

## Supporters of the cause



Mr. P. R. Anbazhakan, Territory Head (TN & Karnataka), HelpAge, receives a cheque of Rs. 14.95 lakh (approx.) from Mr. M.P.M. Abdul Cader, General Manager, West Asia Imports and Exports (P) Ltd. (part of ETA Ascon & Star Group) as donation to maintain the running cost of the Ramnad MMU for a year.



Mr. M.S. Chauhan (right), Principal, St. Thomas School, Jagadhri (Haryana) hands over a cheque for Rs. 78,055 as donation to the cause, to Ms. Susmita Ghose, National Director (North & East), HelpAge. Looking on is Mr. Bhavneswar Sharma, State Head (Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana and J&K), HelpAge.



Dr. V. Vizal Saradhi (left), Director (HR), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL) receives a HelpAge memento of appreciation from Mr. A.K. Singh, State Head - Uttar Pradesh (UP), HelpAge, as he hands over the keys of the new Mobile Medicare Unit (MMU) for Lucknow (UP), to him in return. HPCL has donated the vehicle as part of its CSR initiative, for better healthcare of the needy elderly.



### A unique visit

Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive, HelpAge India, interacts with an elderly resident of Airinkai, one of Japan's most well known homes for the aged and

mentally disabled, during his visit to Tokyo late last year, as part of an intergovernmental mission. He was a part of the Indian delegation sponsored by the Japanese Govt.

## A Memorable Journey



HelpAge salutes the spirit of one of its oldest family members, as her trust with HelpAge comes full circle. Indrani Rajadurai started her journey in HelpAge India at the age of 26 on 1st January 1977, she now formally retires at the age of 60, but her connection with HelpAge remains unbroken, as she takes on the role of Special Advisor. Indrani has been with HelpAge virtually since its birth, she started out as a Sponsored Events Officer, ran on her

skills, but with a great zeal to make a difference and help the less fortunate. She became the first woman officer of HelpAge India.

Her passion towards her work shone through her tenure, as she went from strength to strength and took on further responsibilities, never hesitating to take on that extra work load. Her commitment to the cause of the elderly saw her consistent growth within the organization as she went on to become Deputy Director (South), then Joint Director (South), Regional Director (South) and finally retired as National Director (South & West).

"The organization gave me a wonderful opportunity to serve the elders through the younger generation by organizing Sponsored Walks in schools, which was a unique education cum fundraising event in those starting days". - says Indrani.

New initiatives for the elderly were tested and launched successfully such as Pay Roll Giving, Pre-Retirement Training, Elders Helpline etc. When the Tsunami struck coastal Tamil Nadu in 2004, she was one of the first few people who rushed to help the victims. Few people are aware that, in that very disaster, she too had suffered a personal loss, but Indrani kept on working with fever pitch, putting in all her energy in saving those that were alive, with the hope of keeping them alive. The disaster left a deep impact on her.

Indrani has been a catalyst in urging schools and corporates, especially of the southern region, to come forward and show their sensitivity to the cause. Her constant efforts in sensitizing children on the importance of Agecare values and being sensitive to the elderly, have left an indelible mark in the hearts of many.

Thanks to her efforts the Tamil Nadu State Government recognized HelpAge as a leading national level NGO and appointed her as a member of their Planning Commission, member in their Grant Approval Committee and as an Advisor for Government Programmes. Positions she uses to help the less fortunate. For her efforts she has been conferred with the Best Social Worker Award twice. Corporates, Rotary & Lions Clubs etc. have also awarded her with the Best Woman Achiever Award.

Her inspiration is simple she says, "The blessings and smiles of the elders have encouraged me to achieve my goals successfully. I feel proud that I served HelpAge for 34 long years and continue my second innings as a Special Advisor imparting Value education on Agecare to school students, corporates and the general public. I thank God for using me as a small instrument to help put a smile on an aging face." HelpAge feels blessed to have such a member in its family and wishes she reaches more milestones in her life.

## BOOK POST

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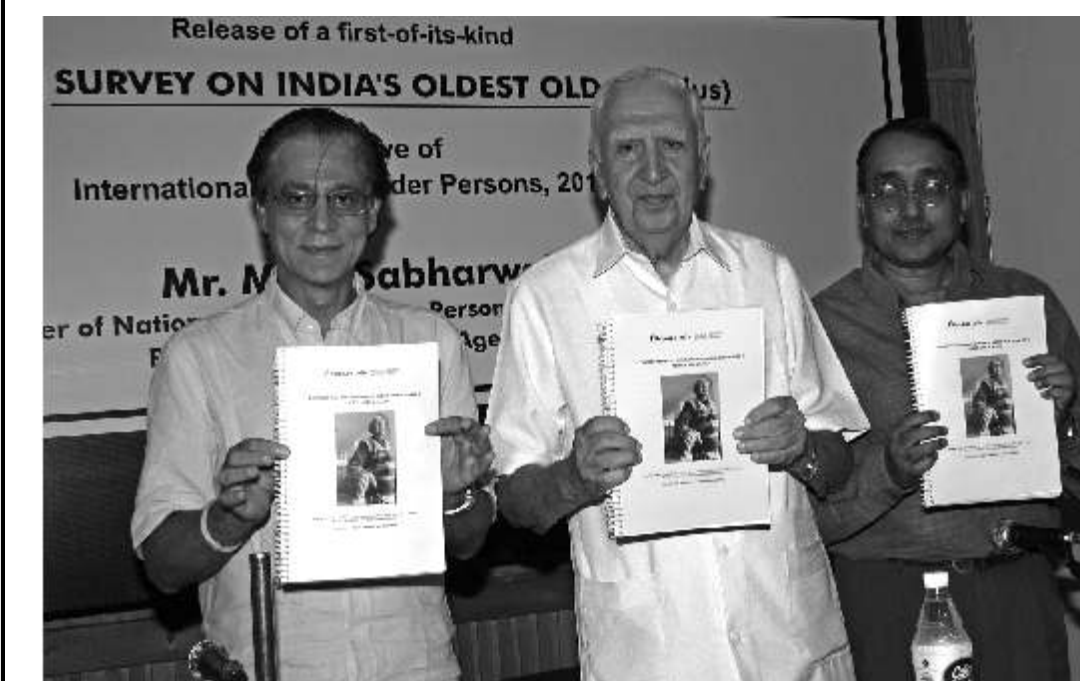
## MOMENTS FROM 2010

### Economic & Health Survey on India's Oldest Old (80+) brings some urgent needs to the forefront

On the eve of International Day of Older Persons (IDOP), HelpAge India released nationwide a first-of-its-kind "Economic & Health Survey on India's Oldest Old (80+)". Launched at the National capital by 89 year old, Mr. M.M. Sabharwal, Member of Review Committee of the National Policy on Older Persons & President Emeritus of HelpAge, it brought out some startling facts.

conducted among the Oldest Old men and women. The sample size was 833 (with 416 men & 417 women) spread across 8 cities in India: Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bhopal, Chennai, Patna and Hyderabad. SEC C\* and below category households/areas were selected for the study.

57% of the Oldest Old were widows/widowers. More than two third of the Oldest Old were financially dependent on others (72%). Son being the topmost on whom they were dependent (79%). 36% of the Oldest Old have a monthly household income of less than Rs. 2,500. Only 12% were engaged in any economic activity. More than 70% of the Oldest Old don't own any property. Majority of the elderly covered in the survey were illiterate. Remittance from children was their main source of income.



(From left): Mr. Kapil Kaul, Country Head (Advocacy, Resource & Communications), HelpAge, Mr. M.M. Sabharwal, Member of Review Committee of the National Policy on Older Persons & President Emeritus, HelpAge and Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive, HelpAge, jointly release the HelpAge "Economic & Health Survey on India's Oldest Old."

India has an 80 plus population of more than 80 lakh, out of which over 25% live in urban areas (Census 2001). According to the NSS (National Sample Survey) 63 percent of the elderly are illiterate in India. This is likely to have a bearing on their economic activities. Poverty and loneliness further add to the problem, rendering them even more vulnerable.

With increasing age, the needs of the elderly, especially health needs, often puts pressure on their source of finances. The National Policy on Older Persons (1999) has also clearly stressed on the high priority to be given to elder healthcare and has identified it as a major need and that the goal should be to provide good affordable health services, very heavily subsidized for the poor. The survey focuses on their economic condition & health aspects and also looks at need, care and access to Govt. health schemes & health insurance.

The survey was both quantitative and qualitative. The main survey was quantitative with structured interviews

Hyderabad (40%). Four fifth respondents in Hyderabad and Delhi NCR, reported that their son takes care of them at the time of ill health.

The Oldest Old who had no income source was highest in Mumbai (28%) followed by Delhi NCR (23%). 60% Oldest Old in Delhi NCR depend on their son for household chores. 52% of the Oldest Old had either poor or very poor health. Free treatment, health care and financial aid, were the major needs as per them in Delhi NCR coming to 80%, 76% and 57% respectively.

Interestingly keeping in mind their Socio-Economic Classification, on an average the Primary Health Centres (PHC) weren't too popular among the elderly, as they preferred going to a Private Clinic/Hospital or a District Hospital at their time of need.

Most of the Oldest Old with common ailments preferred going to a Private Doctor / Clinic (23%) as against a PHC which was preferred by only about 12%. 80% of the elderly felt there was no support system at the community

## EDITOR Speaks

First of all, I would like to wish all of you a very Happy New Year. As HelpAge moves into 2011, we take a look at some of the defining moments of 2010. New initiatives were taken up to mainstream issues of the elderly, such as the nationwide release of the first ever Economic & Health Survey on India's Oldest Old (80+) on International Day of Older Persons, bringing the issue into the forefront of the Review Committee of the National Policy on Older Persons, State Governments, media and general public.

For first time HelpAge helped draft the Assam State Policy for the elderly, while on the other hand in Uttarakhand it was a catalyst to help form the first Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of Uttarakhand.

The year also saw much disaster in its wake, whether it was the cloud-burst in Leh-Ladakh or the devastation caused by floods in Uttar Pradesh. Our disaster relief teams immediately got to work. Corporates didn't shy away from their responsibilities either, volunteer staff from KPMG especially flew to Leh to work hands on with the HelpAge medical team, providing the much needed support.

Another corporate whose support requires a special mention is Balmer Lawrie, who showed their generosity by supporting the HelpAge MMU programme in Chennai for a period of 5 years and the Sponsor-A-Grandparent programme for an entire year.

The work is never-ending, but along with it so is the satisfaction that with each passing year, the elderly are finding the courage to come forward and raise issues relevant to them.

*Kapil Kaul*  
Kapil Kaul  
Country Head  
Advocacy, Resource & Communications

contd...from page 1

level. Utilization of Community Health Centres for chronic problems, was highest in Chennai (83%) followed by Bhopal (17%), while Delhi NCR is extremely low (0.8%) as most go to a Private Doctor/ Clinic (21%).

Awareness levels of Govt. schemes and Health Insurance schemes was extremely low, with only 12% aware of any Government Health Related Welfare scheme and 23% aware of any Health Insurance schemes, of which only 5% are covered under any Health Insurance scheme. Only 5% were aware of the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana.

"Through the release of this survey, HelpAge India hopes that measures be looked into for providing incentives to the families of the Oldest Old on whom they seem to be most dependent upon, and subsidized healthcare be available for the elders", said Mr. Kapil Kaul, Country Head (Advocacy, Resource & Communications) HelpAge India.

The National Policy also states that Public Health services require greater State participation. Public

hospitals are to be directed to ensure that elderly patients are not subjected to long waits and visits to different counters for medical tests and treatment. They should also endeavor to provide separate counters and Geriatric wards to be set up.

Representing the Review Committee on National Policy on Older Persons, Mr. Sabharwal said, "We are putting in a recommendation to provide free treatment for those senior citizens who don't pay any Income Tax."

**SEC C\*** : The Socio-Economic Classification (SEC), groups urban Indian households on the basis of education and occupation of the Chief Wage Earner (CWE) - the person who contributes the most to the household expenses, into five segments (SEC A, SEC B, SEC C, SEC D and SEC E households in that order). This classification is more stable than one based on income alone and being reflective of lifestyle is more relevant to the examination of consumption behavior. Here, "high" socio-economic classes refers to SEC A & B, "mid" socio-economic class refers to SEC C and "low" socio-economic classes refers to SEC D & E.

**Forces of Change**

The following were honoured on Oct.1st International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) with the Annual HelpAge Institutional Awards, for their exemplary work for society and the disadvantaged elderly, by Mr. Prithviraj Chavan, then Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences.

Excellence Award - Mrs. Grace Pinto, Managing Director, Ryan International Group of Institutions.

Golden Award - Mrs. Vijaya Mulya, a renowned educationist and film maker.

Silver Plate Award for CSR - Cairn India

Bronze Plate Award for CSR - Asian Paints

Samson Daniel Award for highest school contribution - Bombay Scottish School

**States across the nation join hands in unison to mark International Day of Older Persons (IDOP), emphasizing the need for Healthcare and Economic relief for the elderly.**

Various events such as signature campaigns, rallies, walkathons, cultural events, health camps etc. were held across India to mark International Day of Older Persons. The HelpAge "Economic & Health Survey on India's Oldest Old (80 +)" was released by Govt. representatives & decision makers in various states, sensitizing them on the urgent need to address these issues head on.

Another function was held in **Delhi** on International Day of Older Persons, organized by HelpAge India in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology on the theme "Think Elderly" at the India Habitat Centre. Mr. Prithviraj Chavan, then Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences (Govt. of India) was the chief guest. The event was designed to highlight the role of science and technology in service of the aged population, also to showcase the efforts made by the science fraternity so far and emphasize the need for taking it further into the realm of production for the people. Exhibits were showcased at stalls set up at the venue, of various assisting devices helpful for the aged via a vis movement, support etc.



Mr. Hans Raj Bhardwaj, Governor of Karnataka, releases a copy of the HelpAge Economic & Health Survey he receives from Mr. Edwin Babu, Joint Director-Programmes (Chennai), HelpAge, in Bangalore (Karnataka). Looking on is Ms. Snehal Pinto (left), Administrator, Ryan International Group of Schools.



Senior citizens march together in step to drive home the point of the importance of healthy ageing in Kottayam (Kerala).



Senior citizens and school children of Koikata (WB), walk hand in hand to raise awareness about the importance of Healthy Ageing on the eve of International Day of Older Persons. The Commissioner of Police (Kolkata) Mr. Gautam Mohan Chakraborty, IPS, along with Mayor-in-Council, Mr. Debabrata Majumder, flagged off the Walk early morning from Eden Gardens. In another function Mr. Bishwanath Choudhury, Minister-in-Charge, Dept. of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal, also released the HelpAge Economic & Health Survey marking International Day of Older Persons.



An elderly man participates in an intergenerational game with his grandson. Helping them out is Dr. Aapga (left), State Head (Uttarakhand), HelpAge. More than 200 senior citizens along with their grand children participated from nearby villages such as Naya gaon, Ratanpur, Pallo and Malhan from Dehradun (Uttarakhand) marking International Day of Older Persons in Dehradun (Uttarakhand).



Mr. B.T. Bangera (right), Managing Director, HI - Tech Arai Ltd, hands over a copy of the HelpAge Economic & Health Survey to Ms. Udhayakumari Rathinavalli, Headmistress of OCPM Girls Hr. Sec. School, Madurai, releasing it in Madurai (TN) on International Day of Older Persons. Mr. Bangera urged the gathering of senior citizens present, to lead active lives like himself and become emotionally stable to avoid physical vulnerability, which leads to age related health problems.



Senior citizens of Assam participate in a mass procession demanding their rights on International Day of Older Persons. Over 300 people took part in the march. The Assam Senior Citizens Association, the Pensioners Associations, State Bank Pensioners Associations and ONGC Pensioners Associations, joined hands with HelpAge to observe the day.



Justice P. Jyothimani, Judge-in-Charge for speedy disposal of cases of senior citizens, Madras High Court, presents gifts to the winners of the Super Grandma and Super Grandpa competition at the valedictory function on International Day of Older Persons, in Chennai (TN).

In Ramnad (TN), more than 170 people including representatives from the District Level Federation of Senior Citizens Associations, brought to the attention of the District Government, the urgent need to address the health demands of senior citizens through a rally.

In Lucknow (UP), to mark International Day of Older Persons, a seminar was organized on the "National Policy on Older Persons with special reference to intervention and action strategies on Health". It was inaugurated by the chief guest Mr. Balvinder Kumar, Principal Secretary, Social Welfare, in the presence of Mr. Ram Bahadur, Director, Social Welfare. The HelpAge Economic & Health Survey was released on the occasion. The Principal Secretary informed that Maintenance & Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, shall be notified in the state soon. He also said that 50 Lakh people are benefiting through the Old Age and Widow Pension Scheme and another 30 Lakh beneficiaries have been selected under the Mahamaya Gareeb Aarthik Yojana (a scheme launched by the UP Govt. for those who are poor but do not have a BPL card. Rs.300 per month shall be paid under this scheme to the beneficiaries).



The HelpAge Economic & Health Survey is released in Ahmedabad (Gujarat) by (from left): Mr. O.C. Shah, Secretary Gujarat Retd. Pensioners' Association, Mr. I.C. Shah, Ex-President, Sr. Citizen Association Federation, Ahmedabad, Dr. Manish Jain, Dentist, Mr. Prafullbhai Patel, Trustee, Sadvichar Parivar, Ms. Gargi Sharma, Teacher from The New Tulip Int'l School, Bopal, along with Mr. Anilkumar Massey, State Head (Gujarat), HelpAge.

Bringing into sharp focus the importance of Healthcare for senior citizens on the eve of International Day of Older Persons, a programme was organized in Chandigarh in association with the Health Department, Social Welfare department, Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh and Sr. Citizens Centre, Lajpat Rai Bhawan, Chandigarh, on the theme "Intervention and Action Strategies on Health of the Elderly" attended by 300 senior citizens. The chief guest on the occasion was Ms. Anu Chatrath, Mayor, Chandigarh, while the guests of honor were Ms. Vandana Disodia, Director Social Welfare, Chandigarh and Dr. Soma, Dist. Health & Family Welfare Officer, who informed the gathering that the Health Dept. is soon going to start a separate clinic fully dedicated to Geriatric care with all the necessary facilities under one roof in the Govt. Hospital in Sector 16, Chandigarh.



Mr. Aftab Shivdasani (left) and Mr. Sachin Ahir (centre), State Social Welfare Minister, along with Mr. Prakash Bargaonkar, Territory Head (Maharashtra, Goa & Gujarat), HelpAge, release the HelpAge Economic & Health Survey marking International Day of Older Persons in Mumbai (Maharashtra).

In Patna (Bihar), a function was organized with the theme of discussion being "National Policy on Older Person states : Healthcare needs of Older Persons to be given high Priority." 83 year old Dr. Sachindan Sinha of Patna, Ex Director, A.N. Sinha Institute, a noted socialist, researcher, as well as a symbol of active ageing, chief guest at the function, spoke on the issue.

In Hyderabad (AP), a Memorandum on issues related to older persons' Health, Economic, Financial security and Shelter was submitted to Shri E. S. L.Narasimhan, Governor of AP, on International Day of Older Persons. Discussions took place on issues such as the need for enhancement of pensions, delivery system of old age pensions. The Governor stressed on the need to uphold the Joint Family system and also requested HelpAge and Senior Citizen Associations to sensitize the present generation on this issue. He also went on to release the HelpAge Economic & Health Survey.



An elderly man signs his support during the signature campaign emphasizing the need for better healthcare facilities & medical assistance for 80 + elderly, marking International Day of Older Persons in Dist. Cuttack (Odisha). A Charter of Demands on Accessible healthcare facilities for older persons, Health Insurance, Social Security & Pension' was also handed to Mr. Niranjan Behera, Block Development Officer, Barang Block (Dist. Cuttack), by the elderly.

In Jammu (J & K), Mr. R.S. Chib, Minister for Technical Education, Medical Education, Youth Services and Sports, released the HelpAge Economic & Health Survey at a function, marking International Day of Older Persons, threw light on the problems of the elderly in modern society and also highlighted the schemes run by the Govt. for the welfare of older persons.

## Urban Agecare

On the occasion of "World Physiotherapy Day", a second physiotherapy unit was opened in Lucknow (UP). This centre is a first-of-its kind in UP which will be managed by *Bhartiya Varishth Nagarik Samiti "Bhavna"*, that is by the elderly themselves.

HelpAge Agecare activities are spreading its wings far and wide. In Dimoria Block of Kamrup District (Assam), HelpAge has started its Sponsor- A- Grandparent (SAGP) programme along with providing basic healthcare to destitute elderly through its Mobile Medicare Unit (MMU) service and eye screening camps. Through the SAGP programme, the basic needs of 225 needy elderly are met by providing them ration and clothing. Each month two health camps are also organized on a regular basis. The MMU doctor visits the project site fortnightly and the MMU caters to the health needs of the elderly along with medical counseling.



A doctor screens an elderly patient at an eye screening camp at Hahara area in Dimoria Block of Kamrup District (Assam).

Spreading the reach of Agecare, more Physiotherapy centres were launched across the nation in Ernakulam (Kochi) along with an Elders Helpline (1800-180-1253), then in Jaipur (Rajasthan) at the Senior Citizens Forum's Day Care Centre in Mansarovar and in Chennai in association with the Senior Citizens Welfare Association – West Chromepet.

### Sundaresan finds a new home

70 year old Sundaresan was found shivering in the cold, lying on the roads of Cuddalore (TN) by a kind auto driver named Selvaraj, who immediately contacted the HelpAge Elders Helpline (1253), which has been operating in Cuddalore for the past two years. The Helpline team immediately rushed to the spot. With the help of local vendors they fed Sundaresan and clothed him properly. Seeing his dehydrated and malnourished condition, they rushed him to the Govt. Hospital and he was admitted immediately into Intensive Care.



Since he was in a virtually unconscious state for nearly 24 hours, it was difficult to know anything about him. The HelpAge team went to the local police station and informed them about his condition. After 24 hours of treatment, he managed to give his name but was hesitant to share any details of his past life other than the fact that he was a native of Kumaramangalam, Cuddalore District. With a faint smile on his face Sundaresan said "The Helpline team rescued me and gave me a new lease of life".

With no home to call his own, the HelpAge team soon shifted him to "Tamarakulam-Elders Village", a safe haven catering to the needs of the destitute elderly, giving him shelter and comfort.

The MMU team of Rajgangpur (Odisha) treat a destitute elderly woman during a Home visit. Unable to access any medical facility due to physical immobility, many elderly often are often bereft of any medical treatment, especially in small towns and rural areas. For such elderly in many cases, the HelpAge MMU team visits their homes and provides on-the-spot treatment to the destitute elder.



Healthcare at home

### Spiritual care @ Healthcare



Purnima Mondol (right), 68, performs at the Tarda MMU site to a rapt audience of elders.

The Tarda MMU site is 30-35 Kms from Kolkata (WB). Set amidst a completely rural background, it is cut-off from the main city. Most of the people are poor and into farming, the rest are working in small industries in the peripheral areas. Since there is no medical facility in the vicinity of their village, people come to the MMU site from far-off places. Elderly destitute patients come early in the morning and wait patiently for the van to come. Purnima Mondol, 68, is a resident of Kashiadanga, married at the age of 7, she struggled all her life with virtually her entire childhood spent at her in-laws home. She gave birth to four sons and managed the house well. Her husband could not support her much economically. Purnima is a devout religious woman who spends her free time chanting the praises of the Lord. Her renderings from the holy Hindu scripture the 'Bhagwad Gita' and its application to our daily lives, her religious anecdotes, hymns and prayers are quite famous in the neighborhood. To break away from the monotony of simply providing healthcare and to positively engage the MMU beneficiaries, HelpAge brought Purnima's spiritual insight to the MMU site. She enthralled the small audience who listened to her with rapt attention. It made their early morning wait all the more entertaining and fulfilling.

### A multi-faceted Ashram for the aged

The Vishokanand Vriddh Ashram is a unique haven for the aged of Bijnor (UP). Run by HelpAge, it caters to multiple needs of the elderly of Bijnor, by providing healthcare through its Rural Health Centre for the aged, based on the traditional system of Indian medicines viz. Ayurveda, Homeopathy & Naturopathy. It also provides Physiotherapy and Livelihood opportunities, along with helping them fulfill some of their long cherished dreams of travel by organizing tours to places of worship and of historical significance.



An elderly potter works hard at the wheel in Kalagram, a place for artists, constructed to support the livelihood of local aged artisans at the Vishokanand Vriddh Ashram in Ganj, Bijnor (UP).

## Beating the Odds

"The temperature dipped straight from +16° to -16° when I got out of the plane in Leh-Ladakh. I needed 2 hrs of oxygen, I thought I was blanking out. From my window on that Jet Airways flight, I had seen the semi-frozen Indus river and I focused my mind on the mission I had come for" – said Rajeshwar Devarakonda, Head (Social Protection & Emergencies), HelpAge, who landed in Leh at a time when most wouldn't have dared to, on December 27, 2010.

With all road connectivity to Ladakh snapped due to onset of winter, and virtually 7 feet of snow covering the Rohtang Pass, air travel was Rajeshwar's only option. Starting from Delhi, along with his colleague Dr. Rajesh Kumar, State Head (HP), who joined him from the Shimla office, they had gone to Ladakh to help set up the first Fitness & Wellness Centre in Shey village, one of the worst affected villages of Ladakh region post that fateful day.

On 6th August 2010, life came to standstill in Leh-Ladakh (J & K), when an unexpected cloudburst caused massive flash floods which left in its wake, an estimated 1000 people dead and over 500 missing. The devastating floods caused massive landslides and damaged agricultural land, live stock and property. Houses were reduced to rubble, as if a giant bulldozer had made its way through the area.

The dead and missing included many foreign tourists. The HelpAge team immediately got into action and rushed its Mobile Medicare Unit (MMU) from Shimla to Leh District. Nearly 2500 treatments were meted out through the MMU and the team worked tirelessly 24 x 7 providing much required medical care to the victims. The MMU also went to the doorsteps of victims who were unable to physically reach the MMU location.

Rescue & Relief measures by the Army & Paramilitary along with local volunteers helped saved many lives, especially as in the initial days access to the district was impossible, due to damage of roads leading to Leh. It is estimated that more than 10,000 people have been affected in Choglumsar, Pathar Sahib villages and the surrounding areas of Leh Township in Leh.

With the onset of winters the roads to Leh might be shut, but for HelpAge, work continues.

### HelpAge INTERVENTION:

- Winter relief (dry ration customized to local needs) is being provided for 100 families in Leh District in collaboration with the local Thiksey Monastery.
- 32 residents of the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC), an old age home in Devechan, Choglumsar (7 kms away from Leh), received winter relief. A HelpAge Fitness and Wellness Centre was also established at the home to provide relief to the elderly.
- Two other Fitness and Wellness Centres have been launched in Leh Township and Shey village in collaboration with the Thiksay Monastery and Shey Village Committee respectively. Both centres have a Physiotherapist, a Physician and an *Aamchi* (Tibetan Medicine Practitioner).
- The Shey Village Committee has offered HelpAge 3 acres of land to set up an elder's village involving community participation for providing relief to all affected elders of Ladakh.

### Estimated Impact in Leh District

- ☐ 34 villages affected
- ☐ 500+ missing
- ☐ 1000 dead
- ☐ 500+ families affected
- ☐ 400-500 houses damaged/destroyed

contd...on page 8

## Hope Floats

More than 30 districts in Uttar Pradesh (UP) faced severe flooding. According to Govt. officials, the death toll in rain-related incidents had gone up to 256. Swirling waters of UP's major rivers have inundated 177 villages in many districts. The flood situation in 9 districts of Western UP badly affected road and rail traffic.



An elderly victim of the flood receives his ration and shelter material.

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## A first hand account

- Kiran S. Vijay, Manager (Health Programmes) HelpAge



As planned, we three friends reached Leh, capital of Ladakh burning our tyres through curfew affected Srinagar in the middle of the night. We traveled the high mountain pass, the **Khardung Pass**, and proceeded to the tranquil Pangong Tso Lake. We stayed a night there and on our way back were informed that Leh had been flooded. We immediately proceeded towards

Leh, hoping to help however we could. Violent streams of flowing water were criss-crossing the road in a random pattern making the journey extremely dangerous.

Reaching Leh was out of question and we requested the personnel at the Army Transit camp for a place to spend that fateful night. The next day we took a mountain route and reached Leh somehow. We were told there had been a cloudburst but no one still had a clear idea of the extent of damage caused. There was no electricity, no running water, shops were closed, no communication channels were functioning, closed ATMs and no fuel, made things worse.

We set off to visit the affected areas in Choglamsar village, 10 kms from Leh, which was one of the worst affected. It was a sight I still remember, people were crying, many were trying to find their dear ones under the mudslide and debris. The Army was trying its best to help. Bodies were being dug out from the mud and from beneath the boulders which had come crashing down into the villages from the mountains. Foreigners who were there as tourists, became rescue workers and villagers from the neighboring villages were pouring in volunteering their help. I was heart warmed at the spirit of humanity when help was needed most.

Only one telephone booth was working, people were frantically trying to reach their loved ones informing them of their safety. I managed to inform my parents of my survival and then immediately informed the HelpAge Country Head (Programmes & Emergencies), Mr. Avenash Data (based at our head office in Delhi), of the situation in Leh and the urgent need for help. Within no time Dr. Rajesh Kumar from our HelpAge Shimla office landed there with a plan and most importantly the much required funds, to begin the arduous task of reaching out to as many victims as we could.

The first step was to assess the situation, village by village, to understand the immediate need and numbers. Getting the village profile was a tiresome task as nobody knew what had happened to their neighbors and relatives. The Govt. was also having a tough time as they did not have proper information of the number of house holds, total population in the particular area, age group etc. Networking with local organizations and community started working.

The Mobile Eldercare Unit (MEU) in order words our mobile health van, arrived from Shimla with a fully equipped team of doctors and staff, work soon began. Carcasses of animals were thrown into the Indus river by people, as there was no other way to dispose them in the muddy conditions. Diarrhea cases were on a rise as there was no safe drinking water. The MEU team somehow managed to control disease out-break in the affected areas. The team from Shimla worked tirelessly along with volunteer doctors with no electricity, no running water at the base camp cold and the biting high altitude climate.

Soon Mr. Rajeshwar, Head (Social Protection & Emergencies) and Ms. Paromita Thomas, Country Head (HR) from our Delhi office arrived and helped us in planning the way forward for the victims to deal with the winters. Plans were set in place and tie-ups with the local Monasteries and agencies were locked in.

After one month of hard work along with the Shimla MEU team, I finally left. I rode alone traveling & passing lakes Tsomoriri and Tsokar, Rohtang Pass and Manali, finally reaching Delhi, with an unforgettable memory.

## GOOD NEWS for Sr. Citizens of Andhra – Govt. does its bit

Govt. extends Health Insurance to old age homes

The "Rajiv Aarogyasri" is a popular Health Insurance Scheme being implemented in the state of Andhra Pradesh (AP) in India, to assist poor families from huge health expenditures. The scheme is a unique Public Private Partnership (PPP) model in the field of Health Insurance, tailor-made to meet the health needs of poor patients and provide end-to-end cashless services for identified diseases through a network of service providers from the Govt. and private sector.

After the 'State Council for Older Persons' meeting in July 2010, the Govt. of AP is responding positively. It has been decided to extend the Aarogyasri health scheme to elders living in Govt. recognized old age homes. It is truly a significant step by the Govt. of AP towards the welfare of elders.

State Govt. allocates funds for Geriatric care

Bringing in more good news for the elderly, Dr. P.V. Ramesh, Principal Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, informed those present at a workshop for local physicians on Dementia in AP, that the State Govt. of AP has allocated Rs. 5 crore for funding projects connected with senior citizens health. The one day workshop on "Early detection and management of Dementia" was jointly organized by Gandhi Hospital, Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India, Hyderabad Deccan Chapter (ARDSI) and the State Govt.



Rural women who are members of the Kranthik Elders Self Help Group, discuss the group's activities at Nalakinta, Vijayawada (AP). In an effort to urge elderly to become independent and economically secure, HelpAge's Sponsor - A Grandparent in Andhra Pradesh (AP), has formed 95 Elder Self Help Groups which have started thrift and also internal lending for their income generation activities like chicken rearing, vegetable vending, etc.

## Raising voice for the elderly



Mr. Kapil Kaul (right), Country Head (Advocacy, Resource, & Communications), HelpAge, hands over the suggestions made by representatives from Senior Citizens Associations, NGOs and individuals, for inclusion in State Policy for Older Persons to Smt. Bhakti Ganguly, Special Secretary-Dept. of Women & Child Development & Social Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal. Looking on is Mr. S.K. Chanda (left), Deputy Police Commissioner, Kolkata Police.

Thank you

We thank the following schools from Mumbai (Maharashtra):

- Thakur International School, Kandivali (West) •Bombay Scottish School, Mahim •Bombay Scottish School, Powai •Thakur Public School, Kandivali (East) •Jamnabai Narsee School, Vile Parle (West) •Atomic Energy Central Schools (School No. 1 to 6) •Dayanand Anglovedic

## National Policy Review Committee starts turning the Wheels

Taking stock of the urgent need to implement the National Policy on Older Persons for the senior citizens of our nation, meetings covering all regions of the country were held in Chandigarh, Chennai, Mumbai, Guwahati and Bhubaneswar, organised by the National Institute of Social Defence (Govt. of India) in collaboration with HelpAge India in Chandigarh, Heritage Foundation in Chennai, and respective State Governments in other locations.

Attended by the representatives of the State Governments & Senior Citizens' Associations in various states, discussions took place on the steps taken by the State Governments for improvement of the lives of senior citizens and problems faced by senior citizens at the state level respectively. These meetings brought out the problems at the grass root level and also highlighted the problems faced by various State Governments in implementing the provisions of the National Policy on Older Persons.

Maximising the use of the existing Central schemes like the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, in some states Health Insurance for BPL category which also helps older persons and The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents & Senior Citizens Act, 2007, were important points of discussion.

The focal points brought out, would be further used by the Committee as starting points for the drafting of a new policy easy on implementation.

For more information on the National Policy you can login to: [www.helpageindia.org](http://www.helpageindia.org)

## Assam drafts its own Policy for the elderly

In a major effort to push forth State Policy for senior citizens, HelpAge India, formulated the draft Policy for Assam, on the behest of the State Social Welfare Department. The process involved the formation of a 10 member Committee to study the draft which had representation from not only the Social Welfare Dept but also from Senior Citizen's Association. A rough estimate of senior citizens in Assam comes to 21 lakh.

The highlights of the draft Policy were:

- For those who look after their parents, the Assam Government will provide concessions on home loans, property tax in urban areas, higher priority in Govt. shelter and infrastructure schemes in rural and urban areas.

- A separate empowered and enabled nodal agency at the State level.

- Programmes for employees planning retirement to be taken up 10 years before retirement

- Counseling through family courts

- To strengthen inter-generation bonds, educational campaign in schools and colleges

- Ageing issues, tips on healthy lifestyle to be part of curriculum in institutions, a helpline to be set up in every district and access to affordable medicines, especially life-saving drugs.

The draft Policy has been forwarded to Govt. departments for approval after which it will be sent to the Cabinet for ratification.

## Forging Ahead – School Principals Meet



Dr. R. Satyanarayana, Commissioner & Director of School Education (FAC), Govt. of AP, informs those present at the Principal Meet Seminar on Value Education in Hyderabad (AP) that 1 lakh teachers are being trained every year for catering to the educational needs of 1.5 core students in the state.

In continuation with ongoing efforts to promote Value Education on Agecare issues in school curriculums, Principals Meets were organized in various parts of the nation such as Hyderabad (AP), Rourkela (Orissa) among others.

The seminar in Hyderabad was attended by 65 participants including 20 principals of reputed schools of Hyderabad and surrounding districts, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, Missionary Schools, educationalists, retired principals, teachers, senior citizens and the media. All the participants agreed that the growing problem of the aged is a big issue and society needs more attention from families, schools, Govt. NGO's and the media.

They also acknowledged the need for implementation of Value Education on Agecare in schools, and were ready to commit themselves to help in this noble work. The participating Principals agreed to take the initiative of forming Value Education Committees in association with HelpAge.

## Formation of Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of Uttarakhand

In Uttarakhand HelpAge initiated the formation of a State Level Federation (Federation of Senior Citizen Associations of Uttarakhand) with Senior Citizens Associations from Dehradun, Mussoorie, Roorkee, Haridwar and Rishikesh becoming founder members of the Federation and HelpAge becoming its permanent advisor. This has been a huge step for the elderly of the region, in taking charge to fight for their rights on their own steam.

## Balmer Lawrie provides a huge balm



Mr. S. Ravi Kumar, (third from left), General Manager, Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd., Chennai, gives a cheque donation of Rs. 28.10 lakh (approx.) and Rs. 1.80 lakh towards HelpAge MMU & Sponsor - A Grandparent (SAGP) programme for needy elderly, to Mr. P. R. Anbazhakan, Territory

Head (TN & Kar), HelpAge. Looking on are (from left): Mr. U. Mohamed Feroz Khan & Officer (P&A), Mrs. Shyama Gopakumar, Manager (HR) SR, both from Balmer Lawrie and Mr. Edwin Babu, Joint Director (Programmes) & Mrs. Arthi Vivekanandhan, Manager (CFR) from HelpAge (Chennai). Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd., Chennai, showed its generosity by committing Rs. 1.11 crore (approx.) to address the health needs of older people in Manali (Chennai) through the MMU programme for a period of 5 years and support to 25 destitute older people for a year, through the SAGP programme.

- Vidyalaya, New Panvel •St. Columba High School, Churni Road •Christ Church School, Byculla •Lilabvatibai Poddar School, Santacruz (West) •St. Ann's High School, Malad (West) •St. Gregorios High School, Chembur •Children's Academy, Asha Nagar •Children's Academy, Ashok Nagar •Learner's Academy, Bandra (West) •Learnium School, Malad (West) •DPS Roorkee •Citi Group

