

HelpAge

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Editor Speaks

Dear Readers,

Through these pages I would like to share with you some of HelpAge's prominent work across the country. Thanks to NDTV, a comprehensive habitat for elders affected by the *Tsunami* will soon be a reality near Pondicherry.

The work in Jammu and Kashmir is in full flow and, as things take a turn for the better, more stories of hope are emerging from the Valley.

Here's some news for the elderly. The National Housing Bank has approved a proposal on Reverse Mortgages in India. A "reverse" mortgage is a loan against your home that you do not have to pay back for as long as you live there. With a reverse mortgage, you can turn the value of your home into cash without having to move or to repay the loan each month. The cash you get from a reverse mortgage can be paid to you in several ways — in a single lump sum, as a regular monthly cash advance, as a "creditline" account that lets you decide when and how much of your available cash is paid to you, or as a combination of these payment methods.

Finally, I would like to express our gratitude to all our esteemed donors. I would also like to thank renowned artist Shri Amarnath Sehgal who has very kindly donated some paintings to HelpAge, and the family of late Shrimati Satyawati who willed her fixed deposit to us. During her lifetime she was donating the interest to HelpAge and upon her demise, her son-in-law transferred the FD to us.

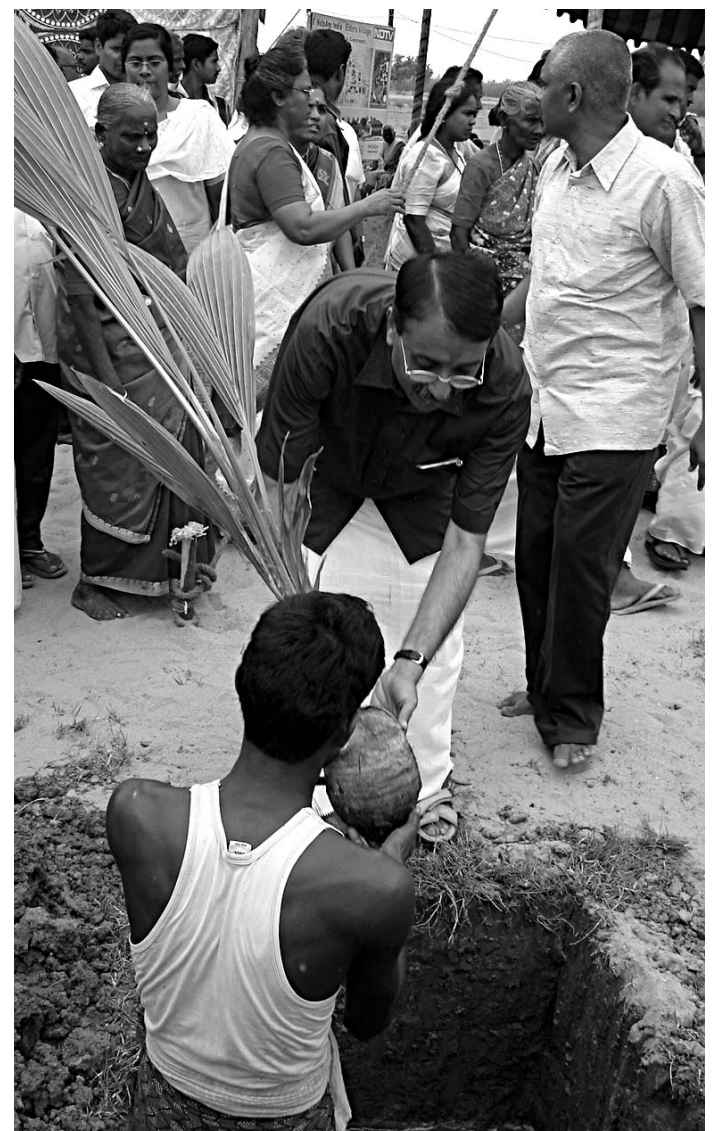


Nidhi Raj Kapoor

NDTV Viewers Fund Elders Village

It was an unusual sight of elders who travelled from far and wide carrying with them bricks from their respective villages, to add to the foundation stone being laid for a unique project. It was the inaugural ceremony (*Bhoomi Pooja*) for the construction of a village exclusively for Elderly *Tsunami* victims on the Pondicherry - Chennai highway. 5.47 hectares of land have been bought for the purpose.

A HelpAge initiative funded by NDTV Viewers, once complete the village will house 100 elders and provide them the facilities needed to lead a comfortable life. The village will also incorporate income generation activities suitable for the residents. Some of the activities being considered are making agricultural, handicraft and coconut tree products, setting up of small enterprises like tea shops, looms for making durries and cloth, drying and pickling of fish, etc.



Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive (CE), HelpAge, plants a coconut sapling during the *Bhoomi Pooja* ceremony at the grounds of the Elders village.

Story from the field: A place called Home



Photo Credit: Tashi Morup

Sher Naman, 90, broke his upper arm as the walls of his home in Gavalata village (which lies near the LOC) came crashing down on him on during the disastrous earthquake that shook Jammu & Kashmir on October 8, 2005. The village faced total devastation. For three months he was hospitalized, somehow his son managed to meet the expenses, but then things became tough, they had no place to shift him after the treatment was over and his son had to go off to work.

The HelpAge shelter in Bela camp (Boniyar Town) came as a blessing, where he now stays with his wife. HelpAge has virtually adopted this camp of displaced quake victims, including all 260 families mostly elders and young children. Today, the shelters provided by HelpAge is the only home left known to them.

◀ Sher Naman walks towards his shelter at Bela camp

A night to remember in J&K

With increasing insurgency in the J&K region one thing that remains constant, is the spirit of relief workers in the region. It was about 7.30 am in the morning when HelpAge team members Ashraf, Shabnam and Waseem started for the tedious ride to Uri from Srinagar to distribute 250 kits of warm clothing for the J&K earthquake victims. Distribution started at village Sarai the last motorable point about 110 kms from Srinagar and was further to be carried on in Bandi & Dacchi. It was a day of heavy rains and landslides. Shooting stones aggravated the problem making distribution work extremely tough but despite the odds the team continued their work relentlessly.

Soon dusk set in, the team was left with no place to stay for the night. What made matters worse was that due to its sensitive location, the area was heavily guarded by the military, creating a lot of bottle necks. Any movement in the dark was a potential threat.

From the Valley

At the Kalgi army post, the army suspected the team were infiltrators, caught them unawares and were ready to fire. It was sheer instinct which saved them all, as they all shouted in unison "we are from HelpAge India." An army personnel came forward and interacted with the team and after much debate the team managed to convince the army of its purpose. Somehow the team managed to get some refuge at a local NGO's base camp at Julla and stayed the night there. The next morning the journey back to Srinagar began, but it was night they would remember for long.

In the pipeline:

HelpAge is now looking at long term rehabilitation for the earthquake victims through various livelihood restoration initiatives and skill-training of local youth for house reconstruction.

It is also looking at providing health care in remote village areas through the Mobile Medicare Unit (MMU) located at Baramulla and providing specialized health care services for older persons in collaboration with medical teams from the Army and State Government.

Tyndale school leads the way



(from left): Ms. Sunita Santoshi, Manager (J&K), Dr. Harvinder S. Bakshi, Regional Director (North), HelpAge, Mr. Parwez Samuel Kaul, Director of the school and school captions Ashim Bashist and Khushboo Bashir.

Tyndale Biscoe & Mallinson School, Srinagar, deserves a special mention for being the highest collector so far in the Northern Region raising over Rs. 7 lakh for the cause. We thank Mr. Parwez Samuel Kaul, the Director of the school for his efforts. We also plan to invite the school to participate in the national level quiz competition. Dr. Harvinder S. Bakshi, Regional Director (North) recently received the first draft of Rs. 6,54,000 along with Ms. Sunita Santoshi, Manager (J&K), HelpAge, at a function in Srinagar.

Launching healthcare services in the interiors



Dr. Farooq Abdullah, MP - Rajya Sabha, displays the photographs of the MMU donated by him to HelpAge under the MPLAD scheme. This vehicle will replace the old one based in Jammu.



Governor Lt. General (Retd.) S.K. Sinha (J&K) flags off the HelpAge's Mobile Medicare Unit (MMU) from Raj Bhawan, Srinagar, for providing healthcare services to earthquake affected people in 18 villages in and around Baramulla district. Looking on are Dr. Harvinder S. Bakshi (second from right) Regional Director (North), Ms. Sunita Santoshi (third from right) Manager, J&K and other members of HelpAge staff.

Keeping the spirit of giving alive

The children of the following schools in J&K have shown great sensitivity towards the aged and contributed towards the cause:

- BSF Senior Secondary School, Paloura, Jammu donated a sum of Rs.1,02,203.
- Burn Hall School, Srinagar, donated Rs.1,72,000.

A Royal Gesture

In a true display of royalty, King Baudouin Foundation gave HelpAge a grant of Rs. 33.38 lakh for restoration of livelihoods of people affected by the earthquake in Jammu & Kashmir.

Ironing out the wrinkles

Vijaya Kumari (55) a widow who lives in Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu), earned her living by doing the laundry for others, before the *Tsunami* struck. The disaster affected her business badly leaving her with no other source of livelihood. HelpAge gave her a push-cart and iron, a package worth Rs. 7,500 to help her out. But as dusk set in she would have to wind up as there was no electricity and she found it difficult to use the traditional petromax light.

With the help of Cosmos Ignite, a company producing solar torches, HelpAge gave her a torch which has helped her earn a better living. Vijaya Kumari charges the light during the day and uses it at night. It also helps her children study after sunset. Lanterns have been provided to many such elders. Cosmos representative, Mr. Sumit Gupta, also went to Tamil Nadu to train the elders on how to use the lights.



Keeping Ramsukh's kin together



Ramsukh with his family

It was 9 O' clock in the night, when the sky of Badrinath Pura village, Tehsil Chaksu, Jaipur District, glowed orange against the dark blue sky. A fire had broken out at blind 75 year old Ramsukh's house. Ramsukh was about to retire early to bed that evening but felt uncomfortably hot, it was only later when he heard shouts from his son and wife that he realized a fire had broken out. His son quickly pulled him to safety dragging him out of the hut. But it was not just Ramsukh's own house that was destroyed, the adjacent thatched huts of his family of 5 households were also enveloped. The fire gutted everything it came in contact with and the hot summer heat along with lack of water supply, made matters worse. The only source of water was the village hand pump.

A family of nearly 40 members (including his three sons, brother and their individual families and two widowed sisters) had nothing left to survive on.

HelpAge immediately got into action and collected Rs. 82,000 from local donors and are now helping them repair their huts, by giving them tin sheets, two pairs of clothing to each member, foodgrain and other necessary utensils, etc.

Ramsukh says "I'm glad I can't see, I don't think I could have to seen my life's worth destroyed in front of me. I'm glad God has sent these people from HelpAge to help us, we had no idea what to do and where to go from here."

Abandoned elder builds ties with HelpAge support

80 year old Soundararajan had never imagined living his later years in an old age home. Well settled into married life he was the head of his family till he turned 60. But soon his health started to decline severely and he suffered from an intolerable back ache. This limited him from performing his basic daily chores and he became a burden to his family. Neither his three well educated children nor his wife had the time nor the energy to support to him. He was virtually abandoned.

HelpAge came to his rescue and he soon became a part of it's Sponsor—A-Grandparent programme at the Old Age Home in Chatrapatti, Tamil Nadu, run by the Kasthuribhai Gandhi Educational and Public Charitable Trust. He welcomed with open arms by others like himself at the home and his medical needs were also taken care off.

Today, he actively involves himself in the day to day activities. He wakes up early for a morning prayer with his friends and then goes straight to the garden to water the plants. Despite the treatment meted out to him by his own family, Soundarajan hasn't lost faith "My family members had neglected me. But I am not worried, rather I am fortunate for being cared by many here" he says with a smile.



Nearly 90% of the residents of this old age home were abandoned by their own children and have finally found a place which they can call their own. HelpAge India's Sponsor—A- Grantparent was started here in the year 1994. This program supports 99 beneficiaries out of which 25 elderly are the residents of the home and 74 elderly belong to the community.

A matter of "Rights"



A Natak (street play) in action with the villagers themselves performing to spread awareness on rights of the elderly in Ranchi (Jharkhand) as a part of HelpAge India's PACS (Poorest Areas Civil Society) project. This project is aimed at raising the awareness level and providing poor older persons access to social, food and habitat security.

Fighting Abuse, 'Bhatt' naturally



Ms. Pooja Bhatt, Hindi film Actor/Producer/Director, along with Mr. M.M. Sabharwal, (left) President Emeritus, HelpAge India, Dr. S.Y. Quraishi (second from right), Election Commissioner of India, and Mr. Ved Marwah, Former Commissioner of Police (Delhi) & Former Governor - Mizoram, Manipur & Jharkhand, jointly launch the Logo for fighting Elder Abuse at a function organized by HelpAge to mark "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day", in Delhi.



Mr. Alok Nath (left), veteran actor from Hindi films and television addresses the seminar on Elder Abuse at a function in Mumbai. Also seen are (from left) Mr. Anjan Srivastav, Television/Film Actor, Mr. Mahesh Bhatt, well known Hindi film Director, Mr. John Thattil, Regional Director (West), HelpAge, Ms. Pooja Bhatt and Mr. Anand Rao, GM - ITC Grand Maratha.

Kahani Marking International Day of Families on May 15, HelpAge India released a study in Delhi assessing the changing role of families in catering to the needs of older people in India. The study reveals the dwindling acceptance of the elderly by their families. The lack of respect, regard and love was the overriding concern of many older people interviewed by the organization. Among other areas covered in the study were the daily activities and pastimes of older persons living with their families. The findings reflect the fact that older people are by and large lonely and left to their own devices, even when they live with their children.

Ghar

Ghar

Ki

Have Feet, will Dance!



Senior citizens from ages 65 to 85 jived, rocked and dance away to their favourite music on World Dance Day at the HelpAge office in Delhi during a special dance workshop organised for them in association with SDIPA (Shiamak Davar's Institute for the Performing Arts).

Recreation time for seniors

HelpAge in a unique initiative to provide leisure and recreation avenues to the elderly is supporting a recreational facility in Tilak Nagar in association with the Delhi Govt. HelpAge is supporting 25 older people. Some of the facilities which are going to be made available are:

- o A multi purpose room/hall with television/music system etc. for residents.
- o Excursion trips for residents and other senior citizens within and outside the city.
- o HelpAge India MMU to provide complete medical service once in every week.
- o Experts of Yoga and Meditation will be invited for giving proper guidance and tips related to healthy ageing.
- o Counseling of residents.
- o Developing of income generation activities such as *Masala* making, *Papad* making etc.

Resourceful Initiatives

A "Kee" solution

Kee Pharma Limited, a well-established pharmaceutical company entered into a cause related marketing tie-up with HelpAge for 2005-06, worth Rs. 2.50 lakh. It recently gave the final instalment of Rs. 1.25 lakh. The tie-up is for its pharma brands Nt. Natal MP (a fertility drug for women) and Kee Nuron (B12 Vitamin). We thank them for their commitment.

Keeping our healthcare mobile, the following corporates have pitched in their bit to support the running cost of our MMUs:

- l V.M. Charitable Trust, AP
- l Asian Paints, Noida
- l Hyderabad International Airport Limited, AP
- l Vemagiri Power Generation Limited, AP

Chipping in their bit

In a selfless gesture, the employees of Auto Tech Industries (India) Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, gave a part of their salary to the cause by enrolling themselves into Pay Roll Giving with HelpAge. We thank them for this heartfelt initiative of theirs.

We are grateful to:

- Airtel
- Systopic Laboratories
- Rajeshwar Susheela Dayal Trust
- Bombay Stock Exchange
- ONGC, Surat & Mumbai
- Dr. Reddy's Labs
- VLCC
- Tata SSL



Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive (CE), HelpAge, addresses the gathering at the national conference on "Mobility for All" to address the concerns of senior citizens and persons with disabilities, organized by Samarthyaa.

A special partnership



Ms. Sudha Chandran, well known Dancer/Actress hands over a cheque worth Rs.81,654 of Intas Pharmaceuticals to Mr. John Thattil, Regional Director (West), HelpAge. This cheque is for the last quarter of 2005-06. This is a cause related marketing tie-up which started on April '05 between HelpAge and Intas, for its product Nervz. Intas has been contributing approx. Rs.1 lakh per quarter since. The partnership has further been extended for another year.

Fibre of sensitivity



Justice K.P. Radhakrishna Menon, HelpAge Advisor, hands over a HelpAge memento to Ms. Maggie Mathew, Managing Director, Palm Fibre, Kerala, in appreciation of her support towards the company's successful tie-up with HelpAge India. Looking on is Mr. Mathew Cherian (left), CE, HelpAge and wife of Justice Menon (centre) and Mr. Mathew Joseph (right), Chairman, Palm Fibre. The employees of Palm Fibre have pledged Rs.9,505.40 per month.

How to detect a stroke

If an older person stumbles and falls, he/she could be suffering a stroke. At such a time remember the first 3 letters - STR.

S - Ask the individual to Smile.

T - Ask him/her to Talk, to speak a simple sentence coherently.

R - Ask him/her to Raise both arms.

If he/she has trouble with any one of these tasks, call immediately for medical assistance. You could save a life.

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