

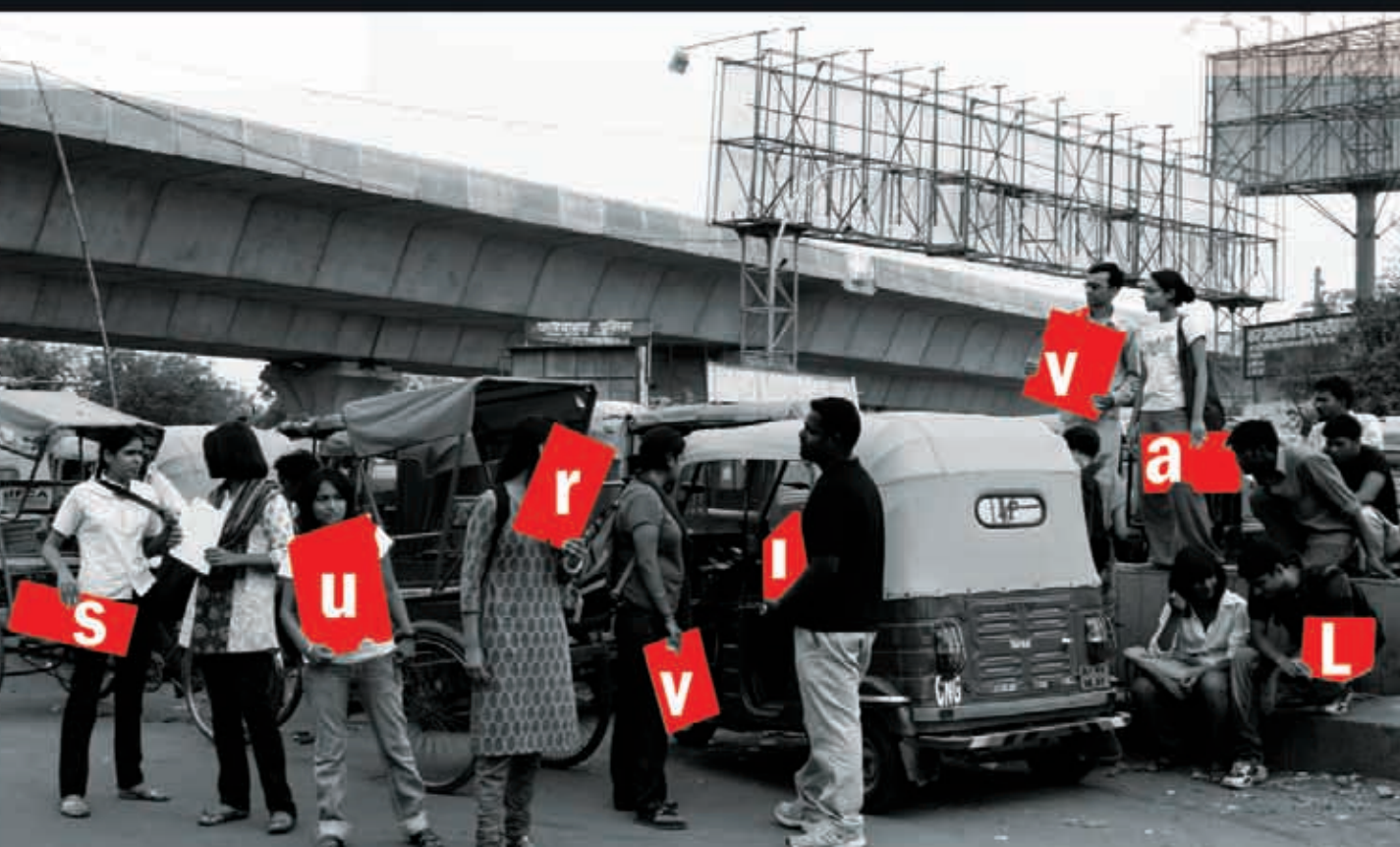


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AFS 2010



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We're different
because
of
our
values

**AGAINST
ANIMAL
TESTING**

**SUPPORT
COMMUNITY
TRADE**

**ACTIVATE
SELF
ESTEEM**

**PROTECT
OUR
PLANET**

**DEFEND
HUMAN
RIGHTS**

The Green Wash pay its store workers low wages that are near the expected minimum wage and well below the official European 'decency threshold' for pay

While professing to abhor the beauty myth, the Green Wash actually rely on its for selling products and as a result strengthen it

The Green Wash uses plastic containers made of petrochemicals which are not recyclable in the vast majority of markets in which the company operates

**THE
GREEN
WASH**

Less than 1% of sales goes to 'Community Trade' producers

Many of the ingredients in their products have been tested on animals by other companies

I DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION

By-
Nandini Upadhyay
with
Ritodhi Chakraborty



In the third bedroom on Gandhi street,
Wrapped in her Fabindia sheet,
ayesha heard her solar clock,
Ring its bell on C block.

Her room was green and overstuffed,
With posters, buttons, shirts and mugs,
darfur occupied a tiny square,
Next to DiCaprio, smiling and bare.

As Bai brought her kiwi juice,
She tripped over her bamboo shoes,
And thought about her busy day,
Would the sale at Pody Shop stay?

A trip to "Dharti" with her planet friends,
Mostly to make some quick amends,
For her mother's love of trips to the mall,
And she could visit the organic pizza stall.

The mercury soared in the street outside,
As Ayesha pondered her options for rides,
With the sun too bright, she needed some shade,
What a difference CNG taxis had made.

She haggled over prices with the driver below,
As mascara went under her well threaded brow,
The biking club was meeting at the pool,
She'd get to argue how Amsterdam rules!
Lunch was at the new glass mall,
Where all her friends were enthralled,
Of the romaine lettuce and artichoke dish,
vegetarian, healthy, it was all they could wish

Afternoon was at the climate change bash,
Cute guys, free stuff, it was a smash,
She got to yell at plebes eating lunch,
Chicken again? What an ignorant bunch.

Dharti's offices were in a frenzied mess,
The latest issue had to be sent off to press,
But no one could find a synonym for Green,
Till she showed up and suggested, "clean".

Henrik from Norway was here for week,
To document India's bright green streak,
She showed him a PV on her university roof,
And smiled in pride as he noted the proof.

Her mother needed pasta, her text message said,
Vodka sauce linguini with whole wheat bread,
She couldn't wait for dinner tonight,
Spanish red wine not lame McDonald's and Sprite.

As the cab pulled up to the lawned estate,
She thought of the garbage her neighbors dumped in haste,
Plastic and compost and paper all together,
Hadn't they heard of recycling ever?
She walked up the stairs turning off lights,
Her air-conditioned oasis in plain sight,
pink Floyd wafted through Dad's study wall,
"We don't need no education; We don't need no thought control..."



ANNA'S FOOTPRINT

The Carbon Footprint of an AFS warrior in KgCO₂

by Ragini Lall, Sai Aditya Pradeep

Naoma Devi's tale

It has been a while and the image of Naoma Devi refuses to fade. We were asked to submit our story ideas by 18th of June and with every passing day the pressure of finding that story mounted. Tolma, I figured, would be the perfect place to find that “interesting story”. Secluded in the Nanda Devi biosphere reserve in Uttarakhand, Tolma is a treasure trove of information.

It was on a warm and sunny afternoon that I met Naoma Devi with the intention of finding folk tales from Tolma for my report. Folk lore and stories have always fascinated me as a child. They enchant and enthrall the human mind and have fascinated me with their encrypted meanings.

Naoma was like any other old lady with a gentle demeanor. She had a leathery wrinkled face and many of her teeth were missing. Her eyes spread a warmth that permeated the air around us. But it was her hands that stood out. They spoke of hard work, years of compassion and tremendous pain.

I initiated the conversation by questioning about her work, and family. She replied in the little Hindi she knew. After this conversation outside her little mud hut she then invited us inside as the evening set in. *Dadi*, as I started calling her, lit firewood in her *chullha* to keep us warm and laid out rugs made out of goatskin to protect our posteriors from the biting chill. I was quite adamant on getting that perfect story for my report, and kept bringing up the topic. From this point onwards I shifted track. My first attempt at obtaining the local folklore helped me get a glimpse of the local deities. We spoke at length on the gods and goddesses of the village but the only information I could gather related to the rituals that the villagers performed in their honour.

There were four of us seated in the tiny mud hut and by this time everyone started pitching in to try and get a story. *Dadiji* asked us to tell a story of ours in exchange for one of hers and after much thought Anubhuti (my peer) spoke about *Karva Chauth* (a fast observed by Hindu women in many parts of northern India) but it was not met with any reciprocity. The first night ended with a hope for a story as *dadi* had promised one for the following day. The following morning I spoke to her with renewed vigor and asked her about stories her parents might have told her when she was a kid, to which she merely shook her head as I stood there expecting at least one brilliant tale. Then I asked her about the relations between the various gods and goddesses from time to time. She gave me details of the festivals the villagers celebrate in honor of *Bhumyai devata* and *Bhagyavati Devi*.

By this time Anubhuti was getting impatient as she wanted to do a story on local cosmetics and we split ways. I went to *Dadima's* field where I helped her with weeding, and again asked about *pahadi kahanis* but didn't get anything out of her. On my way uphill I managed to rip my track-pants caused by a clumsy fall. After about 20 minutes I still had not given up on getting the story. *Dadi* invited me to her house for a cup of *namkeen chai*. The next time I met Anubhuti she was telling me how clueless the villagers had been about cosmetic herbs and how she had instead advised the young girls on cosmetic products available in the cities. She suggested anti-wrinkle cream to several old ladies of the village.

By now the group had expanded to seven and all of us gathered in *Dadi's* hut for a filling meal of *namkeen chai* and *sattu*. The tea tasted like soup and provided extraordinary insulation from the cold. Even now I didn't give up, and asked her yet again for a *kahani* as *chai* time is synonymous with *kahani* time. This time she spent about an hour explaining to us how *Bhagyavati Mata* visited some 40-odd villages around that area once every 12 years. As dinner approached, we became especially close to her and when the time to leave approached, she broke down. The pain of her loneliness overwhelmed us. Her silent tears spoke volumes. This touched me deep. After an hour of leave taking, the emotional disturbance gradually sunk in. Here was a woman who had every right to live the family life she desired but couldn't. She spoke of the difficult choices her children faced and how she was helpless. Her very soft nature overwhelmed me. Here was a woman who had no stories to tell but became a story in herself. Her last words to us were “take care of your life, your happiness and most importantly your family”. I stood there petrified.



Environment in *paathshala*

Vivek Anand A and Anubhuti Sharma

While our classroom sessions this past month have been engaging, disturbing, awe-inspiring, repetitive, or even boring, we at 'Agenda For Survival 2010' unanimously agree that environmental education in India is highly irrelevant and compromised. While the discourse has been developing the past few years – its health has weakened and the cause defeated.

A landmark judgment of the Supreme Court of India – *M.C.Mehta vs. Union of India*, (W.P Civil No.860 of .1991) ordered that environment awareness be raised through media and academics. As these orders were not brought forth by the government, a review petition was filed in 2003 (2003(10) SCALE 100b) against several State Governments for not complying with the Supreme Court orders of 1991. This ruling was much more comprehensive containing detailed directives on Environmental Education that was to be taught in schools and colleges all over India. Environment Education is now a compulsory subject for most courses with the University Grants Commission (UGC) and National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) having framed a 'detailed' syllabus on 'Environment Studies'

The course comprises of eight units which are of a multidisciplinary nature - On Environmental significance, Natural Resources, Ecosystems, Biodiversity and its Conservation, Environmental Pollution, Social issues and the Environment, Human populations and the Environment and a field trip. All set in theory, the reality as we realized is something else.

The UGC's vision nostalgically reads, "It is now even more critical than ever before for mankind as a whole to have a clear understanding of environmental concerns and to follow sustainable development practices". Keeping that in mind, it can be argued that environmental education in our country is replete with fallacious policies both at the conceptual level and at the implementation level.

At the conceptual level, the approach adopted regarding environment education simply pays lip service to the institutional directive. While its careful terminologies are appreciable, it has marked loopholes. A casual interaction with several college students tells us that many of them do not know that they are supposed to study environment as part of their curriculum. And the few that are exposed to it have to sit through archaic lectures that are inspired by a



very narrow understanding of the issues. Furthermore very few colleges in Delhi University teach courses on the environment. Similar is the case with many other universities in our country. A student of Pune University states that for the field trip they were taken to the hill behind their college and "Everyone went there just for the sake of compulsory attendance!"

Not unlike many other academic programs in India, environmental education is usually far removed from the ground realities and often overlooks regressive state actions. The underhanded conspiracies of the pollution regulating institutions in India, the several 'anti-people' draconian environment 'protection' Acts that have been passed and the failures in the current situation of many government projects is cautiously eclipsed in the syllabus. In such a scenario a civil engineer constructing a gigantic dam, is usually in the dark about its disastrous aftermath or how to remedy it.

Lastly, the flaw which can be called the 'nail-in-the-coffin' is that teachers and policy makers have failed to understand or have simply ignored the sociological perspective. Many colleges reduce environment to technical terminology disengaging nature with the socio-economic aspects. With such vital defects students cannot be expected to develop the absolutely necessary interdisciplinary understanding. As aptly remarked by Dr. Rohan D'Souza, Assistant Professor, Centre for Studies in Science Policy JNU, "We are victims of an Education system that constantly puts us in isolation." The universal presence of this compartmentalized educational paradigm is the largest stumbling block towards creating a curriculum that can inculcate in young India, an honest and critical understanding of the environment.

No wealth for commoners

Padmasai Lakshmi B

Now in mission mode to achieve world-class status in time for the Common-wealth Games, the Delhi government is altering the physical and social landscape of the city. The poor happen to be inconveniently in the way of the beautification drive – ‘Illegal settlements’ are being pushed to the margins, away from public gaze.

On a sweaty day in June, I visited two clusters of roughly 15 hutments each that face an especially precarious situation these are not formally recognized slums, but informal hutments. Located across the Nigambodh ghat, on the banks of the Yamuna below the metro line, the slum dwellers live under the constant threat of relocation. These urban landless live on land owned by the Public Works Department (PWD) and are termed as encroachers.

It was only a few months back that over a dozen families were evicted from a slum called as T-Huts near Shastri Park, just beneath the ISBT interstate bus terminus flyover in north Delhi. The slum dwellers had been living there for long. They had ration cards, voter IDs other identity cards scraps of paper that serve as proof of their existence. Farzana Begum, a resident for more than 10 years, recalled the day the families were asked to move. One morning some eight months back, the police arrived to serve an eviction order; residents were given 24 hours to clear out. They had not been served any prior notice. The next morning a police posse arrived with bulldozers and started pulling down their houses. Those who protested were beaten. Even a frail old woman was not spared, and four were jailed for resisting.

Their pleas to let them stay till Diwali, only ten days away, fell on deaf ears. Some managed to pack their be-

longings but many could not. They moved to the patch of land beneath the metro line, where they now live. The river Yamuna, reduced to a sewage drain, flows nearby, carrying the city’s unwanted, untreated waste of residents. The children are sick with respiratory and skin ailments. Farzana Begum smiles and says, “They (the authorities)

call us *gande naali ke keede*. But the urban people are the ones who pollute this water; for us it’s sacred.”

Farzana’s husband, Mohamad Alam, said the slum dwellers put together some money to install a hand pump, which yields yellow, stinky, toxic drinking water. Once in a while a water tanker reaches them, but somehow they are even excluded from having access to such a basic amenity. It has been three months since her four-year-old daughter, Savana, has been coughing. Farzana took her to Jag Parvesh Chandra Hospital, four kilometres away, bought expensive medicines, but the cough persists. Meanwhile, Alam takes up odd jobs to feed his family. Other residents are engaged in small agriculture along the Yamuna’s banks, some eke out a daily wage through manual labour, and others pull cycle rickshaws, while some do temporary jobs.

Farzana just got Savana admitted in a school nearby which is run by World Vision, a church-based charity. But they again got an evic-

tion order from the police again; this time the date is 28th June.

The same story plays out in every slum cluster on the Yamuna’s banks, where people live amid dust and stink, consume unhygienic water and live in transitory shelters, under constant fear of eviction even as the city gets set to roll out the red carpet for the ‘Commonwealth’ games.



Hopping on, hopping off

The Delhi public transport saga

Avikal Somvanshi & Nidhi Adlakha

On 22 June, 2010 The Indian Express Newslane read: “The hop-on-hop-off to Qutub – Metro to Gurgaon becomes a joyride on Day 1, many make multiple trips”

‘Joyride’ is precisely what the Delhi Metro is turning into instead of an effective means of public transportation. After thousands of crores being spent on this mass transport system, fact remains that the metro is an underutilized gimmick that is accessible to very few. Roads in Delhi are continuously getting more congested, and pollution levels are increasing. What is going wrong then?

Mass rapid transit systems (MRTS) They are the only viable, logical and equitable option in a city’s transport design as they are cheaper, enable faster mobility, reduce traffic congestion and significantly reduce pollution levels.

Road space in Delhi is 21% of the total available space, and there is little scope for future expansion of roads. To accommodate the increasing vehicular population on Delhi’s roads, the government has resorted to allocating majority of its financial resources for construction of flyovers, wider roads and the Metro.

The present design of Delhi’s transport pattern is such that it provides minimum benefit to buses and enables private transportation. Cars have replaced buses on the roads and cyclists have switched to two-wheelers and motorcycles. This changing pattern not only increases traffic congestion but pushes pollution levels to new highs. Buses are the cheapest mode of public transport. But very little has been done to make them acceptable and financially viable.

Exacerbating Delhi’s traffic

predicament is a rapid growth of private vehicles. This phenomenon is driven by the dual vectors of immigration and affluence. However, city planners have resorted to implementing mass rapid transport systems to address the city’s traffic woes. The first preference was given to the Metro. The Delhi Metro’s first phase was completed in 2006. The Metro was aimed at serving Delhi first and is in the process of extending its services to the entire the national capital region – Noida, Gurgaon, Faridabad and Ghaziabad.

The Metro was created for a capacity of 80,000 persons per hour/per direction. In reality, only 10,000 avail the services and it is still congested. The Metro as a transport medium is fixed and benefits people living in close proximity to the stations, which is a very small part of the population. “Why should I take the Metro when it takes the same amount of time if I take my car? I don’t have to go through the hassle of changing trains and commuting to and from the stations.” said Prateek Dasgupta, a Delhiite. It is such statements that offer an insight into both the myopic policy decisions that mar of MRTS projects as well as attitude of elite citizens towards public transportation.

Like a sequel to a flop movie, The Bus rapid Transportation System (BRTS) was added to the ongoing Metro project as authorities realized the Metro system and was failing to address the existing transportation problems. A cheaper BRTS at the cost of Rs. 8.5 crores per km was implemented; the Metro costs Rs. 175 crore per km. “With the thousands of crores the Delhi Government has spent on the Metro, 80 premier medical insti-

tutes like the AIIMS could have been built which would have greatly improved the health scenario of Delhi”, said Sandeep Gandhi, one of the principle designers of the BRT corridor. Mr. Gandhi’s frustration is justified since the metro has failed to reduce the use of private vehicles and congestion on Delhi’s roads.

The purpose of mass transport system is defeated when people spend more time travelling to-and-fro from the stations than on the journey. The need of the hour is to create an efficient transport system that reduces travelling time at all stages of the journey, which the Metro or closed BRTS fail to address. The system should give people the option to choose their desired modes – walking, cycling, taxis, car, bus or train. A system should be heterogeneous in nature and allow for equitable access and usage of road space, while being affordable. Furthermore, it should discourage private automobiles while creating various incentives for public transportation. “Paris has an excellent public transport system with speed limits that favour buses and the system encourages pedestrians and cyclists, automatically discouraging cars on roads.”, added Sandeep.

One system that effectively discourages the use of private vehicles is the open BRTS. Buses being the most flexible and cost-effective mode of intra-city transport are prioritized and the other modes are facilitated in ways more than one. Firstly, in BRTS all modes of transport are given exclusive lanes according to their load carrying capacity. Special lanes are demarcated for pedestrians and cyclists that help reduce peak hour congestion as there is a homogenous flow

of traffic. Anjor Bhaskar, a student of environmental development, an avid cyclist says, “As a cyclist on Delhi roads I have always felt like a third class citizen and the new BRTS lanes give me an immense sense of pride and freedom. I no longer feel inferior and hope to see many more of these lanes.”

The transport structure in India is developing in such a way over the years that it caters to the idiosyncrasies of the elite. The city is being ‘metroized’ instead of being mobilised. “I prefer travelling by the Metro as it is safer, cheaper more convenient and most importantly its air conditioned.” said Anukampa Gupta, a student. On the other hand we have a large majority of pedestrians who have been pushed off our roads and their footpaths have been encroached by hawkers and two wheelers. The culture of walking in India’s cities is being pushed off the roads and into malls and parks. “Streets today are so dangerous that I can’t imagine taking my three-year-old granddaughter for a leisure walk let alone a casual walk to the local supermarket.”, says Kavita Shrineth, a resident of Saket, a colony in South Delhi.

The BRTS has run against the enforced psychological barrier of the population although, it holds a possible solution to the traffic problems. The major setback has been the fact that people have expected it to be a replica of the elitist Metro. The city is

proud of its world-class “toy” that has come at a huge cost and chooses to overlook the fact that it has been ineffective in reaching a wider segment of the population.

These two mass transportation systems have failed in Delhi. One fails to address the city’s transportation needs while the other collides against the popular notion that buses are inconvenient and unglamorous, therefore failing to address the situation. People at times do not realize that they spend more time travelling to and fro from stations and bus stops than the journey. A system like the BRTS considerably reduces travel time as the system’s flexibility enables a commuter to use with varied options to access the BRTS. Buses as a transport system have the advantage of reaching residential areas via multiple routes. The bus routes cover the city far more extensively than the fixed Metro tracks.

In 2001, 60% of Delhi’s population used buses on a daily basis. The figure showed a stark decrease and by 2009 only 43% people were using buses and as of 2010 only 41% of Delhi residents use the bus as their mode of transport. State policies are meant to encourage the use of public transportation whereas these systems have had the opposite effect. Startling statistics show that use of buses reduced almost 20% in the past decade. The blame, however, doesn’t lie with the government alone. Citizens are to

be equally blamed for the current scenario. The struggle between the city plan implementers like the municipality officials, traffic police and every day people at the crux of the issue. Those who are supposed to use public transport never seem to conform to the expectations of the planners. People continually flout rules and view traffic rules as something that restricts their mobility. That’s when things like jumping red lights and crossing road barriers takes place. BRTS also subtly advocates paradigm shift in how people view urban transportation. Most people refuse to change their mindset and adapt to new changes that are meant for their betterment, which was reflected in their refusal to accept BRTS in the trial phase. Kailas Singh, a blue line bus conductor sees no difference in the traffic scenario post introduction of the BRTS. He said, “If there can be a change in the city’s traffic it will be because of the many flyovers the government constructs and not systems like the BRTS. *Flyovers se hi traffic kam hota hai*”.

People and the media will continue celebrating inaugural ‘joyrides’ such as that of the Huda City – Qutub Minar Metro Link which was saw 30,000 commuters on day 1 while its design capacity is multi-fold. As Sandeep rightly put forth, unless people accept transformation and understand its implications, such projects will remain a grand dream.”



Women on wheels

Richa Joshi



"I felt liberated for the first time in 31 years of my life. I went home yesterday and my husband threatened me that he will not spare my life if I go back to cycle, but here I am."

-Sunita Yadav, Age 31, on her experience of bicycling for the first time under the Bicycle Partnership Program (by Transpor Research and Injury Prevention Program (TRIPP)-IIT Delhi and ICE Netherlands, documented by Institute for Democracy (IDS) and Socialscienceand Social Action & Training (SAT))

Speed is the mantra for modern India. Be it the GDP growth or the vehicles on our roads, everyone is trying to grapple with speed. City roads mirror the disparity in contemporary India. Delhi adds 1000 vehicles to its roads every day, eating up precious road space as the government wrestles with congestion and coffers are emptied for flyovers. Already, motorized private vehicles are beginning to dominate the transport mix on our roads. A 2008 survey showed that about 45 per cent of people in Delhi were bus users, (it was 60% in 2001).

For women, mobility poses a special challenge. On the urban Indian roads her patience gets tested. The biggest impact is on women who belong to the low income group. Their mobility is much less than the men in the same socio-economic group. According to Dr. Anvita Arora, the issue of gender in transportation is of prime importance; women after all account for 70 per cent of the world's poor. Public transport prioritizes the needs of men while overlooking the mobility needs of women.

As it is, public transport in a crowded metropolis is an agonizing experience decrepit buses, erratic footpaths, poorly lit shelters, improper feeder services, large flyovers

the struggle is endless, and especially so for women from low-income households.

Anita Kapoor, director of the NGO SAT points to the social injustice concerning the mobility choices

for women. *"If a house has a bicycle, it has to be with the man of the house. She is not only burdened with household responsibilities but also suffers subjugation from the social and physical environment enforced upon her. As a consequence women choose the slower and less expensive modes of transportation as compared to men. This also forces them to look for work in the vicinity, limiting their options."*

She narrates the disturbing events of how women participating in workshops to promote bicycling, were suppressed at home. At most times the



resistance came from men threatened by such direct ways of women empowerment.

Women's mobility comprises a complex nature of travel than that of men. She often makes shorter trips and has multiple stops. Public transport services fail to recognize this very essential need of hers. She needs to multi-task in the household and in their community.

"Bicycles can help women fulfill their needs of multiple trips resulting from her very nature of socio-economic needs. Women from the low-income strata can especially benefit from this mode as it has a negligible cost," says Dr. Rajendra Ravi, director of IDS, which works for the rights of captive cycle users.

Cycling is faster and a more efficient means of mobility. Ravi cites the success of a programme in Tamil Nadu where women were distributed cycles during a literacy program. *"At the end of the programme, women did not only become literate but also self sufficient to find work on their own. This example has become a model for many women-centered training programs across India."*

In places like Hazaribagh in Jharkhand and Alwar in Rajasthan, girls in schools were given free cycles. According to Dr. Vishwanath Azad, from Hazaribagh, "Initially

girls faced a lot of mocking and embarrassment, but because they rode in a group, they could face the situation courageously."

Cycling can improve women's earnings; conversely, the lack of access to mobility can push women to poverty. A study on the relocation of squatter communities to the outer periphery of Delhi with poor public transport found the move was especially damaging to women. Female unemployment in the new squatter camps rose by 27 percent compared to 5 percent for men.

Cycling is efficient and an inexpensive mode of transport. It can give a woman freedom of movement, bringing her dignity and self-reliance. But the fact remains that the cycle is not the most preferred mode of transportation. A study by TRIPP, IIT-Delhi and IDS in Delhi in 2005 found that of the 1000 people from low income group interviewed, only two were women bicycle users. Several women knew how to cycle and had done so in their hometowns or villages, but had stopped cycling after migrating to Delhi.

Dr. Anvita Arora says safety, patriarchy, lack of dignity for cyclists, harassment, inept bicycle design, gender insensitive infrastructure are the prime reasons that keep women from cycling.

Some attempts are being made to put more women on wheels. IIT-Delhi, for instance, has created the country's first dedicated, cycle-friendly track running alongside the city's controversial dedicated bus corridor. On average a cyclist takes about 30 minutes to cover 5.8 km, roughly the same time taken by a motor vehicle to cover the same distance in peak traffic.

Sandeep Gandhi, the corridor's architect says providing such infrastructure directly empowers pedestrians and cyclists. And it costs little and utilizes space that is unusable in the present road conditions. *"Most of the crores of rupees spent by the government goes into developing car lanes. The greater objective of these projects is the equitable use of road space."*

A rally organized by the National Cyclist Union in January this year on the Bus Rapid Transit System corridor, women participants were jubilant. Radhika Pandey, 24, a student cycling for the first time on a cycle track, was thrilled. *"It's a smooth ride to be here. Even though motorcyclists come into the lane, they have to comply with our speeds because the cycle lane is too narrow to overtake."* She said she preferred a dedicated cycle track to riding on mixed traffic lanes for safety and convenience.



There are two stories

One begins on the majestic slopes of the Himalayan foothills. It is a story of epic proportions. Men and women of a small Garhwali village are exhibiting the audacity to doggedly protect their relationship with the natural world. Their resistance, it can be argued, is helping sustain the fragile mountain ecosystem they call home, and we call “nature”. Through a participatory *van panchayat* the villagers of *Makku* are making the statement that the marginalized and oppressed throughout history have made: *We should have the right to utilize our own resources, in ways we see fit*. The forest to them is their only capital, their only insurance. But their lives aren’t easy living on a Himalayan ridge and farming off stepped plots. They lack many of the amenities that people in urban centers take for granted. And with easy access to cheap technology, especially cell phones, they are more than ever aware of the “luxuries” of the outside world. Yes, they are eking out lives in this isolated valley, but given the chance would they move to Dehradun and Delhi? Is money after all just money – whether you get it from working at a Delhi construction site or you get it from tending to the forest? As we found out from the village youth that stood bemused at the presentation by the van panchayat, they just wanted to leave as soon as possible. As one of them wryly noted, “I wish we had a dam here. Then at least we would have jobs.” Who had the moral higher ground, the elders that defiantly stuck to their mountain, or the youngsters that wanted to experience “a better life”?

The second story really begins in many different places. It starts with 1991 and structural adjustment, it starts with the building of big dams, it starts with the creation of education policies that create workers, instead of citizens – and it begins with 30 young Indians from all over India meeting at its capital, to be asked some startling new questions. It is about self discovery and looking for connections. And also a humbling realization that we belong to an elite minority that has both the luxury to self evaluate as well as the ability to affect the oppressed majority with our lifestyle choices. It consists of moments of poignant clarity and hours of confusion and denial. Why had everyone failed to mention to us the consequences of our “stuff” filled homes and cities? However, the climax of this story consists of an attempt at reconciling the conflict between realizing that we were part of the problem and envisioning possible solutions. While the effectiveness of our attempt remains debatable, the inspiration behind it is startlingly honest.

80

So, what is 80:20? It is a symbol. It is a definition. In a way it is a tribute to our past one month. A time where we discovered how few live with a lot, while a lot hardly have any. It is our way of bearing witness to the duality that we feel exists in this nation. However, it is also merely a statistic and in its most quantized avatar states that 80% of this nation's populous have access to just 20% of its resources, while 20% wield the power to use 80% of the natural and human capital. And our magazine remains true to this idea. Even as one segment chronicles the trials and tribulations of the bottom 80%, and their reactions to the ever changing variables of development – the other is a spectrum of stories that criticize, evaluate and reflect on the top 20%.

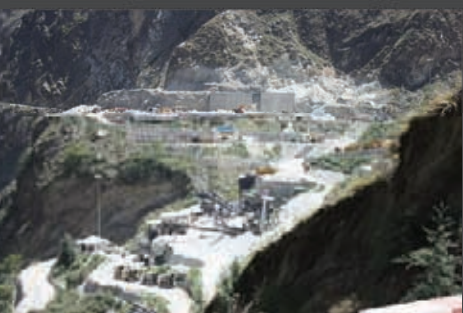
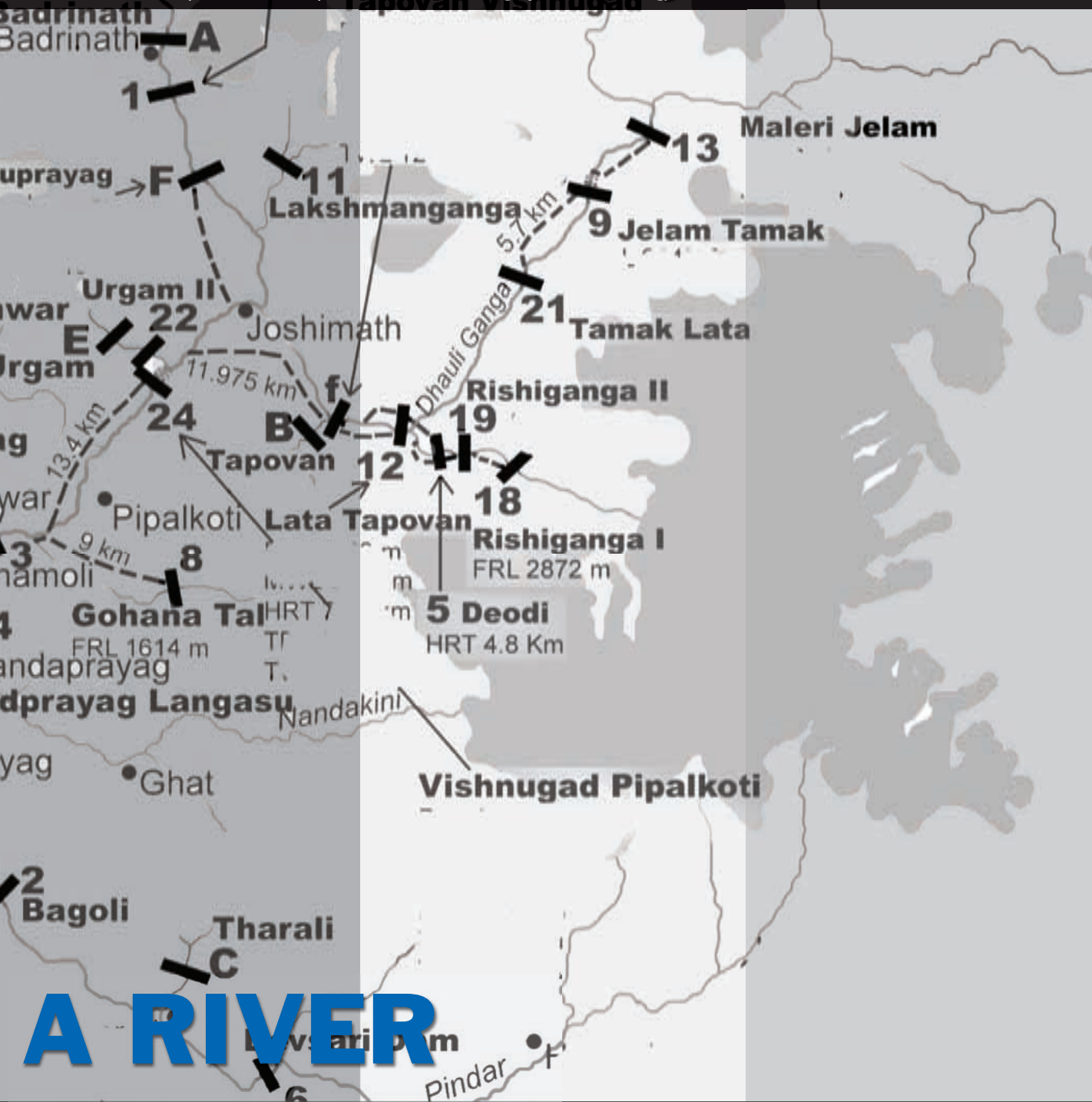
And what about the stories? Team AFS 2010 will unanimously concur that the stories did not come easy. Our classroom sessions taught us that being 'pro-poor' is the essence of being 'pro-environment.' We can say this with a conviction because we were made to understand the dimension of 'equity'. Our field trip to Uttarakhand, where the landscapes and life-skills had changed confirmed why there is an urgent need for reconciliation in this divided nation. As we searched for our stories, our own lives were examined and the lives of those who we met were viewed with sympathy, empathy even, and criticism. So if a group of young Garhwali boys dressed in Levis and spiked hair, in a remote village surrounded by lush forests told us "*We wish the govt. hadn't made it illegal to cut these trees at least then we could have made some money off it!*" – We understood. A smiling elderly widow seated at a handloom told us that she was more secure now than in her youth as she was employed – We understood. We even understood the hostility in some amidst the welcome at another, but most importantly we understood that making sense of the situation must include every person and situation that we are in.

The climb to *Makku* is surreal. The mountains seem to float on the clouds. As we walk up terraced fields, slate houses greet us. The digital cameras in our hands go on overdrive to capture it all. An old lady rings the bell at the village temple. Children look at us as if greeting animals in a zoo, responding to the same exoticism that we find in them. Our differences are apparent. We could be from a different planet. The chasm between us is huge. And even as we stand with a mixture of awe and confusion the old lady looks at us – and her dark stained lips curl into a smile. Suddenly for that moment, there is a bond – an elusive and fleeting bridge is formed. Is reconciliation possible after all? Days later when this was being written that moment came back to us in a classroom in CSE when Sunita Narain said, "Have you found some solutions? Or more importantly have you learnt how to reframe the questions?" *We think we have.*

cut up and twisted and turned into something so gory that it was impossible for us to watch. Those few cries of protests were too feeble to be heard.

And now your daughter Ganga is slowly fading away. Her life-transforming waters have bestowed *moksha* on many, but for her death is unavoidable. **Can we do nothing but sit and watch ?**

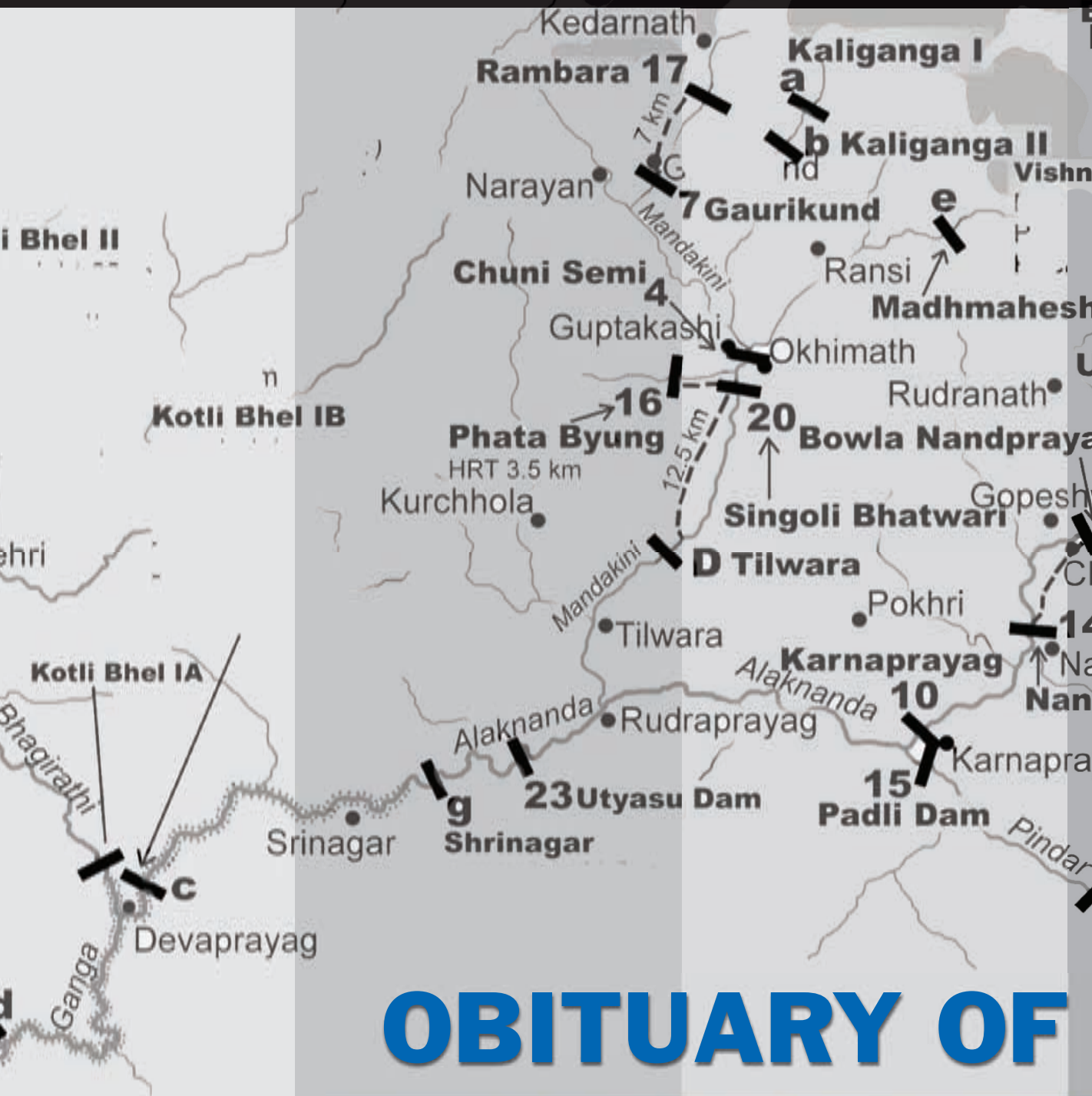
Text: Denise Pereira, Gabriella D'Cruz, Avikal Somvanshi Photographs: Serena Thangjam



In loving memory of our beloved mother, River Alakananda. Your unconditional blessings had nurtured us for over a hundred thousand years, giving your children hope, love and sustenance. You were taken away too soon; now all we can do is suffer in remorse, knowing all too well that our intertwined destinies are now at a loss.

We should one known that your existence was damned from the very day man's ravenous greed got hold of you. What sadistic pleasure they seek in deriving temporary benefits, so small in comparison to countless lives you have provided for.

In a world filled with ironies, your bounty has provided for millions yet only a few seek monetary vindication. You were



Hawker games

Pankaj Bhadana



Hundred and two street vendors were evicted from Pankha Road, near the Uttam Nagar bus terminal in West Delhi on May 21st 2010. This drive was carried out by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) with the police. *“Even before eviction, harassment from the police and the authorities was very common,” says Manikchand, who has been a vendor at the same spot since 1990. “They even demanded money but now, with absolutely no sources of income left, matters are worse.”* Similar eviction drives aimed at removing all street vendors have been carried out in the nearby areas of Sagarpur and the Janakpuri street markets. Even the Monday weekly market at Jeevan Anmol Hospital, Mayur Vihar, was not spared. At each of these places about 100-200 vendors have been forcibly evicted.

The plan is to make Delhi ‘a world-class’ city before the Common Wealth Games (CWG -2010) to be held in October this year. Recently the Commissioner MCD made a statement in public that all street vendors will be evicted before the commencement of CWG. In all these measures what is overlooked is how our cities are different, both culturally and economically, from other cities across the globe. Instead of incorporating all sections of our society into this mega event it is evident that the MCD is trying to eliminate their existence altogether.

The vendors from Uttam Nagar have not remained silent. They have organized themselves into what they call the “Vikas Sheel Swabhiman Janhit Sangathan” and staged a dharna, protesting their unlawful eviction. Manikchand, “*mukhiya*” as he is called by other vendors, is their president. He has met everyone, from the

chief minister to the local MP Mahabul Mishra and various other MCD officials, to talk about the issue. But these talks have been in vain.

Incidentally, the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors 2009 prepared by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation is where the Government of India recognizes the positive role of street vendors. It also recognizes the need for regulation of street vending by way of designated zones such as ‘Restriction-free Vending’ ‘Restricted Vending’ & ‘No-Vending Zones’, that simultaneously ensures free flow of traffic, smooth



“We had not received any notice about the eviction, our stalls were destroyed and our goods were confiscated”
Manikchand, street vendor

movement of pedestrians and maintenance of public hygiene. The policy states that *“street vendors provide valuable services to the urban masses while also asking out a living through own enterprise, limited resources and labour. They facilitate efficient, convenient and cost-effective distribution of goods and services to public. They also contribute significantly to the local economic growth & vitality of urban economy.”* It also states that *“street vendors help the government in combating unemployment and*

poverty; it is the duty of the State to protect the rights of these micro-entrepreneurs to earn an honest living.”

The vendors of Uttam Nagar claim that their market had no cases of chain-snatching and eve-teasing in their presence. Also their market place is badly littered and used for urination. Despite conveying to the MCD that they are willing to adopt any measures for cleanliness and hygiene if required, they have not received any positive response from the authorities.

Mr. Mukut Sarma is the Project Manager of National Authority of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) an organization representing about 300,000 vendors across 22 states of India. He says, *“The Government never thinks of regulating the number of cars in Delhi to reduce traffic, but they falsely accuse vendors for the traffic problems, as the vendors are weak.”* NASVI has decided to approach the Supreme Court to fight against the ongoing eviction drive that cites CWG-2010 as the reason.

There are several instances in our country where civic agencies, with careful planning, have reformed the circumstances for street vendors to become ‘micro-entrepreneurs’. E.g. Fashion Street Mumbai has nearly 200 shops that provide quality ready-made garments at affordable prices. Similarly, street vendors in Kolkata say there is an upturn after having received lessons in basic hygiene with the aid of civic agencies and the UN. *“Since then, Kolkata street food doesn’t have many chemical and physical contaminants,”* confirmed Ms. Indira Chakravathy, a scientist from the Indian Institute of Health and Hygiene, Kolkata.

Street vendors are an asset to our cities; then why should we sweep them under the carpet for an international event?

Battle for cattle

Ankur Kumar

Nannu, 70, has been living for the last 30 years with his cows in sector-37, Faridabad, Haryana. There has been tremendous urbanization in this area which earlier used to be a semi-urban area with lots of trees and grazing grounds for his cows. Cattle rearing has not been easy for Nannu but this is the only source of income for him and his family. Although he has a small land at his village near Anandpur dairy but 'agriculture is not profitable now', he says. Almost all land that he owned here has been acquired by the government for the expansion of national highway giving a meager compensation without thinking where he and his cows will go.

Urbanization and expansion of city has its pros and cons for these people whose livelihood depends on livestock rearing. Although urbanization increases demand for milk and customers are easily available it has its demerits too. Cattle are not part of any city plan thus they are seen as an extra burden not only by municipal corporation but also the people who come to reside in these areas. There is fight for space, drinking water, electricity, fodder and often the availability of all reduces which has a toll on health of these animals. Subsequently, it is a challenge for those who depend on these milch cattle as a source of income.

Blurring of distinction between stray and domesticated cattle is another big problem in this area which falls along the border of Haryana and Delhi. Cows have a tendency to roam

which otherwise will give less milk says the son of Nannu, Sahab Singh. Pratap Singh, a cattle owner mentions that the municipal authorities are not the only problem. The stealing of cows for beef is also a big problem for the cattle owners here.

Cattle are a nuisance to people who reside in the neighbouring locality. They often complain about the unhygienic conditions and the problem of flies, mosquitoes and odour which lead to diseases. Rajesh, Gauraam, Sunaina and their three children have been living on this encroached land for last 10 years and have been facing



the problems of hygiene and sanitation due to cattle in front of their house. Malaria in children is often cited due to unclean conditions created by these cattle. Also the drain which divides their house from Faridabad into Delhi is not cleaned regularly. Moreover, this drain has become the source of drinking water for these animals in times of scarcity which lead to their diseases.

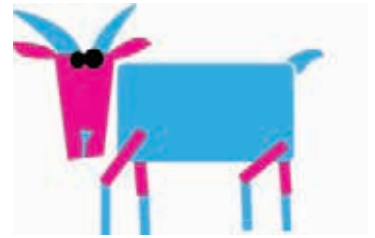
Pratap Singh, a cattle owner, reveals that climate change is also affecting their animals which are sensitive. One of his calves had died the previous night due to excessive

heat. He says sheds are not available now due to lack of space and less number of trees. The grazing land alongside the roads has only exotic weeds which have no use and are poisonous for animals.

Livestock rearing is a noble and sustainable way of livelihood. Apart from milk it provides dung from which cakes are made which reduce firewood demand in urban areas. It ensures food security and balances the nutrition demand for poor families. They consume the organic waste produced in colonies and help reduce waste problem.

Agriculture and livestock rearing have been two major livelihood options for the people of India. With no land left in urban areas for agriculture, livestock rearing remains as the only options for many of these illiterate people. However, with the growing problems faced by cattle and their owners, one is forced to rethink whether cattle have

no right to live in a city or whether cattle rearing is a crime. India is the largest milk producing country in the world. It consists of, by far, the largest number of people involved in cattle rearing and cattle traditionally hold an extremely venerable position in Indian culture and society. The option is whether to blindly outlaw the rearing of cattle in cities or to devise sustainable solutions which help deal with the problems associated with cattle rearing while ensuring that it continues to provide livelihoods to such a large proportion of cities' unskilled labour force.





POWER PLAYERS

At Reni, the Dal was quick to define its roles. Working in tandem with the Van Panchayat, the women here protect and manage their forest and also work towards the village community like organizing marriages and maintaining cleanliness.

REDIFINING WORKING WOMEN

In Guptkashi, we came across Beena working the Tana at a textile shop associated with Appropriate Technology India. She has completed her Inter and has a 9 to 5 job. Working for the past four years she tells us that she is satisfied with her pay.

COLLECTING NEEDS

Women carrying beautifully woven bamboo baskets overflowing with vegetation were a common sight throughout our journey. The vegetation is fodder and the tough climate coupled with gradual depletion of resources is forcing them to cover larger distances to procure this.



SUPERWOMEN of Tehri-Garhwal

IMPOSTOR OR CONSERVATIONIST?

At Reni, Chipko's now troubled birthplace, we met up with Bali Devi, now famous world over as a voice of experience from the real Chipko Struggle but allegedly a nobody according to many locals.

HANDS FULL

Married for seven years, Maheshi Devi is now 25 with four daughters. Her day starts at 5:00 am and it is only after she has filled water for her household, visited the fields twice, collected fodder and fed the cows and attended to her children and household chores, that she can rest.

HEAD HELD HIGH

Dashmi Maithani personifies the spirit of Makku, the village with the strongest Mahila Mangal Dal. A midwife, with two daughters she faces flak from the villagers for not bearing a male child. Yet, she endures the ostracization and continues to stand by for her girls' education and future.

Wrapped in Oak

Pallavi Parihar

Like most people, I believed that silk is produced only by a domestically reared caterpillar larvae (*Bombyx mori*), which feeds on mulberry leaves. In Uttarakhand, another variety of silk is reared in Ukhimath in Chamoli district called Oak Tussar Silk. In the past few years, Oak Tussar Silk production has provided employment to the people living in the forest-amongst the poorest of the poor- and raised their standard of living. For example, elderly Narmada Devi could save money from a few years of making silk besides owning a farm and cattle for milk. It is of a highly democratic and de-centralised model. The Garhwal region's fragile but rich biodiversity is threatened by overgrazing and unsustainable practices of collecting fuel and fodder. The production of the Oak Tussar Silk has led to an increase in the plantation of oak trees (approx 2.3 million in Ukhimath). This in turn facilitates conservation of soil and watershed management. The reasons for the production of Oak Tussar are: oak trees are the only forests available in plenty; they replenish water and, therefore, regenerate forest.

Oak Tussar Profile

Colour: Copper. Texture: coarse and less lustrous than Mulberry Silk.

Species: Tussar Silk Worm (*Antheraea proylei*) which feeds on oak leaves. *A. proylei* is mainly reared on oak such as Yung (*Quercus serrata*), Banjh (*Q. incana*) and Moru (*Q. himalayana*).

Altitude: The western range of Garhwal, between 1300m and 2200 m, and in the eastern hilly tracts, 700m-1600 m.

Tussar Culture

Rearing: The first crop, the seed crop, is reared between May and July,

whereas the commercial crop is reared in October and November. The eggs are collected. Once hatched, the larvae feed on the *kharsu* or *moru* leaves. The larvae go through at least four rounds of moulting before moving onto the next stage. After this they spin themselves into a ring like structure to become cocoons. These cocoons are cooked in caustic potash and reeled to extract the fibre. A single cocoon gives a fibre that is about 3000 m long!

Spinning: The next stage is that of spinning of the yarn. Women are usually employed for this purpose. It is done manually by using a *charkha*, which is often of a poorer quality and the yarn produced is uneven in tex-



ture. Machines are slowly replacing the *charkhas*; these machines will however continue to employ the women to operate them. Quality in spinning is controlled by fixing different Grades (Grade A, B or C). A woman can spin upto 6 – 7 kg of yarn in a day but a zealous one like Narmada Devi can easily spin up to 10- 12 kg as she is paid accordingly.

Dyeing: The yarn is then dyed into a wide spectrum of colours. Natural and chemical dyes are used, but according to 20-year-old Suman, who is employed for dyeing, “*The demand for natural colours is higher in the market.*” Natural dyes are derived from

plant-based extracts, such as *kaphal* leaves (*Myrica esculenta*) for Red, *van mara* (*Eupatorium sp.*) for green and yellow, *dried pomegranate skin* for ochre and grey, *kattha* (*Acacia catechu*) for brown, *indigo* for blues, *kilmodh bush* for mustard yellow.

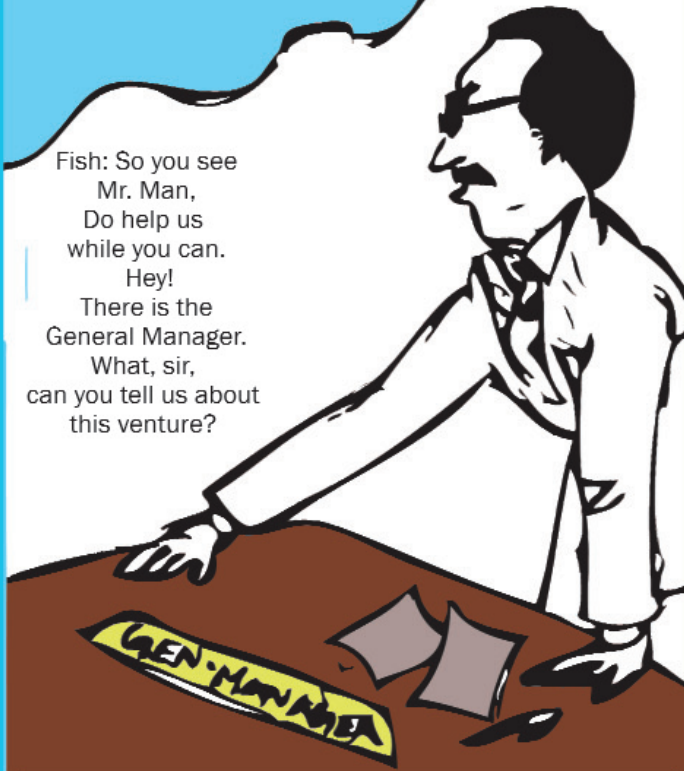
Weaving: The final stage is that of weaving. Weaving is done in three ways: Silk by silk, Silk by wool, Wool by wool. Weaving is typically design based catering to the national and international trends in the market.

Tussar silk is unique as it affords a higher durability because of its coarse texture. *Devbhumi* (the organisation we visited) employs twenty - eight people from Ukhimath and the nearby villages of Mansuna, Mastura, Mohankhal and Agasthmuni. Often well-known designers give complex weave patterns to these skilled weavers. Bangalore-based designer Deepika Govind, was inspired by a photograph she had taken of a native Himalayan bird during her visit to the centre. In the words of their manager, “*It was the most complex weave pattern as yet!*”

A remarkable outcome of the production of Oak Tussar in these indigenous centres is that it has provided a **stable** means of employment to people in the region - a clear indication that the mass migration in search for employment can be avoided if appropriate technology and industry like that of Oak Tussar production is developed. The main producers of Tussar Silk in the global market are China followed by India. While Oak Tussar silk is produced in other states of India as well, it can be concluded that in Garhwal it has maintained a rural economy and brought its people closer to their forests, land and homes. The critical aspect is that it allows people to optimally utilise their own resources.



Fish: So you see
Mr. Man,
Do help us
while you can.
Hey!
There is the
General Manager.
What, sir,
can you tell us about
this venture?



GM :
Boy, I don't think I have the time
A minute I lose, and gone is another dime.

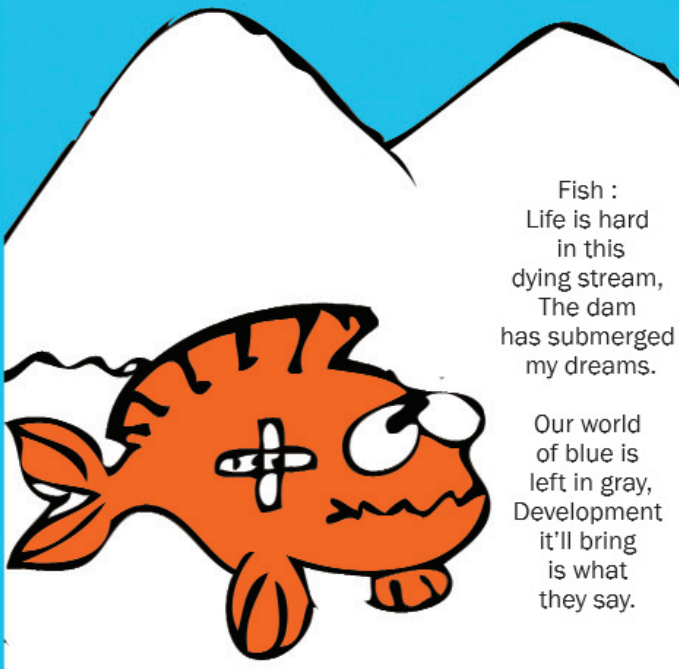
These protests are simply baseless
And about economic growth, they couldn't care less.

Oh fish! I nearly forgot I have a conference at nine
And dinner with friends and some fine wine.



Man - Can there be a way out of this ?
For roads and dams and people and fish,
For a good life at no ones expense,
Maybe a marriage of soul and sense?

But roads for whom?
And where will the river go,
Can these turbines forever flow?
Will the valley remain or drown for the cause,
Is it my gain, or is it your loss?



Fish :
Life is hard
in this
dying stream,
The dam
has submerged
my dreams.

Our world
of blue is
left in gray,
Development
it'll bring
is what
they say.

Birahi Hydro Electric Project is a project located near the village, Birahi, about 200 Km from Rishikesh. The BGHEP will utilize the waters of the Birahi Ganga, a tributary of the Alaknanda river, to generate electricity, which would be supplied to the northern regional grid and then distributed.

By-
Aldrina, Anubhuti, Anjor, Lakshmi
with Ritodhi & Joel
Illustrations-
Preeta with Ragini

Fish –
come
along dude,
we're wasting
time,

I'll show
you more
of
this heinous
crime.



As they
moved
along, a rabble
grew loud,

Mr. Man just
had to
stop by
the crowd,



Crowd –

We've come from
the dying lands
around,

From Jharkhand
and Nepal
where
unemployment
abound,

We work in this hell,
in the mountain's
heart,

Our lives are
chained to
its dying parts.



As they walked on, past sand and rocks,
Through villages in mist and the mountains in blocks,

They came upon, some villagers in pain,
And through the valley they heard this refrain:

Our lives are part of this evil game,
No jobs, or schools or crops, for shame.



Then the
women of the
village
stepped in time,

Like old jazz
birds
they sang
these lines

MMD :
Empty
promises
they
made
About
fat roads,
big schools
and
promenades.

They lured us
to court
in the end
For only
demanding
what
we deserved,
my friend.

And now
we march
on to
the top
of the dam

To jump
off there,
everyone
from
our clan

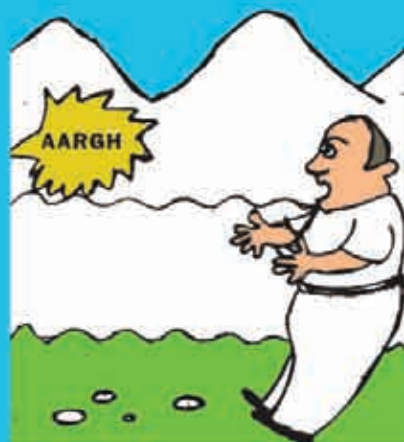
DAMMED VOICES



Birahi, one morning, near the river, at Dawn,
Mr. Man wandered, happy, just rambling along,

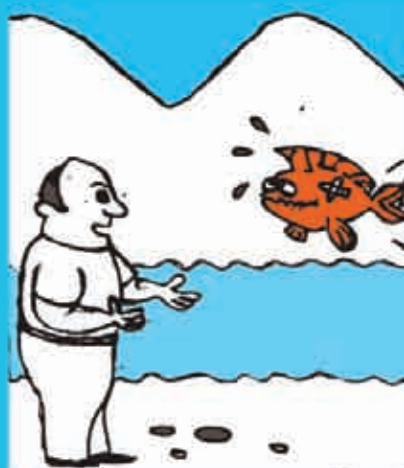
Suddenly,
he heard,
a noise
from the blue,

"Aargh",
he heard,
"Man,
I am talking
to you",



Fish -
I was in a
Surge Shaft
all day

Man -
What the hell,
is that,
by the way ?



Fish :

Think of a tunnel through that hill,
And trust me man, it's quite a pill,

For the river that gets shoved into that hole,
Good way to mess up its watery soul.

No speed limits in that tube of death,
As The water rushes out on its alien quest,

To crash onto the turbines below,
Trust me, it's a messed up way to go.

All to run some ACs downstream,
A fair exchange overall, doesn't it seem?



Man- Damn! That's crazy, tell me more
Fish - Dam is right, and it's on the Ganga, for sure,

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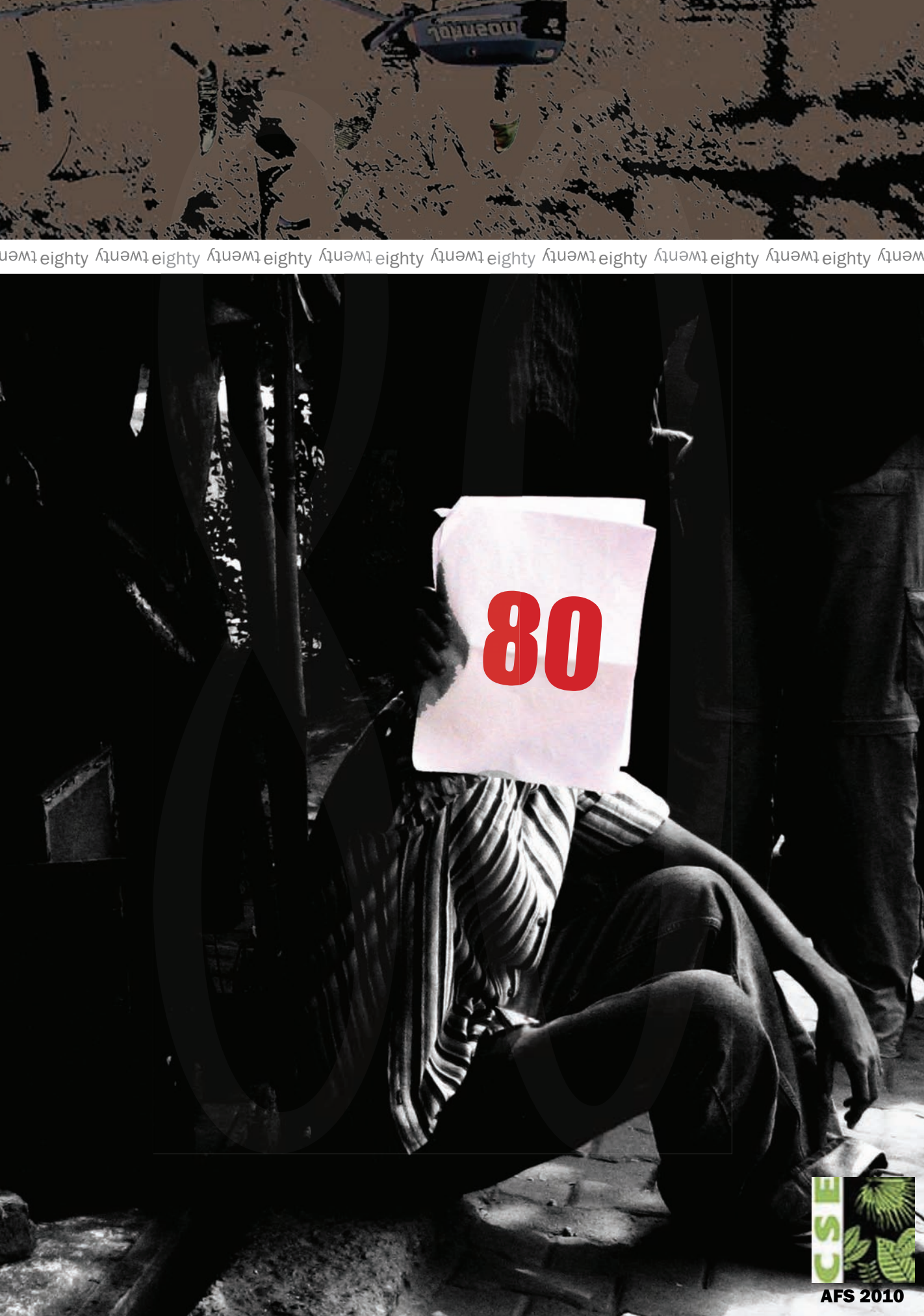
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<div><div>'GOD OF BREAD' BLESSES EVERY HOME.</div><div>FINISH</div></div>	<div><div><div>CORRUPTION and INEFFICIENCY.</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>48</div></div><div><div>BILL PASSED</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>Each BPL family to get 25 kg rice, wheat, at Rs 3/ kg per month.</div></div><div><div>UPA 2 proposed the NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY BILL</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>ADDITION OF OIL AND PULSES in all centrally sponsored schemes</div></div><div>42</div></div>	<div><div><div>FOOD GAME</div><div>Swastina Bhawdwaj with Avikal Somvanshi</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>17</div></div><div><div>Problem of water insecurity</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>19</div></div><div><div></div></div></div>	<div><div><div>ANTYODAYA ANN YOJANA 2005</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>30</div></div><div><div>Our PDS basket, LACKS NUTRITION</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>PDS= RICE+ WHEAT "INSUFFICIENT NUTRITION"</div></div><div><div>How to ensure NUTRITION SECURITY?</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>39</div></div><div><div></div></div></div>	<div><div><div>ADDITION OF OIL AND PULSES in all centrally sponsored schemes</div></div><div>40</div></div>	<div><div><div>10</div></div><div><div>Multiplying population = burden on production</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>It serves 330 millions.</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>26</div></div><div><div>Dilemma of TARGETTED vs. UNIVERSAL approach</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>28</div></div><div><div>Do you know the number of poor in our country?</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>24</div></div><div><div></div></div></div>	<div><div><div>27% of world's under nourished live in INDIA- MSSRF</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>08</div></div><div><div></div></div></div>	<div><div><div>06</div></div><div><div>Rising food prices.</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>Do you know the amount of degraded land in India? 146.82 mha.</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>31</div></div><div><div>Do you know the number of poor in our country?</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>Our PDS basket, LACKS NUTRITION</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>Each BPL family to get 25 kg rice, wheat, at Rs 3/ kg per month.</div></div><div><div>UPA 2 proposed the NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY BILL</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>ADDITION OF OIL AND PULSES in all centrally sponsored schemes</div></div><div>42</div></div>	<div><div><div>Productivity not in sync with population</div></div></div>
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