ujjawala - "Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation" - has been launched.

The scheme comprises of five components: -

1. **Prevention:** Consists of formation of community vigilance groups/adolescent groups, awareness generation and sensitization and

preparation of IEC material, holding workshops, etc.

2. **Rescue:** Safe withdrawal of the victim from the place of exploitation.
3. **Rehabilitation:** Includes providing protective and rehabilitative homes with basic amenities, medical care, legal aid, vocational training and income generation activities etc.
4. **Reintegration:** Includes restoring the victim into the family/community and the accompanying costs.

5. **Repatriation:** Provide support to cross-border victims for their safe repatriation to their country of origin.

Implementing agencies are Social Welfare/Women and Child Welfare Departments of State Government, Women's Development Corporations and Centres, reputed Trusts or Voluntary Organizations with adequate experience in the field of trafficking, social defence, dealing with women and children in need of care and protection etc. □

CALENDAR OF A NEW KIND

LATUR'S Kushwarta Bele, Haryana's Manik Devi and Orissa's Pratima Behra may not be your conventional pin-up girls, but are the faces on *Redefining Politics*-an annual calendar which has been created in their honour, thanks to the efforts of Aalochana, a Pune-based resource center.

Aalochana's calendar will feature 12 emerging women leaders from panchayati raj institutions, who are making a visible difference in grassroots politics.

Aimed at 'breaking stereotypes', the calendar has been conceptualized to demonstrate that rural women can surpass the barricades posed by illiteracy, poverty, gender and societal norms, if they have the will and the vision to look beyond, explained Medha Kotwal, a founder-member of Aalochana.

"The average village woman is still envisioned as a silent, passive personality, adhering to societal norms and wifely duties. In reality, the women's reservations have opened up a new world of opportunities for rural women nationwide, who are not just voters, but also leaders in active politics", she said.

Once the concept of the calendar was formalized, the onus of translating it

into reality fell on freelance writer-cum-photographer Vidya Kulkarni's shoulders. Kulkarni, who spent an intensive month traveling across the states in order to photograph the women, narrated the challenges she faced while capturing the achievers on camera.



Manik Devi, Sarpanch Narayanpur Village of Rewari district of Haryana finds place in the Calendar



Ratan Mala Vaidya, Sarpanch, Ganeshpur in Bhandara district of Maharashtra is also among those featured

including quotes, describing experiences that bring to life, the personalities of each of the women.

Aalochana, which was one of the organizations to be selected to be a part of the UNDP's capacity building programme for elected women representatives spread over 10 states, had worked in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. "Our work in Gadchiroli brought us into contact with women like Bele, a zilla parishad member and chairperson of Women and Child Development Committee from Latur, and Latifa Sheikh, sarpanch of Raimoha gram panchayat in Beed. The focus was also on women achievers from Haryana, Uttaranchal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, by networking with the welfare organizations in those areas that were selected by the UNDP as well" said Kotwal.

"Our motive has always been to document and disseminate, and a calendar was the unanimous choice to project the achievements of these women to the world," said Kotwal. "Throughout the year, the user of the calendar will get a glimpse of 12 inspiring break-throughs into politics, traditionally considered to be a male domain, by women" she added. □

Anti-Trafficking Interventions and Women's Human Rights

Ratna Kapur



The only way to fight trafficking is to empower the victim through rights

THE UNION Cabinet recently returned the proposed amendments to the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, back to Committee for further discussions, especially on the implications of the provisions that seek to criminalise clients who visit sex workers. The initial intention of the proposed reforms was to stem the tide of human trafficking. Yet in trying to achieve this result by directly targeting the rights of women in the sex industry, the proposals may result in further harming victims of trafficking rather than alleviating their situations.

The proposed amendments suffer from several serious limitations. They regard sex work as per se exploitative and enable the police to charge clients who bargain with sex workers for sexual services. Even if the client offers gifts or other consideration to the sex worker, he can be charged under the broad terms of the new law. By implication, sex workers would have to provide their services for free, in order to avoid the application of this provision. If

clients have sex with a trafficked woman, then the client is automatically deemed to be a trafficker. This provision renders all clients liable to be charged until it is established that the sex worker was not in fact trafficked. Given that there is no definition of trafficking in the law, it is impossible to know how this fact is to be established. The act also renders children and other members of a sex workers family liable to be removed from the premises, as well as to charge any members who are dependent on the earnings of a sex worker.

All of these provisions operate to undermine the life and work of the woman, as a parent, as a caregiver, as a provider and as a sex worker. The amendments effectively ban sex work by producing circumstances that will make it impossible for the woman to function. The impact of these new provisions is a far cry from the original intention of lawmakers to amend the law for the purpose of combating trafficking.

According to the UN Protocol on Trafficking, trafficking is a crime that takes places when a person is moved from one place to another

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against his or her will into a situation of exploitation. The protocol does not target sex workers or criminalise consensual sexual conduct. Its explicit purpose is to stop the exploitation of migrant labour coerced into moving by deceptive individuals and criminal networks. Its implicit purpose is to encourage states to adopt measures to ensure the safe legal passage of migrants. In the current context of the dubious 'war on terror', xenophobia and anti-immigration politics of many countries, the possibility of safe legal passage especially for low skilled or semi-skilled labour is limited. Instead, migrants are resorting to smugglers and traffickers to facilitate their movement. The closing down of legal routes merely encourages clandestine movement. It doesn't stop it.

The new amendments neither target trafficking nor do they protect women. Instead, the reforms are driven by a morally conservative and myopic vision. These include cast iron assumptions about Indian cultural values which suggest that sex per se is against Indian cultural values, judging by the recent deletion of sexually explicit imagery from school sex education material. By criminalising clients, the new law will drive prostitution and sex workers underground. As a result the women will be more vulnerable to abuse and more importantly, trafficking. Secondly, the government is putting a powerful weapon in the hands of the police, to extort money from both sex workers and clients who want to avoid charges. Thirdly, in the current climate of HIV/AIDS, driving prostitution underground will weaken if not altogether destroy established links between vulnerable communities and groups

providing information and support about the virus. India has the highest rate of HIV infections in the world, which is spreading most rapidly amongst married, heterosexual women. To enact legislation that will drive the virus further into the realm of illegality is not only an extraordinarily irresponsible act it is sentencing millions to a life of greater stigma, discrimination and violence. All of these consequences have been documented in the evaluation of the Swedish law that sought to eliminate trafficking by criminalising the clients of sex workers. While sex workers were pushed off the streets, prostitution did not stop. In fact, trafficking increased, women were denied any legal mechanisms for redress, and tracking HIV infections became virtually impossible.

The Sonagachi Sex Workers Project in Calcutta has been hailed as a model project for bringing down the rate of HIV infection and stopping child trafficking because of the active participation of the sex workers. Similar projects in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, which involve the sex workers and encourage aggressive condom promotion among female sex workers, have also resulted in reduced HIV infections. Such results highlight the need to intensify programmes that create an enabling environment for sex workers to negotiate for condom use and safe sex practices.

Unfortunately the proposed amendments are alienating the very community whose rights it is intended to protect. Their support is critical in fighting the battle against both trafficking as well as HIV/AIDS. The proposals however

will push millions of women into more vulnerable and exploitative situations, rather than uphold the rights of women to practice their livelihoods in safe and clean working environments. Rights cannot be made conditional upon sexual status, sexual knowledge, or cultural conduct.

The moral agenda that is driving these particular reforms are going to help nobody. They are simply going to keep the nation ignorant about the causes of trafficking, which is driven by poverty, demand and the closing of borders, as well as alienate the one community that can be an effective and powerful ally in the fight against HIV. In *Collateral Damage*, a recently released global report by the Global Alliance Against the Trafficking in Women, there is conclusive evidence that anti-trafficking interventions are resulting in human rights violations rather than alleviating the problem of trafficking and protecting women's rights to mobility. Instead of proceeding down this dangerous path, the government and NGOs should support the establishment of self-help groups that will monitor trafficking into sex work as well as assist communities to organize and manage their own health needs including HIV prevention and support. Most importantly, the government needs to enact a comprehensive migration policy, to enable workers to access their rights and legal services to fight any violence and abuse that they may experience from employers, clients or co-workers. The only way to fight trafficking is to empower the victim through rights, rather than empower the state through the strengthening of law enforcement. □

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Amendments to the ITPA

Bharathi Ghanashyam



The proposed amendments to ITPA do not address the issue of trafficking in a manner in which it would remove the focus from prostitution to other forms of trafficking as well

I AM proud that I am self sufficient. If I choose to sell my body to make a living, society has no right to question me. For a moment I want people to reflect on the role we play in society. Sexual urges are very powerful. What if a man who is either not married, or is away from his wife did not have access to a sex worker when he needs to fulfil those urges? Will women around him then not become vulnerable? Will there not be increased threat to their security? Are we not in denial when we think otherwise? Most of us in this profession are here not out of coercion, but rather out of compulsion. Instead of making it more and more difficult for us to work, the government should find ways to let us work without hindrance, or find alternate ways for each of us to earn a living." -R Pushpalatha, Field Operations Manager, Swathi Mahila Sangha, a Bangalore-based sex worker's collective organisation.

The Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India recently proposed amendments to the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 (ITPA). While no objectives have been formally spelt out for the proposed amendments there are reasons to believe that the changes have been proposed in response to concerns that the existing legal framework is inadequate to counter trafficking for sex work.

The proposed amendments however have been received with a degree of alarm by the sex worker community and civil society groups engaged in enabling better working conditions for sex workers. Rather than address trafficking, the amendments, if they come into force are expected to negatively impact the livelihoods of sex workers. They will also hinder on-going HIV prevention programmes among sex worker communities.

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There is a dichotomy evident in the Amendment Bill, which recommends deletion of Section 8, which penalises soliciting or seducing for sex, and insertion of Section 5C, which instead penalises those who buy sex. Sex workers, while welcoming the decision to remove penalties against soliciting, are questioning how they would survive if clients did not come to them out of a fear of being arrested. The Bill has now been referred to the Group of Ministers for examination.

Anand Grover, advocate and Director of the Lawyers' Collective points out that the move to punish clients is not in accordance with the existing legislative policy, as understood in the ITPA, which is to punish third parties who profit from prostitution and not criminalise prostitution per se. The proposed provision punishing clients of sex workers resembles the prostitution law of Sweden, where persons purchasing sexual services are punishable but not those selling sex. "This prohibitionist model has failed to protect sex workers, who are driven underground by clients, wanting to avoid the police. Sex workers are known to have experienced loss of control over their working conditions, and as a result, have become vulnerable to violence, exploitation by pimps and STI and HIV infection", adds Tripti Tandon of the Lawyers' Collective HIV/AIDS Unit.

The negative impact that the proposed Clause 5C will have on the HIV prevention programme is expected to be huge. Pushpalatha says, "We are sure that if Clause 5C comes into force, it will lead to lesser clients coming to us owing

to fear of arrest. In a situation of reduced demand, it will become harder to enforce condom usage on the meagre clientele we would have. It does not take much imagination to see that unsafe sex leads to greater vulnerability to HIV." If the sex trade goes underground, it would also lead to a difficult and dangerous situation where extension workers cannot reach sex workers and their clients to promote use of condoms and enable access to treatment for STIs.

Understanding attitudes

The sex trade as a profession has thrived down the centuries across the world and India is no exception. People want it but condemn it, use it but damn it, need it but pretend otherwise. It cannot be wished away, has existed since humankind has been present on earth and will continue to exist in some form or other. Then why this conflict about whether it is legal or illegal, right or wrong, moral or immoral?

It is a well accepted fact that sex work provides livelihoods to thousands of women who otherwise would have been bereft of any source of income, given the low levels of literacy and income generating skills in women in India, particularly in rural areas.

To quote an excerpt from a paper entitled ITPA Amendments: An evidence-based approach, authored by Shyamala Nataraj, Sarvojana, Delhi, Nov 5, 2007, "... harassment, abuse and violence by police and by rowdies, were the main problems faced by the women; and that poverty, sexual abuse and desertion

by husbands were the reasons they had entered prostitution. We also understood that despite the many problems they faced, most women preferred to continue selling sex once they had started on that course, for two reasons:

1. They had no skills to work in the organized sector, and this paid more than other forms of daily wage labour, and allowed them to support their family. In many cases women sold sex to supplement income from other sources;
2. The stigma associated with prostitution was so high that even if they found alternate employment, the moment employers discovered their past association, they were either dismissed, or were expected to provide sexual favours--both no-win situations.

An important aspect to this situation was the fact that a large percentage of the women were in sex work with the knowledge of their families. A survey conducted by the National Commission for Women in 1997 among 200 women in Tamil Nadu found that:

- 50% had run away from home after sexual abuse within the family;
- 60% were prostituting with the knowledge of their family;
- 40% completed secondary education, but started selling sex due to lack of other job opportunities;
- 50% started selling sex after desertion by husbands;
- 63.3% sold sex in addition to other work (food sellers, flower sellers, agricultural labourers, and housemaids).

The survey also found that most women had dependent children; were from relatively poor families in rural areas; and were responsible for maintaining parental and marital families. A very high proportion of the women were from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled tribes, and Backward Castes.

What the law says

The legal regime on sex work is laid down under ITPA, which does not proscribe sex work per se but penalises specific activities related to commercial sex. In May 2006, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) introduced the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2006 in Parliament.

By introducing Clause 5C it is proposed to penalise, for the first time, persons who pay or offer to pay for sex. The amendments have been proposed with the well-meaning intention of curbing trafficking of women based on a premise that all women who engage in sex work are trafficked, and are forced into the sex trade. Reality, as the above studies demonstrate is that a large percentage among them has not been forced into the trade.

Testimonies from sex workers actually point to a different reality. As Pushpalatha says, "Very few of us have been trafficked and forced into sex work. The rest are here out of their own free will."

Given the situation it becomes necessary to provide a legal environment that can give the sex trade an unambiguous professional

identity. It is important to give the individual woman in sex work an opportunity to claim her fundamental rights to freedom, dignity, and livelihood as guaranteed to all Indian citizens.

The proposed Amendments address only trafficking associated with prostitution. It must be understood that human trafficking exists in various other forms. There cannot be change unless there is clarity on who is trafficked, who perpetrates force and where the blame must lie. This would probably call for a complete revamping of the Act, or an entirely new one. Merely effecting changes to existing clauses without studying the problem will amount to cosmetic changes, or worse, impact the livelihoods of sex workers negatively while the real problems continue to fester. Trafficking, while it might have linkages to prostitution, is an issue that must be addressed in a much more holistic manner.

The current deliberations provide an opportunity to initiate debate the larger issue of trafficking, of which trafficking for sex work is one part. Internationally too, there is growing realization of the problem and its ramifications. This has led to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime 2000 with a wider and more inclusive definition of trafficking.

It covers not only trafficking in human beings confined to sexual

exploitation but also children trafficked to serve as domestic servants or as labour in hazardous industries.

Article 3A of the Protocol clearly defines trafficking as "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

In view of the above definition, it is probably more relevant to look at sex work as a part of trafficking and not the other way round, and formulate laws accordingly. India became a signatory to the Protocol in the year 2002. This in itself implies that India has accepted to implement the provisions of the Convention. However, the proposed amendments to ITPA do not address the issue of trafficking in a manner in which it would remove the focus from prostitution to other forms of trafficking as well. And this is something to reflect seriously on. □

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Unveiled Travelogue



THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY of a Sex Worker' by Nalini Jameela is not a mere narration of her encounter with clients.

In her autobiography, she portrays her struggle and the various phases of her life which she had gone through on her own terms. In her book Nalini Jameela seems to be so keen on unveiling the mask of hypocrisy in our society by depicting her varied experience. Yes, Nalini has become the voice of her community. Her book has become a best seller when it was first published in Malayalam.

Nalini Jameela, worked as a child in the clay mines. To say Jameela is a sex worker is to limit her, she has been a wife, mother, successful business woman, a documentary film maker and social activist as well as a sex worker -at different stages of her life. Her book is her search for dignity, empowerment and freedom on her own terms, for the cause of her community, she represents.

In an exclusive interview to Yojana, an outspoken Nalini Jameela gives a candid account of

her community and the real picture of the society which we belong to. She spoke in Malyalam to Lemi G Nair, Editor, Yojana in Trivandrum. Lemi has translated the version.

Has the book changed your life?

Nalini Jameela Yes, it has changed my life a lot in important



Nalini Jameela at Yojana Malayalam office in Trivandrum during her interview

ways. Being in this profession, people will not accept me as a writer. When my book was published, I had to face different kinds of reactions from the public. Many said that I had the courage to open up my mind. It has allowed not only me but also others to bring out what they need and what can be done for them. In concrete terms, there is a clear difference in the way, the police especially, used to deal with me. They are more respectful.

How did you enter into human trafficking?

NJ After my husband's death, the poor economic conditions of my family forced me to take up this profession. In those days, my daily income from the local claimant was only two-and-half rupees and it was not sufficient to care for my children and other family members including mother-in-law.

You have made a significant revision of the original "Njan laingika thozhilali". Why did it happen?

NJ I wrote my autobiography to show that, we, deserve a better place in the society. I have raised my voice for the entire community. When a social activist asked me to write a book, it was difficult for me to write. One social activist approached me and told me that he would assist me in writing my story. Spending hours together, he started noting down what I told him. To my surprise we could complete the book within a year. When the book came out many thought that neither me nor my book was true. They thought that this was a fiction and I was not a real person. Because of this controversy I decided to rewrite my book.

You know the style of my first book was not according to my taste. Then I felt a person who wrote the book on my behalf 'created' me. I felt that I am like a puppet who dances to others' tunes!

Therefore I decided to rewrite my book to express in my own style and thus the second version of the book got published.

Do you still work as a sex worker or the royalty from your book is enough to meet your family needs?

NJ Yes, I am still a sex worker. It is true that I got a royalty of Rs 1.5 lakh from my book. And you know my book has already got translated into five more Indian languages like Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi. I am expecting a royalty of rupees eight lakhs from all the Indian editions as well as from the English edition. As I told you, since I had to spend a lot for the marriage and other social expenditure, I could spend the royalty to clear my debts. Being a standalone machine, I will have to earn my livelihood on my own. Still I continue in this field.

From your experience , what do you expect from Govt. and NGOs to give sex workers social security, healthcare, education etc.?

NJ Well, Govt. can assure social security, healthcare, education etc. to sex workers provided they really want it. As we think sex work is not a permanent job. Age, health, pressure from family, children's future all are parameters which determine whether a person should continue with her trade or not. It is not that once a sex worker, always a sex worker. At this point, on what criteria Govt. and NGOs can render help to rehabilitate the sex workers. Moreover, in our social set up how many sex workers will come forward to seek help from Govt. or NGOs? Won't they think that the society will

impose a social stigma when their identity is disclosed? So it is not an easy thing to rehabilitate all sex workers. Like earlier times, we don't enjoy the social status of Devadasis. We are just treated as public properties with social stigma. You know our job is not done in public. Just like identifying the BPL families, no Govt. mechanism can identify the men and women who are engaged in this trade. But I can say that Govt. and NGOs can help those who really want to quit this job. The question before the Govt. and NGOs is, how to identify the people who are actively engaged in this trade, if they really want to get them rehabilitated.

Is the book getting translated in foreign languages also?

NJ Yes, I am really happy that my book has come out in English, a language that I don't know. And you know I am thrilled like anything, don't even have words to express my happiness. Now discussions are going on to get it published in French as well.

What is your opinion about sex education in schools?

NJ Well, I feel that denial of sex education is the violation of the students' right to information, education and health. The youth need comprehensive sex education so that they are empowered to make informed decisions.

In your book your experience of mothering is really moving? How did you manage to raise your child, while you being actively involved in this profession?

NJ You know, we often hear women who do not have ample time to spend with their children just because of their profession. I disagree with these women. It is like saying that one can do only one thing at a time. When meal is served, would you say that you can have only the rice and not the curries along side? See, motherhood is the

sweetest divine bliss, which gives a woman strength and courage to overcome all the hurdles in front of her. So is the case of a sex worker turned mother. We too can experience it with all our hopes and aspirations of a gifted mother.

Don't you think, your profession is a social evil?

NJ No, never. If you see the daily newspapers, we can go through inhuman stories like sex rackets, gang rapes etc. Here in Kerala, rapes and child abuse are common even within the family. If this kind of unnatural and brutal things can happen within the family, we can't treat this as a social evil.

Could you please comment on your visits to Thailand?

NJ With the help of social activists I could visit Thailand thrice. In 2003, I went to Thailand to screen my first documentary. I can say that Thailand is worst.

What is the message you tried to convey through your documentary?

NJ Well, my documentary was on 'a day of a sex worker'; that is with the police, goondas, waiting place for clients, night shelter etc. Its duration is only eight minutes and it is just like a short film. Here the difference is that I engaged people to act in my film. The film depicts the torture and harassment's faced by sex workers from all sections of our society, including the clients.

Nalini, with a hopeful smile on her face did not forget to disclose Yojana her strong desire. "I have plans to write again and again; 'My Autobiography, Part-II'. "I will keep on telling you the story of my life", she said. As her lyrical voice tapers off, you are convinced that there is a lot more to her than the tag she carries. □

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Community Policing

P M Nair



***AHTU is a
synonym for action,
where the synergy of
all stakeholders
working on a
common cause is
delivering its best***

UNITED NATIONS Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Regional Office for South Asia, in partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, is "Strengthening Law Enforcement Response to Human Trafficking". One of the mandates of this project is to set up integrated Anti - Human Trafficking Units (AHTU), so as to create an effective partnership among several stakeholders engaged in providing responses to human trafficking in India. The fact that the response to human trafficking requires synergy of several stakeholders, has been recognized in the South Asian context and since long.

Too much has been spoken and written about it and yet most of the response agencies and stakeholders were independently functioning, many times duplicating efforts and, at times, even being counterproductive. Combined

initiatives started at certain places remained ad-hoc, for want of metamorphosing it into institutionalized practices. This void has been addressed by the AHTU, a classic case of transformation from rhetoric to reality. This article discusses the structure and working of AHTU, the philosophy of its functioning and brings home the point of AHTU as a 'good practice model' of community policing and the best mechanism of addressing human trafficking in the given context.

Twenty-second January 2007 marked a watershed in the response to human trafficking in India. A small step, yet a new beginning, turned out to be a great leap and indeed a revolutionary initiative. This was the launch of the first Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) in India in Andhra Pradesh (AP). Three Units were set up in Hyderabad, Anantapur and Eluru. As the second state in India to join this process, the AHTU of Goa was

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established in March 2007. In June 2007, West Bengal became the third State.

The configuration of AHTU is quite simple. It has a vehicle (presently TATA Vectra), computer systems, cell phones and other communication systems, resource materials in the form of law books, compilation of Court rulings, investigation kit with forensic equipments, Tools and SOP (Standard Operating Protocols) on the various activities, MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) among the agencies concerned, registers to maintain records and contingency funds to meet with the day to day requirements.

AHTU believes in the combined strength and optimum utilization of the human resources that constitute AHTU. Therefore the emphasis is on less numbers but greater potential of each one of them. AHTU has personnel just enough to meet the operational and administrative requirements, but are fully trained, sensitized and oriented. The major players are the police officials notified under the relevant law (Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956), supporting officials (in adequate number and depending on the need) and NGO representatives. AHTU has representation of female police officials depending on availability. Effort is to have the female representation of at least 30% of the strength. The AHTU has also the support of officials of other departments of Government, like Welfare, Health Development, etc., whose services would be called upon during times of need. They render referral services. AHTU maintains a directory of persons and agencies who can be contacted for support and

assistance, when needed. This includes the list of Homes run by Government and NGOs as well as a list of Specialists like psycho-social counsellors, legal counsellors, etc.

The Article 23 of the Constitution of India mandates prohibition of human trafficking. Besides this and other provisions of the Constitution, the various substantive and procedural laws provide police officials with the mandate and strength to undertake activities relating to prevention of crimes, prosecution of offenders and protection of the victims of crimes of trafficking. The special legislation to address sex trafficking, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 (as amended in 1986) provides wide ranging powers to special police officers and other police officers working on their behalf for conducting searches, rescue of victims, arrest of offenders etc (Refer Sections 15, 16 ITPA).

The existing Indian legal regime on anti-human trafficking is unique in providing the civil society partners with legal support. For e.g. Section. 43 Cr. PC empowers any private person (NGO included) to arrest any offender including a trafficker. The ITPA, vide Section 13 (3) (b), envisages the setting up of an advisory body, consisting of NGOs, including women, numbering up to five persons, to advise the special police officer on the working of the ITPA. As per section 16 ITPA, NGOs are authorized to go directly to the Magistrate, including Executive Magistrate, and obtain orders for rescue of any trafficked person. Section 17 (5) ITPA gives

the Magistrate powers to summon a panel of five civilians (NGOs), three of whom wherever practicable, shall be women, to assist him in matters pertaining to the intermediate custody of rescued persons. Under Section 17A ITPA, before ordering return of the rescued person to her natural residence, the Magistrate has to get 'Home Verification and investigation' carried out by a recognized welfare institution or NGO and convince oneself about the capacity or genuineness of the parents, guardian or husband. Thus, ITPA envisages wide-ranging involvement of NGOs in the implementation of the Act. Furthermore, ITPA is a veritable feast of legal powers ascribed not only to police and judiciary, but also Executive Magistrate, other government departments and even NGOs, which is perhaps unparalleled in the world, thereby ensuring a comprehensive and multiple stakeholder response with a rights- based approach towards victims of trafficking. This legal vision and mandate has been aptly captured and implemented in the AHTU.

The officer incharge of AHTU is a police officer usually of the rank of Dy.SP (Deputy Superintendent of Police), who has been notified by the state government as a Special Police Officer (SPO). He/ She will be in command and control of the functioning of AHTU. As a dedicated and specialized task force, mandated to attend to the problem in its entirety, the functions of AHTU include the following:-

- Undertaking all activities in preventing and combating human trafficking,

- Protection and rehabilitation of victims, which includes care and attention to victims during rescue and post-rescue situations, providing referral services (like that of counsellor), providing empowerment programmes and such other support services, undertaking steps for restoration / repatriation of the traffic persons, preparing the victims for the various challenges in the process of justice delivery etc.
- Expeditious and professional investigation of crimes and effective prosecution of offenders.
- Working with all concerned stake holders in the field to prevent human trafficking.
- Taking all steps in ensuring prevention of re-trafficking of the rescued persons,
- Maintaining a database of all offenders and suspected offenders,

Collecting, collating, analyzing, utilizing and disseminating intelligence with all concerned (police officers, Govt. officials, NGOs, etc. at different places).

- Networking with the police officials at other places. Trafficking of human beings, being a borderless crime, requires simultaneous activities at the source-transit-demand areas. Therefore, the police agencies at these places have to be necessarily working together. The AHTU maintains the list of police nodal officers (PNO) and the government nodal officers (GNO) of all states, including their contact numbers, addresses,

e-mails, etc. The officer-incharge of AHTU is responsible for liaising with the appropriate officials at the appropriate time.

- Networking with other Department: The AHTU maintains proper liaison with the officials of other departments like Healthcare, Correctional Administration, Welfare, etc. A list of such officers with the required coordinates is maintained by the AHTU. It is preferred that the concerned official of the welfare department is notified in the AHTU. For e.g. in AP the official incharge of the District Women Development Agency has been made part of AHTU. This synergy is essential as it is of tremendous help to the victims, especially in the post-rescue rehabilitative process.
- Networking with the NGOs: This is a fundamental mandate of AHTU, as the synergy of police and NGOs constitutes the core of AHTU. It is for the police to select the appropriate NGOs and associate them. The parameters include:
 - NGOs with experience in AHT be preferred.
 - NGOs with integrity and reputation be associated.

- NGOs with networking (with all other stakeholders, including other NGOs) can deliver a lot.
- NGOs associated with police training be preferred.
- Developing MOU: It would be appropriate to develop an MOU among the various stakeholders, fine-tune the same by discussions and thereupon formalize the role and function of each agency.

Achievements: The major achievements of AHTU in the nine months of its existence in 2007 can be summarized as 'synergy in action' or as 'synergy of stakeholders in delivering the best in anti-human trafficking'. The box shows the output in the anti-human trafficking activities in five states (where UNODC project is functional), most of these achievements having been contributed by the AHTUs. A social audit of the impact of AHTU has brought out remarkable achievements, some of which are listed below:

- The number of persons rescued has gone up drastically in comparison to previous years.
- The number and percentage of children among those rescued has gone up.
- The number of arrested traffickers has shown high increase.

Achievements of anti-human trafficking activities in five States (Jan. - Sep. 2007)	
- Trafficking crimes registered: 466	- Rescue Operations: 96
- NGOs associated in operations: 90%	- Victims rescued: 716
- Minors rescued: 108	- Traffickers arrested: 1020
- 'Customers' arrested: 332	- Traffickers convicted: 2
- Places of exploitation closed: AP-8 and Goa-1	
- Crimes prevented: numerous, though the numbers cannot be counted	
- Post rescue care and attention provided to rescued persons: 100%	

- 'Customers' are being arrested in large numbers, thereby making an impact on containing 'demand'.
- The number of crimes of human trafficking, registered with the police has gone up steadily.
- Crimes are being registered by the police officers on their own statement. This shows proactivity. Even if no complainant is forthcoming, police officials are going ahead with the required action, by collecting intelligence.
- NGOs provide intelligence to police. Several crimes were registered on such 'source information'.
- The response time has improved tremendously. Information and intelligence received in AHTU is acted upon promptly.
- Victims are being treated as 'victims' and not as 'offenders'. There is a paradigm shift from the situation prevailing earlier, wherein rescued victims were being arrested as 'soliciting persons'.
- The offenders are kept segregated from the victims and thereby the latter are protected from intimidation by the former.
- The 'welfare approach' which was in existence earlier has given way to 'human rights approach'. The response methods have become human rights oriented.
- NGOs are being involved in the entire process of anti-human trafficking from the beginning till the end, i.e. planning rescue operation to completion of activities.
- Presence of NGOs is giving strength not only to the victims but also to the police.
- Specialized services of NGOs are being made available to the victims at the required time. For e.g. psycho-social counseling is provided after rescue.
- Rescued children are given special care by the AHTU members, as they have been sensitized to the issues of child rights.
- The rescued victims feel more comfortable working with police thanks to the changed attitudinal orientation of the police official. Victimization of victims has become a thing of the past.
- Victims feel comfortable in speaking out the facts of the case and even coming out with the names of other trafficked victims as well as the offenders and suspected persons.
- Police officials feel 'more comfortable' in dealing with victims and in taking care of them. It was a major challenge to communicate with the traumatized victims. The professional training on women's rights and child rights has empowered them to understand the victims in the right spirit and to communicate with ease. The comfort level of police vis-à-vis victims have improved tremendously.
- The intelligence provided by the rescued persons leads to further rescue operations at different places. For e.g. the intelligence disclosed by a victim rescued in Guntur District of AP led to several rescues one after another and the entire chain resulted in rescue of a total of 27 victims. This shows sustained and prompt action by AHTU as well as the support the police is getting from the rescued persons.
- Female victims, after rescue, are accompanied by a female police officer or a female NGO during all post-rescue activities.
- The care and support extended to the victims has given them confidence to depose against the traffickers in the Court of law and this has resulted in the conviction of offenders. The process of providing care and support to the victims in this process includes the following :
 - Carrying out 'mock trial', to facilitate the victim to understand the proceedings and processes in the Court.
 - Providing 'child-minders' to child victims has facilitated in enhancing their confidence.
 - Providing women counselors to women victims has enhanced their confidence and morale.
 - Invoking the provisions of 'in-camera trial', has been of great help to the victims especially children and women.
 - Public involvement in police working has improved tremendously. From a state of almost nil cooperation, even on demand by the police, the transformation has led to a state of full and voluntary cooperation. Several operations were facilitated and triggered by the intelligence provided by anonymous callers or letters from public. A symphony has set in.

Community Policing

The essential feature of community policing is the involvement of civilians in policing and synergy between police and civilians in preventing and combating crimes. Consultation with the community, involving the community in planning and operation are essential features in community policing. In fact, community policing is a philosophy based on the paradigm of solving

problems in synergy at the local level itself, wherein the police facilitate a community in accepting and sharing responsibility. Since decision making is done at the local level, community policing is aimed at a 'top-down approach'.

The AHTU, in its structure and function is indeed community policing. The NGOs forming part of the AHTU are functioning at the 'grass-roots'. They are not only assisting and supporting police but are also part of the decision making process. The NGOs are not just witnesses to the police activities or simply care providers to the victims, but are also calling the shots in the entire functioning of AHTU. This does not mean that the police has abandoned or abdicated their responsibility or duty. On the other hand the synergy has enhanced their responsibility and accountability, especially because they are under constant scrutiny.

Social audit is an essential feature of AHTU, as that of community police. The partnership of the police with the NGOs has made them more accountable. The performance and delivery has become more transparent.

The partnership of civil society and police in the AHTU has made them more open and visible. Checks and balances upon each other - police and NGOs - has indeed improved the functioning of both.

Acceptability of police by the civil society is a hallmark of AHTU. The usual distrust and animosity has been substituted with camaraderie, mutual trust, enhanced credibility and acceptability. Points of dispute do arise, but are discussed, debated and appropriate decision taken with mutual consent.

Constant improvement in the functioning is another notable feature of AHTU. The continuous interaction and social audit being undertaken by the police and NGOs of their activities, coupled with the assessment of the impact that the AHTU makes, has enhanced the quality of functioning of the police on AHT. Infact, positive criticism is facilitated, promoted and acted upon by all stakeholders in the AHTU.

Though AHTUs have been set up at different places and have independent jurisdictions; combined and regular evaluation of their performance being undertaken on a platform provided by the UNODC, has indeed created a positive spirit of competition among the AHTUs and this has facilitated in better functioning.

Protecting and ensuring victims "best interest" has been the sumum bonum of AHTU. Community policing is also focused on the best interest of the victims. In AHTU, decision making regarding the victim is based on consultation and informed consent of the victim. For example, the decision whether to send the victim back to the same house or not is decided depending on whether it is advisable to undertake the same. The advisability is decided by taking into all the parameters at the home front and consulting the victims on these aspects. Therefore, AHTU is a model of victim-oriented community policing.

The functioning of AHTU cannot be understated or underestimated as being concerned only with the issues of trafficking crimes. The professional training

and empowerment provided to the responders in addressing human trafficking - both preventing and combating - has made concomitant change and improvement in response to other activities of public administration and public service. The overall response to issues of women and children has made phenomenal improvement, thanks to the attitudinal orientation. There is a paradigm shift towards a human rights approach. Emphasis is on prevention through cure.

Infact, AHTU is symbol of institutionalization of the appropriate response systems to the issues of human trafficking. The integration of the functioning the various stakeholders, synergy in their functioning, complementary role in action and providing support structures and sustaining these activities through written and sometimes even unwritten MOU, have together contributed to the institutionalization of the response mechanism of preventing and combating human trafficking. The AHTU is therefore, a symbol of community policing and institutionalized mechanism against human trafficking. It is a vehicle of social change and change towards better governance. It is a hallmark of professionalism in addressing human trafficking as a major issue of serious human rights violations. Above all, AHTU is a synonym for action, where the synergy of all stakeholders working on a common cause is delivering its best. No doubt, an ideal model which can be replicated by the states in the police modernization programmes. □

(Email: pmnair@unodc.org)

Sex work is No Crime

*Bishaka Datta
Siddharth Dube*

FOR THE last year and a half, sex workers' organisations from Kolkata to Kerala have been protesting the proposed amendments to the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), 1956, which will leave them worse off than they already are. But who's listening?

On March 8, 2006, even before the amendments had been introduced in Parliament, more than 4,000 sex workers marched the streets of Delhi to draw political and public attention to the fact the amendments would deny them their already meagre livelihoods. Two months later, the department of women and child development introduced exactly the same set of amendments in Parliament.

What are these amendments and why are sex workers against them? To begin with, all customers and clients would be treated as criminals. This may satisfy those who see making money from sex as a crime or a form of coercion. And it will help put more hush

money in the hands of conniving cops. But it makes little or no sense to sex workers or to those who recognise adult sex work as commerce rather than coercion, consensual rather than criminal.

At a conceptual level, the issue is this way should any consensual sexual activity between adults-heterosexual, same sex, in exchange for money, within marriage or outside of it-be viewed within a criminal framework at all? The keywords here are consent and adult'. If these two conditions are met, there is no crime being committed. Unfortunately, that is not the view of prevailing wisdom.

As ITPA stands today, prostitution is not a crime per se. The law regulating it is ambiguous. When introduced in 1956 as SITA (the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act), lawmakers did not want to penalise women engaging in prostitution, whom they saw as victims. Instead, they decided to punish those who profited from or exploited these women. Hence,

prostitution did not get defined as a crime. But many conditions surrounding it got defined as crimes soliciting, running a brothel and pimping. This legal framework was retained when the SITA was amended into the current ITPA in 1986.

From the point of view of women in prostitution, it makes no sense to not be able to solicit. It's like not being able to advertise your business. Studies have shown that despite the noble intentions of Indian lawmakers, the implementers of the very same law-the police-have used every means possible to harass sex workers on charges of soliciting and enrich themselves by taking petty bribes in lieu of dropping criminal charges. Jean D' Cunha's study in Mumbai between 1980 and 1987 clearly showed that the worst victims of ITPA were prostitutes. The number of women rounded up for soliciting under the Bombay Police Act and ITPA far exceeded the numbers of brothel keepers or pimps arrested under the same laws.

The authors have written books on issues concerning sex work.

Even today, sex workers all over India are routinely arrested even when not soliciting. AIDS activists and peer educators are harassed by police while distributing condoms and educating sex workers about HIV prevention. The proposed ITPA amendments would lift the ban on soliciting. This is a welcome move. But what is the point of removing penalties against soliciting, if the police can continue to harass sex workers under the provision that criminalises clients?

The proposed amendments only replace one set of ambiguities with another.

It there is one thing that the proposed amendments to the ITPA reflect, it is confusion. Trafficking is confused with prostitution, the result being the legislative framework does justice to neither. Although those who advocate the abolition of prostitution have always insisted that trafficking and

prostitution are one and the same, the experiences of prostitutes show that they are not. Sure, trafficking and prostitution are linked but while some areas might overlap large areas do not. It is true that girls and women in India are tricked, forced and sold into prostitution, just as they are trafficked for domestic work and coerced into marriage against their will. But large numbers of Indian women don't become prostitutes only through trafficking. Usually, many enter the trade to earn a living in the absence of other opportunities for employment, a result of being socially, economically and politically disadvantaged.

Both ITPA and the proposed amendments reflect a fundamental confusion about the role of law. What is the role of criminal law in contemporary society? Is it to regulate crime? Or is it to regulate public morality?

How does law constitute itself or get made in a democratic society? It does not get made from above, by the ruling class who decide how the masses should be regulated. It is a result of processes that hear the voices of and account for the concerns of those who are most affected by the laws being made.

For more than a year now, women in prostitution and sex workers' rights groups have actively lobbied members of the parliamentary standing committee set up to consider the matter. Earlier this year, the proposed amendments were referred back to the health ministry. Only recently, in a landmark decision, the ministry recommended that the amendment to criminalise clients and sex work be dropped. It's high time we listened to sex workers before actively destroying their livelihoods.

(Courtesy : The Times of India)

HARASSED, SEX WORKERS TO SET UP CO-OP BANK

The sex workers of Ahmednagar are meeting for a novel purpose—they want to set up their own credit society. Tired of being humiliated by banks and exploited by money lenders, these women have decided to put their savings into a cooperative that they will themselves administer.

“No bank grants us loans and private money lenders charge us huge interest. When we try to save in form of gold, it is snatched or stolen. Even for medical treatment we have to go to money lenders”, says Sunita, who is HIV positive and has lost her vision,” “In the

prime of my life I never realized the importance of saving. But now I am penniless,” she adds, tears rolling down her cheeks.

The sex workers are being organised by local NGO Snehalaya. “Already 300 women have agreed to pay Rs 500 to become shareholders and we are confident of raising capital worth Rs 1.50 lakh in the next few days,” says Girish Kulkarni of the NGO.

A group of 14 women from the city recently visited Kolkata to study the co-operative society established by the Kolkata sex workers. In any case, running a

co-operative is something the 2,500 sex workers in Ahmednagar are quite good at. “We are successfully running six small saving groups (SSGs) since 2002 and have developed a sense of responsibility”, says Meena.

The women have approached the deputy district registrar of Ahmednagar and state co-operative minister Patangrao Kadam to ask him to amend the rules to facilitate their effort. As per the State Co-operative Act, a minimum capital of Rs 10 lakh and 4,000 members are pre-conditions for establishing a society.

(Courtesy : The Times of India)

Prajwala - a Hope for the Underprivileged

V Balakrishna

BHAVANI was born in a poor family in Pileru village, Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh. At the age of 12 on the assurance of her close relative she was married to Amar who worked in Delhi. "Even though I was young I felt very happy to get married as they gave my parents lot of money and took care of the marriage expenses" says Bhavani. On reaching New Delhi, Amar asked Bhavani to stay with her 'close relative' till he made arrangements for family accommodation. That relative's house turned out to be a brothel on G B Road, the red light area in New Delhi. She then came to know that she had been sold for a sum of Rs 45,000/-. Bhavani today at the age of 17, she is rescued and is "HIV positive." Hundreds of thousands of young adults and children are traded for flesh in the guise of jobs, marriage, film roles, modelling and love, mostly by known persons.

When 'Mehboob ki Mehendi' one of the oldest red light areas of Hyderabad city was evacuated in 1996, thousands of women in prostitution were suddenly uprooted and displaced. The plea of the scattered mothers for a

respectful future for their children made Bro. Jose Vetticatil and Dr. Sunitha Krishnan, two visionaries to come together and initiate an intervention 'Prajwala' for second generation prevention.

Prajwala emerged as an anti-trafficking organization, which believes in preventing women and children from entering prostitution, the worst form of sexual slavery. The Organization is actively involved in second-generation prevention, rescue, rehabilitation, restoration and social reintegration of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. Efforts are made to explore both employment and self employment alternatives for the survivors.

The role of police in combating the crime of trafficking cannot be undermined. Through UNODC support the Andhra Pradesh Police Department has established Anti Human Trafficking Unit comprising of specially trained police officers and civil society partners to rescue victims of sex trafficking. Prajwala as the nodal agency in the AHTU, collaborates with the state police on all aspects of rescue and post rescue operations.

When a girl expresses to be

reunited with her family, a home investigation is taken up with the support of a local partner. If the investigation reveals that the family is not a safe place, then the girl is counselled to stay back in the organization. If the home investigation reports are positive then with counselling the girl is reunited with her family.

A team of 200 committed staff manages all Prajwala interventions, 70% of whom are survivors, which is a unique feature. The rest are committed professionals from different walks of life including MBAs and MSWs.

"When we get the girls, they cry a lot. I ask why, and I tell them my own story, that this is what happened to me and I don't want the same to happen to you" says Nalini, the Peer Counsellor who was rescued a few years back.

"I will close down Prajwala the day society stops treating women and children as objects of exploitation" says Dr. Sunitha, Founder member of the Organization. Let us hope 'Prajwala' succeeds in its endeavour. □

(Email: bkyojana@yahoo.co.in)

The author is Editor, Yojana (Telugu), Hyderabad.

Treating the Malaise



Interviewee: Gary Lewis

South Asia is a high-volume source, transit and destination region for trafficked persons. The United Nations office of Drug and Crime in New Delhi is carrying forward the global initiative to fight human trafficking in South Asia. The India Representative of the UNODC Mr Gary Lewis in an exclusive interview to Anurag Misra, Chief Editor Yojana discusses wide ranging issues on Human Trafficking.

Despite the constitutional provisions, special laws like Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA) and many sections of the Indian Penal Code, prostitution, trafficking and other forms of exploitation of children and women continue. Where exactly have things gone wrong?

India has robust laws in place, to deal with the crime of trafficking in persons. However, simply having laws in place does

nothing to solve the issue at hand. The laws must be implemented consistently. In addition, authorities must be accountable for laws to be effective. Awareness on trafficking has yet to reach not only those in the general public but also law enforcement and other officials in criminal justice.



Other factors like reintegration and rehabilitation of the survivors, also need to be addressed. The civil society response to the crime has been quite robust. Much has been done, but much more needs to be done, on issues such as the stigmatization of the victims/survivors. Also, one needs to keep in mind that laws are effective for dealing with the

problem, but we need to tackle the root causes which lead to situations of vulnerability for certain sections of the society – poverty, gender discrimination, inequitable access to resources, livelihoods – are issues which needs to be addressed.

What is the role of UNODC? What are the steps the UN body has taken in India in different states?

On the issue of human trafficking, UNODC's Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) has, in association with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, initiated a two-year project (2006-2008) for the training of law enforcement officers, on human trafficking, in five states—Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Maharashtra and West Bengal in India. In addition, UNODC ROSA is supporting the Government of India, through a global project aimed at building non-government support structures for victims of violent crime, including victims of trafficking in persons. This

project involves assistance to several NGOs in India along with NGOs in other countries working towards countering human trafficking. Other projects on child protection, and exploring the linkages between trafficking, migration and smuggling, are in the pipeline.

One really important aspect that I would like to mention is what we call the GIFT. UNODC, together with other UN agencies, Governments, and NGOs, has in March 2007, launched the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (GIFT). The goal of the initiative is to produce a turning point in the fight against human trafficking and slavery. This global initiative is based on one simple principle: human trafficking is an organized crime. As such, it needs an organized response. The strategy for achieving this goal starts with efforts to increase public awareness of the problem, enhance knowledge of how to combat trafficking, and coordinate existing but disparate efforts by international and national groups, governments and NGOs and by concerned individuals to end the practice. To mount this response, UNODC is engaging as broad a spectrum of actors as possible. We are holding regional forums around the world to look at the different manifestations of the problem, to collect information, and to build stronger networks and take action to produce a turning point in the fight against trafficking in human beings. The recently-held (October 2007) GIFT conference in South Asia - the first of its kind in this region, was

one of them. From every country in South Asia, we came together - policemen, politicians, the film and entertainment industry, artistes, the media, those in government and those from the NGO community who struggle in the trenches day in and day out, and many of you – businesswomen and men, representing the corporate houses of this vibrant region of the world.

The conference was but a starting point, a turning point, for an organized response to the crime of human trafficking. The challenges and the opportunities lie ahead of us now, and we will move ahead with the support of all stakeholders, including media houses and publications such as ‘Yojana’.

In terms of huge geographical area and population, it is important to involve NGOs, local bodies to check trafficking and take care of workers health, education and other needs. What are your suggestions and has UNODC taken steps on these lines?

As I mentioned above, we work not in isolation, but in coordination with relevant stakeholders. Our projects on the ground, work closely with the central and state governments, judiciary, law enforcement agencies, with the non-governmental organizations, as well as with individual experts. We are yet to look into greater involvement of local level bodies and panchayat-level institutions. The involvement of such institutions is key to increasing the awareness at the local levels.

From your experience, what are your views on making “Sex Work” legal?

There is no basis for UNODC to state an opinion on sex work other than in the context of human trafficking. When the UN Trafficking Protocol was negotiated, Member States decided to keep the issue of prostitution within the domain of national competence. Thus, it is a question of national policy for the Member States themselves.

In India ‘Sex Work’ has been prevalent historically. At present this is in the group which is poor and also the group who are rich. Your comments?

As I mentioned, UNODC’s stand on this issue is neutral. What we do have a strong stand on, is the crime of human trafficking. Unfortunately the problem will persist unless there is more equitable and inclusive growth. It is poverty, illiteracy and regional imbalances in development which fuel the demand for trafficking from low income to high income areas. Add to this the social customs which are discriminatory against girls and you will see why we are concerned that trafficking will increase. Globalization and the resultant relaxation in control mechanisms fuel an increased need for cheap labour. That’s on the one hand. On the other we have strong demand factors. The commercial sex industry is expanding. There is an increase in the demand for younger and younger clients because exploiters are afraid of contracting sexually transmitted infections and believe their

chances of doing so are lower if they have sex with younger girls and virgins.

But it is difficult to generalize and say that one economic group faces certain forms of trafficking and that another group will not. What is known is that increased vulnerability and weaker social and family structures increase the likelihood of trafficking. Poverty makes people, especially women and children, more vulnerable.

Poverty and lack of options force people to migrate to distant places, and often this unsafe migration leads to trafficking. South Asia is estimated to be home to the second largest numbers of internationally trafficked persons, estimated to be around 150,000 annually. Leaving their own place makes people more vulnerable leading to them getting caught in debt-traps leading to bonded or forced labour and other evils such as sexual exploitation.

Unless all sections of society are vigilant against this scourge, and unless those who are responsible for governing the society take an active – and visible – and vocal – stand against trafficking, the response to this organized trade will not be organized. If it is not organized, it will fail. This is why, under the Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking, it is not just the UN agencies that are working together but there is a conscious effort to bring ALL stakeholders on the same platform.

The Government of India is in the process of amending Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act. What will be your

suggested broad parameters to make it realistic?

First of all, you'll see from my response to one of your earlier questions on the laws in India, that I believe that in general India has thorough laws in place. The real need of the hour is to improve their implementation. This needs to be tackled with adequate training and sensitization of the law enforcement officials – an area in which the United Nations is supporting the efforts of the Government.

The Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA) concentrates a lot on prostitution. But the law should perhaps shine its light on other forms of exploitation. Prosecution is often delayed, witnesses are not sufficiently protected and the 'victim' is often – in practice – criminalized. In many cases, the difficulty starts right from the moment of non-registration of the first information report (FIR).

But you ask about the law itself. So here is what we would say. It would be appropriate that the amended law against trafficking be fully in accordance with both Article 23 of the Indian Constitution and the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. This convention has a Protocol specifically on Human Trafficking, which India has already signed but not yet ratified. The Constitution itself prohibits trafficking in human beings. So does the UN Convention and Protocol too. Therefore the amendment of the ITPA should be comprehensive

and should address all types of exploitation, including trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation (which it already does) and for forced labour and for all other types of exploitation like domestic labour, the organ trade etc.

Secondly, the new law should provide an environment to bring synergy among the functioning of the various departments of the Government and also the civil society agencies working for the cause. One example of the outcomes the law should attempt to secure is the recent establishment of Anti Human Trafficking Units established in some states of India through a partnership between the Government agencies and civil society NGOs with the support of UNODC. Thirdly, we believe that it would be useful if the law were to have a specific provision for the confiscation of illegally-acquired assets and proceeds earned out of the crime by anybody. Fourthly, a strong argument can be made that the process of rehabilitation should be mandatory with the consequence that agencies should be legally tasked to this end. Fifthly, Rules. It may make sense that law should mandate for State Government agencies to frame the Rules (under the Law) within a given timespan and that the Rules should be both rights-oriented and in what we call the "best interest of the victim of trafficking".

□

(Email : gary.lewis@unodc.org)

Sangini....A Ray of Hope

*Harshal Pradhan
Sudhakar Kulkarni*



*Sangini operates
as an organ of
Sangamitra and the
children
acknowledge the
important transition
that Sangamitra has
brought for them*

Female Prostitution is perhaps the oldest profession all over the world. Also, it is perhaps the most hated profession. Hated in a sense that people who visit them actually enjoy it, but in society they pretend otherwise. The system operating in this profession is mostly coercive at all stages, from recruitment to retirement. The nature of this activity forces the area specific concentration of the sex-workers. This is necessary for the security reasons as well as cooperative living among sex-workers themselves.

The unit of this profession is generally known as 'Brothel' and invariably headed by an elderly woman. This chief brothel keeper is always in search of new recruits. For this, she hires agents or 'Dalals' who roam around all over the nearby or even far off remote parts of the state/country.

As India is a poverty-ridden country, the agents concentrate on girls, in the age group of say 6 to 12, from extremely poor households. These destitute girls are easily lured into money earning prospects by tall promises of the agents. Sometimes even the parents fall prey to agent's sinister designs. Many times, however, the girls are simply abducted. It is really a tragic paradox that a woman brothel owner should be the cause of destroying the life of another very young and 'about to bloom' girl.

Most of these workers are treated very inhumanly at the early stage of their stay at the brothel. They are beaten frequently in order to create fear in their mind. Before initiation to the profession they are fed in somewhat better manner and paid only a few rupees to meet their needs. Once they reach the age of entertaining the customer they are sometimes physically forced to do so.

Having achieved what the brothel owner wants, these workers

The authors are Mumbai-based journalists.

virtually remain under house arrest to prevent their possible escape. Whatever the owner earns from the customer, only a small portion of that earning is given to the worker. The owner meets all other needs. All in all, the workers are left to the mercy of the owner and her guards.

The government estimates that there are 3 million sex workers in India. Most of them are living a miserable life. Majority of them are not only HIV affected but are suffering from various other diseases. They are not given required medical attention. The workers also give birth to children but cannot bring them up in proper manner. Despite this heart-breaking scenario, all is not lost for this unfortunate segment of our society. There is a ray hope as number of social organisations (NGOs) is now reaching to them for their wellbeing and uplift.

NGO's Efforts

One such NGO is Population Services International (PSI) which is working in the field of HIV & AIDS awareness for the last 18 years. In 2004, PSI established a social organization for sex workers. Sangamitra is the name of this organization. Sangamitra attempts to imbibe awareness among the sex workers about their legal status and rights. Sangamitra also aims at providing education to the children of sex workers. Sangamitra's observations revealed that sex workers' immediate requirement is financial security. It was noticed that whatever they earn is mostly squandered by the owner and her pimps.

This scenario led the Sangamitra to establishing some kind of set up that will enthrone the workers to save part of their earnings, even if it is a meagre amount. Thus, Sangamitra people framed the idea to start a cooperative credit society of sex workers. They decided to implement it in Mumbai first. To achieve this, the PSI adopted the concept of 'Mahila Bachat Gats' in Maharashtra. Under this, females are pulled together in saving part of their earnings.

Mumbai's Kamathipura and Fockland Road are such red-light areas.. This organisation has taken initiative in improving the life of the sex workers in these two locations of Mumbai. The PSI started campaign to establish such a female group in these two red-light areas. The efforts proved successful and in June 2007 Sangini Mahila Seva Coop Credit Society was formed under Cooperative Act, 1961. The Reserve Bank also recognised it as registered coop society. The efforts taken by PSI proved extremely successful. This is reflected in the fact that before the dawn of New Year, 2008, the membership of the Society rose to 1100.

'Yojana' decided to have some insight about the Sangini project. For this 'Yojana' contacted Mr Jeevan, Financial Manager of PSI. He said " We are in the field of AIDS awareness for last 18 years and gave regular awareness programs in HIV, safe sex, condom usages etc. We are also working to improve the living standards of sex workers and Sangini is the result of our efforts."

He further pointed out that sex

workers were never allowed to open an account in the bank. Then Sangamitra planned the formation of co-operative credit society. Slowly the concept took concrete shape in Kamathipura & Fockland road red-light area. Now 1100 sex worker women have been enrolled as members of Sangini Mahila Seva Co-op Credit Society Ltd.

These women have complete faith in the management of the Society. Their adult children are not only closely associated with it but they also work as staff of it. This has changed the life of these unfortunate children and they are moving towards life with respect. Sangini operates as an organ of Sangamitra and the children acknowledge the important transition that Sangamitra has brought for them.

Mr Jeevan says that we just showed them the way to fight this battle of life. The media also provided good publicity to Sangini. The press noted that Sangini will help the sex workers to free themselves from the coercive bonds of the brothel owner and her thugs. It is also expected to assist he members of Sangini in breaking the vicious circle of poverty and exploitation for their children.

Since the establishment of Sangini each of its members is depositing at least Rs 10 to 20 per day. Brothel inmate Jai, who is also the founder member of Sangini, observed "we have understood importance of saving money to meet the expenses of any unfortunate eventuality like emergency medical treatment." She also expressed confidence that

the future of our children will be much better with the help of our savings.

The Sangini Credit Society also runs a small cooperative store for the benefit of brothel members. Members buy their daily needs from this store. This way the store effectively generates internal resources for Sangini members. For establishing Society and the store, PSI had extended financial assistance of Rs 16 lakhs. Ms Shilpa Merchant, PSI's director in Mumbai, noted that they had not expected such an active response from females in red-light area. "we thought that it would take one year to enroll 100 members" she said. The Sangini Society invests Rs

25,000 per day in fixed deposits of public sector banks. These deposits fetch interest at 9.5 per cent per annum.

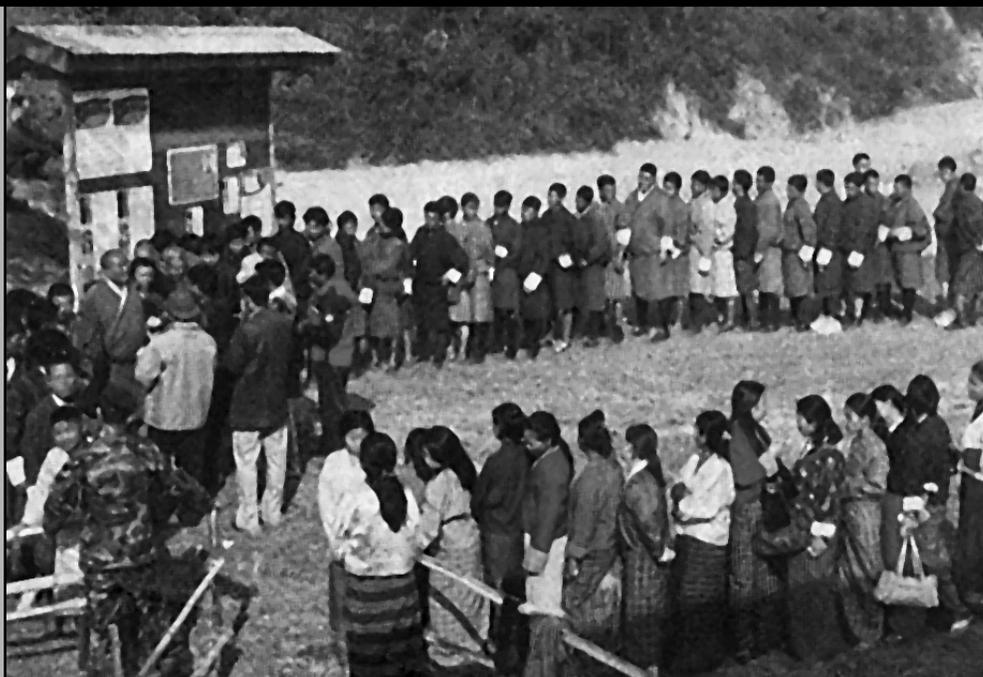
The best proof of success if Sangini project is reflected in the reaction of Gulabja Sheikh, 35, who was enrolled at the brothel when she was 15. "All through these years I was cursing myself thinking that I deserve to die. The Sangini, however, has changed my approach and now I am working for my own house" said Gulabja.

Sangini's steady progress is certainly noteworthy. It has now entered red-light area of Bhivandi, near Thane, and opened a branch there. Here too, along with banking activity, it runs a small grocery shop

for the benefit of its members as well as other customers. At both the Branches, sex workers can avail loan facility. Not only that, PSI is now working to offer accidental insurance cover to these unfortunate women.

Sangini has estimated that to survive it will need at least 1,390 members. In the first six months of its existence itself it has enrolled 1,100 members. This is really an achievement. It is also an indication that these women are determined to improve their social status if provided an opportunity to do so. Mr Jeevan of PSI is confident that by 2008 Sangini will reach the target of 1,390 members. Once this is achieved, Sangini will certainly be a self-sufficient and vibrant Cooperative credit society. Let us wish it a grand success in the years ahead!!

WINDS OF CHANGE FOR DEMOCRACY



Pic: The Hindu

Nascent Democracy: In a novel experiment, Bhutanese went to the polls in December 2007 to elect members to an upper house of Parliament in the Himalayan kingdom. A scene at Pashakha village.



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OSCAR NOMINEE TO FILM DAL'S BOATMEN

Kashmir is the next destination for Iranian film-maker Majid Majidi. The Oscar nominated director is shooting a movie—an Indo-Iranian joint venture—in Spring next year. The movie will be shot on the world famous Dal lake and according to an Iranian newspaper, is tentatively titled *Flood-stricken Kashmir*.

Majidi was in Kashmir in the last week of October to finalise the locations and had shown his preference for the Dal lake for the

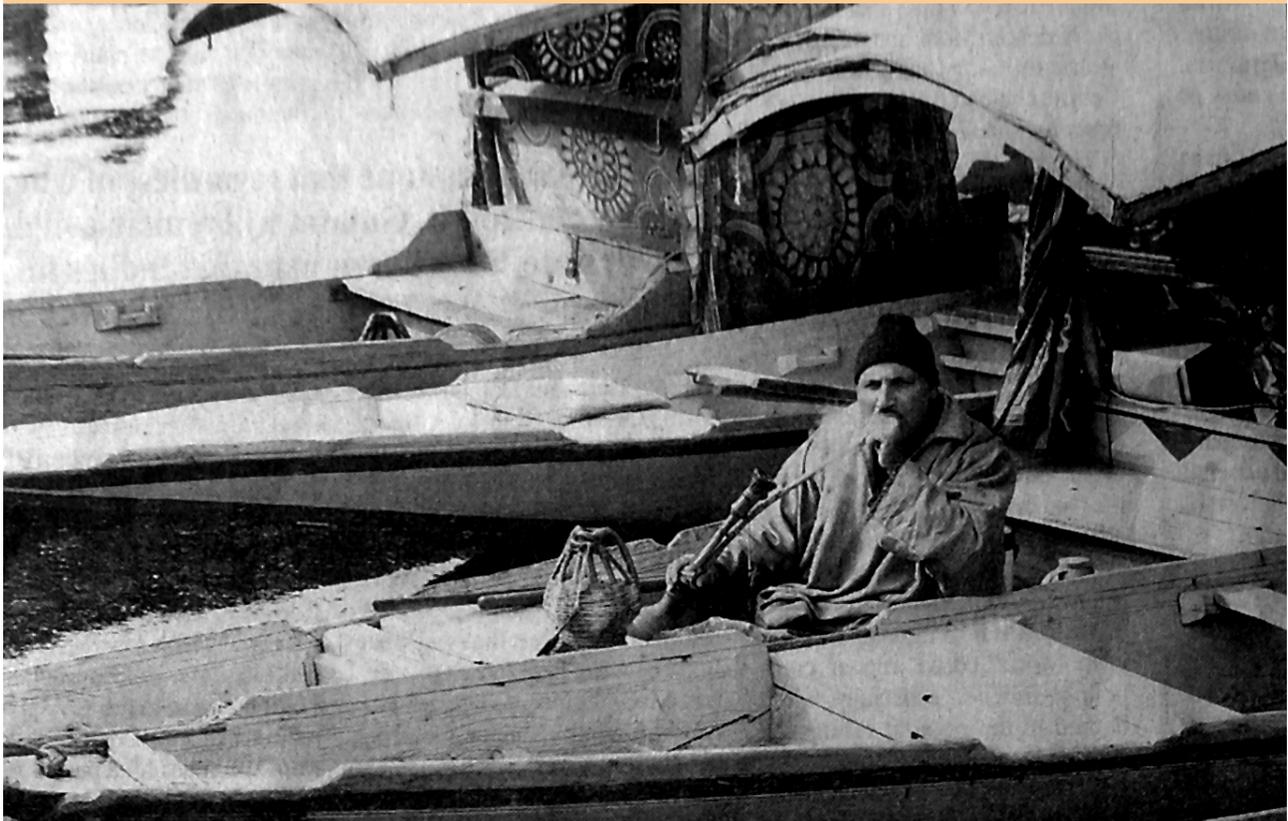
scenic beauty around it. His reason for being drawn to Kashmir is “the strong cultural affinity between the sensibilities of the two places and the connections triggered off by the streets and the buildings”.

“He went around the Dal lake and was fascinated by its beauty,” joint director of Kashmir’s Tourism Department Sarmad Hafeez told the Indian Express.

The broad outline of the film—emerging from his activities in the

Valley—will be centered around the life of the boatmen on the Dal. Majidi is interested in untrained actors to play the lead. He is looking for two Kashmiri shikara (boat) boys aged between seven and nine as the protagonists. “Majidi has already met a few boys who live on the Dal lake. Besides, he has also met fishermen to have an idea about their culture and tradition,” Hafeez said.

Bollywood actor Aamir Bashir who is Majidi’s assistant in the



A Kashmiri with his shikara on Dal Lake in Srinagar. Iranian film-maker Majid Majidi, whose film Children of Heaven was nominated for the Oscars, was in Kashmir recently to finalise the locations for his next film

project, however, remained tightlipped about the content of the film. “Majidi is still in the process of preparing the script. Besides, he doesn’t want to divulge anything at this stage,” said Bashir He, addedtr that Majidi will probably have a script in hand by February next year.

Majidi first visited Kashmir in 2005, Bashir said. Known for his eye for details, Majidi’s celebrated film *Children of Heaven* was nominated for a Academy Award

for best Foreign Language Film in 1998, but lost to the Italian film *Life is Beautiful*. And his film *Baran* (Rain) won the first prize at the 25th Montreal World Film Festival.

Majidi’s film is proposed at a time when Kashmir is set to be the location of a few Bollywood films as well—and that too, after a gap of two decades. Santosh Sivan’s *Daastan* recently completed its first installment of shooting schedule in Pahalgam. Next year, the Valley will see

shooting of a film on Kashmir by Rahul Dholakia of *Parzania* fame. However, Dholakia’s film will have nothing to do with terrorism.

The film will have Sanjay Dutt as the lead actor. Lawrence D’Souza, alongwith music director Shravan, wants to recreate his nineties superhit film *Saajan*. D’Souza has tentatively named his movie *Love in Kashmir* or *Jannat*. “About 90 per cent of film will be shot in Kashmir,” he said. □

-(Agencies)

Festive Spirit



Women shop for flowers on a street in Srinagar a day ahead of Eid



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1857

1947

2007

JOURNEY

Economic Development of Southern India since 1857



M Naganathan

The year 1857 signifies the rebellion of Indian rulers against the British colonialism. Many valiant leaders and soldiers fought against the British army and made supreme sacrifice for the cause of independence. This year is ever remembered as the beginning year of the freedom struggle in India.

East India companies by Portuguese, Dutch, French and English were competing each other to maximize their economic exploitation through their trade in the many regions of India since 17th century. The Industrial Revolution in England coincided with the European colonization of India. The invention of new machineries and the introduction of factory system in England increased the demand for raw materials from Indian soil. It had given advantage to England over the other East India Companies. Using the new technology, England had produced huge quantities of finished commodities and exported to Indian colonies. The system of tariffs and taxes were designed to suit and sustain their trade interest in India.

The 1857 revolt happenings had their impact in Tamil Nadu. The revolt which took place in the South Indian town of Vellore was carried out by soldiers loyal to sons of defeated *Tipu Sultan*. They were imprisoned at the Vellore fort since 1799. Independent of this incident, the *Poligars* popularly known as *Palayakkarars* had revolted against East India Company rule and waged struggle against the company's supremacy over their territories which include Sivaganga, Kola Patti, Tirunelveli, Madurai, Tanjore, Trichy, Ramnathapuram and Coimbatore. Notable among the poligars were *Marudhu Brothers*, *Puli Thevar* and *Kattabomman*. They valiantly fought against the British East India Company's army.

The economic historians have brought many material evidences and facts to conclude that there was not marked difference between the company rule and British government rule in India. After the 1857 revolt, the British administration strengthened its military rule and ruined the local institutions, polity and economy. The burden of expenditure and the loss sustained by the East India Company in China were shifted on to the shoulders of the people of India.

After the establishment of the British rule, economic unification was made by the British. Irrigation works were inaugurated to reap the benefits from the vast tracts of fertile agriculture land found available in India. Many ports were constructed. communication links were made. Railway lines were laid. Highways were inaugurated.

South Indian Economy was based on mainly agriculture having a unique characteristics feature of land system. The East India Company enhanced the irrigation facilities in the present districts of Thanjore and Trichy. Paddy was the main agricultural crop grown in the Thanjore district. Therefore, Thanjore was called the granary of south.

The urbanization and new system of education had led to the Tamil renaissance movement with religious sentiments which started in the middle ages had again reappeared in the writings of the many Tamil Scholars and saints. Among them *Ramalinga Vallalar* (1823-1874), was a towering personality, A great Tamil scholar, a famous social reformer, savant Ramalingar had popularized Tamil heritage and culture through his

The author is Vice Chairman, State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu.

poems and lectures. Similarly, social reformer *Narayana Guru* (1854-1928) had vehemently opposed casteism, inequality and blind beliefs. He stood for total prohibition and demanded equal opportunities for all communities in education. Social reformer *Veesalingam* (1849-1919) had opposed social and economic inequalities.

The freedom struggle got its new impetus after the entry of many newly English educated middle class people in the Indian political scenario. The formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 had brought many changes in the southern parts of the country.

Dadabhai Naoroji along with statesmen like Gladstone, Cobden, Bright and his colleagues like A.O. Hume and William Wedderburn, founding leaders of the Indian National Congress had argued that the Indian economy was looted by British. His Drain Theory had revealed the nature and pattern of British exploitation.

Followed by Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade had demonstrated that the real cause of poverty was the drain of resources from India to England. As a social reformer, Ranade had proposed widow remarriage and given emphasize for social reform. The great poet Bharathi was a front ranking nationalist. He had brought forth the economic ideas of Ranade, Bipin Chandrapal, Gopala Krishna Gokhale and Balangathara Tilak. Bharathi participated in the 1906 Congress conference where there was a clash between moderates and extremists. Bharathi was of the firm view that there were three enemies for the principle of Swadesi. The first enemy was the concept of free trade as advocated by British. The second enemy was English newspapers and the third one was the traders who sold foreign goods in India.

After the entry of Gandhi, the shape and structure of the congress

movement had undergone a sea of changes. Southern regions were no exception to this. Prominent among them were Rajaji, Periyar EVR, Sathya Murthy and Kamaraj.

In 1919, Rajaji and Periyar EVR occupied the Chairman posts of Salem and Erode municipalities respectively and carried out many developmental activities. As a staunch support of congress movement, Rajaji invited Periyar EVR to join the Congress movement and Periyar joined the congress party in 1919 and became the Congress president of Madras Province in 1923. He led the famous Vaikom Sathyagraha in Kerala in 1924 and successfully got the rights for the under privileged and untouchables to enter the temple streets and temple premises.

The Justice Party captured power in the 1921 elections and introduced a progressive reservation policy for deprived sections of the society in education and employment. Justice Party, the forerunner of Dravidian Movement laid social foundation and economic restructuring in favour of the majority by introducing many progressive legislations.

The major event after independence was the reorganization of States in 1956. States were linguistically formed. Southern India was reorganized as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

The Andhra Pradesh's economy was primarily agriculture based. Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, has emerged as an IT center after the 'blue chip revolution'. Andhra Pradesh, has witnessed a major jump in software exports.

Karnataka is one of the fast developing States in India in view of the IT boom in Bangalore. 80 per cent of Karnataka's population is dependent on agriculture. Agriculture and allied activities form

49% of State income. Coastal plains of Karnataka are cultivating Paddy and Sugarcane. Karnataka produces 70 percent of India's coffee, of which about 50 percent is exported.

Kerala's economy, though predominantly agrarian, commercial plantation crops are cultivated. The Marxist government introduced land reforms and reduced the inequality of income considerably in the state. The policies pursued by the congress and communist parties gave emphasis to social sector development. Therefore its achievement in the Human Development is the highest in India. Recently Kerala has taken measures to attract IT industries to strengthen the tourism industry.

The Tamil Nadu has been one of the growing states in India in spite of fluctuations in certain sectors of economy due to unfavourable monsoons. The primary sector of which agriculture is the back bone has been in the crisis in 1993-94 to 2005-06,

Tamil Nadu has been in the forefront in the industrial production since the beginning of the Five Year Plan. Efforts have already initiated to consolidate the earlier achievements by bringing new investments in the districts of Tamil Nadu ensuring balanced development.

The 150 years of experiment in political and economic institutions give many lessons to learn. To uphold the values of diversity in unity India has to strive hard in up keeping the vision of federal democracy state rights human rights by reducing inequalities among the people and safeguarding the sovereignty of the country without sacrificing its unique political, cultural, social and economic identities in the era of globalization. This would be the real honour we pay to the martyrs of the freedom struggle. □

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DO YOU KNOW ?

KINDS OF DEFICITS

Interest payment is nothing but a reflection of debts accumulated by the government over the years for bridging deficit. Successive finance ministers have tried, without success, to bridge the growing revenue expenditure chasm. Finance minister P. Chidambaram too will endeavour to contain deficit in Budget for 2008-09 at various kinds of deficits and their implications for the economy.

What is deficit?

Deficit is basically the difference between expenditure and receipts. In public finance, it means the government is spending more than what it is earning. Government expenditure and revenue can be split into capital and revenue. Capital expenditure generally includes those expenses which result in creation of assets. Revenue expenditure is primarily that which does not result in asset creation —like interest payments, salaries, subsidies, etc. eg., expenditure on construction of a fly over will be capital expenditure, while the salary being paid to government officials supervising the construction will be revenue expenditure.

Similarly, on the receipts side, whatever the government receives as taxes is revenue receipt. Receipts not of a recurring nature are generally capital receipts. These include domestic and external

borrowings, proceeds of disinvestment, recovery of loans given by the Union government, etc.

Is deficit financing necessary?

States often fail to generate tax revenue which is sufficient enough to take care of the expenses of the state, especially a welfare state. Deficit financing allows the state to undertake activities which, otherwise, would be beyond its financial capacity.

The concept, it may be recalled, was popularised by noted British economist JM Keynes with the aim of pumping a depressed economy. The basic intention behind deficit financing is to provide the necessary impetus to economic growth by artificial means. Unfortunately, the extent to which India has been practicing deficit financing has gone way beyond what could possibly have been contemplated by Lord Keynes.

Should revenue deficit be eliminated?

Tax is the most important source of revenue for a government. The difference between revenue expenditure and revenue receipts is revenue deficit. It means the government is unable to meet its expenses from recurring sources of income.

The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003 has

laid down the roadmap for a gradual reduction and finally, elimination of revenue deficit by 2008-09. This will entail raising of revenue and, simultaneously, having some checks on expenses relating to subsidies, salary and pension bills, interest payments, etc. After all, the government ought to live within its means.

Significance of fiscal deficit?

The government's first task is to bridge revenue deficit, Second, it must generate the resources for investing in projects and schemes of capital nature. This may include equity contribution to public sector undertakings, loans for public enterprises and investment in infrastructure sector projects. These investments yield direct as well as indirect dividends.

The government borrows money to bridge the revenue deficit and fund developmental projects and schemes. The government, as sovereign, borrows at competitive rates from various sources which include the Reserve Bank of India, commercial banks, general public, external borrowings etc. The total borrowings used to bridge the receipt-expenditure gap is called fiscal deficit. This is measured as a percentage of GDP as it may not be appropriate to compare borrowings of different years in absolute terms. □

UNION BUDGET 08-09

G Srinivasan

The Finance Minister would fashion his budget keeping in view his larger political compulsions and also the altruistic compulsions of serving the millions of the under-served in the country

The Indian economy is in the midst of an exceptionally buoyant phase with gross domestic product growth (GDP) for the current fiscal growing at a robust clip, moderation in inflation and economic fundamentals in fine fettle. This is also the time when various productive segments of the economy such as farmers, industrialists and exporters pitch their demands for fiscal concessions from the Finance Minister as he is engaged in the task of budget preparations to present the Union Budget 2008-09 on the last day of February 2008. The next budget also marks the second year of the 11th Plan.

Incidentally, the National Development Council (NDC) on December 19, 2007 gave its broad approval to the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) document which sets out an accelerated nine per cent growth per annum for distributing the benefits of development in an

inclusive manner. The Prime Minister's address to the NDC gave inkling to the Government's thinking on the Union Budget of 2008-09 of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government which would be presenting its fifth and final budget. In his address to the NDC composed of all State Chief Ministers of the country, the Prime Minister Dr. Singh highlighted the strategic shift on public investment focusing more on building up social capital and on equity issues, while private investment would play a key role in funding infrastructure and power. Hence the forthcoming budget would focus mostly on social capital or raising investment for public programmes like education, health, agriculture, irrigation and rural development so that the results of development reach the intended and targeted beneficiaries whose number is legion and whose plight is none too enviable in a country of a continental size and scale like India.

The author is a senior journalist.

The Finance Minister Mr. P.Chidambaram also told the States at the NDC meeting that they should not be complacent over the recent fiscal consolidation measures they had undertaken successfully. He insisted on them to persist with their efforts to mobilise resources and improve the efficiency of their expenditure for development purposes. The messages from both the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister are in unmistakable terms designed to send the signal that the Government in the penultimate year to the General Elections would be inclined to spend more on social programmes so that the marginalised sections of the society would get a measure of relief from the various economic reforms that have been undertaken but which have bypassed them from bestowing on any tangible gains.

It may be noted that on the last day of the winter session of Parliament the Finance Ministry presented its mid-year review of the economy in which it said the improved competitiveness of the Indian economy, now on a trajectory of sustained high growth, bears ample testimony to the success of the reform measures. The high growth rates of 9.4 per cent in 2006-07 have been sustained at the level of 9.1 per cent in the first half of the current fiscal too. It said there was a moderation in inflationary pressure and inflationary expectations from the middle of August 2007, with inflation measured in terms of wholesale price index (WPI) plummeting to below four per cent, after 68 weeks. The moderation in domestic inflation is all the more significant because it supervened

despite a continued firmness in global commodity prices particularly for food, fuel, metals and other industrial raw materials.

The Finance Ministry review acknowledges that the critical challenges at the current juncture pertain to sustaining this growth momentum with macroeconomic stability and improving the competitiveness of Indian industry and services sector. These two segments bear crucial key to the economy as their contribution to national income and gross domestic product (GDP) have of late been growing in size and stature, pulling the share of agriculture in the economy down. But as the Prime Minister observed in the NDC meeting that there is a peculiar paradox about the farm sector that even as its share in total GDP has come down below 20 per cent, the number of people still dependent on agriculture has not come down in any proportionate manner. This makes the Government to focus its strategies to pep up farm sector and address the livelihood security concerns of millions of farmers. Hopefully, the forthcoming budget would address the issue in a more positive manner to help the farmers realise their full potentials without getting mired in myriad problems that remain peculiar to their calling.

The Finance Ministry's latest review is relevant for budget-makers in that it has unequivocally asserted that for greater accent on inclusive growth, there is a clear need to foster fiscal space. The sustained high economic growth in the last four years obviously points to the dividends from fiscal rectitude under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act

(FRBMA). Since 2003-04, public savings have remained positive and overall investment, public and private, generally buoyant. Given the increased demand on resources, more fiscal space needs to be created, the Finance Ministry review argues, adding that keeping this in view, another review of subsidies is warranted. The Budget has to address the thorny issue of subsidy as the Prime Minister Dr. Singh is keen on rationalising subsidies and went on record that the country could no longer live with unsustainable subsidies that put a severe drag on resources and consequent development. It may be noted that last year subsidies on foodgrains amounted to Rs 23828 crore, on fertilisers Rs 25952 crore, on public distribution system (PDS) kerosene Rs 970 crore and on domestic LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) Rs 1554 crore. The Review rightly contends that the benefits of subsidies could be maximised if they are transparent, well targeted and suitably designed for effective implementation.

That subsidies pre-empt resources that would otherwise be deployed on public work programmes that generate both income and assets and employment is hardly doubted. There is a burgeoning of the subsidy bill which has a negative effect on government finances, including its ability to augment public investment to promote sustainable employment, income growth and development of economic and social infrastructure. It may be germane to note that the total investment proposed by the Central and the State governments

and the private sector in physical infrastructure sector over the 11th Plan period is projected at Rs 2,060,193 crore. Of this total investment, the share of Central, States and private sector are expected to be about 37 per cent, 33 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. As the Centre has to bear the preponderant share of the burden of expenditure on the creation of physical infrastructure, it is under greater compulsion to rationalise subsidises to find resources for genuine development investments. The overall explicit subsidies according to Expenditure Budget (2007-8) increased from Rs 43,533 crore in 2002-03 to Rs 53,463 crore in 2006-07 (Revised Estimates). Though as a proportion to GDP it

declined by 47 basis points in the last five years (as the economy has also been growing), it had pre-empted 12.6 per cent of the current receipts.

In the light of these disconcerting figures on subsidies which result in denial of outlays for real development, the Finance Ministry review aptly asserts that the principal objective of reform of the subsidy regime is to make them explicit, transparent and work for the poor and the needy. Reform could unleash a virtuous cycle of enhancing the consumption of specific essential items by the poor, reorient public expenditure for investment and infrastrucsature, and raise the growth of income and employment, thereby reducing the number of poor.

As targeting the triple subsidies on food, fertiliser and petroleum products is an imperative, the Finance Ministry has its tasks cut out unambiguously. How far the Finance Minister would fashion his budget for the next fiscal, keeping in view his larger political compulsions and also the altruistic compulsions of serving the millions of the under-served in the country would be known only on the Budget day when he rises to present his budget in Parliament. But the fact remains that he has to do a dexterous tight-rope walking in balancing the two compulsions which are the apple of his eyes. □

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DR SETHI, INVENTOR OF JAIPUR FOOT, DIES

Magsaysay Winner and investor of the Jaipur prosthesis (rekno) 'Jaipur Foot', an artificial limb used all over the world for the physically challenged, Dr P.K. Sethi died of a cardiac arrest in Jaipur.

Dr Sethi first thought of the idea of working on the artificial limb mechanism in 1965, when he was prescribing solid-ankle-cushion-heel (SACH) feet to people with amputated lower limbs in Jaipur. He would ask users, in casual encounters outside the hospital setting, how satisfied they were with their new feet and found that many of them had returned to using crutches.

The production team had not realised that the SACH Foot, intended to be worn with shoes and for sitting in chairs, was not suitable for Indians who walked



Many people all over the world got a new lease of life thanks to the Jaipur Foot designed by Dr. P.K. Sethi (left).

bare feet and sat on the floor. By 1970, with the help of his team members. Dr Sethi had come up with the new designs, which have since been known as the Jaipur.

These devices have two other features that led to their

popularity. First, they can be made easily by local artisans and with local materials. Therefore once the design is known, they can be produced anywhere. Second, Dr Sethi's team did not patent the designs, making them available free of charge and thus reducing the cost to users. As a result, the devices have proved useful not only in the ESCAP region, but also in Africa, and Latin America.

Born on November 23, 1927 at Agra who went on to win the Padma Shree, Dr Sethi got his FRCS degree from Edinbera in England in 1954 and invested the Jaipur Foot in 1968. He practiced in Swai Man Singh Hospital and established a rehabilitation research centre. □

SHGs and Micro-Credit

Archana Dwivedi

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH credit is the modern face of growth. Be it the World Bank at the international level or governments of the country at the national level, all are advocating growth through credit. In this linkage, small credits advanced locally, have been given a new name, micro-credit. Not only in India, but in many developing and least-developed countries also, micro-credit is spreading its wings covering newer fields. Ever since Founder of the Grameen Bank, and Nobel Prize winner, Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh proved with his pioneering work that the micro-credit is beneficial for borrower and lender alike. Not only the micro-finance institutions but even large national and international banks have also ventured into the area of microfinance with great zeal.

In India, micro-credit programmes are implemented through group structures, which are known as self-help groups.

According to various reports and documents, there are said to be seven to eight million groups active in the country by means of whom 70 to 80 million families are being served. Out of these nearly 92 per cent self help groups are exclusively of women. Not only in India but also at the international level women self-help groups form nearly 80-85 per cent of the beneficiaries of the total micro-credit programmes. Working with such a large number of women, is not only just an event but has certain reasons and logic.

A survey conducted by the United Nations at the international level found that women form 60-65 per cent of the most poor populace. It means that the real face of the poverty is of a woman. On the basis of which, it was emphasized to reach maximum women on the poverty front. However, it was not the sole reason to reach out to women. It has been proved extensively that the money borrowed by women is not only utilized for meeting the family needs

and necessities, women are more disciplined and committed towards paying back the loan in time. Most of the micro-credit programmes prefer working with women self help groups. This is the reason most of the SHGs try to work for poverty alleviation through women SHGs. They also claim to achieve other greater objectives through these groups: some of them are these is primarily women's empowerment, Micro-credit and poverty alleviation. They acknowledge that to get rid of poverty, it is mandatory to free one self from the tentacles of money lending system. It has been claimed that the easy access of micro-credit to poor, has lessened their dependence on money lenders. To some extent this claim seems to be correct. Several studies have revealed that to meet the petty needs of the family or in any urgency, the credit received from the group has helped the women folk greatly. However it is also a fact that despite these tall claims the programme has not succeeded to that extent.

The author is research consultant and has wide experience of working with government and NGOs on SHGs and Micro-credit.

In 2004, an NGO *Nirantar* conducted a study of 2700 groups across the country. It was that merely by extending credit, you cannot tackle the menace of poverty. Earlier also a study by D. Rajsekharra concluded that despite being linked with the self help groups about 56 per cent women went for loans from the local money lender.

Mexican micro-credit specialist Alphonzo Christilo believes that poverty eradication and capacity development have a direct and deep connection. According to him "if the governmental efforts are limited only to extending credits through group formation then the programme should be better called as poverty promotion and not of poverty alleviation. He said that in the absence of capacity building, poor women are incompetent to utilize the loan amount received as resource money in a positive manner. Due to this their economic condition fails to improve and their loan amount goes on multiplying. Because of lack of income generation the loan received from SHGs throws them into the whirlpool of loans. As such the vicious circle of taking fresh loans to repay earlier loan begins.

To run any industry or business, howsoever, small, one needs particular skill and managing abilities. But in the context of self help group, the chances of skill and capacity development are quite limited. As most of these efforts are carried out by women, hence the need for capacity building is doubly required. In absence of proper capacity development in the self help group programmes running presently in India, the aspect of capacity development is the weakest link.

Poverty is not only an economic problem but also a social one. At which lies the lack of income and unequal distribution of resources. This is not only due to paucity of funds but is also linked with caste, religion and gender. This is the reason, communities related to some particular caste or religion are more poor, and women among them are mostly resourceless. Thus it is clear, that micro-credit/micro-enterprise alone is not enough to tackle the problem of poverty. One needs not only a proper strategy, but also requires a comprehensive and integrated approach towards the problem. For if it is necessary that our approach should not be limited to increasing income only but also should be able to ensure regular income for sustenance.

According to Micro credit expert and researcher Linda Mayo since the root cause of poverty is the inequality and discrimination and this problem cannot be addressed unless the issue of social justice and equality of women is tackled properly" But when the women take loan from self help groups, it is hoped from them that they will spend that amount in bettering financial condition of the family. This thought has not only increased pressure on women to contribute financially but has also negated their contribution towards household chores and farm related works though they don't provide cash but one equally important while a movement is going on to give due recognition to the household works of women, efforts are being made on the other hand to ignore their contribution in other fields by encouraging them to contribute financially by taking loans from self

help groups. This is not a just practice.

Besides, women are being made responsible to repay their loans, while the loan amount is used for entire family. Several studies have revealed that due to the pressure of paying back, working hours for women have increased, whereas women empowerment is the main purpose of self help groups, just as poverty eradications. Even in Bangladesh, where micro-credit programmes are largely claimed to have been very success for surveys have established that this has put extra burden on women while on one side the traditional male areas of authority like loans and then repayment have been shifted towards women, there has been no reduction on their own traditional responsibilities. Can this situation be really called women empowerment.

In the present Scenario, if self help groups and micro-credit is a fact from which one can not turn its eyes, then socio economic condition of women associated with them is a bigger fact. You cannot put women in the center to these groups to eradicate poverty and then use them like machines for a long. Therefore if self help groups have to become the real carriers of women empowerment, and also if women are to be associated with these programmes for long, these groups will have to emphasize on education, literacy and capacity building processes. Then only these groups can really become the tools of poverty alleviation and empowerment of women associated with them.

□

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Look East Policy

Sumathi Vishwanathan

A resurgent economic force, is in a position to negotiate with the ASEAN grouping and with other individual countries for free trade agreements

“By gradually integrating this region through cross border market access, north-eastern states can become the bridge between the Indian economy and the fastest growing and dynamic region in the world"- Pranab Mukherjee. He said this in his keynote address at a national conference on India's look east policy in Guwahati recently. The external affairs Minister also announced that Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. had started working on an optical fibre project to set up telecommunication network between north-east region and south-east Asia. There is also a proposal to connect the region with SAARC capitals. There are several other projects to improve connectivity between north-east region and Myanmar. These include road, rail links, telecommunications, information technology, science and power. North-eastern states are now in focus because of the sheer advantage of the geographical positions which can help in exploring new trade connections and add one more dimension to India's growing

economy.

The ten member association of south east Asian Nations' blue print on free trade zone aims to turn the sprawling region with 500 million people, roughly of the size European market, into an ASEAN economic community where goods and people will move freely. It will become a reality by 2015- says the blue-print. The ASEAN is now seriously engaged in negotiations for having free trade area with India. Dr. Manmohan Singh has maintained that India is committed to work with the ASEAN and other East Asian countries to make 21st century truly as "Asian Century". Minister for development of north-eastern region suggests that Look East policy should act as the basis of developing the North-Eastern states- Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The concept paper of this high level meet on the development of this region paper said, although north-east India is where south-east Asia begins, all considerable economic benefits that have flowed out of Look East Policy have gone to other parts of the country.

The author is a senior journalist.

This policy is the region's single biggest hope for breaking out of its isolation a good policy-decision mix which could make the north-east region the arrowhead of sustained double-digit growth for the country. The paper adds that the Look East Policy in this region's context should begin by looking south to Bangladesh and north to Tibet. There is a need to supplement this by looking west towards Nepal and Bhutan before Turning eastwards through Myanmar to the ripe fields of South-West China and ASEAN via Thailand. There should be entry points linking the region to south-east Asia and possibly South-West China. Better connectivity through rail, road and telecom links will transform the entire region into a developed zone. Windows could be opened for improving economic relations on the lines of Nathu La, opened up recently. These measures will address imbalances in the region.

The US-INDIA civilian nuclear energy deal has added a new dimension to India's rising profile in east Asia. India, a resurgent economic force, is in a position to negotiate with the ASEAN grouping and with other individual countries for free trade agreements. New Delhi can have a smooth ride in firming up several country specific agreements. The north-eastern region should get a due share of the benefits.

The union ministry for development of north-eastern region showcased the region and untapped trade and investment potential at a business summit in Bangkok. It gave an opportunity to Thailand's companies and businessmen to invest in the region. Insurgency problem in some pockets of Assam and Manipur should not be a hurdle as the climate in the region is conducive for trade, business and industry. Thailand has shown keen interest in tourism and hospitality sector nearly 30 million

tourists visit Thailand every year. Thailand and north-east region could be packaged together. Even if one per cent of Thai tourists visit the region, its profile will change tremendously. Thai government also showed keenness to develop the infrastructure in the north-east, especially with the trilateral highway connecting the region with Myanmar and Thailand. Key sectors identified for attracting Thai investment include rail, road inland waterways, air connectivity, energy, food processing, tourism and hospitality, horticulture, handloom and handicrafts.

The ministry of tourism has given special importance to improve the quality of tourism all over the country. The ministry extends central financial assistance to the states for development of infrastructure of tourist destinations and circuits. New

market requirements will be met to enhance the competitiveness of India as a tourist destination. The ministry has sanctioned 323 crore rupees for various projects connected with tourism. For the north-east it proposes to spend over 20 crores.

With Meghalaya emerging as the hub of the region, countries across South-East Asia can invest on the sector. Besides, horticultural produce like strawberry, ginger, turmeric and cashew nuts are inherently organic which give an opportunity to potential investors to grow and market them at good price. Given the economic complementarities between India and Thailand this north-east initiative could turn into an excellent example of Globalization by south-south cooperation. □

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The Sixth **Pravasi**
Bharatiya Divas

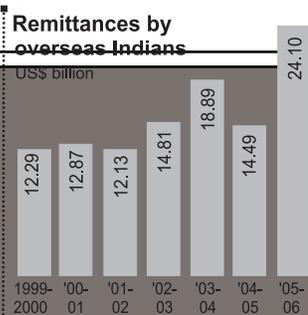
January 7-9, 2008 *Engaging the Diaspora: the way forward*



The Indian diaspora is about 25-million strong and spread across over 130 countries. The country hosted the first-ever conclave of its diaspora in 2003, celebrating the first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas between Jan 9-11. A high level committee set up by the Ministry of External Affairs in Sep 2000 had recommended that Pravasi Bharatiya Divas should be held on Jan 9 every year in recognition and appreciation of the constructive economic, political and philanthropic role played by the Indian diaspora for the country. January 9 was chosen because on this day Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to lead India's struggle for freedom

Remittances by overseas Indians

US\$ billion



World Bank estimates for 2007-08: US\$ 27 billion

The Indian Diaspora
Major concentrations of overseas Indian community



(Based on Dec 2001 estimates)

Source: Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs

In the News

- The Union Cabinet has appointed public sector mutual fund managers the Unit Trust of India Mutual Funds and the State Bank of India Mutual Fund for investment of Post Office Life Insurance Fund and Rural Post Office Life Insurance Fund.
- Government to go ahead with the setting up of mobile courts at panchayat level. The Cabinet gave its approval for further pursuing the Gram Nyayalayas Bill in Parliament and to move official amendments in the Rajya Sabha. First Class Magistrates will head the Nyayalayas
- Nod to construction of road from Zaranj to Delaram in Afghanistan at an expense of Rs 746.79 crore. The project would give India improved access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- Nod to the textiles ministry's proposal for setting up Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Textile Management at Coimbatore with an investment of Rs 29 crore during the Eleventh Plan period
- Modernisation of observation and forecast facilities of India Meteorological Department.
- Nod to the hospital patient care allowance for categories of Group C and D (non-ministerial) employees working in Railway Health Units, Hospitals and Super Speciality Railway Hospitals. Group C and D categories employees will get hospital care allowance at the rate of Rs 700 per month and Rs 695 per month, while patient care Allowance shall be admissible at the rate of Rs 690 per month to both the categories.
- Coverage of Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme to be extended to Uniformed Coast Guard Pensioners and retired personnel of Defence Security Corps
- Nod to extension of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis from January 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009
- Nod to an agreement with Senegal for avoidance of double taxation

32-M ANTENNA SET UP TO TRACK CHANDRAYAAN I

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has joined the league of China, Japan, Russia, Europe and the United States in demonstrating "its complete self sufficiency in tracking deep space missions," with the installation of its giant 32 metre antenna, said S.K. Shivakumar, Director, ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC).

The antenna, built indigenously, has been installed at the Indian Deep Space Net-work (IDSN) at Bialalu, 40 km from Bangalore, to track and send commands to Chandrayaan I, ISRO's first moon mission scheduled for launch on April 9, 2008.

The scientific mission intends to map the surface of the moon, its mineralogical composition and detect possible reserves of polar ice and the presence of Helium-3.

Bialalu was chosen as the location because of its distance from the city's mobile network, among other reasons, Mr. Shivakumar said.

The security personnel here, at 45, will be double the strength of the operations staff.

"We have now demonstrated our self-sufficiency in tracking and managing our own data. The IDSN will track all forthcoming deep space missions, but as the facility is of world standard it can be used by international space agencies as well."

Mr. Shivakumar added that he foresaw "commercial opportunity" for IDSN.

"We have to now go in for performance testing," he said. The antenna moves at a lower speed of 0.01 millidegrees per second, and at an upper speed of 0.4 millidegrees per second, with a vertical manoeuvrability of 90 degrees and capacity to rotate 270 degrees.

The 32-metre antenna joins an 18-metre antenna installed in 2006 on the 135-acre IDSN. The total cost of the Chandrayaan mission is Rs 386 crore, of which the DSN was built at a cost of Rs 100 crore.

Both the antennae will be operated from ISTRAC, located at Peenya "We will have a third, 11-metre antenna here, to track Astrosat, a multi-wavelength scientific satellite, to be launched in 2009," Mr. Shivakumar added.

When asked about the nine international missions competing to reach the moon, M. Annadurai, project director, Chandrayaan, said, there is no race to the moon. It so happens that we are all working in the same time-frame". ISRO, he said, had proved itself to be a "world leader in forging international links". Chandrayaan I will have six international payloads, and Chandrayaan II (scheduled for a 2011. launch) was an Indo-Russian collaboration, he added.

ISRO officials also denied a report from a section of the media that its INSAT-4CR satellite "disappeared" from the radar and reappeared after fifteen days, having lost five years of its life.

The report is "baseless," said S. Satish, Director, Public Relations, ISRO.

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