

HelpAge NEWS



Vol.5 No.4

January-March 2007

EDITOR *Speaks*

Dear Readers,

The New Year began with promise for senior citizens. Close on the heels of Varistha Medclaim for Senior Citizens, launched by National Insurance Company, a first of its kind medical cover for the elderly, the Senior Citizens (Maintenance, Protection and Welfare) Bill got the Cabinet nod. The Finance Minister announced the provision of Reverse Mortgage, launched recently by Punjab National Bank. In Delhi, the Chief Minister announced free bus travel for the aged.

All this goes to show that the concerns of seniors are in the public eye, which is what HelpAge has been striving for all these years.

In rural India, our widespread rights & entitlements awareness drive too is gaining momentum. Mounted essentially to help the elderly be aware of their rights, and to facilitate access, it is beginning to show results.

In March, Mr. Sanjay David, a development worker by profession, was travelling through a village in Betul, MP, when he saw something that compelled him to stop. It was a group of poor older people making serious plans to meet the Collector with their demands. They were members of a Vridh Sangh formed by HelpAge India under this very programme.

Many such older people's groups are gaining strength and the confidence to confront local authorities and ask for their rights. A number of older people have finally received long-overdue ration cards, and others have got homes under the Indira Awas Yojana.

Times are changing and with them so are the needs of the elderly. We have our finger on the pulse and are alert that these must be brought to the attention of the government and civil society.

Nidhi Raj Kapoor
Nidhi Raj Kapoor



Helpline for elders launched in Delhi



Sister Jolly (right), In-charge of Shantibhavan, an old age home in Burari, consoles Narayan Devi who was found abandoned on the street. Looking on is Mr. Prem Poddar, HelpAge Helpline Officer.

One weekend in March, Mr. Mathew Cherian, HelpAge Chief Executive Officer, had an unexpected call from Amit & Divya Mangain of Indirapuram. The couple had found 70-plus Narayan Devi abandoned in the local market and had taken her home. They had called to seek permanent shelter for her.

For Devi and many other elders like her in distress, HelpAge has launched a helpline service in Delhi, after the success of such operations in Chennai and Bangalore.

Mr. Cherian alerted Helpline officer Prem Poddar who rushed to see her, and arranged to house her at "Shantibhavan", an old age home in Burari. He requested the sisters of the home to take care of her while he sorted out matters.

Narayan Devi has 3 daughters and a son, but had been living with grandson Naveen, who was ill-treating her. One night he just threw her out on the road, where the Mangains found her.

Prem first informed the nearest police station, but was told that in the absence of a criminal case no official action could be taken. However, Assistant Sub-Inspector Pradeep Kumar Singh offered to help in any manner possible.

On Sunday evening when Prem went back to check, Narayan Devi requested him to send for her son. She did not know his address or the whereabouts. While Prem was busy trying to locate her son Om Prakash Grover with the help of the Senior Citizens Cell (Delhi Police), Om Prakash himself contacted Prem in search of his mother. The lady chose to return home with her son, who has given an undertaking that he will look after her.

DIAL: 41688956 (EXT.430) TO REACH THE HELPLINE.

Elders Bill gets Cabinet nod

February brought with it a new ray of hope for senior citizens as The Senior Citizens (Maintenance, Protection and Welfare) Bill, 2006, was finally passed by the Cabinet. If passed by Parliament, the Bill will give senior citizens legal recourse against ill-treatment. Perpetrators could be imprisoned for 3 months or fined Rs. 5000.

HelpAge has been lobbying for awhile now for the Bill and this is just the first step. It has gathered support from young members of Parliament who have helped push this Bill forward.

Says Mr. Mathew Cherian, HelpAge CEO: "This is a momentous year for India, as it completes 60 years of Independence. In a sense that 'midnight children' are now senior citizens and their children are now enjoying the fruits of an unprecedented boom in economic growth. But where does that leave the elders? In the aftermath of these socio economic changes, the joint family system has collapsed and we find it difficult to take care of our own parents. Thousands of elderly are dumped and left alone to fend for themselves. How far the Bill will be successful remains to be seen, but it is a welcome step."

Rooting for Social Security



Mr. Mathew Cherian (left), HelpAge CEO and Mr. P. Narayana Murthy, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, participated in the Asia Pacific Regional Seminar on 'Ensuring Social Protection/Social Pensions in Old Age in the Context of Rapid Ageing in Asia'. Mr. Cherian spoke on social security and HelpAge's advocacy project in UP, MP and Jharkhand.

Work in Valley winds to a close, MMU to carry it forward

HelpAge India's post-earthquake programme in J&K formally wound to a close in March 2007. It included providing medical care to 5000 people, and dry rations, warm clothes and bedding to 700 families in 7 villages of Uri. Temporary shelters were erected for 860 families in 15 villages.

With an eye on the future, HelpAge has launched a Mobile Medicare Unit to carry on its work in the Valley. The Unit was inaugurated by the Governor of J&K, Lt. Gen (Retd.) S.K. Sinha.



SHARING THE GRIEF

The first anniversary of the earthquake was observed in Bela migrant camp, where 260 displaced families from Uri live, in collaboration with Life Help Chennai & Global Green Peace, a local organization. The event began by the recitation of Quran (Holy Book of Muslims). Mr. Taj Mohi-ud-Din, Minister for Consumer Affairs, J&K, chaired the event & distributed solar lights to 20 older people.

MEDIA SENSITIZATION

As part of the project, a media sensitizing workshop was organised in collaboration with the Press Institute of India. It was chaired by Mr. B.G. Varghese, former editor of the Indian Express. Thirty media professional participated, representing national, regional and vernacular print and electronic media. Other participants included senior state government officials, and representatives of the armed forces, UNDP/Home Ministry, (Disaster Management Unit) and other NGOs. Participants visited project villages in Uri and interacted with beneficiaries and relief officials.



Mr. Mathew Cherian, HelpAge CEO, meets with a resident of Rajaji Home for the Aged, Madurai during a visit to the home supported by HelpAge. Looking on are Mrs. Indrani Rajadurai (right), Director for the southern region and Mr. V. Sivakumar, Manager (Madurai), of HelpAge.

HelpAge-NHRC organise health week

HelpAge India, Ahmedabad, conducted a seminar titled "Health Awareness Week" supported by the National Human Rights Commission. 1060 elderly participants were imparted knowledge on various subjects covering diabetes and its management, alternative medicine, pain management, and prevention of accidents. The week culminated in a health check up camp and a talk on breast cancer.

Spreading warmth on a chilly night



Dr. H.S. Bakshi (right), Director for northern region and Mr. Manjeet Kumar Singh, Manager (MMU - NCR), of HelpAge, comfort an old lady with a sleeping bag.

On the night of January 4, when the world was huddled in blankets and razais, a HelpAge team was scouring the streets of Faridabad (Hry) for old people with no protection against the cold. Dr. H.S. Bakshi, HelpAge's northern region director, Major V. K Choudhary of the Indian Army & Mr. Satish K Dua of Sai Trust, Faridabad, chose the night to give away a van-load of sleeping bags donated by Osian's Connoisseurs of Art Private Limited.

They went from hospitals to railways platforms to street corners, identifying destitute elderly. The look in their eyes was their best reward, said team-members, and that kept them going till the wee hours.

Some sleeping bags were also distributed at Shaheed Bhagat Singh PG Institute of Management, NIT, Faridabad to the destitute residents of Jawahar Colony.



(From left) Mr. Kapil Kaul, Country Head (Resource Mobilization) and Dr. H. S. Bakshi, Director for the northern region, interact with participants of Sponsor-A-Grandparent programme in Lucknow, after distributing blankets and shawls to them. Looking on is Mr. A. K. Singh, Joint Director (North). Since 1998, the project is being implemented by Tirupati Mahila Gramodyog Kendra, Lucknow, and 50 older persons have been "adopted". In an allied livelihood support effort, the older women also prepare products like papad, badis, spices etc.

Elders group fights for their due



Rahul Bose, actor & social activist, addresses representatives of Civil Society Organizations at a workshop in Mumbai. Also in the picture is Mr. John Thattil, Director for the western region, of HelpAge.

HelpAge India's PACS programme is about raising older people's awareness of their rights and going a step further by providing access. The programme has been witnessing significant achievements. One such instance is of Mokha village, in Madhya Pradesh's Betul District. Older people in various villages have been organised into groups known as Vridha Sanghs.

Under the HelpAge initiative, 80 members of Sanghs got together and traveled to the office of the District Magistrate to demand ration cards for themselves, in order to access benefits of the government's food security scheme. Under this scheme, each family / card holder receives 35 kg food grain per month.

Under the virtual onslaught, the DM's office issued a directive to all Panchayats and city corporation officers. As a result, 70 older people in Mokha have received their ration cards. Mr. M.P. Singh, CEO of Nainpur Block in Mandla District, MP, has issued a directive to the Gram Panchayat to ensure older peoples participation in its Gram Sabha meetings.



An elderly person enjoys Lohri celebrations with HelpAge and the Roller Skating Athlete Club Jandhra, at an old age home in Jammu.

MMU dispenses care and comfort

The Mobile Medicare Unit (MMU) in Nagpur has been providing much needed health services covering the villages of Yavatmal District. In all 5 Camps conducted over 2 days each, 3083 people received treatment. A large number of suicide affected families availed the services of the on-board counselor.



Indian Idol winner, Sandeep Acharya visits MMU Bikaner.



We thank Mr. Amar Lulla (left), JMD, and Dr. Hamied, MD, the two driving forces behind CIPLA's continuous support to HelpAge's nationwide MMU program. CIPLA contributes a bulk of the medicines, for the programme that dispenses nearly 10 lakh treatments every year. In 2006-07 this support was worth more than Rs. 50 lakh.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Microsoft India, HelpAge has gained access to software beyond its financial reach. In a demonstration of its support to the cause of the aged, Microsoft has donated software worth US\$ 86,497 (Rs. 40 lakh).

Thank You!

- HI Tech Arai Limited, Madurai, for donating Rs.9.64 lakh (approx.) for a year's running cost of MMU Madurai.
- ARR Charitable trust, Chennai, for Rs. 8.27 lakh (approx.) to support a new MMU in Madurai.
- GAIL, Hyderabad, for Rs.18.86 lakh for supporting MMU Hyderabad.
- GAIL, Surat, for supporting 150 cataract surgeries.
- State Bank of Mysore, Bangalore, for facilitating 100 cataract surgeries worth Rs. 1 lakh.
- ONGC, Surat for supporting 100 surgeries at Navsari.
- DSP MERILL LYNCH employees and management for a donation of Rs. 3.31 lakh.
- Standard Chartered & GIVE INDIA MARATHON for passing on the amount raised by employees of Pfizer, Total Cargo, WNS and DSP, who ran for HelpAge and raised more than Rs.10 lakh.
- Volkart Foundation (VOLTAS), for funding 500 cataract surgeries.
- MINERAL FOUNDATION OF GOA for supporting the capital and 5-years running cost of the Goa MMU. The grant is valued at Rs.56 lakh.
- Citibank for sending 3 lakh HelpAge mailers to their Premium Credit Card holders with their card statements.
- TCIL for supporting an integrated grandparent-grandchildren initiative under the Tsunami programme.
- GE India for supporting 100 cataract surgeries worth Rs. 1 lakh.
- Vizag Steel Plant, Vizag, for providing steel worth Rs. 5 lakh for an old age home in Cuddalore.
- Asian Paints, Hyderabad, for giving Rs. 1.2 lakh towards medical care.
- A special thanks to Indo-Asian Fusegear Ltd. and its Chairman & MD, Mr. V.P. Mahendru for donating an MMU vehicle for Delhi, which was recently launched. This is the third time Indo-Asian Fusegear has donated an MMU to HelpAge propelling its mobile healthcare programme forward.

Intas Pharmaceuticals, Ahmedabad, for Rs. 97,000 under the ongoing cause-related marketing initiative. The total so far is Rs. 4.05 lakh.



Mr. C.A. Rashid (right), Chandigarh Zonal General Manager, GAIL India Ltd., and Mr. Narinder Singh (centre), SDM, Yamuna Nagar, present a cheque of Rs. 8.98 lakh (approx.) to Dr. H.S. Bakshi of HelpAge, towards the cost of MMU Jagadhri for the financial year 2006-07.



Mr. P. Babu Rao (right), Director (Personnel), Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited, prepares to hand over a cheque of Rs. 1.94 lakh (approx.) to Mr. S. Prabu (left), from HelpAge Chennai. Looking on are Mrs. Jeena Dayalan, Principal of Jawahar Matric Hr. Sec. School, Neyveli, which has raised the money, and Mr. G. Mathialagan, Chief General Manager (Per. & Admn.) of Neyveli Lignite.



Mrs. Indrani Rajadurai of HelpAge, receives a cheque of US \$ 69,273 (Rs. 32.5 lakh) from Mr. Yoshiaki Kodaki, Consulate General of Japan, in Chennai, as grant to HelpAge towards its various infrastructural facilities in the south.



Mr. Mathew Cherian (right), HelpAge CEO, receives the keys for a new Mobile Medicare Unit for Delhi, donated by Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), from Mr. S.K. Roongta (left), Chairman, SAIL, who shakes hands with Dr. H.S. Bakshi of HelpAge.



Mr. Ram Babu of HelpAge Bangalore receives the first Pay Roll Giving contribution from Mr. Ashok Hattangady, Technical Director of Conzerve Systems Pvt. Ltd.

Students shoulder responsibility

With the leadership of Mrs. Grace Pinto, MD, Ryan Group of Institutions, 90 schools pan India, are participating in HelpAge's school education program. HelpAge expresses its sincere gratitude to Mrs. Grace Pinto, for her sensitivity & continuous support towards the cause.



Mrs. Mohini Vig, Principal, Little Angel School, Salt Lake, Kolkata, stands proudly along with the highest contributing teacher and students towards the cause, during a prize distribution ceremony. They had collected Rs.63,392. The school has been a strong supporter since the past 12 years.



Mr. K Vairamani (right), AGM, Bank of Maharashtra, hands over the winning shield and certificates to the students of Holy Angels School, Trivandrum, who won the National Quiz competition held in Bangalore. Looking on is Mrs. Indrani Rajadurai of HelpAge. Bank of Maharashtra supported the inter-school quiz competitions on a district, state as well as national level, with Rs. 8 lakh.

We thank the following schools for their contribution towards the cause:

- Apee Jay School, Jalandhar (Pb)
- Bentick Girls Hr. Sec. School, Chennai (TN)
- Bharti Vidyabhavans, Sulochana Natu Vidyalaya, Pune (Mh)
- Delhi Public School, Bhopal, (MP)
- Delhi Public School, Jalandhar (Pb)
- DAV Public School, Palampur (HP)
- Happy School, Daryaganj, Delhi
- Kendriya Vidyalaya School, Chennai (TN)
- Kendriya Vidyalaya School, Adoor, Kerala
- Kendriya Vidyalaya School NTPC, Kayampulam, Kerala
- DPS Panipat (Hry) & Mr. Amit Rana it's Pro - Vice Chairman
- Modern Sr. Sec. School, Patiala (Pb)
- New Model English School, Dist. Kolhapur, (Mh)
- Police DAV Public School, Jalandhar (Pb)
- Pratap Public School, Karnal (Hry)
- Ryan International School, (Chd)
- Rainbow International School, (Chd)
- Ramjas School, Anand Parbat, Delhi
- Satya Matriculation School, Chennai (TN)
- Sommerville School, Greater Noida (UP)
- St. Antony's School, Trichy, (TN)
- Spring dale Sr. Sec. Shool, Amritsar (Pb)
- Sacred Heart School, Moga (Pb)
- T.K.M Public School, Kollam
- The Punjab Public School, Nabha (Pb)
- United English School Chiplun, Dist. Ratnagiri, (Mh)
- Vishvas School, Shahbad,(Hry)

SPECIAL MENTION



Students of Nirmala Convent School, Rajkot, interact with an MMU beneficiary during their visit to the MMU site in Jangleshwar area. The school has made the highest contribution in the state of Gujarat amounting to Rs.3.32 lakh (approx.). We thank Sister Jancy Joseph the Principal of the school for her support.



Comic twist to aged concerns

Highlighting the concerns of the aged, HelpAge staged a rib tickling comedy directed by well known theatre personality Ms. Sarita Vohra titled "mallaiika.sherraffat@oldagehome.com" in Delhi. The play brought out issues such as the increasing trend of senior citizens moving into old age homes, loneliness, being disregarded by one's own kin and many more to the forefront.



HELPAge MEMBER HONORED

Standard Chartered, Scope International, Chennai, honoured seven 'Women Exemplar 2006' in a special function. HelpAge's Director for the southern region, Mrs. Indrani Rajadurai, was among those honoured.

In Memorium



The HelpAge family pays homage to Shri Babar Singh, nephew of Shaheed-A-Azam Bhagat Singh, and a strong supporter of HelpAge programmes in Faridabad. He passed away at the age of 53 on February 21, 2007. Shri Babar Singh was always supportive to the work of HelpAge and on several occasions offered the use of the grounds of the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Post Graduate College of Management, NIT, Faridabad, to the organization.

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HELPAge INDIA
 C-14, Qutab Institutional Area
 New Delhi - 110 016

Published & Printed by Ms. Nidhi Raj Kapoor on behalf of HelpAge India at C-14, Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi - 110016
 Website: <http://www.helpageindia.org> Email: helpage@nde.vsnl.net.in
 Editor: Ms. Nidhi Raj Kapoor
 Associate Editor: Ms. Sonali Sharma

Registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India Vide R.N.I. No. DELENG/2002/6655.
 Price Rs. 12.50/- per issue. Annual subscription Rs. 50/-