



Rotary

NEWS

July 2018



Meet the new
RI President
Barry Rassin and
his wife Esther

Get, set, go!



RI Director C Basker with the new governors at a Rotary News Trust meeting in Chennai.

Picture by K Vishwanathan

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On the cover: Rotary International President Barry Rassin and spouse Esther in Nassau. Picture by Alyce Henson, *The Rotarian*.

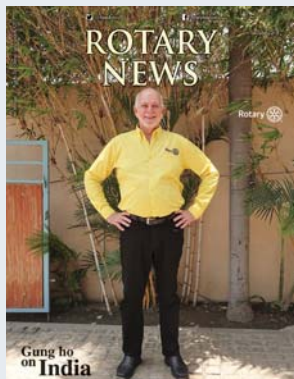


Journalism at its best

It is journalism at its best in *Rotary News* month after month. In April it was Renutai, in May *Learning with dignity* and the June issue has RIPE Barry Rassin on the cover, *Gung-ho on India*. The excellent photography and reporting on different topics and events make the magazine very readable. Two articles were really impressive, namely *Chuck- The Complete Man* and *Small city big projects*.

Soumitra
Chakraborty
RC Tollygunge —
D 3291

Rotary News under your editorship has become a powerful tool of communication, rich in content, with layout pleasing to the eyes. We now see statistics



about other South Asian countries and I'd like to see more news from those districts to make the journal truly representative of Rotary in South Asia.

In the June issue, I was pleasantly surprised to see the review of the book *Aurangzeb: The Man and the Myth* by Audrey Truschke. Sandhya Rao has done justice to this scholarly work. My compliments to her. I love reading the regular column by TCA Srinivasa

Raghavan and the last piece was no exception. Carry on the good work.

PDG Lalit
Surjan — D 3261

Every month I eagerly wait for *Rotary News*. The Editorial, various articles, thought-provoking and inspiring stories, and pictorial presentations, all these make me wonder about the educational background of the magazine's Editor, who pens well-worded Editorials and numerous articles on various Rotary activities that inspire us all. This makes me wonder if she has a PhD in journalism! She manages the Editorial team well; hats off to her and her team, specially Jaishree.

Deepak Agarwal
RC Siliguri
Midtown — D 3240

Over time *Rotary News* has become a keenly awaited

magazine, containing many interesting and useful articles and the June issue is another 'piercing arrow'. Past RI President Charles C Keller has appreciated it for its plain speaking and honest reporting. It is highly commendable that our senior leaders call a spade a spade. In his message, RI Director C Basker remarks, "A celebration need not be ostentatious" which is advice to us to avoid wasteful expenditure. The interview with RIPE Barry Rassin is really appealing; he has such a down-to-earth approach. His monthly connect with club presidents will give a major fillip to membership and Foundation.

K K Dhir
PDG — D 3070

Rotary in smaller cities

It gave me immense pleasure to read the coverage on the devoted and extraordinary efforts of RC Ratlam, D 3040, in the June issue. I joined this club in August, 1973 and it didn't take me too long to convert from a member to a Rotarian, thanks to that committed

group of Rotarians. The 22 years I spent as its member were some of the best years of my life. Fellowship and service made us better human beings. I was only 20 when I joined the club and consider myself blessed.

Since 1995, when I moved to Delhi and joined RC Delhi Midtown, I have

always talked about my home club while addressing Rotarians on membership, service projects or public image. RC Ratlam is a great club and as its Past President (1983–84) and PDG (1993–94), I feel proud to see the club grow under the leadership of devoted Rotarians

(particularly the father-son Anklesaria duo).

Thank you for this wonderful article — *Small City, big projects* — which goes to prove that Rotary in India is growing exponentially in smaller cities as they quietly go about serving the lesser privileged and helping Rotary enhance its public

image. A true embodiment of *Service above Self*.

PDG Raman Bhatia
RC Delhi Midtown — D 3011

'Wash' is best

I agree with the views expressed in *Wash or Wipe?* by Ramesh Bhatia (March issue). It is scientifically proven that a wash is better than a wipe. Indians have been using the wash system for ages, but unfortunately, we are influenced by European culture. In many 5-star hotels in India one does not find the wash system in toilets, even though there are more Indian guests than foreigners.

As we are used to the wash system and don't feel clean and comfortable without it, we have to do *jugad*, such as using mineral water bottles to help wash!

Priyadarshinee Kanoria
RI District — 3011

The May issue has well-balanced content that portrays the entire Rotary world and our humanitarian projects. Apart from that, the issue has carried excellent articles of general interest such as *Dance of Life*, *An anti-ageing pill called exercise*, and *Over fairy chimneys in hot air balloons*. Good coverage is being given to the top brass of Rotary, their visits and guidance to all Rotarians. Kudos to you and look forward to more such issues in the future.

Major D K Zarekar
RC Nashik-Ambad — D 3030

Right way to resuscitate heart

The account of the Samaritan project (*Creating Good Samaritans*) conducted by RC Cochin West, D 3201, VPS Lakeshore Hospital and the Kochi City Police was interesting. Training the children and youth for

cardiopulmonary resuscitation is commendable. But in all suspected cardiac arrests, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is not required and may interfere with proper chest compression. The three important steps are: call for help; continuous, proper chest compression — 100 per minute — after proper positioning of the victim till electric shock-giving AED (automated external defibrillator) arrives on the scene (the final step). Only in cardiorespiratory arrests from drowning or suffocation, mouth-to-mouth breathing is required.

In Mumbai, we are helping the Holy Family Hospital in its 'I Care Project' with a large number of AEDs and educating citizens about cardio pulmonary resuscitation. Kudos to RC Cochin West for the initiative.

Dr Akshay Mehta
RC of Bombay Airport — D 3141

RI President Ian Risley's message was interesting but it is sad to note that 22 cases of polio were reported from two countries. The RI Director and Trustee Chair's messages as well as the Editorial were thought provoking as also other articles including *Chuck - The Complete Man* by Rajendra K Saboo, *Let's not run behind numbers: RI Director* and other detailed reports on Rotary activities were worth reading. Kudos to the Editorial team.

M T Philip
RC Trivandrum Suburban — D 3211

The numbers game

Membership in Rotary is important and every July hectic activity starts in all Rotary clubs to install new office-bearers and induct new members.

But often in the indiscriminate push for new members, club officials forget the admission procedure laid

down by RI. RI President Ian Riseley has sarcastically named this process as 'membership robbery' as related by RI Director C Basker, who has urged Rotary seniors "not to run behind numbers." We need genuine Rotarians who care for humanity and club officers need to understand this.

Dr Sudam Basa
RC Bhubaneswar — D 3262

With reference to PRIP Keller being quoted in the *Editor's Note* on honest reporting, often, Rotarians chairing events add an extra layer of cream to gain popularity. But under the Editorship of Rasheeda Bhagat, the *Rotary News* team cross-checks facts before publishing. While reporting the *4-Way Test Award* to Sanjit Bunker Roy last year, I received several phone calls from them to verify the facts.

Piyush Doshi, RC Belur — D 3291

Young blood

I totally agree with RID C Basker when he says "Let's not run behind numbers." Membership growth to create impressive statistics has led to declining quality of Rotarians over the years. In my club, the 58-year-old RC Madras South, during the mid-1990s, eight new members were inducted on the day of the new President's installation, without due diligence; seven quit by year-end. Failing to attract younger members our club went through a bad phase, and the average age hovered around 65, till we launched project *Operation New Blood*.

Carefully chosen new members in the 40-50 age group were inducted; they took to Rotary like a duck to water. Today the average age of our club is 45 and it is considered one of the most vibrant clubs in RID 3232.

R V Rajan
RC Madras South — D 3232

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor: rotarynews@rosaonline.org; rushbhagat@gmail.com

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Ushering in more gender equity, within and outside Rotary

It is not by design but a random selection of the new District Governors' interviews that Jaishree and I already had in our news basket that we have featured this month's DGs. It is remarkable to note that in these short snapshots, four out of the five DGs interviewed, have put their focus on enhancing women's membership in their clubs during their stint at the helm of the district. One of them — Stuti Agarwal from RC Allahabad, RID 3120 — is a woman and one of the two female governors, the other being Pinky Patel from RC Baroda, RID 3060. Incidentally, this is the first time that India has two women governors in a single batch. Now Stuti hails from not one of India's rocking metros or big cities but a town from Uttar Pradesh, an Indian State not particularly known for women's empowerment. And this, despite UP having returned the highest number of women Parliamentarians — 13 — in the current Lok Sabha. And now one more woman, Tabassum Hasan, from the Rashtriya Lok Dal, has made it to the Lower House through the recent bypoll in Khairana. Three cheers to Stuti's resolve to get women into Rotary in her district, not merely to boost numbers "but ensure that they do the work and are fully involved and participate in our service projects." And she smartly links the recent directives from Rotary's top leadership from both Evanston and India to cut down extravaganza and concentrate on community projects by quipping: "That's why women; they are always cost-conscious".

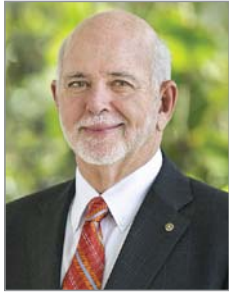
In *Rotary News*, it has always been a delight to feature projects that concentrate on women's education, welfare, and above all specialised skilling to

enhance their livelihood. In this issue too, we report the path-breaking initiative undertaken by the Family Court Judge in Pune, Swati Chavan, who incidentally happens to be a Rotary Peace Scholar, to launch *Swayam Siddha*, a self-empowerment project which is giving special training to women who have been deserted or divorced by men refusing to pay the maintenance granted by the courts. Thanks to the initiative of Rtn Vaishali Bhagwat, RID 3131 is partnering with the Family Court and some NGOs to skill several such women who have now started their own ventures and are making a decent income. In Gujarat, thanks to the initiative of PDG Ashok Panjwani and his wife Meera, a past president of RC Ankleshwar, in this industrial town, girls and young women who had to drop out of school for various reasons, are being specially coached by Pratham teachers, who are paid by the club, to appear for their Board exams and pursue higher education if they wish. Some of the girls, infused with a new confidence, have opted for computer classes, and the club will continue this project. In yet another article, we bring you a project by RC Mandi, RID 3070, which is spreading awareness on the use of biodegradable plates, with the aim to help rural women in Gharwasra village near Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, to earn a decent living, by setting up a leaf-plate manufacturing unit in the village.

As they say 'every drop helps' in conserving water, every project, however small, to help women, educationally, economically and psychologically and boost their self-confidence and sense of self-worth will not only help your community and country, but will also make Rotary a richer, worthier organisation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Rasheeda Bhagat'.

Rasheeda Bhagat



Inspire, to make a better world

Dear fellow Rotarians,

One year ago, the Rotary International Board of Directors adopted a new vision statement, reflecting our aspirations for our organisation and its future. It reads, “Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change — across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.”

That simple sentence distills so much of what is essential about Rotary. We **unite**, because we know that we are far stronger together than we could ever be alone. We **take action**, because we are not dreamers, but doers. We work to **create lasting change** that will endure long after our involvement has ended — **across the globe** and **in our communities**. And perhaps most important of all, we work to create change in ourselves — not just building a better world around us, but becoming better people ourselves.

A quotation attributed to French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry goes: “If you want to build a boat, don’t begin by collecting wood, cutting boards, or assigning tasks. Begin by awakening in the souls of your workers a longing for the vast and boundless sea.” Each of us came to Rotary because we had a longing — to have

an impact, to make a difference, to be part of something larger than ourselves. That desire, that vision for a better world and our role in building it, is what drives us in Rotary. It’s what made us become members, it’s what motivates us to serve, and it’s what led me to choose our theme for this Rotary year: *Be the Inspiration*.

I want to see Rotary *Be the Inspiration* for our communities by doing work with a transformational impact. It’s time to start moving forward, by removing the barriers that are holding us back. Let’s make it easier to make adjustments in our clubs or start new clubs that suit different needs. Let’s work to strengthen Rotaract and smooth the transition from Rotaract clubs into Rotary. Let’s give all Rotarians the flexibility to serve in the ways that work best for them, so that every Rotarian finds enduring value in Rotary membership.

Truly sustainable service, the kind of service we strive for in Rotary, means looking at everything we do as part of a larger global ecology. This year, I ask all of you to *Be the Inspiration* for sustainable service by addressing the impact of environmental issues on our work. The environment plays a key role in all six of our areas of focus, and that role is only becoming greater as the impact of climate change unfolds. It’s time to move past seeing the environment as somehow separate from those six areas. Clean air, water and land are essential for healthy communities — and essential for the better, healthier future we strive for.

Be the Inspiration — and together we can, and we will, inspire the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Rassin".

Barry Rassin
President, Rotary International

Message from the RI Director



Be the Inspiration

Dear Rotarians,

Let me begin by greeting and wishing all of you a very happy and meaningful Rotary year 2018–19.

We must embark on this New Year full of enthusiasm and inspire fellow Rotarians and community leaders with our motto of service above self. Our President Barry Rassin has asked Rotary leaders to “inspire the club presidents, and the Rotarians in your districts to want to change; to want to do more; to want to reach their own potential. It’s our job to motivate them — and help them find their own way forward.” Every one of us knows that we work for membership development by introducing our friends, business associates and neighbours to Rotary. Rotary’s strength is its dedicated members. To achieve the goals we have to inspire our members to do more. It is for each of us Rotarians to get involved with the important projects of our clubs and take pride in our service to our community.

How do great leaders inspire others to commit themselves to their goals? It’s not just that they have charismatic personalities, or that they give powerful motivational talks. What they really do is communicate their vision so forcefully that other people adopt it as their own vision.

During the early sixties, at a time when the US space programme was in its infancy, President Kennedy set his vision... to send a man to the moon, and told the American people “We can do it!” He said it with such conviction that Americans believed it, and committed themselves to making it happen. In less than a decade, the first human being — Neil Armstrong — walked on the moon.

Mahatma Gandhi said, “Be the change that you want to see in the world.” Every moment of Mahatma Gandhi’s life is inspiring. In his young age — the drama of ‘Harishchandra’ was the inspiration for him to speak the truth.

Lee Iacocca took over as the CEO of the sinking Chrysler Corporation and said, “We’re going to turn this company around!” With clear goals, an action plan and the strength of his convictions, he was able to inspire enough commitment from the US government and secure the largest loan ever made to a private company. Then he inspired enough commitment in thousands of Chrysler employees to enable the company to pay back the loan much ahead of schedule. That’s the formula for any leader — clear goals, a pragmatic plan of action and strong conviction.

Inspire by what you believe in

Inspire by leading

Inspire by listening

Inspire by the courage to change course

Inspire by your integrity

Inspire by sharing credit

Inspire by teamwork

Inspire by highlighting Rotary’s success stories

Inspire by recognising good work

Be the Inspiration — and together, we can, and we will inspire the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Basker'.

C Basker
Director, Rotary International

District Wise TRF Contributions as on May 2018

(in US Dollars)

District Number	APF	PolioPlus	Other Restricted	Endowment Fund	Total Contributions	EREY Donors (in numbers)	EREY %
India							
2981	61,156	5,053	0	0	66,209	473	10.9%
2982	89,391	7,758	2,725	0	99,873	528	19.5%
3000	126,435	25,252	402,227	72,677	626,590	2198	43.5%
3011	189,214	1,982	216,298	22,977	430,470	558	18.4%
3012	59,448	6,923	112,590	3,016	181,977	299	8.5%
3020	100,322	25,118	49,950	52,478	227,869	330	7.7%
3030	12,331	22,924	1,050	0	36,305	59	1.2%
3040	16,097	93	54,117	77	70,383	73	3.4%
3053	43,652	78	22,129	25,000	90,859	69	2.4%
3054	109,168	203	315,368	26,000	450,739	70	1.2%
3060	210,031	1,749	263,544	59,538	534,861	1425	37.4%
3070	63,908	198	25,794	1,084	90,985	377	12.7%
3080	158,816	19,351	21,178	92	199,437	240	7.4%
3090	608	0	2,500	0	3,108	3	0.1%
3100*	14,929	0	30	0	14,960	56	3.5%
3110	88,657	3,801	66,931	0	159,388	221	5.8%
3120	98,238	508	50,231	0	148,977	156	5.3%
3131	513,549	11,711	436,773	91,399	1,053,431	1796	35.3%
3132	111,665	1,606	7,875	16,000	137,145	339	7.8%
3141	732,738	28,743	813,300	138,001	1,712,782	1497	29.4%
3142	409,488	18,843	788	(1,000)	428,118	940	34.8%
3150	58,308	12,557	44,750	63,000	178,615	357	10.0%
3160	147,221	1,000	0	16,673	164,894	224	9.6%
3170	84,052	8,300	26,802	0	119,154	440	8.2%
3181	94,449	1,091	0	78	95,618	718	23.7%
3182	82,688	205	40,126	0	123,019	752	23.9%
3190	171,928	59,447	293,717	24,335	549,428	110	2.2%
3201	359,142	18,063	218,827	5,323	601,356	375	7.3%
3202	55,632	16,934	0	2,773	75,339	128	2.6%
3211	200,543	1,100	0	150,392	352,035	223	5.2%
3212	294,123	64,324	32,500	2,000	392,947	656	17.7%
3231	133,393	28,113	188,553	80,914	430,972	96	3.8%
3232	484,681	36,202	163,330	20,300	704,513	545	14.8%
3240	107,706	5,257	0	8,367	121,330	549	18.8%
3250	151,565	214	21,143	11,000	183,922	239	6.8%
3261	64,412	115	46,593	1,000	112,121	174	7.4%
3262	79,521	1,757	28,903	24,864	135,045	298	9.1%
3291	74,282	26,790	109,739	120,794	331,606	123	3.2%
India Total	5,853,486	463,362	4,080,381	1,039,152	11,436,380	17714	13.0%
3220 Sri Lanka	126,428	10,452	12,038	1,217	150,135	601	31.5%
3271 Pakistan	39,401	70,957	11,752	0	122,110	83	5.8%
3272 Pakistan	34,009	3,201	0	3,000	40,210	64	2.3%
3281 Bangladesh	421,353	15,206	385,966	87,037	909,562	742	13.2%
3282 Bangladesh	133,039	12,233	0	3,000	148,273	613	16.3%
3292 Nepal	160,267	27,814	704,104	0	892,185	665	15.2%
South Asia Total	6,767,983	603,225	5,194,240	1,133,406	13,698,854	20482	13.0%
World Total	109,910,268	31,359,856	17,150,234	23,050,514	181,470,871		

* Non-districted

Source: RI South Asia Office



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Call Me **Barry**

Diana Schoberg



Rotary's new president, Barry Rassin, strikes a perfect balance between Bahamian bonhomie and decisive leadership.



Several miles off the shoreline of Nassau, Barry Rassin, the 2018–19 President of Rotary International, balances in the bow of the bobbing *Rat Bat*. There are no colossal cruise ships out here, no noisy jet skis, only the occasional passing pleasure boat and the sound of water lapping against the hull. In the turquoise sea below, giant turtles glide across the ocean floor.

“To me,” Rassin says, “the sea is freedom, it’s peacefulness. When I’m out on the water, everything fades away. You feel like you’re at one with the world and nothing could go wrong.”

A few minutes ago it was drizzling, but now the weak December sun struggles to peek through. The *Rat Bat* sways suddenly in the wake of a passing vessel. Unfazed, Rassin stands perfectly poised, staring toward a patch of blue sky floating on the horizon.

Late in the afternoon of January 12 2010, Rassin and his wife, Esther, were at home in Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas, when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake rocked Haiti, 550 miles away. Shortly thereafter, Rassin got a call from Errol Alberga in Jamaica. At the time, Alberga was the governor of District 7020, which encompasses the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Haiti, as well as several other island nations in the West Indies.

Alberga told Rassin — a former governor of the district and president of the renowned Doctors Hospital in Nassau — about the earthquake and asked him to lead Rotary’s relief efforts. Rassin spent the rest of the evening pacing around his living room as he called other Rotary leaders in the region. In a corner of the room, a television broadcast images of Haiti in ruins — and then, scrolling across the bottom of the screen, came



Rassin loves dogs and gardening. He nurtures mangoes, avocados, guavas, and a wide variety of flowers on his family's property.

the emergency warning that caught Rassin's eye: A tsunami might be headed for the Bahamas, a seismic sea wave so formidable it had the potential to wash over the entire country.

Rassin and his wife walked out onto their second-floor balcony and waited. "At night, if you look out toward the ocean, all you see is lights, stretching down to the edge of the water, and then everything turns black," Rassin recalled in a powerful speech he delivered in January at the

International Assembly in San Diego. "I looked at where the lights ended and the black began, and I waited for the blackness to come toward us and swallow the light."

Fortunately, the tsunami failed to materialise, and Rassin got back to work. Over the next few days and weeks, as Richard McCombe, another past district governor, headed Rotary's day-to-day response, Rassin coordinated long-term recovery efforts funded by donations from Rotarians

The sea is freedom, it's peacefulness. When I'm out on the water, everything fades away. You feel like you're at one with the world and nothing could go wrong.

around the world to The Rotary Foundation. He created a 132-page spreadsheet to track each detail: how much money was available, how much had been spent, which Rotary club was in charge of which initiative. "At the district conference the year after the earthquake, Barry went through the dollars for every single project," says Lindsey Cancino, past president of the Rotary Club of East Nassau, Rassin's club. "It matched to the penny what was in the (disaster recovery) account. I was mesmerised."

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, Rassin worked with Claude Surena, a Haitian doctor and Rotarian who had turned his home outside Port-au-Prince into a makeshift shelter and hospital. There, Surena provided care for more than 100 displaced people. Elsewhere on the island, tens of thousands were dead and tens of thousands more injured. In nightly calls to Rassin and his team, Surena — who, at the behest of René Préval, then President of Haiti, would later oversee the recovery of the nation's private and public health sectors — detailed the medicine and other supplies he urgently needed. And then, each morning, a private plane flew from Nassau packed with the necessary goods.

Rassin decided to tag along on one flight. On the four-hour journey, flying low over the ocean, he gazed out at the limitless blue of the sky and an azure sea dotted with green tropical islands. “It just looked like paradise,” Rassin said in his speech. “And then we came in over Haiti.”

On the ground below, he saw buckled roads, collapsed houses, and entire neighbourhoods turned to rubble. Unable to land in Port-au-Prince, the plane touched down on a grassy strip outside the capital. After unloading its cargo, the plane headed for home. “In a couple of minutes, we were out over the water,” Rassin recalled in his speech, “looking down on that same gorgeous view. Haiti disappeared behind us, the Bahamas lay in front of us, and there we were, in between.”

“And looking down at that water, out at that horizon, I realised that there was no line, no boundary between there and here, between them and us, between the suffering we had escaped and someone else hadn’t. It could just as easily have been the Bahamas. It could just as easily have been us.”

Barry Rassin always felt he was supposed to go into medicine. It was his heritage. His father, Meyer, a notoriously brusque orthopaedic surgeon, had arrived in the Bahamas from England during World War-II to oversee the medical care of the Royal Air Force troops there. Except for some submarine

“I was never a good academic.
Teachers always said I never
applied myself.”



From left: With his wife, Esther, Rassin mingles with fellow members of the Rotary Club of East Nassau.

activity, the Bahamas was outside the theatre of war. Nassau’s Oakes and Windsor fields provided flight training for would-be RAF pilots destined to return to the fighting over Europe.

With little in the way of military medicine to occupy him, Dr Rassin spent time ministering to local residents, including treating people with leprosy who had been exiled from society. This work endeared him to the populace. After the war, he returned to England, but in 1947, a few weeks after the birth of his son Barry, Rassin *père* returned with his family to Nassau to work in the government hospital. In 1955, he and his wife, Rosetta, a surgical nurse, opened Rassin Hospital to better serve their patients.

Barry was 10 when his father had him watch his first caesarean section (“That kind of freaked me out,” he says

today). This was his introduction to the family profession. His older brother, David, would earn a PhD, specialising in pharmacology, and devote himself to researching the properties of breast milk.

As for Barry, he enrolled as a pre-med student at Long Island University outside New York City — and flunked out after two years. “I don’t know whether it was too hard for me or I just had no interest,” he explains. “I was never a good academic. Teachers always said I never applied myself.”

Rassin returned to Nassau and worked menial jobs at the British Colonial Hotel. He started at the front desk — “That was not me” — but was soon relegated to microfilming and delivering office supplies. After a year, Rassin realised he had to make a decision: He could either spend the rest of his life working at the hotel and

living at home with his parents, or he could go back to school.

In 1967, he moved to Miami, enrolled in community college, and took whatever classes struck his fancy. He wanted to figure out what suited him best. “Two days in accounting and I said, ‘This is me,’” he recalls. “It was just so easy. It came to me.”

He transitioned into a business programme, improved his grades, and transferred to the University of Miami, where he earned a degree in accounting — with honours. Later, he received his MBA in health and hospital administration from the University of Florida.

Back in the Bahamas, following several prosperous decades, Rassin Hospital had undergone a decline. After the Bahamas won its independence in 1973, a lot of British expats, including many of the hospital’s patients, left the country. That’s when Rassin, with several years of health administration under his belt (primarily at Miami’s Mount Sinai Medical Center), returned to Nassau once again, with his first wife and their kids, Pascale, Michele and Anthony. His goal was to bring the best in modern medicine to the country — and he planned to do it at a transformed Rassin Hospital.

Charles Diggiss, the president of Doctors Hospital (as the reinvented facility came to be known), covered emergency room shifts there in the late 1980s, when he was a surgical resident at the public hospital. “Barry was running a hospital that was one block away from the public hospital,” Diggiss says. “He had the courage to take that on. There was no promise of success, but

every guarantee that this was going to be frustrating, every guarantee that the physicians were going to be sceptical.”

Looking back, Rassin recounts the challenges he confronted: “It was a battle with my parents. It was a battle with the doctors. It was a battle with my wife.” All that pressure caused the demise of his first marriage, he says. But the friends he made through Rotary steeled his resolve to persevere. “It gave me the support from a group of citizens of the Bahamas who said there was really a need to do this.”

Several years earlier, Rassin was working for American Mediacorp in Hollywood, Florida, when a doctor asked him to join Rotary. Rassin declined. “In my mind, he was at least 70,” he explains. “I was 30. People say new members aren’t joining because we don’t ask. It’s not just the ask. I was asked. I didn’t want to join.”

He changed his mind about Rotary when he moved to Nassau and met John Robertson at a fundraiser for the East Nassau club. Robertson was helping out, and Rassin’s daughters, Pascale and Michele, were participating. The two men chatted, and at the end of the conversation, Rassin accepted Robertson’s invitation to lunch at Rotary. Seven years later, in 1987, he was the club’s president. Michele, the club’s first female member, would take the helm in 2009.

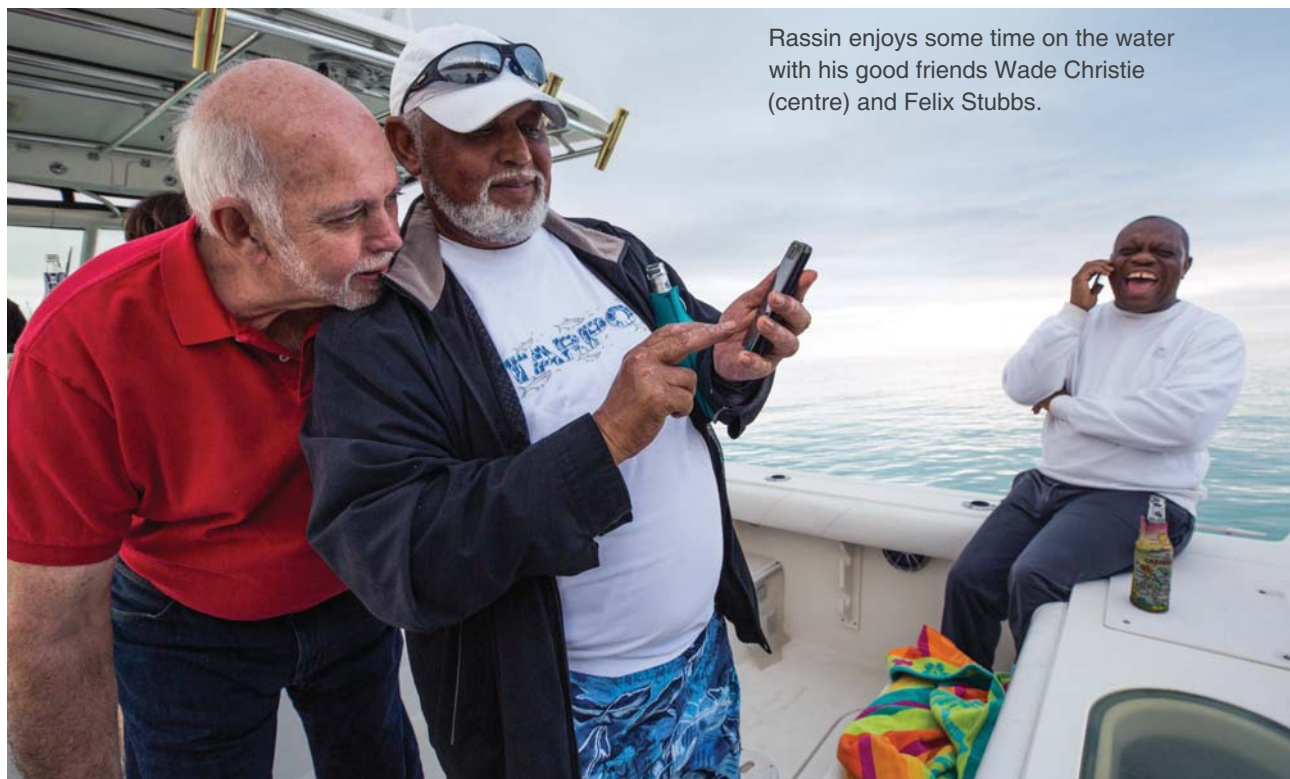
Rassin’s rise through the ranks of Rotary coincided with the culmination

The friends he made through Rotary steeled his resolve to persevere. “It gave me the support from a group of citizens of the Bahamas who said there was really a need to do this.”





Esther and Barry beneath the Queen's Staircase, which was carved by slaves from solid rock in the 1790s.



Rassin enjoys some time on the water with his good friends Wade Christie (centre) and Felix Stubbs.

of his plan to transform Rassin Hospital. In 1986, he worked with a consortium of doctors to buy the hospital from Meyer Rassin and create the newly christened Doctors Hospital. In 1993, under Rassin's direction, it completed an \$8.5 million expansion, and today it's considered one of the Caribbean's leading hospitals.

As all this transpired, Rassin's personal life changed as well when he met and, in 1990, married Esther Knowles. A successful banker, Esther dived into her husband's life at Rotary. When he was district governor in 1991–92, she accompanied him on a six-month odyssey to every club in every country in the district. Their mutual respect and partnership are evident when you see them together. "Esther has always kept me grounded," Rassin says. "As soon as she thinks that my ego is kicking in, she makes sure she kicks it back out. After any speech, if Esther was there, I always ask her how it was. She's

the only one who I know will tell me the truth."

Rassin retired as the hospital's president in 2016, though he continues to serve on its board of directors. In retrospect, the long struggle to make his dream a reality was worth it. "You've got to take risks in this life," he insists. "That's what we're here to do: not to follow the same old path, but to take out your machete, cut away the bush, and create a new way. People here weren't getting good health care. They needed it badly."

"One of the most appreciable things about his journey is watching how he committed himself wholly and fully to Doctors Hospital while maintaining his involvement in Rotary," says Charles Sealy, who met Rassin through Rotary and succeeded him as the hospital's CEO. "To see how

someone can balance the two — except I don't think the word is 'balance,' because he was wholly committed to each of them."

At the hospital, as in Rotary, people recognise Rassin as both a visionary and a detail-oriented administrator. They also salute him as a valuable mentor. "He's good at identifying leadership talent," says Felix Stubbs, a board member at Doctors Hospital who credits Rassin with creating the opportunities that led to Stubbs' own stint as District 7020 governor. "When he sees someone with skills that he thinks could be advantageous to Rotary, he makes sure to pull that person along. That's exactly what he did at Doctors Hospital. He identified good young leaders and pulled them up — and then he was able to retire and dedicate his time to Rotary."

As befits an island organisation, the Rotary Club of East Nassau meets inside a wood-panelled room at a yacht club. Pictures of sailboats bedeck the

walls. Sir Durward Knowles, who, until his death in February, reigned as the world's oldest living Olympian (bronze and gold medals in sailing in 1956 and 1964, respectively), was an active member.

In many ways, it's the ideal 21st century Rotary club: Sixty per cent of its members are younger than 50, and one member is a dual Rotarian/Rotaractor. At a meeting in October, there were so many women in leadership positions that a man didn't come to the lectern for the first half-hour. One order of business: handing out attendance awards. Rassin receives

one for 30 years of perfect attendance. Since joining in 1980, he has missed only one meeting.

Though Rotary has been central to Rassin's life for nearly 40 years, it was never his goal to become president of Rotary International. He was loath to even put his name up for consideration. But, he explains, "the Bahamas and the Caribbean have never had a president, and Rotarians there felt I should put my name in and represent them. I realised that they want to feel part of Rotary, and I was in a position where it was possible. So for them, I thought I should do it."

"As soon as she thinks that my ego is kicking in, she makes sure she kicks it back out. After any speech, if Esther was there, I always ask her how it was. She's the only one who I know will tell me the truth."

Golf is one of Rassin's favourite pastimes.



Sam F Owori, a member of the Rotary Club of Kampala, Uganda, was nominated in 2016 to serve as Rotary's 2018–19 president. After he died unexpectedly of complications from surgery in July 2017, Rassin was selected to take his place.

Among the first people Rassin called was John Smarge, a past Rotary International director from Florida who had served as Owori's aide. Rassin asked Smarge to serve as his aide too. "One of his first sentences was, 'I want Sam's memory to continue, and I want you to help me do that,'" Smarge recalls. "Barry was uniquely qualified to come in at this time. He will allow Sam's memory to shine brightly."

Smarge and Rassin have known each other for two decades. They're from the same Rotary zone and served as district governors around the same time. They worked together closely after the earthquake in Haiti and served as account holders of the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund, a donor advised fund established through the Foundation that supported projects totaling \$6.5 million. "Barry Rassin is a rock star in Haiti — there's no other way to say it," Smarge says. "He's a rock star



Rassin embraces his daughter Michele (right) and granddaughter Bella at a party thrown by Bahamian Rotarians in honour of him and Esther.

“We just wear different hats. I happen to wear the president’s hat this year, but Rotarians all wear the Rotarian hat, and I have that hat too.”

but Barry and Esther Rassin wish another creature would get more attention. The country is home to the world’s largest breeding population of Caribbean flamingos, a species hunted to near extinction in the mid-20th century. At Ardastra Gardens, a zoo and conservation centre in Nassau, the birds parade around a ring several times a day, stopping for photo ops with delighted visitors who perch on one leg to mimic their new friends. Rassin came here as a child, and he has returned many times with his children and grandchildren.

It’s the last show of the day, and Barry and Esther stay afterward for a photo shoot alongside the flamingos. When that’s done, they are shaking hands with the birds’ “drill sergeant” — the gardens’ operations manager, who is also a Rotarian — when Esther remembers something: They didn’t get to stand on one leg like everybody else.

She and her husband, now Rotary’s distinguished president, dash back into the ring. The squawking, coral-coloured birds gather round. Barry and Esther thrust out their arms and lift one leg off the ground. Their eyes lock, they can’t stop laughing, and it looks as if they could remain perched there, perfectly balanced, forever.

because they know what he’s done for that country.”

Rassin may be a Rotary rock star and the pride of the Caribbean, but he shuns the limelight, says his friend Felix Stubbs, and considers himself a regular guy. Back when he ran Doctors Hospital, it was not uncommon to see him roaming the halls in shorts and flip-flops. When he visited recently, this time smartly dressed, everyone — from the staff at the front desk to the doctors and nurses — stopped to say hello. One woman rushed up and gave him a big hug. Another smiled and shouted, “Looking good, Barry!”

No disrespect there — just following company policy. In the early 1990s, Rassin (that is, Barry) asked everyone at the hospital to

address their colleagues by their first names. He recalls that “one housekeeper walked up to me and asked, ‘Can I really call you Barry?’ I said she could. ‘Well,’ she replied, ‘I’ll just whisper it because I don’t feel comfortable.’”

“We’re all on the same level,” Rassin continues. “We just wear different hats. I happen to wear the president’s hat this year, but Rotarians all wear the Rotarian hat, and I have that hat too. We’re all in this game together. We’ve all got to work together no matter what hat we wear.”

The Bahamas is famous for its swimming pigs (Google it, it’s true),

Pictures by Alyce Henson
Reproduced from *The Rotarian*



Our focus: building our Rotary legacy

About a year and a half after I joined my Rotary club, I terminated my membership because I missed four consecutive meetings. That was the rule at the time. I'll freely admit — I didn't care much for the food or the weekly meetings. I didn't think they were the best use of my time. But the real issue was that I wasn't engaged. I had no role, I had no reason to be a member, and I didn't need to go to a luncheon meeting every week that appeared to offer me absolutely nothing.

But then my incoming club president asked me to chair the club's Rotary Foundation Committee for the next Rotary year. That was a turning point for me, and the rest

is history. I want you all to think about engaging those members who have their doubts about Rotary. In 2018–19, I need your help. I want you to join me in focusing on our four core goals for the Foundation.

First, the No 1 priority of our entire organisation (and this won't be a surprise) is ending polio. We must fulfill our promise of a polio-free world to every child.

Second, we must increase the sustainability of our service efforts within the six areas of focus. This means conducting thorough needs assessments. It means working with communities to see what they really need and get them to buy in — to own the project and measure it over time.

Our third priority is to encourage districts to use all their District Designated Funds. Whether through district grants, global grants or PolioPlus, there are many ways to

form transformative partnerships and put these funds to work.

Finally, we choose to build our Rotary Foundation Endowment to \$2.025 billion by 2025. Our comprehensive fundraising goal for the year is \$380 million. These funds will allow us to continue the life-changing programmes that Rotary members undertake every day. But we each need to think about our Rotary legacy. The Endowment is our future.

So please join me, and let's make this a legacy-building year for Rotary. Your legacy, Rotary's promise.

Ron D Burton
Foundation Trustee Chair

App makes Speaking English easy

Team Rotary News

Now one can learn conversational English through a mobile App which RC Bombay Airport, D 3141, has introduced, in partnership with The British Council and English Strokes of former India cricketer Kris Srikanth.

The App offers access to two out of four modules — the Basic and the Beginner level, priced at ₹550 as against the MRP

of ₹1,275, thanks to the CSR programme of English Strokes. Each module has a three-month validity. Learners get online certificates from The British Council after passing an online test at the end of each module.

The App is ready for implementation across India. District governors may contact Rajesh Agrawal, the Avenue Chair for Skill Development, on his mobile: 98204 45542. ■

How was the idea of Swayam Siddha conceived?

When I was judge at the Family Court in Mumbai, a woman High Court judge asked me to identify a woman who was stuck in the corridors of the Family Court waiting for maintenance, who could work as a housekeeper for her. She had got

comfortable quarters in Mumbai and needed help with housekeeping.

I sent a couple of women for the interview and one got a job, free housing and a salary of around ₹15,000. This was at the back of my mind. When I was posted to the Family Court in Pune, I saw that judges are very quick in giving relief to

women who are deserted or undergoing divorce, as they should not wander here and there for money or take a risky job. At least their basic needs should be met by their husbands.

But though we give quick orders, often *ex-parte* if the husband is not present in the court, the woman's frustration doubles as she gets the

order but not the money. Again, another vicious cycle begins... the case comes, the summons is issued, and it goes on. The truth is she gets the order but not the money. So I felt the judiciary needs to get involved to ensure that such orders are executed, and meanwhile the women have some income through their own work. So I thought of

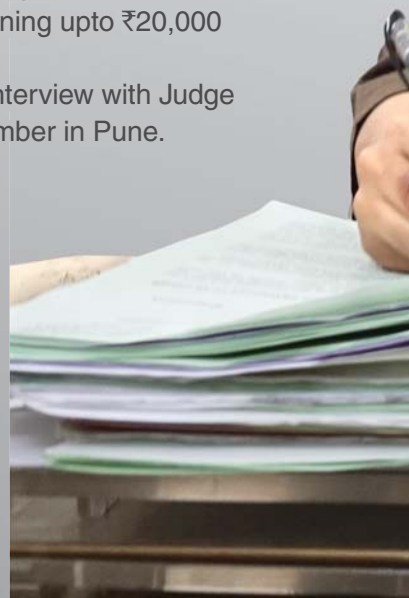
WHERE WOMEN ARE GIVEN WINGS

Rasheeda Bhagat

Judge Swati Chavan, a Rotary Peace Scholar and a judge of the Pune Family Court, is making waves in the economic emancipation of women deserted by their husbands or waiting for divorce, with court orders for maintenance in their hands, but penniless nevertheless as the men refuse to pay up and go in for further litigation. For these women "trapped in the court corridors" for long years, she initiated Swayam Siddha, a self-help programme through which the women are trained in different vocations and helped to help themselves economically.

With RI District 3131 partnering with the court and RC Pune University supporting the programme, it has really taken off and over 50 women have already completed their training and are in gainful employment, with some of them earning upto ₹20,000 a month.

Excerpts from an interview with Judge Swati done in her chamber in Pune.



a mechanism in which the court partners with NGOs, marriage counsellors, trainers, etc.

What was the women's response?

Initially the women were reluctant saying why should we get trained and work; if we do so, then even a ₹2,000 maintenance order will not be

adhered to by the husband. I want that money from him. So this was a mind block and we had to get them out of it, counselling them that don't spoil your life for a paltry ₹2,000, which also you might get in instalments of ₹500, if at all, when you could get ₹20,000 by working. Live your life outside the corridors of the court.

Don't sit here for days and spoil your life. For that orientation was necessary, so it was done and they were made to understand that they have all the fundamental and constitutional rights but their own and their children's lives and future are important. In one such orientation course, one woman asked: Oh, I should work and

We counselled the women: Live your life outside the corridors of the court. Don't sit here for days and spoil your life.

woh baith ke khayenga (sit and eat)?

Oh, is that possible too?

Under the Hindu law, the provision is that any spouse who is economically strong has to give maintenance to the other spouse irrespective of gender. So I pulled out a judgement which said that if a woman deserted by her husband is working to survive, then he can't claim maintenance from her. I quoted these citations in my judgement and explained to the women that your earnings will remain with you. Finally, they were motivated. The other challenge — there were many — was who will

Judge
Swati Chavan



train them. Our counsellors called NGOs for a meeting and the training started, but it was not regulated or standardised... courts don't have funds, we can only pass orders.

Meanwhile after an article was published on Swayam Siddha, advocate Vaishali Bhagwat approached us saying Rotary will finance the training and that was the best thing that happened; you could see the outcome at the meeting today!

So what kind of transformation do you see in these women?

Oh, tremendous! You should have seen how they looked when they used to sit in the corridors of the court... they have now gained so much strength and confidence, they've started dressing up, and when somebody has a low moment, others comfort her. They have lifted themselves. It is not only money, but also strength that empowers women. These 50 women now have the key to open the doors to any difficulty.

How did you become a judge? Was it something planned from early days?

No, I never intended to go into law or become a judge but even from school days, the inclination was always there to help others solve their problems and I got good results.

I did my LLB from Nanded Law College in Maharashtra (1989–90), followed by LLM and M Phil, where

the subject was Women and Law. Next I did my Masters in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from Bradford University as a Rotary Peace Scholar (2013–14).

How did you learn about this Rotary course?

A police officer in my court who was looking after a very sensitive trafficking case and had got such a scholarship told me about it. But I didn't apply then. Subsequently, I got an award from the US State Department for my work in anti-trafficking in the special court in Mumbai in 2011, and a Rotary club invited me as a speaker and then I applied through that club.

How did that course influence you or shape or change your thinking in any way?

The basic fabric was there but now I can see things in a different way,

think deeper and analyse better and differently.

Did you opt for the Family Court; if yes, why?

(Laughs) I did; why is difficult to say! I had worked for the civil and criminal judicial systems, and also in a special court in human trafficking, and did an assignment as registrar in the State Consumer Commission. We talk of international peace, but the smallest unit of peace starts from the relationship at home and then society. If your relationship is peaceful then the family is peaceful,



They have gained so much strength and confidence, they've started dressing up, and when somebody has a low moment, others comfort her.

They have lifted themselves.

If other Rotary clubs form such a partnership, this initiative could spread throughout India.

You don't have to search for needy and marginalised women, you can find them everywhere.

community is peaceful, city and then the country is peaceful.

You came to Family Court in 2011; what has changed between 2011 and 2018 when it comes to the kind of disputes that turn up in family courts?

It is changing every day; take live-in relationships for instance. Earlier when they came into play, people used to look upon it as something dirty but now nobody raises an eyebrow, it is accepted. People are evolving; their needs, demands and outlook are changing. The definition of relationship is changing and it is no longer only confined to a relationship between a man a woman. So, the entire outlook is changing.

What is the major reason for marriages or relationships breaking down?

The woman has always been tolerant and even today she continues to be tolerant. But today she knows her rights. She is adjusting now also, but there was an era where she had no option but to adjust. I'd say even today she adjusts to a certain level but when it becomes unbearable and intolerable, she is coming out (of a marriage). Earlier the scope didn't exist for the woman to ask questions and come out of a relationship like marriage. Now women are on par with men, which will of course take

some more time for the other gender to accept.

Is it due to better education, awareness among women?

Yes. Education is one of the big reasons that she has confidence, knows what is right and wrong and can take decisions. Till now the man was taking decisions for her.

Has the stigma on divorce gone; are families more understanding when a woman seeks divorce?

Yes, in the larger cities the stigma has gone but in rural areas divorce is still a taboo. In cities and among the elite, it is something very natural and accepted. Like a death in the family, which is very unfortunate but we have no other option than accepting it. We also accept that if the person was grievously ill, it is better that life has ended. Relationships are also like that.... the daily fights, children suffering and being affected by the quarrels.

What happens to children in broken homes?

You saw what happened just now (in her chamber); the man is not interested in visiting the child. Of course not all men are like that, but many men don't want to take responsibility.

What role does infidelity play in a broken marriage?

After the onslaught of the social media, this role is on the increase.

And they come for divorce after one is caught?

(Laughs) Sometimes, when they come for divorce on mutual consent both are having affairs and both know each other's affairs and neither wants to wash their dirty linen in public and decide 'you go your way and I'll go mine! I forgive you, and

you forgive me.' For younger couples, the break-up is easier; but for the couples in the age group 40–50, or those married for 10 to 20 years, it is very difficult to break the bond. They are still traditional and with the mindset that marriage is for keeps, lifelong. But the younger generation doesn't think the same way.

What role does domestic violence play in marriages breaking up? Do you see a lot of it happening?

Yes. One of the biggest misunderstandings about this is that people think the domestic violence legislation was intended for breaking up marriages. But the objective is to save the relationship while stopping the violence behind the walls of the home. And invariably the aggrieved party is the woman, so she goes to court to say just that I want this man as my husband but he should not beat or abuse me. But when a woman files an application under the Domestic Violence Act, the husband thinks: 'Okay she is now going for a divorce.' That is the downside. She wants the relationship but says stop the violence. The husband says: 'You've gone to court so get ready for divorce.'

Is yours the first and only family court in the country to do this skilling programme to make these women self-sufficient economically?

Yes, I take pride in saying so. And if other Rotary clubs could come forward for such a partnership this initiative could spread throughout the country. You don't have to search for needy and marginalised women, you can find them everywhere. You just have to extend your hand to help them in a strategic way.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat
Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



An innovative project to empower divorced women

Rasheeda Bhagat

District 3131, under the leadership of DG Abhay Gadgil and Vaishali Bhagwat, District Literacy Committee Chair and advocate by profession, has forged a partnership with the Family Court in Pune to execute an innovative project to skill and economically empower

deserted wives and divorced women.

This scheme is the brainchild of Family Court Judge Swati Chavan, who incidentally, is a Rotary Peace Scholar, who had done her Masters in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from the Bradford University in

2013–14. She explained that very often the courts are quick to grant relief to deserted women or those undergoing divorce, through an order for maintenance, but the men simply refuse to part with the money. The result is the desperate women spending long hours in the

corridors of the court in order to get the money that has been judicially granted to them.

Vaishali explained that while the courts have consistently upheld the right of a woman or a child to be maintained in the same comfort level or lifestyle to which they were used to



while the marital relationship was intact, “the burden of proof, when it comes to proving the husband’s income, lies with the woman, and the men use several tactics to conceal their income and want to pay as little as possible.”

And once a court spells out a maintenance amount, the man invariably disputes it and moves a higher court and the woman, often with one or more children to maintain, is left high and dry and totally dependent on her siblings or parents. “In such cases a woman

can end up spending anywhere from three to even as many as 20 years, to get through the litigation,” says Vaishali.

As Judge Swati explained at the inaugural of the event organised to give certificates to the qualified women, after seeing the hardships suffered by such women, along with Court Counsellor Smita Joshi, she had decided to start Swayam Siddha, a programme to skill such women, so that instead of running after the maintenance amount, which might



Judge Swati
Chavan, Family
Court, Pune

It is easy for courts to pronounce the maintenance award but difficult to get it implemented. Men are ready to go to jail, but they don’t want to pay the money.

Principal Judge **Shailaja Sawant**



or might not come, these women could be economically empowered. “Otherwise their lives are stuck in the corridors of the courts for long years.” Several NGOs were involved in this initiative to train the women in tailoring, fashion designing, packing, beauty care, jewellery making etc.

But the programme was done in an “informal setting” till Vaishali read about this initiative in a local newspaper. “As skill development is an additional vertical in our TEACH programme, along with District 3131 DG Abhay Gadgil we decided to partner with the Family Court to strengthen this programme, and benefit more women,” she says.

The beneficiaries were selected on the basis of their

economic status, educational qualifications and some other parameters.

In the courtroom the women who had successfully completed various training courses had turned up to receive their certificates from the dignitaries. They were neatly and nattily dressed, wearing vibrantly coloured sarees with glittering borders and *pallus*. But more than the attire, the confident smiles they flashed added a special vibration and air of celebration to the spanking clean court room. Past RI President Kalyan Banerjee, who presided over the event, complimented the



From L: DLCC Chair Vaishali Bhagwat, DG Abhay Gadgil, Judge Swati Chavan, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee and Principal Judge, Pune Family Court, Shailaja Sawant.

As a former TRF Trustee, the peace programme was an idea I had participated in many years ago. I am delighted to see a peace scholar like Judge Swati Chavan putting our concept into practice and changing lives.

PRIP Kalyan Banerjee

judges, saying he had “never seen a courtroom as clean as this one anywhere in India.”

There was more than one comment on how there was a sea change in the confidence levels of the women after the training.

Vaishali thanked Judge Swati Chavan for totally supporting the project and “guiding us on how it can be done. We participated in mentoring and motivating the women, who were little reluctant at first to apply for a

course like this but came in after we ensured them that we will handhold each of the participants to sort out problems.”

Family Court Principal Judge Shailaja Sawant, thanked Rotary for partnering with the court to help these women. She said last year when her colleague (Swati Chavan) had put forth this idea to her, “initially I was doubtful but changed my mind after she prepared the plan for implementation of this project. Finance is always required for any project or else ideas remain ideas. But when Rotary came forward to help, it became a reality.”

She said that it is easy for courts to pronounce the maintenance award “but very difficult to get it implemented. Men are ready even to go to jail, but they don’t want to pay the amount. So the idea was to help and empower these women to earn their own livelihood and 50 women have benefitted. I hope this will be implemented all over Maharashtra.”

Addressing the meeting PRIP Banerjee congratulated District 3131 for partnering with the Family Court

in Pune to do this project. “I am delighted to see the confidence and smiles on the faces of the beneficiaries and hope that Rotary clubs across India will implement this wonderful project.”

He added that he was particularly delighted to meet a Rotary Peace Scholar in Judge Swati, “because as a former TRF Trustee, the peace programme was one of the ideas I had participated in many years ago. When I see a peace scholar like you putting our concept into practice and really changing lives, it really enthralls me.”

A couple of beneficiaries recounted how this programme had helped them come out from a life of abject dependence and uncertainty to one where they made a decent income and could now support their children. DG Abhay Gadgil thanked the judges for choosing Rotary as a partner and Pallavi Deshpande, President of RC Pune University, which supports the project, welcomed the gathering.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

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Editors at Evanston.

The one clear takeaway from the World Magazine Press Editors biennial meet was the need for all the 33 regional magazines to adopt a more uniform look and feel, particularly on the magazine covers.

Editors and Editorial board members from various regional magazines came together for the meet at the Rotary International Headquarters in Evanston where they exchanged notes, shared best practices and did some brainstorming on the road ahead.

In his videographed message, RI President Ian Riseley said, “Having a regular magazine on Rotary issues is important for our 1.2 million plus members around the world. As we mandate

that Rotarians pay for the magazine, it is important to maintain a high standard and give value for money.”

Congratulating the regional editors for “the quality of magazines that you all bring out”, he said that he reviews most of the regional magazines every month “and I believe, as do most Rotarians, that the standard has improved significantly over the years.” Of course for the magazines published in languages other than English, he just looked at the pictures “but even those pictures are of superior quality”.

Riseley said that quality magazines also served the purpose of representing Rotary to the non-Rotary world and ensuring “we have an excellent public image and a well-regarded brand”.

Over the years, the number of magazines had expanded “and I understand that more than half the members now receive a magazine that is specific to their region. That makes our magazines even more relevant to our membership.”

Much of the discussion at the conference was on the possibility of digital taking over from print in the coming



Rotary Editors meet in **Evanston**

Rasheeda Bhagat

years, but there were strong voices in support of print, including from John Bernaden, RI Communications Committee Vice-Chair, and moderator of the conference, who said that last year alone 700 new print magazines were started in North America alone. A friend of his had started a magazine two years ago just outside Chicago; “it goes to multi-million dollar homes, but he told me I don’t think people read it. It’s a coffee table magazine and a status symbol because if you have this magazine people think you are in the data base of the wealthy!”

Addressing the editors, RI General Secretary John Hewko said

Rotary had 33 magazines printed in 22 languages in 130 countries and reached 700,000 Rotarians. He urged the editors to make the content of the magazine “so innovative, compelling and of a high quality that even though the subscription is mandatory, members should willingly and gladly buy the magazine.”

One of the important issues magazines should address was flexibility in club meetings. Even though the CoL had allowed such flexibility, many Rotary clubs did not really understand the concept of flexibility or how it worked in practice. As the RI President’s rep, he had visited many places where clubs thought that flexibility meant saving cost by reducing the number of meetings! Others had no idea what they should do to embrace flexibility.

But on the other hand, many clubs were adopting innovative approaches in embracing flexibility but this was not really known to everybody so the magazines should strive to write about clubs that had really introduced the flexi component in their club meetings.

The onus was on the magazines to educate Rotarians that there is no “Rotary police” watching what they do in their club meetings or how they do it, as long as the clubs continue to grow and make a difference to their communities. It would be a good idea to choose model clubs in different countries that best demonstrated the flexibility concept and write about

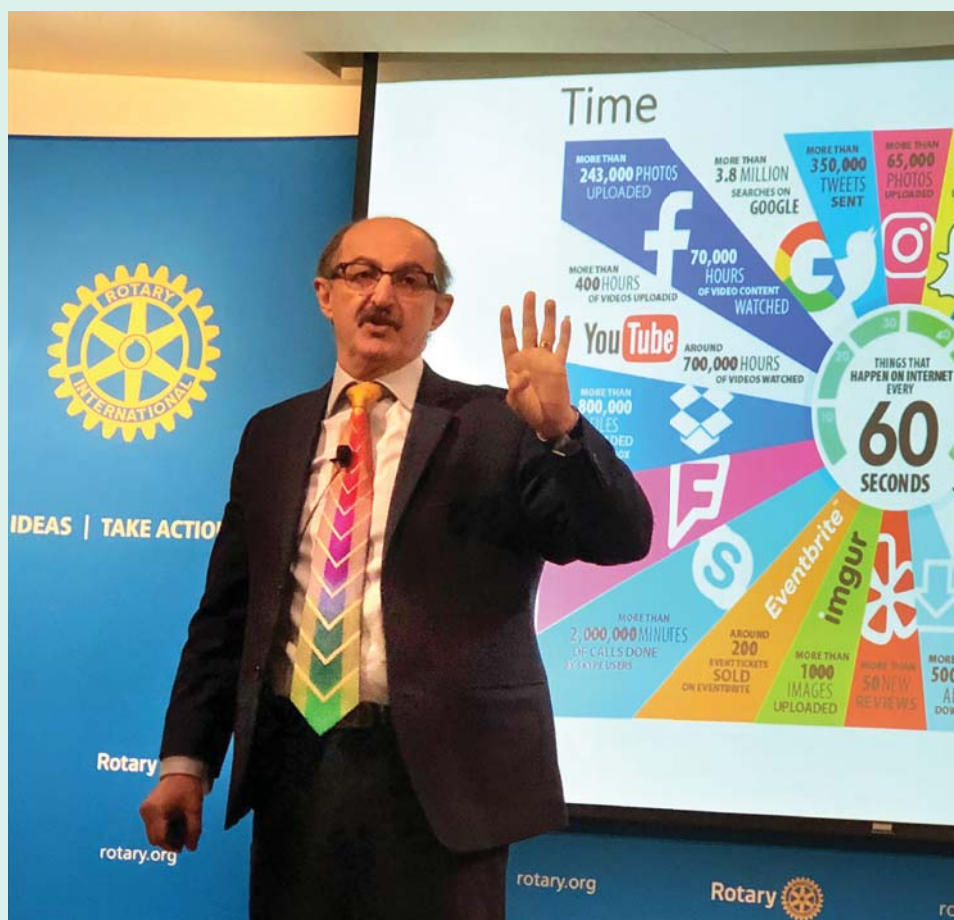
Be masters of storytelling

In an interesting session, Samir Husni, a leading magazine expert and analyst of the magazine industry, who is popularly known by the nickname 'Mr Magazine', made a huge case for print and said we lived in compelling times where there is an explosion of the social media, fake news and "a President who engages with the news through a twitter account. So when a President is tweeting and directly engaging with people, how about you? How are you, as journalists and editors, going to engage with the social media?"

It was challenging to be a journalist and an editor in this year because there are so many versions of the same news that "sometimes I wonder if something is wrong with my head, after I have watched reporting of the same incident on *CNN* and *Fox News*!"

Pooh-pooing doomsday scenarios projected on the death of the print media, he said once upon a time the iPad was supposed to be the salvation of content. Then came more and more sophisticated versions of the smart phones and everybody said print would soon die. But guess what? "For *Hurst* and *Meredith* (which recently bought Time Inc), two publishing giants, over 90 per cent of their revenue still comes from print. The magazine *Better Homes and Gardens* has a circulation of 7.6 million. Trust me, when you have that kind of a circulation, you're making a lot of money."

But to compete with the web world and social media which were so fast in disseminating information, "you will have to be smart, quick, and start knowing your audience... in your case, a captive audience." But



Samir Husni

there were many challenges, a major one being the human being's shrinking attention span. "It is amazing to see how little our attentions span is. It is estimated that Americans' attention span has fallen from 12 to 8 seconds; if I can grab your attention in 8 seconds I've got you. That is why some advertisers on the social media are creating videos of 3, 4 or 5 seconds. By the way, the attention span of a goldfish is 10 seconds!"

But even with such a short attention span, "so many people are seeking our attention. Somebody is trying to reach you all the time... recently, at

a bathroom at the Amsterdam airport, I saw myself facing an ad!"

Husni said there was a set of statistics that said that "it will take you continuous four years of watching to see what is uploaded on YouTube in one day. So let's have a YouTube binge party for the next four years!" Similarly, on Netflix, in one minute 87,000 hours of video is watched. Add to this Facebook, Snapchat and so many other apps, and the scenario is mindboggling. There is no red light on the social media... only green lights and the information just keeps coming..."



But in the midst of all this electronic information, print was holding good. Giving the example of the recent royal wedding featuring an “American Princess” (Meghan Markle), print magazines were in a tizzy to score over each other. *Time* magazine changed its publishing schedule from Friday to Wednesday because it wanted to be the first on the newsstands with this story. Magazines raised their cover prices. “Everybody wanted to have a piece of the action, and this American princess in my home.”

He urged the editors to never forget that “print... either books or magazines... and audiences have a relationship... you are in the relationship business, and the difference between print and digital is like that between a one-night stand or a love affair and life-long marriage!”

Print would always remain relevant, said Husni, but with a caveat; “good content is no longer enough. You will have to provide an experience.” If magazines did that, there will still be takers. The average price of a magazine these days in the US was \$13, and people were willing to pay that for information of value and an experience.

Predicting that both the print and digital media would coexist for a long time, he said that for most digital publications, advertisements came only in dribbles. “Google and Facebook receive more than 85 per cent of all the digital dollars out there. The rest of the entire digital media has to fight for the remaining 15 per cent.”

Husni also warned editors: “Don’t think digital is the haven or answer for a sick print product”. A bad product, whether print or digital, would not survive in the marketplace.

His sane advice was to offer a judicious mix of both the print and digital mediums. “If I am reading *The Economist* or *War and Peace* on a flight, I want it in my hand, because I want people to see the hard copy and say: ‘Wow this guy is a smart guy.’ But if I want to read the *Playboy*, I will do it on my iPad!”

His parting shot to remain compelling and relevant: “Be masters of storytelling... tell the story of children without clean water in such a compelling way so as to make people get off the chair, keep aside their glass of wine and take action...”

I review most of the regional magazines every month and I believe, as do most Rotarians, that the standard has improved significantly over the years.

RI President **Ian Riseley**

them. Such models could be replicated by other clubs, said Hewko.

Brad Howard, RI Communications Committee Chair and co-moderator of the conference, said the regional magazines were the “primary voice” of what Rotary does across the world. For that a brand is very essential and the communications department had started “our brand exercise and went into the marketplace for a basic understanding of our brand essence.” The result was the ‘people of action’ campaign, “which is our core essence and fundamentally what we really are.” But RI depended hugely on the regional magazines to tell both Rotarians and non-Rotarians “who we are and what we do”.

The regional magazines were “an extraordinary network” which had an opportunity to come up with innovative content. And since the subscription to a Rotary magazine was mandatory, its quality levels should be maintained at a high level.

David Alexander, Chief Communications Officer, addressed the primary focus points of the seminar: improve quality and messaging, build a holistic approach to communication, define and use tools to keep our readers close, collaborate, and continue to move in the direction of providing a communications tool that that Rotarians need and value.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy



Our Esteemed Guest

Rtn Barry Rassin & Ann Esther
RI President 2018-19



Rotary Institute 2018
Chennai | 5-7th October
Zone 4, 5 & 6A

Convener's Message



RID Basker Chockalingam
Ann Malathi

Dear Rotary Leaders,

Rotary Zone Institutes give opportunity to Rotary leaders, past, present and future, to meet and greet each other, exchange ideas and debate on how to take Rotary forward. **Malathi & I** deem it a privilege and pleasure, to invite you and your spouse, to Rotary Institute 2018, to be held during October 5-7, 2018, at **Hotel Leela Palace, Chennai**. With a set of wonderful speakers and world class entertainment, this will be truly an Institute with a difference. We will have the rare opportunity of having with us the Rotary senior leadership, who will make the event a memorable one for us. The dynamic Institute Chairman PDG ISAK Nazar and his wonderful team are making every effort, to ensure that, we all have a grand Rotary Institute 2018 — **Passion To Serve** — at Chennai.

With warm regards,

RID Basker Chockalingam, RI Director (2017-19)

Chairman's Message



Ann Afzalunnisa
PDG ISAK Nazar

Dear Rotary Leaders,

Greetings from Team — Rotary Institute 2018.

It's a great opportunity given by Director / Convener Rtn C Basker to have our **Rotary Institute 2018** at Chennai, at the grand venue — **Hotel Leela Palace, Chennai** — on 5th, 6th and 7th October 2018. Please be ready to witness one of the most memorable Rotary Institute at Chennai. We are all set to deliver an outstanding and memorable Institute. With a galaxy of eminent speakers, a new experience in entertainment and all that a successful Rotary Institute can be remembered for, awaits you. On behalf of Rotary Institute 2018 Team, I welcome you to **Passion to Serve, Rotary Institute 2018**. Please register immediately.

PDG ISAK Nazar

Chairman — Rotary Institute 2018



Please send this form duly filled by post / courier to:

Rtn PDG ISAK Nazar, Chairman, Rotary Institute 2018

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e-mail: rotaryinstitute.chennai2018@gmail.com, nazarisak@gmail.com

REGISTRATION DATA SHEET



Name: Rtn. Call / Badge Name:.....

Classification:

Address:

City: Pin Country

Mobile: e-Mail:

(Note: Include country and area code for Telephone / Fax Number)

☐ PDG ☐ IPDG ☐ DG ☐ DGE ☐ DGN ☐ DRFC ☐ DMC ☐ DRC

Home Club: RI District:

Name of Spouse: Call Name:

Food Preference			Collar size				
	Rotarian	Spouse					
Veg	☐	☐	☐ 38	☐ 40	☐ 42	☐ 44	☐ 46
Non Veg	☐	☐					

REGISTRATION			Couple	Single	Amount
Institute Registration	Couple	Single			
Upto 30th June 2018	INR 25000	INR 15000			
After 30th June 2018	INR 26000	INR 17000			
GETS (Couple)	2,3,4 October 2018	INR 60000			
DGs Training Seminar	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Person			
DGN Training Seminar	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Person			
Dist Trainers Seminar	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Person			
COL Seminar	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Person			
TRF Dinner	4th October 2018	INR 5000 per Couple INR 3000 per Single			
TRF Seminar	5th October 2018	INR 5000 per Couple INR 3000 per Single			

HOTEL ACCOMODATION

The Leela Palace	Double Executive	INR 10000 Per Nite			
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Ramada Plaza	Double Deluxe	INR 8000 Per Nite			
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	Single Deluxe	INR 6000 Per Nite			
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*Kindly tick whichever is applicable.

*Please note that the Accomodation is purely on first come first serve basis.

The cheque and draft shall be in favour of "Rotary Institute 2018" payable at Chennai.	Online payment details: Account Name: Rotary Institute 2018 Bank: Karur Vysya Bank Branch: Saidapet, Chennai - 15 Account No.: 1651155000067299 IFSC Code: KVBL0001651
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The Institute registration covers the following:

- Inaugural plenary on Friday, Oct 5, 2018 followed by dinner.
- Lunch and dinner on Saturday, Oct 6, 2018.
- Lunch on Sunday, Oct 7, 2018.

The other events such as GETS (Couple), DG Seminar, Membership Seminar, DGN Seminar, COL, TRF Seminar, Foundation Dinner have additional registration as mentioned above.

Date:

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Giving a second chance to girl dropouts

Rasheeda Bhagat

Meera Panjwani with
students of the 'Second
Chance' project.



In a heart-warming project, Rotary Club of Ankleshwar, District 3060, is on a drive to identify girls and young women who have dropped out of schools for various reasons, and ensure that they complete their Class 10 and appear for the public examination.

A brainchild of PDG Ashok Panjwani, the project is being implemented under the leadership of his wife and past president of the club Meera Panjwani. "For various reasons, including financial ones, teenage girls drop out of schools and are not able to

complete even Class 10 education," says Meera. But many of them have nurtured a dream of completing at least their school education for long years. So "Second Chance", as this project is named, gives them the opportunity to do just that.

Now in its third year the project is getting on a firmer footing, she adds. On how the girls/women are identified she says, "We have hired workers from the NGO Pratham to find these girls in the villages around Ankleshwar, and then we pay Pratham's tutors to coach these girls and prepare them for the

Class 10 public exam. The dropouts they have coached are from the age 15-30 years."

The first year, they found 106 of these dropouts and they were coached in six different centres in villages for which the club paid the rent. On their first attempt 80 of the 106 girls passed out and then another 30 girls emerged successful. The next year there were 56 students of whom 48 girls passed the exam, with three not appearing for it.

"But as this exercise of paying rent for the six different coaching centres was getting too expensive, we decided





to get our own place and have now bought another hall adjacent to the women's empowerment centre which we are presently running in our own premises." An amount of ₹27 lakh for this was raised through funds from the Rotarians of the club, ONGC and the Jhagadia Industries Association of which PDG Panjwani is the President.

The project itself is being implemented through funds raised by the club and a global grant. "It is quite expensive... we are in the third year and we have already spent ₹36 lakh, but we felt that we have to carry it out as we are providing a new hope, dignity and future to these girls and young women," says Meera.

On the reasons for girls dropping out of school, she says these include parents "needing the girls to do household work, and sometimes the mothers, who work in homes, take them along to lighten their own burden." Worse, many parents pull out the girls for early marriage and "we've had girls who have dropped out at Class 5, 7 or 9. Some of the parents were still reluctant to send the girls for coaching but as the girls were interested we've even paid the auto fare to bring them to the coaching centre," adds Meera.

The outcome of this exercise has been rewarding. Many of the girls have expressed interest in further studies and are now being tutored for Class 11 and 12 lessons and five girls have gone for computer classes.

She adds that what is encouraging, apart from the enthusiasm, smiles and happiness on these girls' faces is their never-say-die attitude. And "the girls, who failed, said no problem, we will try again!" ■



PDG Ashok Panjwani gives a certificate to a student as PRID Mano Desai looks on.

Tata Technologies signs MoU of ₹1 crore with TRF

Jayashree Jayaraman



From L: D 3131 DG Abhay Gadgil, TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta, Tata Technologies' Corporate Sustainability Head Anubhav Kapoor, DCSRC Rakesh Bhargava, RISAO's TRF Manager Sanjay Parmar and Vinod Bansal, Vice Chairman, RFI CSR Sub-committee.

Tata Technologies has been partnering with RI District 3131, particularly RC Pune North, for spearheading an e-learning programme in schools in the area. Now the company wants to expand the scope of its partnership with Rotary and work with it throughout India in the area of basic education and literacy. With this background, a partnership discussion was initiated by DG Abhay Gadgil, PDG Vinay Kulkarni and District CSR Chair (DCSRC) Rakesh Bhargava with Tata Technologies on May 1, 2018.

After several discussions between the CSR team at RISAO and Tata Technologies, an umbrella MOU was signed on June 8 for ₹1 crore to implement projects

Tata Technologies wants to expand the scope of its partnership with Rotary and work with it throughout India in the area of basic education and literacy.

across India. The MOU, signed in the presence of TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta and the CSR team from Tata Technologies, was attended by representatives from Districts 3011, 3012 and 3131 along with CSR representative from GHCL Limited. This CSR fund will support four global grants of the Foundation in the area of education.

Tata Technologies and the CSR Team at RISAO will continue this discussion further to identify the districts and clubs to implement this project in basic literacy and education.

The writer is Manager - CSR & WinS, The Rotary Foundation, RISAO.

RC Agra Grand donates a cath lab for underprivileged patients

Team Rotary News

Realising the hardship and trauma suffered by ordinary people in meeting rising healthcare costs, particularly in diseases related to the heart, the Rotarians of RC Agra Grand, D 3110, decided to set up a Cardiac Catheterisation Lab in Firozabad, a small town in Uttar Pradesh.

The idea was to give the benefits of quality medical diagnosis and care to people from adjoining rural areas as the health facility — Sevarth Sansthan Seth Bimal Kumar Jain Trauma and Physiotherapy Dharmarth Samiti Centre — serves a huge rural population extending all the way to the city of Kanpur, located about 225 km away.

Thanks to the effort of the Rotarians from this club, the centre has been the beneficiary of a global grant project

costing \$63,750 (₹2.43 crore) through which a fully equipped state-of-the-art cath lab has been donated to this trauma centre. PDG Sharat Chandra, a member of this club and project head, said funds for the project were collected through an initial generous donation by Madanlal Goyal, whose family enterprise RDS Project Ltd gave a CSR contribution of \$175,000. “At that time, he was not a Rotarian, but now he has become a member of our club, which had approached him for a generous donation and he obliged us. Thereafter, other members of RC Agra Grand donated for this project and there was a matching contribution from TRF’s World Fund,” said PDG Chandra.

He said the club had decided to do this project as cardiovascular diseases, especially coronary heart disease, have assumed epidemic

proportions worldwide and significantly in India. Caused by smoking, diabetes, hypertension,

abdominal obesity, psychosocial stress, unhealthy diet etc, the treatment is often beyond



the means of common people. As a cath lab can do comprehensive diagnosis of such diseases, including coronary angiography to detect the cause of the heart disease, it was decided to get this equipment.

TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta inaugurated the cath lab, “and we have been assured by the hospital management that diagnostic facilities and treatment will be given at a very low cost to the people who can’t afford the high cost of private hospitals. They have also told us that treatment will not be



(From L) P K Jindal, Chairman of the hospital, PDG Sharat Chandra, TRF Trustee Sushil Gupta, RS Jalan, MD of GHCL, Jayashree Jayaraman, Sanjay Parmar and Bhawna Verna from RISAO.

denied even to those patients who cannot pay even a modest fee,” he added.

Chandra said that with Trustee Gupta insisting that the working of the cath lab should not wait for a formal inauguration, heart care services were started at the centre a few days before the formal inauguration.

He thanked TRF and members of his club — RC Agra Grand — for the successful implementation of the project. Gupta complimented the hospital for giving quality health care services to the poor and underprivileged at a highly subsidised cost.

RS Jalan, Managing Director, Gujarat Heavy Chemicals Ltd (GHCL), which has also donated ₹2 crore from its CSR funds for some other equipment at this centre, also participated at the meeting attended by PDG Rajiv Tandon, DGN Dinesh Chand Shukla and Rotarians Manmohan Saluja, Shiv Raj Bhargava, Ravi Prakash Agarwal and Lakshmi Kant Bansal.

Designed by L Gunasekaran

DGEs Meet

K Vishwanathan



Jaishree



From L: DGs Praveen Goyal (3080), Babu Peram (3232), Subhash Jain (3012), Rajiv Sharma (3030) and Shashi Sharma (3141) pose with a statue of Paul Harris at the Rotary News Trust office.

in Chennai



Rasheeda Bhagat

Left: The new DGs in Chennai with (seated from L) PRIDs Ashok Mahajan, Y P Das, RID C Basker, PRID P T Prabhakar, DG Vishnu Mondhe and RIDE Bharat Pandya.

Above: IPDG Vivek Kumar takes a selfie with DGs Rajiv Sharma and Pinky Patel as PDG T N Subramanian looks on.



Jaishree

RNT's Executive Committee members Shashi Sharma, A V Pathy, Rajiv Sharma, Subhash Jain and Pinky Patel with RID C Basker.

Down memory lane at 90

V Muthukumaran

As Rotary Club of Madras enters its 90th year, the members turn nostalgic and walk down memory lane, remembering the pillars who built the club with their selfless service.

From L: Rotarians Arulmozhi Varman, Kapil Chitale, S Gunashekar, Ravi Katari, M C Shankar, DG R Srinivasan, Nandita Krishnan, V K Chandrakumar, Club President P N Mohan, N K Gopinath, Vijaya Bharathi, Nikhil Raj, Vivek Harinarain, PDG S Krishnaswami and Christopher Devapragasam.



The pioneering role played by the Rotary Club of Madras and the yeoman service rendered by its leaders in eradicating polio from this part of the world through partnerships with the government, NGOs and hospitals were recalled and appreciated at a glittering event held in Chennai to celebrate the club's 90th anniversary.

Complimenting them for their great work, RID 3232 DG R Srinivasan said, "I have known and seen first-hand how SL Chitale and his dedicated team worked closely with labs and health agencies to mount a determined fight to eradicate polio in the 1980s. For any DG, it is a pleasure to work and coordinate with RC Madras whose leaders think big and execute big projects in a time-bound manner."

Describing the club, which is the third oldest in India as a "citadel of friendship and a temple of service", the DG said that during his official visits, he can always bank on the club members to make generous contributions to TRF.

One of the major distinctions of this club is that its past presidents N K Gopinath and SN Srikanth will be among the four Indians (out of seven



global Rotarians) to receive the International Service Award for a Polio-free World from TRF's PolioPlus Committee. They will receive the award at the Rotary Convention in Toronto.

Rich history

In a presentation past president Gopinath traced the history of the club and said its first meeting was held on May 10, 1929, at the Connemara Hotel and all the 30 charter members were non-Indians (27 British, two Swiss and one American). The club was chartered on July 19, 1929. CG Armstrong, Chairman of the Madras Port Trust, was the first president of the club and industrialist Raja Sir MA Muthiah Chettiar was the first Indian to be inducted to the club. However, it was Sir Mohammad Usman, the Home Minister in the Madras Presidency, from the Justice Party, who became the first Indian President of the club in 1935–36.

He traced back the growth of Rotary in India to the arrival of James Wheeler Davidson, a Rotary Commissioner from Calgary, Canada, with a mandate to set up clubs in Europe, Asia and the Far East. Davidson was given a budget of \$8,000 to accomplish this onerous task. "However, he spent \$250,000 of his own money to set up 23 Rotary clubs across Europe, the Middle-East, Asia and the Far

For any DG, it is a pleasure to work and coordinate with RC Madras whose leaders think big and execute big projects.

DG R Srinivasan



RC Madras President-nominee Dr Vijaya Bharathi presents a cheque to DG R Srinivasan as President P N Mohan (right) and Nikhil Raj (left) look on.

East in a span of two years (1929–30), with a passion of a missionary." Often called the Marco Polo of Rotary, the pioneering role of Davidson needs to be celebrated by the Rotarians in India. Despite many odds, such as "suffering the Madras summer heat constantly," and with very little fellowship in those days, he managed to set up this great movement in South India.

It was Davidson who recommended Sir Frederick E James, Vice-President of UPASI, as Honorary Commissioner for RI in the Middle Asia Region in 1932, which also saw the first Rotary Convention in Calcutta. Sir James, who was knighted in 1941, was the charter member of RCM and the first RI Director from India (1933–34). He was also the first governor of District 89 in 1936–37 during which the first district conference was held in Madras and served a second term in 1938–39.

In his address, Club President PN Mohan said, "we are in a landmark year as the club is stepping into its 90th year of service." It was a matter of pride that the club had such a phenomenal history. He confirmed

that the club would get the Guinness Certificate for holding the 'Largest Drug Awareness Lesson' in the world and thanked Youth Service Chair M Sesha Sai for the achievement.

On Foundation giving, he said \$82,000 has been collected in this Rotary year (2017–18) and was confident of reaching the target by getting the balance \$18,000 by June 30. He urged the members to contribute liberally to the Polio Fund

TRF Chair Paul Netzel had set a target of collecting \$1.5 billion in the next three years. "We are going to file a number of global grant projects such as *Schools into Smiles* and medical centres, hence please contribute for making Rotary grow," he appealed to the members.

Earlier, RCM President-nominee Dr Vijaya Bharathi presented a cheque of \$10,000 to DG Srinivasan for TRF. Mohan cut the cake to mark the club's 90th year of service in the presence of DG Srinivasan, PDGs and veteran Rotarians.

Pictures by V Muthukumaran

Ensure social and gender equity in agriculture: M S Swaminathan

Team Rotary News



Prof M S Swaminathan delivering his acceptance speech. To his left is former Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, Dr T Ramasami.

Eminent agricultural scientist Prof M S Swaminathan, Founder, M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, has been conferred the Doctor of Letters (D Lit) degree by the ITM University, Gwalior, for his ‘unparalleled contribution to mankind’ at a Special Convocation held at the Foundation in Chennai. Presenting the degree to Prof Swaminathan, Dr Kamal Kant Dwivedi, Vice Chancellor of the ITM University, Gwalior, quoted a Sanskrit saying that translates thus: “There is no greater service than selfless sacrifice which makes others happy. This is an apt description of Prof Swaminathan’s life and work.”

Thanking the University for the honour bestowed upon him and the Foundation, the agricultural scientist, who is an honorary member of RC Madras East, said that the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) can only be achieved through sustainable agriculture, and congratulated the ITM University for producing 1,000 agricultural graduates. He said it was important that higher education in agriculture includes dimensions of social and gender equality, as well as knowledge in economics and ethics.

Stressing the importance of the ethical aspect, particularly with regard to patenting new discoveries, he said institutions should be put in place to ensure equity. He gave the example of the Swiss Government

that purchased the patent for the Golden Rice variety and made it available to all developing nations free of cost or at a nominal charge. This is a model to emulate, he stressed.

“Biodiversity conservation is a key step in sustainable agriculture,” Prof Swaminathan said and gave the example of how the germplasms of thousands of varieties of rice available now can be attributed to the work of farmers, who originally discovered it. “The first rice cultivators were women,” the scientist

said, noting that there was a portrait of a woman in a temple at Along, a town in Arunachal Pradesh, whom the local people consider to be the one who introduced rice into their cultivation.

Dr T Ramasami, former Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, while congratulating Prof Swaminathan, called for a re-definition of agricultural research highlighting the current disconnect between reality and research and development. He spoke about the need for developing people-centric science, or “science that adds value to people’s lives. The very basis of all of Prof Swaminathan’s work has been centered on this philosophy,” he said. ■



Rotarians green a village, reverse migration

Kiran Zehra

One are the days when farmers of Pingori village near Pune in Maharashtra, after 6 to 8 months of farming, depended solely on the yield of *jowar* and *bajra* (pearl millet) to make an income of less than ₹1,300 a month. Left with no choice they had to migrate to the city to do menial jobs to support their family. "I feel miserable when I see other farmers abandoning their farms," says Ganesh, one of the 44 farmers in the village. He owns 1.5 acres of farmland in Pingori. Within a few months of Rotary's (RC Pune Hillside, D 3131) intervention his income has increased to ₹7,000. "This is sufficient to live comfortably in my village," he says. What makes him happy is that he can grow more than four varieties of crops in the land compared to only millets because of failing monsoons and water scarcity.

The younger people have moved to big cities like Pune and Mumbai and "we were just a bunch of old people who chose to stay back in our village when Rtn Borate Madam and Rtn Baba Shinde of RC Pune Hillside came to visit us," says Ganesh. Initially sceptical about investing their time and money to recuperate dried wells and set up storage ponds, he says, "We saw how serious they were in their pursuit to make our village better. Rotarians visited, engineers came and Baba Shinde even got the government to support us. So, we decided to invest our money and energy in this scheme."

Rtn Meena Borate, a doctor by profession, who has managed to finance 16 water and sanitation projects in District 3131 says, "The attitude of the sarpanch of a few villages I have visited was shocking. 'How will it benefit me?' they would openly say. This

is because they suspect that Rotarians do projects to get money from their village." But in Pingori, "although they were hesitant the villagers came forward and made it possible for us to help them."

Baba Shinde had noted that two of the percolation tanks had become shallow, with accumulated mud, and a canal that meandered through the village was choked with sticks and fine mud plugging the percolation channels. He worked with government officials to allocate more funds for cleaning the tanks which were deepened and desilted. While one percolation tank was desilted with the help of Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati Trust, an NGO based in Pune, the villagers themselves cleaned the barren land and laid boulders to create a makeshift bund for the tank to hold water "in the hope that it would rain," says Ganesh.



Meena, with the help of a global grant in association with RC Muscatine, US, six Rotary clubs from D 3131 and TRF raised ₹60 lakh. Two storage ponds lined with special polymer paper and compound walls for security were created. The capacity of the big storage pond is 37.5 million litres while the smaller one can store 35 million litres.

Continuous contour trenches were dug in different parts of the land to enhance water percolation. Pumps were installed, pipes were laid and drip irrigation lines were supplied to the farmlands. Commenting on the water conserved, Ganesh says that this method of watering plants slowly over an extended period of time cuts down water usage by about 60 per cent. Water is directed only to the plant area so there's also less weed growth.

Innovation in farming

In such cases, Israel is always the reference point. "Despite Israel's terrain which is not naturally conducive to agriculture, they are the largest exporters of fresh produce in the world. We wondered how that was possible and realised we could do the same with the adoption of the right farming technology," he adds. With help from Baba Shinde, the farmers learnt soil nutrient management, use of thermal nets, branching and wiring of plants, crop patterns and rotation.

"Once a barren land, now it reaps fruits from 3,500 custard apple trees," says Shinde. The water supply isn't divided among the fields by way of pumps. "Instead, the drip irrigation line runs directly from the ponds to the respective farms. This way the water source for agriculture and drinking remain separate," he adds. Each farmer grows a different crop in his farm such

as ladies finger or cluster beans. This results in the production of 22 to 24 varieties of vegetables per yield.

Organic farm produce

Although the vegetables and pulses produced were organic, the farmers were receiving a minimal price. "The middlemen would pay us ₹2 per kg for a vegetable that they would eventually sell at ₹40 per kg and our income remained unchanged," says the farmer. Things turned around when the farmers decided to invite residents of a large housing society in Pune to spend a day at their farms. After their visit to the farm, "we were asked to create a WhatsApp group and update the residents about the vegetables we have and they started ordering through WhatsApp."

Slowly word of mouth spread and the farmers started delivering in bulk, and instead of ₹2 per kg, the farmers got the full price for the vegetables." They shared the diesel cost for the transportation of their produce. After the second harvest was complete, the farmers benefitted economically and decided to invest in livestock and each family in the village takes turns to take care of the livestock. When high-yielding tomatoes were harvested, the women in the village undertook a training to make ketchup. The women no longer have to trek upto 6 km to the highway to collect water from water tankers, because they now have sufficient drinking water. The village school now has its own water tank and children have access to clean toilets and potable drinking water. Water conservation has got the village accolades and the Chief Minister paid it a visit.

But their biggest cause for celebration is that "our youth are coming back home because they now have a good income here. All this would have never happened without Rotary," says Ganesh.

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

A farmer at the pipe connecting to the drip irrigation system.



Rotary Calcutta presents community awards

Team Rotary News

In a glittering event the oldest Rotary club in India, RC Calcutta, D 3291, presented its annual Endowment Awards to over 100 beneficiaries who are either differently-abled people, suffering from generic diseases, economically challenged or NGOs working for the underprivileged as Rotarians cheered with loud applause for every award recipient.

During his introductory remarks, RC Calcutta President Saumen Ray traced the origin of the endowment awards to the creation of a modest fund from a donation of ₹1 lakh from past president Gobinda Lal Sarogi in 1990. Now the corpus has grown to ₹2.01 crore as on 2018 and Ray appealed to all Rotarians to contribute liberally so as to cross the target of ₹2.5 crore by the club's centennial next year. Former Judge of Calcutta High Court Justice Ronojit Kumar Mitra, the chief guest, elaborated on the screening and selection process of the applicants as the 'de facto presiding officer'. He donated ₹2 lakh for the



RC Calcutta President Saumen Ray and Satyam Roychowdhury, MD, Techno India Group, present an award to a child.

creation of a new endowment for visually-impaired students on the occasion.

The club's Welfare Trust Chairman IPP Nilima Joshi explained the Trust's vision of 'making a difference' by extending 'hope to the hopeless' through the endowment schemes. Thanking all donors to this noble cause, she said, "the awards ceremony attempts to preserve the past, honour the present and shape the future for a better tomorrow for our community."

The awards, along with the certificates, were handed to the beneficiaries by chief guest Mitra and guest of honour, Satyam Roychowdhury, MD, Techno India Group. DG Brojo Gopal Kundu joined the dignitaries and handed over the awards.

"A glint of joy, satisfaction and a sense of achievement were visible on the faces of the awardees who all put up a brave fight for survival and strive for a better life. The aggregate amount of

award money disbursed was nearly ₹15 lakh," said Amit Ghosh, Club Treasurer.

Roychowdhury assured support to the club in its various social projects, and initiated a new endowment named 'Sister Nivedita Scholarship' for ₹5 lakh.

In his concluding address, DG Kundu praised the endowment process of the Welfare Trust and noted the flagship event has become a symbol of 'service to community'. ■

Message from RI South Asia Office

**Rotary International South Asia Office, Pullman / Novotel Commercial Tower,
First Floor, Asset No 2, Hospitality District, Aerocity (Near IGI Airport), New Delhi 110037**

- All club and district officials are requested to update their email IDs through *MyRotary* to ensure all important communications are received by them.

- Club and district officers please sign in through <https://my.rotary.org/en/manage/club-district-administration/club-administration> to access applications, forms and documents to carry out club and district tasks, such as updating club, officer, and member data; running reports; paying dues; viewing contribution information; chartering a club; and more.

- **Membership Minute**

The *Membership Minute* newsletter comes through email, provides information on resources,

tools and membership development ideas. It also features:

- ❑ Latest research on Rotary membership
- ❑ Suggestions about where to find and how to recruit qualified, committed Rotary club members
- ❑ Ideas for creating or enhancing new member orientation programmes
- ❑ Tips and trends for retaining and engaging members.

You may like to subscribe to this newsletter “online” through the link: <https://my.rotary.org/en/newsfeatures/newsletters>

- **Rotary Foundation (India) reporting deadlines**

It has come to our notice that the clubs/districts submit the

interim report/final report online, but the physical copies of the supporting documents are not submitted. To get the reports reviewed and accepted, the club/district should submit the report online along with the supporting documents to the Foundation.

All grants paid out from Rotary Foundation (India) should provide an interim/progress report by May 31 for the activities up to Mar 31 every year. Those who have not yet submitted the interim report for the period ended March 31, 2018 are requested to do so immediately. The final report can be submitted within two months of project completion.

Reporting Documentation	Interim Report	Final Report
Submit report online	Yes	Yes
All original hard copies required		
Original Utilisation Certificate & Receipts/payment statement	Yes	Yes
Bank statement in original/certified true copy	Yes	Yes
Bills/invoices/receipts in original	NA	Yes
Undertaking (if copy of the bills submitted)	NA	Yes
Beneficiary information	NA	Yes
Refund, if any	NA	Yes

- **Community assessments lead to success**

Beginning July 1, clubs and districts that apply for a global grant to support a humanitarian project or a vocational training team will need to conduct a community assessment first and include the results in their grant application.

Sand eye on Rotary Day at Berhampur

Team Rotary News



Following the record for the 'Largest human image of a foot' on World Polio Day, Rotary Club of Berhampur, D 3262, entered the India Book of Records for the second time by creating the 'Largest sand art of an eye' as part of Rotary Day celebrations on Feb 23 which marks the 113th birth anniversary of the organisation.

"We always try to brighten the image of Rotary in many different ways with grand backdrops. This time, the idea was to see how the Rotary 'eye' sees the world, and we decided to make the biggest sand

art of an eye," said Rtn Bijay Bagaria, Project Coordinator.

Preparatory work

But to create such a giant structure, the club had to collect a huge quantity of sand weighing 120–150 tonnes for an image 90–100 ft long. The club then chose sand artist Subol Moharana who, along with his three-member team, agreed to create a giant human eye.

The entire process of stocking the sand and other material began on Feb 20 with trucks doing the rounds at the venue. Following this, the process of watering the sand was taken up to

make it completely wet for moulding. "We hired labourers to pile up and water the sand. On Feb 22, Subol and his team started the art work. It took a whole night to finish the sand art," said Bagaria.

The sand art is 100 x 20 ft, weighs around 100 tonnes, and the human eye created has the Rotary logo as its pupil, and has the message: See the world through Rotary.

Adjacent to the sand art promoting world peace, two other sand creations on tree plantations and blood donation completed the magnificent structure erected to mark the World Rotary Day. Berhampur legislator Ramesh Chandra

Choupatnaik, PDG Narayan Mishra, club members and the media fraternity made the event a grand occasion to cherish. A large turnout of people witnessed the sand carving and the project was a big PR success for the club.

Speaking on the occasion, Club President Tapas Panigrahi dwelt on Rotary's contributions to create a peaceful world and detailed various activities of his club. With the giant eye being illuminated, people at far off places could see the striking piece of art, with the Rotary logo at the centre, during the night, thus giving the club an image boost. ■



Improving women's livelihood

Kiran Zehra



school so couldn't understand how to run the machine. But Padma *didi* helped me." Today, on an average, three women make 1,000 plates in eight hours. Padma, the RCC secretary, says confidently, "We are able to send our children to school, what more do we want? If need be, we will work harder." What she likes about this machine most is that, "we don't have to hand stitch the leaves anymore which means no more needle pricks."

The unit manufactures 12-inch leaf plates and 6-inch *dunu* (leaf bowls). While compared to the earlier 900 plates in 12 hours for ₹1 each, they now can make 1,000 plates in 8 hours, which are sold for ₹4,000. The cost of production of these plates is ₹2,000. This has doubled their income. These plates and bowls are sold locally for use in marriages and temple festivals. With the ban on thermocol and plastic plates being actively implemented all over Himachal, the orders for the plates have also doubled, says Mohan.

"We have sufficient orders for this year and if we make a surplus, we will see if we can invest in exporting these plates to Germany and the US." Quoting details from a research done by the Department of Pharmacy, Bansthali University, Rajasthan, he says the biodegradable plates have many good effects on health too. "The plates are made without glue or additives, and they disintegrate into the soil in 28 days. As eco-friendly products have become the norm nationally and internationally, these plates mean good business." ■

Even before the ban on plastic and thermocol plates and cutlery was announced by Jai Ram Thakur, the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Rotary Club of Mandi, D 3070, had taken the lead in spreading awareness on the use of biodegradable plates with an aim to help rural women in Gharwasra village near Mandi to earn a decent living. Through its RCC of 20 women, the club recently set up a leaf-plate manufacturing unit in the village.

In the past, the club has held medical camps, distributed water filters, conducted cleanliness drives and encouraged the region's children to go to school. Surender Mohan, past president of the club, says that the women in the village were making *patal* or leaf plates earlier too. But the shelf life of the plates was less than three days and

it had a rough finish which resulted in wastage of time, material and money. There were few buyers for the plates. "So, they approached us for a solution and we began our research."

Not satisfied with the results of the leaf manufacturing machine available in Kolkata, "I visited Hyderabad to check out the machine developed by the National Institute of Rural Development," he says. On his return he filed a project summary and waited for the district grant to come through. "The Rotary Foundation approved the project and with the funds received, we placed an order for the machine and began work in April." The complete-cost of the project was ₹1,50,000.

The 20 women who work in the unit initially found it difficult to understand how it operates. Says Vimala, a plate maker: "I have never been to

Rotarians create 3 Happy Schools in **Jalandhar**

V Muthukumaran

At a Jalandhar school, a team of Rotarians led by PDG Dr Surinder Pal Singh Grover from RC Jalandhar West, D 3070, was shocked to find children sitting on jute mats and bending their tender backs to take notes. Some girls even dropped out of the school due to inadequate toilet facilities. And the teachers had to do

with whatever basic amenities they could lay their hands on.

This led Grover and his team to undertake a project to completely revamp and give a makeover to three such schools — the Government Senior Secondary School, Gandhi Camp; SBT Model School, Sodhal Nagar; and Hindi Putri Senior Secondary School, Khanna — which

were in a pathetic state. Given the bad condition of the schools and the magnitude of the task, the club got a global grant after roping in RC *Norfolk Sunrise*, D 7090, Canada, which contributed \$10,000 for the project. “Our club mobilised around \$11,875 for undertaking a number of civil works and setting up new facilities at the three schools. Our home



From L: Rtn Puja Kapoor, PDG SPS Grover, past president Kuldip Singh, Joginder Singh, Club President Daljit Singh Viridi along with students and teachers at the Hindi Putri School.

district and D 7090 chipped in with \$4,000 each, besides a TRF contribution of \$18,500,” explains Grover.

Renovation package

Four gender-segregated toilet blocks were constructed in each of the three schools to ensure sanitation and hygiene. As students were made to sit on the floor during school hours, 200 steel benches were given to each school. “We put up new flooring with a smooth finish covering the courtyard, open space and some classrooms in need of urgent repair in all the three schools. All the interior and exterior walls of the schools were given a fresh coat of paint including the doors and windows. The boundary walls were

The training programme made quite an impact on teaching us issues related to classroom behaviour and understanding the psychology of students.

Resham Kaur, a teacher

reconstructed,” says PDG Grover, who is also the Project Chairman. Kumud Kumari Sharma, the Principal of the government school at Gandhi Camp, wrote a letter to the club, stating that

the makeover was a morale boost for the teachers and the management. She thanked the Rotarians and TRF for renovating the school and ushering in congenial conditions for study. Around 3,000 students benefitted from the Happy Schools projects. The Rotarians also facilitated a training programme for 50 teachers through a four-member faculty led by Prof J K Gulati, Principal, Guru Nanak Dev University College, as part of the grant project.

“Gulati and his trainers made quite an impact on teaching us issues related to classroom behaviour and understanding the psychology of students which will benefit us in the long run,” says Resham Kaur, a teacher who mediates with the club. ■

Water and sanitation in Katwa

Team Rotary News

The Rotarians of RC Katwa, D 3240, have installed drinking water facilities with cooling system in public places for the benefit of the community. PDG Samir Kr Chowdhury who formally inaugurated a water hut expressed his happiness that the



Handwash station in the Arya Banga school.



Rotarians in front of a water hut installed by the club.

project will benefit thousands of people and children visiting the market places braving the hot summer sun.

In another project, the club provided drinking water facilities, and constructed handwash stations and toilet blocks in the Arya Banga FP

School in Purba Bardhaman district. “Our efforts will benefit 250 students studying in the school,” says the Club President Samit Banerjee, adding that all 56 clubs of the district pitched in with their support for the execution of the project. ■



A tribal village goes from candles to solar lamps

Kiran Zehra

Rotary Bangalore Downtown, in association with RC Bangalore Koramangala (D 3190), has installed solar lamps in 39 tribal homes at Imbet, a Kota village 60 km from Ooty. The nearest school from this village is 5 km away. Children travel on foot for some distance before boarding a bus to their respective government schools. “But that was not as big a

problem as not having power in our homes. Children returned home just before sunset and were never able to complete their daily lessons. But thanks to Rotary, we now have light.” says Saraswathi Neeji, the head of the Kota community.

Indigenous to the Nilgiri hills, the 3,500-populace of Kotas are fine potters, musicians and musical instrument

makers. Keen to keep up with the times, they have taken up mainstream jobs and primary education for their children. Saraswathi explains that unlike other societies, a Kota woman is held in high regard and has a greater say in choosing her partner for marriage, re-marriage, divorce and plays a big role in the economic development of her village. “We were unaware that we could avail free



RC Bangalore Downtown President Raghu Allam and RC Bangalore Koramangala President Janet Yegnes Warren with the Kota women.

education until a few years ago. Now every Kota child, both boys and girls, goes to school,” she adds.

RC Bangalore Downtown was looking for a village near Bengaluru to execute the solar lamp project. “When we approached a few villages, the panchayat leaders said, ‘Give us the money, we will install the solar lamps ourselves.’ After months of searching for a village, Janet Yegnes Waren, the President of RC Bangalore Koramangala, identified the Imbet village “deep inside a forest with barely any road to connect it to other places. We were taken aback to see these people living in 70–100 sq ft houses, made of wood and mud, with just a bed, a shelf and a few vessels,” says Raghu Allam, President of RC Bangalore Downtown.



Club President Raghu Allam (right) gives a solar lighting system to a villager.

The villagers did not demand any money; neither did they relate stories of poverty to earn our sympathy.

Raghu Allam
President
RC Bangalore Downtown

Both the presidents were pleasantly surprised as “the villagers did not demand any money; neither did they relate stories of poverty to earn our sympathy. The village had absolutely no electricity but it was strange to see that every household had a mixie and a grinder,” says Allam. Apparently, these have been given by politicians who have sought their votes in the past.

The village has been denied electricity since it is deep inside the forest. “We have been meeting government officials and politicians to get this village electrified. But with little success. And just like that, these Rotarians walked up to our village and set up the solar lamps in a day,” says Saraswathi.

The solar lamps do not need a pillar or post and require minimal wiring. The panel is set up on the roof of the house and is connected to a battery which feeds a mini LED lamp and a mobile charger. On the day of installation of the lamps “we were given a grand welcome with flowers, shawls and garlands. The villagers treated us to a typical vegetarian Kota meal. It was an amazing experience,” says Allam.

Saraswathi is now relieved that children need not stay with friends or school teachers who live closer to the town during exams. “All our lives we have lit oil lamps and candles, finished our daily chores by 7 pm, and struggled to keep wild animals away. But the solar lamps have changed everything. It was not the fear of the dark, but the anxiety that our children will also have to struggle like us that haunted us.”

“As we left the village,” says Allam, “they wanted assurance that these lamps will continue to provide light and requested us to provide school uniforms for their children.” The club plans to build concrete houses for these villagers and has begun looking for a partner club. ■

Apply yourself

Would you like to contribute further to Rotary by serving on a committee? Each of Rotary's committees, made up of Rotarians and Rotaractors from around the world, works with the organisation's leadership to ensure efficiency and promote the goals and priorities laid out in the strategic plan.

The following committees are searching for qualified candidates for openings in 2019–20. All committees correspond via email, teleconference, or webinars as needed, and some also involve at least one mandatory in-person meeting per year. Most committee business is conducted in English.

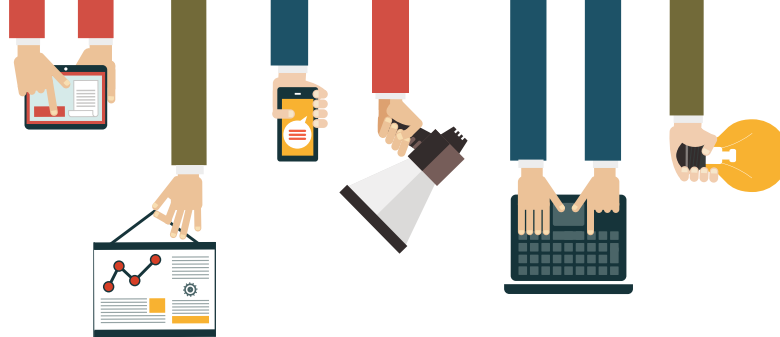
To be considered for committee membership or to recommend someone for an appointment, visit **on. rotary.org/application2018**.

Applicants must be registered on *MyRotary* at **rotary.org/myrotary** and should make sure that their My Rotary profile includes current contact information.

Candidates may apply for only one committee.

The application deadline is August 11.

Committee	Function	Prerequisites	Commitment
Audit	Advises the Board of Directors on financial reports, internal and external auditing, and the system of internal control	Independence, appropriate business experience, and demonstrated financial literacy in accounting, auditing, banking, insurance, investment, risk management, executive management, or audit governance	One six-year term; two meetings per year in Evanston and two teleconference/webinar meetings per year
Communications	Advises the Board on communication with key audiences	Professional background and experience in a communications-related field	One three-year term; multiple conference calls; annual meeting in Evanston
Finance	Advises the Board on Rotary's finances, including budgets, investment policy and sustainability measures	Professional background in a finance-related field; nonprofit experience preferred. Candidates should have experience in financial matters at the club and district levels	One three-year term; two meetings per year in Evanston
Global Networking Groups	Oversees action groups, fellowships and vocational service including operations, programme enhancements and proposals	Strong candidates; have led action groups, fellowships, or club- or district-level vocational service initiatives, and are familiar with their policies	One three-year term; annual meeting in Evanston and two teleconference meetings per year
Joint Committee on Partnerships	Advises the Board and Trustees on partnership and sponsorship matters	Knowledge of Rotary grant-making and international service portfolios; extensive experience in cultivating and developing partnerships with corporations, the NGO sector and government; experience in cause marketing, sponsorship, and resource-generating relationships, as well as international strategic partnerships; and clear understanding of the capacity and club-based projects of Rotary	One three-year term; two meetings per year in Evanston



Committee	Function	Prerequisites	Commitment
Leadership Development and Training	Advises the Board on Rotary's leadership training programme for Rotarians, clubs and districts with a special emphasis on training for district governors	Must have significant training or education experience with a preference for leadership development	One three-year term; annual meeting in Evanston
Membership	Advises the Board on matters related to membership development, retention and engagement	Rotarians or Rotaractors with significant knowledge of and commitment to membership attraction and engagement activities; candidates from clubs that have diversified their membership preferred	One three-year term; two meetings per year in Evanston
Operations Review	Monitors the effectiveness, efficiency, and implementation of operations and all internal systems; advises the Executive Committee on compensation matters; and performs other oversight functions as requested by the Board	Experience in management, leadership development or financial management, and a thorough knowledge of Rotary's operations. Appointments will be limited to past RI directors	One six-year term; typically meets in Evanston twice a year
Rotaract and Interact	Advises the Board on Interact and Rotaract; develops the Rotaract Preconvention Meeting programme	Rotarians: Experience working with youth; direct experience as a mentor or Rotaract/Interact adviser or district chair. Youth programme alumni are strong candidates. Rotaractors: Leadership at the club, district or international level. Strong candidates; have served as a district Rotaract representative, organised projects, or attended a Rotaract Preconvention. Age restrictions may apply.	One three-year term; annual meeting in Evanston One one-year term; one meeting in Evanston
Strategic Planning	Reviews Rotary's strategic plan and associated measures; advises leadership on other matters of long-term significance	10+ years of experience in strategy development, monitoring and implementation, and strong understanding of RI and Foundation programmes and services	One four-year term; up to four meetings in Evanston
Youth Exchange	Advises the Board on matters related to the Rotary Youth Exchange programme and develops the programme for the Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention	Experience in administering exchanges at district or multi-district level; must be from a district that has met certification requirements	Multiple tel-conference/webinar meetings per year

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Meet your Governors

Rasheeda Bhagat and Jaishree

To do something different, her mantra

Stuti Agarwal

Mechanical Engineer, RC Allahabad, D 3120

She admits that she likes to do things differently. For a woman Rotarian to rise from the ranks of Rotarians in a place like Uttar Pradesh is no joke. When I ask her this she smiles and says, “Of course UP is a very challenging place for a woman and I have experienced that right from my childhood, but Rotary has been very nice to me and over the years, in my club, I have always got the support of my seniors... well most of them,” says Stuti Agarwal, who is the first woman governor from District 3120.

She always walks away from the beaten track; “when no woman from our region wanted to choose engineering as a degree, I opted for that, and even in engineering, I chose a branch — mechanical engineering — which no woman was choosing at that time,” she smiles.

She joined Rotary in 1996, because from her earlier days in Canada, where her family lived then, she was associated with a service organisation that worked for the rights of migrant women. “I liked working for other people’s welfare and when I returned, I found my family deeply engaged with Rotary. My father, cousins and uncle-in-law were all Rotarians and they said that since you’ve always wanted to work for disadvantaged people why don’t you join Rotary. So I joined RC Allahabad.”

Even though the seniors in her club supported her, the journey to becoming a DG was rather difficult, she admits. “Before me women have contested for the DG’s post, but never succeeded. Even though she did not have a contest on her hands and was named by the nomination committee, “there were complaints but my election was not challenged.”

Stuti’s major priorities during her year as governor are to focus on maternal and child health... “my husband is a paediatrician and I very strongly feel for this cause”... and to bring more women into Rotary.

She hastens to add: “My endeavour and challenge will be not only to just induct women into Rotary for the sake of bringing in women members, but ensure that they do the work and are fully involved and participate in our service projects. I want to ensure that.”

So what does she feel about the extravaganza that many Rotary clubs in India indulge in, and which is frowned upon?

With a broad smile Stuti quips: “That is exactly why I want to bring in more women! Women are very cost conscious and will crack down on unwanted expenditure.”





Rajiv Sharma

Pharmaceuticals,
RC Bhusawal Tapti Valley, D 3030

Reintroducing Rotary to Rotarians

He is anguished that many Rotarians are forgetting the core values of Rotary, and those who are new to Rotary are “not well-trained in what is the real essence of Rotary. So educating the new Rotarians and a re-orientation for the older ones who have forgotten Rotary’s core values, will be my priority during my year as governor,” says Rajiv Sharma.

So during his year training and education of Rotarians will take centre stage. “This is very important because I believe that except god, you can only love a person you know really well. So a Rotarian has to know Rotary well before he/she can love it totally.” His next priority will be to focus on women members. “Luckily, the percentage of women members in our district is rather good at 12 per cent or so, but I will try to improve it,” says Sharma, who joined Rotary in 1994, because his father was a Rotarian “who introduced me to this wonderful organisation.”

He adds that District 3030 normally concentrates on maternal health. “Our district has three mammography buses which have been acquired through global grants and functional literacy is another area we are concentrating on. I particularly want to educate people on how to open and operate bank accounts etc because this is something we really need in Maharashtra,” he says.

But his full attention will be on maternal health, and distribution of sanitary napkins in order to ensure female hygiene will be taken up in a big way during his year. This district, with 93 clubs and around 5,500 members has done rather well in Foundation giving; “we have already touched the \$1 million mark a few years back and I am confident of replicating that target. But we will be concentrating more on permanent fund though annual fund will also get our attention,” adds Sharma.



Vishnu S Mondhe

Automobile dealer, RC Tuljapur, D 3132

He wants to enhance women’s membership

A Rotaractor-turned-Rotarian, Vishnu Mondhe holds his Rotaract days close to his heart. “I came to Solapur in 1988, employed as an engineer with LML and I had no friends, until one day I was invited to a Rotaract meeting.” This meeting impressed him so much that he agreed to become a Rotaractor. He is quick to add that his days as a Rotarian since 1994 have been equally interesting and valuable as “looking back, I feel happy to have been of some help to many people along the way through Rotary.”

Mondhe wants to improve women’s membership in the district by making the meeting time and venue more comfortable for them. “I have suggested to the clubs to have early meetings and venues within reach so that women find it easy to attend meetings.” He is also encouraging his team to rope in working women as they will find Rotary an interesting platform to bond. Another challenge is regaining the No 1 slot the district held in membership growth two years ago. “Retention is a huge challenge and I am devising programmes to address it in earnest,” says the DG.

He aims to raise \$300,000 for TRF and towards this goal will encourage Rotarian couples to contribute ₹1.25 lakh to earn the title *Jodi kamaal ki* and will urge club presidents to inspire all members to contribute to the Foundation.

Organising mega medical camps in Akalkot and Usmanabad tops his list of service projects. “We are known for our participation in international medical missions and mega health camps in Udgir and Udhampur. Now we want to extend that support to our people too,” says Mondhe. A mega dental camp to reach out to 100,000 schoolchildren, rallies to promote Rotary’s polio eradication drive and ‘Save the girl child’ are some of the programmes on his agenda.



Nikhilesh Trivedi

Medical Professional,
RC Balaghat Tigers, D 3261

He wants to make Rotary “affordable”

This DG has taken to heart the recent strong message from Rotary International that extravaganza is best avoided in Rotary. “I want to make Rotary interesting for common Rotarians and get their full participation. The recent message from RI not to have events outside the district, or not to make our events too expensive, has been my thinking and philosophy right from the day I got elected.” He feels that if an event is too expensive, being held in an exotic locale, it deprives many Rotarians the opportunity to participate. “So my first priority will be to make Rotary affordable to Rotarians,” says Nikhilesh Trivedi.

He joined Rotary in 1998; he had gone to Australia as a GSE team member in 1987 and “felt I owed a debt of gratitude to Rotary and was also very impressed by what Rotary was doing in Australia.” On his return he looked for opportunities to join Rotary “but unfortunately I landed up in places where there was either no Rotary or it was very regional. I was in Karnataka at that time, and so didn’t join the organisation.”

But the opportunity he was looking for came when a club was chartered in his home town Balaghat, near Jabalpur, in Madhya Pradesh. He not only joined it but also became the charter secretary.

Trivedi’s focus during his year as governor, apart from ending extravaganza, will be increasing women members. “My district lags behind in this area and the percentage of women in our region is much lower than that in India, which itself is much less than the world average of 20 per cent.” His promise to himself is to strive hard to get to the 20 per cent mark, or at least close to it when it comes to women members.

“Thirdly, I want to do sustainable service projects; recently *Rotary News* featured the cath lab we have done.”



Nirmal Prakash

Colour Lab, RC Attur, D 2982

Membership develop- ment is his focus

Ijoined Rotary in 2002 to make friends and further my vocation, but gradually felt overwhelmed by the vast transformation Rotarians make in communities worldwide, particularly polio eradication,” says Nirmal Prakash. He leads a team of 3,000 Rotarians in 68 clubs in the district and is all set to increase this number by 20 per cent and ensure 90 per cent retention. His assignment as membership chair two years ago, which fetched him an RI award, gives him the confidence to meet his target now. He plans to identify 10 active members in every club to assist the club president in inducting “quality” members. The chosen Rotarians will be asked to mentor the new members for better retention.

He plans to double his district’s contribution to TRF with a target of \$300,000. “I will urge each member to contribute \$100, and thus my target can be met easily. Beyond that I am confident of getting PHFs and Major Donors too,” says Prakash.

His agenda includes getting all clubs to register in Club Central and apply for the Presidential Citation, and also get Rotarians to register in *My Rotary*. Most important, he hopes to “educate Rotarians about Rotary, so they can get inspired to plan service projects needed for the community rather than blindly perform an eye camp or a blood donation camp.” He will urge each club to implement the WinS programme in two schools and has drawn up plans to construct check dams and toilet blocks, and gift cattle to enhance villagers’ livelihood. ■





Rotary

Rotary at a glance

Rotarians	:	12,37,694
Clubs	:	35,887
Districts	:	539
Rotaractors	:	2,56,519*
Clubs	:	11,153*
Interactors	:	5,26,723*
Clubs	:	22,901*
RCC members:		2,27,493*
RCC	:	9,891*

* As on June 1, 2018

Membership Summary

As on June 1, 2018

RI Zone	RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
5	2981	112	4,662	220	61	226	170
5	2982	69	3,080	138	65	112	45
5	3000	127	5,346	460	296	664	195
4	3011	78	3,429	679	58	110	25
4	3012	87	3,446	674	70	129	56
5	3020	92	4,235	208	117	466	351
4	3030	92	5,067	632	83	313	164
4	3040	98	2,230	244	61	124	137
4	3053	75	2,836	471	18	56	95
4	3054	130	6,431	1,031	94	318	469
4	3060	101	4,355	519	62	123	136
4	3070	103	3,092	302	68	158	55
4	3080	78	3,371	226	73	216	108
4	3090	80	2,189	83	32	37	122
4	3100*	73	1,715	74	11	72	146
6	3110	115	4,031	316	51	49	104
6	3120	78	3,329	380	38	61	51
4	3131	131	5,620	1,174	113	284	90
4	3132	105	4,143	433	66	206	142
4	3141	92	5,507	1,201	120	255	82
4	3142	83	3,188	500	71	195	65
5	3150	99	3,694	371	93	229	109
5	3160	70	2,459	132	27	48	81
5	3170	127	5,667	408	61	310	161
5	3181	74	3,235	255	35	179	104
5	3182	83	3,428	264	36	274	94
5	3190	129	5,213	640	155	359	51
5	3201	140	5,279	326	101	131	47
5	3202	128	4,919	246	105	436	46
5	3211	138	4,580	280	13	89	124
5	3212	98	4,009	306	113	278	140
5	3231	71	2,981	132	56	201	239
5	3232	106	4,290	618	149	317	80
6	3240	88	3,071	355	65	148	154
6	3250	98	3,815	666	51	209	183
6	3261	70	2,585	338	16	102	42
6	3262	95	3,376	395	47	71	75
6	3291	145	3,808	709	82	131	592
India Total		3,758	1,47,711	16,406	2,833	7,686	5,130
5	3220	70	1,969	251	84	201	75
6	3271	81	1,444	245	53	16	13
6	3272	164	3,281	470	44	37	37
6	3281	205	5,911	856	234	91	186
6	3282	141	4,012	408	132	48	41
6	3292	115	4,498	682	122	117	108
S Asia Total		4,534	1,68,826	19,318	3,502	8,196	5,590

*Non-districted.

Source: RI South Asia Office



Bharatanatyam

fusion of body, mind, soul

Seetha Ratnakar

A spectacular vision of dance etched forever in my mind is watching a thousand dancers performing Bharatanatyam in the central courtyard of the majestic Brahadeeswara temple in Thanjavur to commemorate the Millennium celebrations of the temple. What a resplendent sight it was! Truly an unforgettable and once in a lifetime experience! It was a feast for the senses to see a confluence of multi-national, multilingual and multi-religious dancers from all over the world dancing in perfect harmony without ever practising together. This mega dance event was conceived and coordinated by the renowned Bharatanatyam exponent, Dr Padma Subrahmanyam, and orchestrated by a higher power. I was fortunate to witness and also direct the live telecast

of this magnificent performance for television viewers across India.

The Brahadeeswara temple is an architectural marvel that has witnessed over a thousand years of history. It was in these hallowed precincts that Bharatanatyam was performed centuries ago as a temple worship ritual. It was here that the names of dancers and musicians were inscribed on the temple walls. This was the city where kings nurtured and encouraged fine arts; this was the perfect environment where the Tanjore quartet systematically devised a concert format for dance and composed many immortal songs that are performed even today.

Sep 25, 2010, was the historic day when the picturesque temple glowed with soul-stirring worship through the dance of a thousand devoted dancers.

This perfect coexistence of art and architecture, traditions and technology can best describe the relevance of Bharatanatyam in today's world.

Originating in Tamil Nadu, Bharatanatyam is probably the oldest classical dance tradition of India dating back to over 2,000 years according to available literature. As the dance style evolved from the temple dances of South India, it remains a classical art that combines artistic expression with spirituality even today. T Balasaraswati, a Bharatanatyam Devadasi, described the essence of this exquisite dance style thus: "Bharatanatyam is an art that consecrates the body... the dancer, who

dissolves her identity in rhythm and music, makes her body an instrument, at least for the duration of the dance, for the experience and expression of the spirit.”

Bharatanatyam was earlier known as Sadir, and the new name was coined only in the early 20th century. The name was derived from sage Bharata who wrote the *Natya Shastra* treatise on arts two millennia ago. Another interpretation is that it is an acronym of *bha* for *bhavam* or expressions, *ra* for *ragam* or medium and *tha* for *thalam* or rhythm which combine to make *natyam* or dance.

The intrinsic beauty of Bharatanatyam is meant to be a cathartic experience for the audience that transcends beyond the knowledge of language and technique. Earlier, it used to be performed only by members of certain families in South India and the art has been handed down over the centuries through generations of ritualistic dancers known as Devadasis. Traditionally, it used to be a solo dance mostly performed by women.

The dancer was accompanied by a guru or *nattuvanar* conducting the performance, a singer rendering the vocals, a percussionist for rhythm on the *mridangam* or *thavil* and wind instruments like *nadaswaram* or flute and string instruments like veena or violin were added for melody. The technique is based on an elaborate vocabulary of hand, foot, face and body movements performed to the accompaniment of dance syllables. The dance is an amalgamation of three elements, namely, pure dance or *Nritta*, a combination of expressions and rhythm or *Nritya*, and the dramatic element or *Natya*. The facial expressions known as *abhinaya* are based on



**Bharatanatyam by
Shanmuga Sundar**

the nine universal emotions known as *navarasas* — *shringara* (love), *hasya* (humour), *karuna* (grief), *raudra* (anger), *veera* (valour), *bhayanaka* (fear), *bhibhatsa* (disgust), *adbhuta* (wonder) and *shantam* (peace). The roots of *abhinaya* are found in the *Natyashastra* text which defines *rasa* as the highest aesthetic experience for both the dancer and the spectator.

Celebrated Bharatanatyam dancer Alarmel Valli shares her passion for dance — “For me, the greatness of Bharatanatyam lies in its inherent ability to harmonise the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions of life. The dancer is at once the sculptor, sculpting and structuring space, in forms both graceful and powerful. She is the painter, adding tints and hues to a line drawing, bringing it to life. She is the poet, writing her poems with movements, gestures and expressions. Ultimately she is the seeker, whose dance becomes a transcendental, transforming experience — a joyous prayer with one’s very being.”

Bharatanatyam is a dynamic, vibrant living tradition today that has incorporated music, literature,

Dance helped me in facing a tough life, a highly demanding job and managing a chronic disease like rheumatoid arthritis.

Kamalini Dutt
former Deputy Director
General of Doordarshan



Ragini Devi

sculpture and theatre to offer the artist infinite scope for creative explorations. To understand and appreciate the beauty of the Bharatanatyam repertoire, let us take a walk through the *Margam* or path of the dance performance. The legendary dancer T Balasaraswathi reverently describes it in these words — “The Bharatanatyam recital is structured like a Great Temple. We enter through the outer *Gopuram* (Hall) of *Alarippu*, cross the *Ardha Mantapam* (half way hall) with *Jatiswaram*, then the *Mantapam* of *Sabdam* and enter the holy precinct of the *Varnam*.”

“This is the place, the space that gives the dancer expansive scope to revel in the rhythm, moods and music of the dance. The *varnam* is the perpetuity which gives ever-expanding room to the dancer to delight in her self-fulfillment, by providing the fullest scope to her own creativity as well as to the tradition of art.” The *padam* is a soul-stirring dance replete with emotions depicted through intense expressions followed by an outburst of

pure joy through the *tillana*. The dancer completes the traditional *margam* by emoting to a devotional verse that is profound in its simplicity and invokes God’s blessings for the artists, audience and the universe.

Shiva is the primordial source and embodiment of all movement, sound and beauty and He is worshipped as the Cosmic dancer Nataraja, the Lord of dance. According to Indian mythology, Shiva and his consort Parvati represent the inseparable opposing and complementary masculine and feminine forces, the Yin and the Yang. Legend has it that the couple participated in a grand dance duet attended by all the celestials where Parvati matched Shiva step for step and pose for pose. When Shiva finally performed the *Oordhva Tandavam* with one foot on the ground and the other stretched over his head, Parvati declined to follow suit as she was overcome by shyness and felt it may be unbecoming to do the same. The 108 *karanas* or postures of his enthralling dance have been captured in the exquisite stone carvings of the Thillai Nataraja temple in Chidambaram.

Kamalini Dutt, dancer and former Deputy Director General of Doordarshan, India, shares how Bharatanatyam impacted her life. “I was 18 — an age when one would question everything that came one’s way. What was I learning — Bharatanatyam, philosophy, bhakti, Shiva’s omnipresence or a path to self-realisation? I realised I was a medium to connect past, present and future.”

Thevarnam written a few centuries ago came alive through her “mind, body and soul. I realised, our oral traditions, particularly performing arts, in this case — Bharatanatyam, are an integral part of the great Tamil culture. I imbibed the

nuances of the highest aesthetic sensibility and values of an inclusive society the saint poets dreamt of.”

But when she was 19, she met with a near fatal accident which slowly brought an end to her dancing. “I got a job in DD which in a way changed the course of my life but dance never left me, even for a second. It morphed into creative ideas which empowered me to transform television productions as an artwork. Dance helped me in facing a tough life, a highly demanding job and managing a chronic disease like rheumatoid arthritis. It also held my hand when I faced challenges in a male-dominated work space. In my inward journey, Bharatanatyam is my best friend. It has helped me to learn that body is a very important medium but to touch one’s core, one has to go beyond.”

Bharatanatyam remained exclusive to the Hindu temples and palaces through the 19th century and reached great artistic heights under the Thanjavur kings. After a ban on the Devadasi system in the early 20th century, it moved to the cities and rapidly gained popularity all over India and also internationally.

Rukmini Devi Arundale was a trendsetter who established Kalakshetra at Madras in 1936, which was the first dance academy where Bharatanatyam was taught. Mrinalini Sarabhai was



T Balasaraswati

also a pioneer who popularised Bharatanatyam through her Darpana Academy of Performing Arts in Ahmedabad. Esther Sherman, an American dancer, who came to India in 1930 to learn classical dance was probably the first non-Devadasi dancer to revive the art and perform in India and Europe. She became known as Ragini Devi and started a dance studio in New York where Bharatanatyam was taught.

T Balasaraswati was the first Indian classical dancer who performed Bharatanatyam outside India and is responsible for putting Indian classical dance on the world map. It is thanks to the pioneering efforts of these amazing

dancers that classical dance is enjoying its present-day glory. Bharatanatyam has evolved into a multi-dimensional dance style that includes solo and group presentations that have progressed beyond religious, social and linguistic barriers. Dancers are drawn to it as it challenges them intellectually and artistically to create new work which appeals to the enlightened and evolved global audiences. Today, Bharatanatyam remains one of the most widely performed dance styles all over the world by both female and male dancers.

The intrinsic beauty of
Bharatanatyam is meant to be
a cathartic experience for the
audience that transcends beyond
the knowledge of language and
technique.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

TRF Grants officer visits D 3054

Team Rotary News

Chandra Palmer, Regional Grants Officer from The Rotary Foundation, visited different projects of RI District 3054 in Jaipur and Ahmedabad that are being implemented through TRF grants. During her four-day visit she explained to the Rotarians various steps required for sanction of Global Grant Applications, including the incoming Community Assessment Scheme.

She was accompanied by DRFC Ramesh Agrawal to a project where TRF helped a school for differently-abled children, where classes were given additional equipment. Another project she visited has been done with funds from AKS member Suresh Poddar. She noted how Rotary has changed the complete scenario of 11 rural schools in Gram Jaitpura, Dhodser, Bhojwala, etc.



From L: Suresh Poddar, TRF's Regional Grants Officer Chandra Palmer, Kiran Poddar and DRFC Ramesh Agrawal with the Principal of one of the schools.

Later she visited the famous Jaipur Foot project, where TRF has provided different global grants for artificial limbs and she interacted with the beneficiaries. The process of manufacturing and fitting of artificial limbs was explained to her.

In Ahmedabad, she addressed a seminar on Grant Management and later visited some of the projects of TRF, including one at the SMVS Hospital at Gandhinagar, where TRF is going to install a critical kidney care unit with the help of RC Vijapur. Near Himmatnagar she visited a few toilet projects. ■

Convention

The Germany you don't know

When people think about travelling to Germany, certain images may spring to mind: Oktoberfest in Munich, dramatic Alpine landscapes, the Romantic Road with its medieval towns. But as those who attend the 2019 Rotary International Convention in Hamburg from June 1 to 5 will discover, there's another side to Germany that is equally captivating.

Home to Europe's second-largest port, Hamburg is known for its cosmopolitan outlook. The city offers enough canals and bridges to rival Amsterdam; two inviting lakes in the heart of the city; and easy access to nearby North Sea and Baltic beaches that stretch for miles.



You're not likely to run into any lederhosen-clad polka dancers in Hamburg, but you can visit a world-class concert hall; you might not find Wiener schnitzel on the menu, but the seafood is fresh and abundant; and any thoughts of castles on the Rhine will be forgotten when you catch sight of the huge ships plying the Elbe.

Of course, some stereotypes of Germany do hold true, even in Hamburg: The public transportation system, for instance, is efficient, clean, and easy to navigate. Convention goers will find it even easier to use, thanks to an all-access transit pass that will be included with registration.



**Register for the 2019
Rotary Convention in
Hamburg at riconvention.org.**

Calcutta South City celebrates Silver Jubilee

Team Rotary News

Rotary Club of Calcutta South City, D 3291, celebrated its Silver Jubilee recently in the presence of PRIP K R Ravindran and Vanathy Ravindran as chief guests.

A coffee table book, documenting the club's 25-year journey, was released on the occasion by PRIP Ravindran. Congratulating the club's various humanitarian service projects, he called upon the members to "challenge yourselves to make an even bigger impact in the next 25 years

so that more people will get inspired to involve with Rotary."

To commemorate the milestone, the club has adopted 25 children hailing from underprivileged families, sponsoring their entire education, including hostel fees. Other projects include providing a ₹8 crore worth radiotherapy machine to the Saroj Gupta Cancer Centre and Research Institute under a global grant, and establishing a blood bank at Baharampur in Murshidabad. ■



PRIP K R Ravindran speaks at the Silver Jubilee celebration of RC Calcutta South City. Vanathy Ravindran and Hospital Secretary Anjana Gupta are also present.



Beauty pageant funds breast cancer treatment

Team Rotary News

Rotary Club of Mithila, D 3250, hosted a beauty pageant in Mithila, a town in North Bihar. To raise funds for treatment of breast cancer for needy women, the 'Miss and Mrs Brand Mithilanchal' event was organised, said Club President Dr Ranjana R Mishra. The aim was also to showcase the art, culture and traditions of Mithila. The lead-up to the grand finale was held across the district

in association with other clubs for 45 days and included various stages of qualifying rounds.

Chandrashekhar Singh, the District Magistrate and District Governor Vivek Kumar were the chief guests at the grand finale.

The event also served as an opportunity to enhance the self-esteem of women and inspire them to come out of their shells and achieve greater heights, said DG Vivek Kumar. ■

Wellness in the Workplace

Sheela Nambiar

Good health is not merely the absence of disease.

When you are a working person you often feel short-changed for time. Wellness, however, is not time-bound or reserved for the supermodel, athlete or body-builder; the yogi who has renounced humanity, or the decadent narcissist who seems to have all the time in the world to spend in the gym, obsessed with his fitness and appearance. It is necessary for everyone, particularly the overworked corporate or professional.

Wellness for a working person is not just about exercise and gyms. It should involve everything from how to plan and execute a fitness routine, eat the right kind of food, improve self-confidence and efficiency and most importantly, manage stress, depression and anxiety. Prevention of lifestyle-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension and coronary heart disease, using fitness, the right food and lifestyle change should be a priority for anyone who intends to be productive or successful.

Time is probably the most scarce commodity while you are climbing the corporate ladder. You may believe that spending an hour exercising would cut into your work time which you would rather spend crunching numbers, dealing with clients/patients or closing a deal. But to be effective in your work, it is necessary you are at the top of your game physically, mentally and emotionally. Clarity of thought, efficiency, productivity, positivity, and the ability to manage stress are critical for doing great work and for career growth.

There are several aspects to healthy living at an optimal body weight.

The diet

Healthy eating is a communal and social issue. Some companies provide food for the employees from an on-campus cafeteria. In such cases, the company must make healthy options available. These are not difficult to implement in a canteen... serving adequate quantities of vegetables, fruits and whole grains and avoiding deep-fried snacks, processed food or sweets is possible when those at the top make decisions to make employee health a priority.

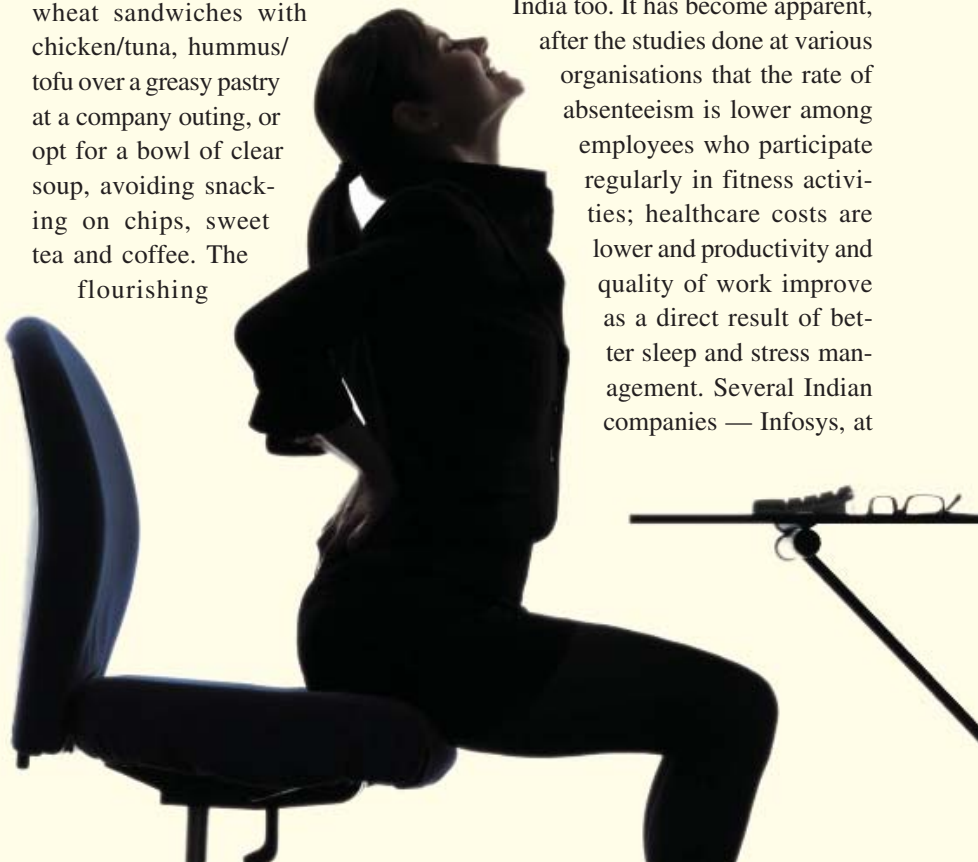
If these options are unavailable, home-packed meal is still the best. A modified wrap, made of whole wheat and soy rotis filled with veggies, paneer/tofu or beans/legumes, keep fruits or nuts to snack on, choose whole wheat sandwiches with chicken/tuna, hummus/tofu over a greasy pastry at a company outing, or opt for a bowl of clear soup, avoiding snacking on chips, sweet tea and coffee. The flourishing

fast food and home/office delivery system encourages one to eat high-calorie, low-nutrient-density food if one is ignorant of how to make the right food choices. For this, the individual must understand the basic fundamentals of healthy eating and the innumerable options that are available even while away from home.

Physical fitness

Incorporating an appropriate fitness routine into one's life helps improve concentration, energy levels and work efficiency; helps combat insomnia, depression, chronic fatigue, obesity and various other disorders.

Onsite fitness facilities are available in several large corporate houses in India too. It has become apparent, after the studies done at various organisations that the rate of absenteeism is lower among employees who participate regularly in fitness activities; healthcare costs are lower and productivity and quality of work improve as a direct result of better sleep and stress management. Several Indian companies — Infosys, at



Bangaluru, which boasts a 10,000-sq ft gym, Hyundai Motor India, LG factory in Delhi to name a few — have also incorporated convenient health centres within their framework.

Access to a fitness centre is one of the fringe benefits some corporates include for their employees. Isn't this even better than medical insurance or health screening as it extrapolates into a form of preventive care? Some companies have found it to be so. Prevention from degenerative diseases, obesity, coronary heart disease, deep vein thrombosis, especially for those at sedentary jobs, is possible when employees include a fitness routine into their day.

Access to a fitness centre alone is not sufficient, appropriate guidance and motivation are also essential. Establishing a full-fledged gym, sauna, and pool or tennis court is only part of the equation. Ensuring that the proper science of fitness is applied and practised is also important. Having a qualified trainer in-house, or conducting regular fitness classes on campus are ways of motivating employees to participate in fitness.

Companies can make it mandatory that employees participate in regular exercise programme, and the time be made available for them to do so. Working a 16-hour shift may not be most conducive to include exercise into an already crammed day.

When higher level employees, CEOs and directors are as

passionate about improving wellness for themselves as they are for their employees, enthusiasm filters down to the rest of the company. Leading by example is a sure way of improving compliance.

Emotional/psychological wellness: Loving your job is key to a happier workspace. But work is stressful with all the challenges it poses. Sometimes it can be just plain boring.

When work stress is debilitating, learning how to de-stress effectively can be taught. Regular yoga classes, short breathing and relaxation routines, progressive muscle relaxation, mindful meditation, and workshops on stress management will help employees stay psychologically healthy.

The economic benefits of offering such facilities to the workforce are indisputable. An unhealthy employee is a liability rather than an asset to the company. Understanding this reality and working towards preventing it is beneficial to every company. While offering health insurance for the employees, it might make sense to also thwart those very diseases with the necessary preventive measures. This is not only economically advantageous, but also makes for a more dynamic and contented workforce.

Make small changes in the work place

- Encourage healthy living from senior-level management
- Provide the time to fit in a wellness programme, within the working day
- Provide access to a well-equipped fitness centre
- Organise group classes a couple of days a week
- Provide healthy menu in the cafeteria
- Organise talks on physical fitness, wellness, food and psychological wellbeing
- Take regular breaks from sitting. Get up and move every 20 minutes when you have a sedentary job

You may believe that spending an hour exercising would cut into your work time which you would rather spend crunching numbers, dealing with clients/patients or closing a deal.

- Do a few stretches at your desk every couple of hours
- Have walking meeting (instead of sitting meetings)
- Hook up with a fellow worker to go to the gym regularly and motivate each other
- Fun challenges and incentives within the company, for example, number of steps walked or number of pounds lost, can be motivating for employees
- Organise group activities that involve physical movement like games, treks, walks.

The final decision and responsibility to improve one's health and wellness of course remains with the individual himself. Having professional guidance and a supportive environment at work that encourages such a lifestyle is only an added benefit. If you are fortunate enough to work in such a company, consider it a bonus. Let us remember the British Statesman Edward Stanley's quote: "Those who think they have not time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness."

The author, an Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, is a fitness & lifestyle consultant, and has published two books: Get Size Wise; Gain to lose.
www.drsheela.nambiar.com



Libraries...

spaces of the free mind

Sandhya Rao

Knowledge is power without boundaries and libraries are powerhouses of knowledge.

My maternal grandfather was a doctor and after he retired from government service, he volunteered at the clinic run by the Ramakrishna Mission on Royapettah High Road in Chennai. I was in a boarding school in Chennai, and every time I visited my grandparents, either over a weekend or during the Christmas holidays, I would tag along with him to the clinic. While *thatha* headed straight down the corridor where queues of

patients anxiously awaited his arrival, I made for the library situated further inside the campus.

To my child's eye, it appeared as though the campus were huge and the library cavernous. On my first day there, *thatha* accompanied me and left me in the charge of a saffron-clad monk who was probably the librarian. But from the next visit onward, I was on my own and soon I felt I owned the place: the shelves, the books, the

library itself. There were no other children around, only monks and lay adults gliding silently between the shelves. But nobody took any notice of the child picking up books at random, sometimes smelling the pages and sometimes flopped on the floor, reading.

You can guess what kind of books adorned those shelves: mostly philosophical, a lot to do with Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sharada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and other venerated individuals, tomes of serious texts in a splattering of languages, some recognisable, some to be wondered at. Not exactly the kind of reading list that would appeal to an 11 or 12-year-old! But I didn't care. They were books and I was a bookworm and in my world, the twain always met! Even so, I used to get a special thrill every time I chanced upon stories that I could comprehend. And so I read about Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and other enlightened souls, stories that I have now forgotten—but not the library that housed them.

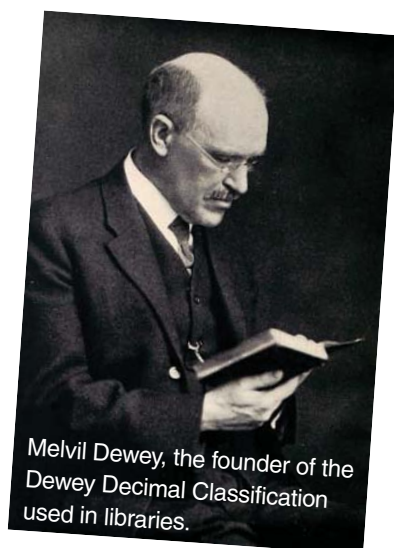
When we were kids growing up in a small town in West Bengal, my friends and I pooled our literary and financial (meagre at best) resources and 'built' up our own private library. We knew nothing about either the Dewey system or colon classification but we had our own way of keeping track of the books and charged anything between 10 paise and 25 paise as borrowing fee. Borrowing books from our library soon acquired some kind of cult status and we vied with each other to see who had read the most number of *Famous Fives* or *Biggles* or whatever else was on offer. Our small collections went into 'stocking up' the library which was housed in a room donated to us by a bachelor 'uncle' in the neighbourhood. Incidentally, he also prepared a badminton court for us in his backyard. After that, he discreetly retreated to the shadows.



The iconic Connemara Public Library in Chennai.

Now, thanks to information being freely available, we know that the Dewey Decimal Classification used in libraries in many parts of the world makes it possible to find any book on the shelves and, in reverse, to return it to its exact place. This may not seem like anything special because we take the system for granted now. But when you realise that before this system was put in place the practice was to organise books in libraries according to the order in which they were acquired rather than by subject and all that ended up doing was get the library disorganised, you understand what a radical invention that was from Melvil Dewey, as far back as 1876.

However, Dewey is not the only purveyor of library science; there is also SR Ranganathan who introduced the colon classification system. This mathematician, university librarian and professor of library science was appointed by the University of Madras in 1923 to make sense of its messy collection of books and journals. Initially, he was bored stiff with the job; he longed to get back to teaching. So the university offered him a carrot: go study contemporary western library practices in University College London and if you're still not motivated, return to teaching.

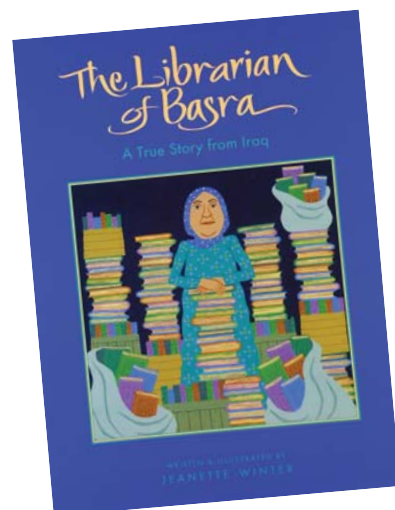


Melvil Dewey, the founder of the Dewey Decimal Classification used in libraries.

Ranganathan took the bait and once he started applying his mathematical brain to the research, he was hooked. He began to see the ambiguities in the Dewey system (among other things) and, to cut a long and fascinating story short, he revised the system and devised a clearer way of classifying books so that identifying and retrieving books and information became simpler. He returned to India in a much happier frame of mind, even going so far as to put the ship's library in shape on the long voyage home! He remained with the University of Madras for 20 years and worked tirelessly for the setting up of free public libraries in India. Given Indians' penchant for connecting relationship dots, SR Ranganathan is often referred to as the 'father' of library science in India.

Still, there are very many schools in India that do not have libraries. There are libraries that blanket-bind the books a dark blue or green or black so that the user has no idea what the book cover looks like, nor can read what's on the back cover. I remember the iconic Connemara Public Library in Chennai used to have shelves and shelves of seemingly forbidding materials that you would not ever be tempted to look at. Yet it's a treasure house, as many bookworms have discovered. There's nothing you cannot find there; you only require patience. Established in 1896, it receives a copy of all books, newspapers and journals published in India.

The seminal value of libraries is brilliantly illustrated by an iconic picture book by Jeanette Winter called *The Librarian of Basra*. Based on a true story, it tells of Alia Muhammad Baker, a librarian in Basra, Iraq, who with help from the local community, saved the books in her library from being destroyed during the war by secreting them out of the building before the marauders arrive. The Jaffna Public Library in Sri Lanka, one of



the biggest libraries in Asia with over 97,000 books and manuscripts, was not so fortunate. In what must surely be the most violent example of the war against knowledge, it was burnt down by a rampaging mob on June 1, 1981. It has since been reconstructed, but those old books and papers are lost forever.

Libraries are spaces of the free mind, they are spaces that free the mind. Libraries are home to ideas across centuries and peoples. Their energy derives from the multilayered experience of reading. That's why dictators, invaders, the power-crazed are afraid of books and libraries. And that's exactly why we need books and libraries, we must protect them, nurture them and ensure their growth and existence. The best way to do that is to use them and encourage others to do so as well.

Yet, I have been at a discussion in the course of which one teacher, the vice-principal of a school no less, said children shouldn't be given books because they mishandle them. Luckily another individual responded by saying libraries should be judged by the number of mishandled books they carry. The more soiled books the better the library. It is proof that children are reading!

The columnist is a children's writer and senior journalist.

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Promoting toilets in Odisha

G Singh

Akshay Kumar and Bhumi Pednekar starrer Bollywood flick, *Toilet-Ek Prem Katha*, focused on the perils of open

defecation and also tried to sensitise people to build and use toilets in their locality.

Far away from the glitterati of the tinsel town, a group of women in a remote hamlet of

Barkote block in Deogarh district of Odisha took up the initiative of having permanent latrines inside their houses. Three years later their hard work has paid off as almost all the households have toilets.

Their initiative has also helped Odisha government to declare Deogarh, the first Open Defecation Free (ODF) district in the State.

Meet Aarti Biswal who toiled hard and knocked one door after another for creating awareness against defecating in the open. The seeds that she had sown three years ago have borne results with several women coming out in support of her cause. She, however, reveals that it was a daunting task in the beginning as people refused to listen to her. “I can still remember the days when I had to bear the verbal insults hurled on me by the villagers who



Bhajanandini Biswas with her husband in front of their new toilet.

Apart from the peeping eyes, there were also the danger of reptiles and snakes that roam freely in the fields and sometimes also sneak into our houses.

Things remained the same for more than five decades till the women of the village decided to fight for the basic requirement and succeeded in convincing the men about the importance of toilets in homes.



refused to listen about the harms of open defecation. The silver lining was some women, particularly the newlyweds, who felt ashamed of going out in the open. I then started with approaching the women who began to take interest in listening about the health hazards of defecating in the open,” she says.

As an *anganwadi* worker she was asked by the government officials to create awareness against open defecation in villages of Barkote. Her initiative was also supported by the volunteers of JEETA Foundation, a non-profit.

Aarti says that more and more women understand the dangers of going out for nature’s call in the open and began to pressurise the male members of the family to construct public toilets by taking ₹12,000 given by the government under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) which was launched in 2014. The fund-sharing pattern between the Centre and State for toilet construction is 60:40.

Soon, the women became the champions of the campaign against open defecation. In 2014, only 11

per cent of the 71,000 households in the district having 698 villages had toilets. In two and half years, the Deogarh Municipal Corporation (DMC) constructed 67,061 toilets making Deogarh the first district in Odisha to become ODF. The formal announcement was made by the state government on August 2, 2017.

Reena Kumar Sahoo (37), a homemaker in Barakote block, says that she along with her family used to go out in the open to relieve themselves till two years ago, but the construction of toilets have changed their lives as they can use it whenever they feel the urge. “We used to wake up early to attend nature’s call. Apart from the peeping eyes, there were also the danger of reptiles and snakes that roam freely in the fields and sometimes also sneak into our houses. The construction of toilets came as a big relief for us as we could use it any time of the day,” she says with a smile on her face.

The construction of toilets has also been equally welcomed by senior citizens and newlyweds who say that it should have been done before. “I was just 20 when I had

come here after marriage. It was unthinkable to even ask for toilets in those days. We had to go out in the open, normally in the early hours when men were asleep. But the danger of being bitten by a snake or attacked by a wild animal always played back in our minds. Things remained the same for more than five decades till the women of the village decided to fight for the basic requirement and succeeded in convincing the men about the importance of toilets in homes,” says Nilotma Sahoo, a 70-year-old homemaker.

Bhajanandini Biswas (22) who got married last year, says that she was virtually shocked when she came to know that there were no toilets in the village, but was eventually relieved when her in-laws decided to construct it. “I am happy that my husband and his parents understood my concern and have built a toilet,” she said.

Indeed, the women have played a major role in making their villages clean and free from health hazards. The state government aims to make Odisha ODF by 2019. ■



RC Vedaranyam — D 2981

A camp for detection of bone diseases was held by the club in association with K S Orthopaedic Centre, Karaikal, and other medical organisations. Over 500 patients were diagnosed for various ailments at the camp and were given free treatment by a panel of doctors.

RC Karur — D 3000

Three solar powered lamps worth ₹50,000 were handed over to the villagers of Nedungur by RI Director C Basker, along with a water filtration system costing ₹1.50 lakh, following a representation by the local people who were hit by lack of drinking water and sufficient streetlighting in their area. An all-women SHG will maintain the RO system.



RC Kundli — D 3012

Over 30 bicycles were distributed to government schools in Aterna village near Kundli. The club also inaugurated a gender-segregated toilet block at a government school at Manoli village, and a sanitary pad vending machine was installed at a government girls high school in Nangal.

RC Rewari Main — D 3011

A water filtration and cooling unit was installed at the urban primary health centre. The facility will benefit 200 patients who visit the centre every day. The project cost is ₹40,000.



Matters

RC Bikaner Midtown — D 3053

Four black boards were given to the government high school in Idgah Bari. Club President Gulab Soni, Secretary Giriraj Joshi and other members were present on the occasion. Principal Munni Devi expressed her gratitude to Rotary.



RC Palanpur City — D 3054

The club distributed wheat, dal and sugar to over 250 needy people with the donation from Rtn Dr Prakash Shah. This is an ongoing project of the club which had earned the goodwill of the community.



RC Umbergaon — D 3060

A water hut was set up in front of the Railway station for the benefit of rail commuters. The hut has a water purifier and a cooler unit to provide clean, safe and cool water. The club has undertaken the responsibility of maintenance.

RC Amritsar North — D 3070

Sewing machines were donated to underprivileged women to help them earn a living. The club has also organised training classes for the women.



RC Karnal Midtown — D 3080

A group hearing aid system for 10 hearing deficient children was installed at the Tapan Rehabilitation Society in Nilokheri town. DG T K Ruby inaugurated the new facility at the society during his official visit.



RC Allahabad North — D 3120

An LN-4 prosthetic hand fitment camp was organised jointly with RC Poona Downtown, D 3131, at Vatsalya Sabhagar in the city. Over 300 amputees were fitted with artificial limbs and the camp helped spread awareness about Rotary in the community.



RC Pune Magarpatta City — D 3131

Women Rotarians and Anns celebrated Women's Day giving out awards and organising cultural events. Top achievers — Accenture CEO Ruhi Ranjan, social activists Shobana Gavas, Shilpa Venkat and Sanjeevani Balgude, and Dr Madhavi Vaze — were felicitated.



RC Mumbai Ghatkopar — D 3141

A solar rooftop panel was installed at the Sant Ghadge Maharaj School in Kurla, a central suburb, at a cost of ₹4 lakh. The solar facility will help the school to save 50 per cent of its electricity bills. The club also donated sports and fitness equipment to the school.



RC Nizamabad — D 3150

Sports equipment was donated to a Zilla Parishad High School in Gupanpally village. This will benefit 140 students. An awareness meet on sunstroke prevention was held at the school in which 90 students took part.



RC Kollegal Midtown — D 3181

Desks were donated to Sri Salur Krupa High School which gives free education to rural children. DG Suresh Chengappa, Damayanathi Chengappa, AG Praveen Kumar and Club President Pradeep Fernandes were among those present at the event.



Matters



RC Palladam Rainbow — D 3202

A tea stall was donated to a physically handicapped woman at a cost of ₹60,000. The shop with appliances and grocery items was sponsored by Club President S Kavitha and an NGO.



RC Alleppey East — D 3211

A Rotary Mammogram Centre costing ₹40 lakh was inaugurated by DG Suresh Mathew. The centre will be of great help to the needy women in and around Alleppey, including Kuttanad, a place with a large number of cancer patients.



RC Karaikudi Heritage — D 3212

A medical camp was held in which screening for breast cancer, along with other ailments, was done at the Alangudiya Municipal Primary and High School in the town. An awareness talk on breast cancer was given by Dr Karthikeyan.



RC Rourkela Midtown — D 3261

A handwashing station was installed at an upper primary school in the town. The facility was inaugurated by PDG A B Mohapatra, who is also Vice-Chairman, National WinS Recognition Committee, and WinS Chair PDG Shashi Varvandar.



RC Joka — 3291

A two-day RYLA was held for 36 visually-impaired students of Calcutta Blind School. The event was inaugurated by DG Brojo Gopal Kundu and Swami Vedaswarupananda of Ramakrishna Mission. PRID Shekhar Mehta was the chief guest at the valedictory session.

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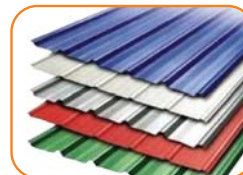
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The economics of haircut

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan

Earlier this month, I needed to get a new passport-sized photograph. My wife said my hair was in a bad shape and would I please get a haircut. After 37 years of marriage I knew it was futile to argue and went looking for a saloon. It took me an hour to find one that was not crowded — which I define as having only four people in the queue or, a 30 minute wait because there were only two chairs.

As I looked alternately between my phone and the back of other people's heads, I was reminded of something Dr D Subbarao, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, had spoken about six years ago, namely, the price of haircuts. Why do they cost more now, he asked, than they did 30 years ago? Why do nearly bald fellows pay the same as others with thick mops on their head?

He was a latecomer to the puzzle. I, on the other hand, have always been fascinated by the economics of haircutting. What Dr Subbarao had said was in the context of inflation. But barbers, haircuts and saloons are much more than that. Indeed, they hide many serious questions of economics. For example, what determines the price of haircuts: the amount of work that the barber must do or something else? Why do haircuts cost more even though the average amount of hair to be cut per head has not changed? What is the role of technology? Why do they cost

what they do when quality is invariant to price?

At a 5-star saloon, you can pay as much as ₹1,500 for a haircut of indifferent quality whereas the fellow under the tree — one or two of whom I have tried — can give you a superb cut and make you feel great for just ₹15. Clearly, the skill alone doesn't determine the price. It is only the overheads, the creams, the towels and the shampoos that matter. In fact the guy under the tree throws in a vigorous three minute head massage for free.

Clearly, skills don't come into it at all, and it is only the overheads, the creams, the towels and the shampoos that matter. In fact the guy under tree throws in a vigorous three minute head massage for free.

Important questions

I had the great good fortune of being taught by the late and great Mrinal Dutta-Chaudhuri, Professor of Economics at the Delhi School of Economics. Amongst other things, he taught the location theory and since then I have always been interested in how businesses locate themselves.

So, how do barbers decide where they will locate their shops? Many markets have as many as two or three while others have none at all. The differentiator between them is the ambience: a/c, non-a/c, fancy chair, wooden chair, clean towels, dirty towels and so on. But all of them charge the same amount. That should lead to longer queues in the better shops but it doesn't. Clearly, clients go for the barber, not the ambience.

There are many other mysteries. For example, why are barbers' shops not more widely dispersed, say, like dentists or path labs? Also if the population is growing, why is the supply of barbers not keeping pace? The price of a haircut would not increase if that was happening. Is there really a shortage of barbers? If so why?

There are many other questions like how does a barber decide on the optimum number of chairs in his saloon? Does he provide for peak loading on a weekend or only for off-peak loading on weekdays? How many barbers should be on duty on weekends and weekdays? Is mechanised cutting better than the old fashioned way with scissors and comb? How much time does mechanisation save per chair? Why does a haircut cost only a quarter of a head massage or shampoo? Why does a mere trim cost the same as a crew-cut?

I can go on but the point must be clear: uneasy lies the head that goes for a haircut. ■



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