

Veerangana 2020





Art Work depicts the welfare forms undertaken by NWWA and flowers depict the blossoming of lives each time; branches show the extensive network to reach out to the maximum in the most human way.

by Mrs. Shashi Tripathi
President NWWA, Ezhimala



एडमिरल कर्मबीर सिंह

पी वी एस एम, ए वी एस एम, ए डी सी
नौसेनाध्यक्ष

Admiral Karambir Singh

PVSM, AVSM, ADC

Chief of the Naval Staff



रक्षा मंत्रालय

एकीकृत मुख्यालय (नौसेना)

नई दिल्ली-110011

Integrated Headquarters

Ministry of Defence (Navy)

New Delhi - 110011

MESSAGE

The Veerangana magazine has, over the years, been an eagerly awaited periodical that showcases NWWA's growth in tandem with the ever growing responsibilities of the Navy. The rich content of the magazine has always captured the range of activities and endeavours of this fine organisation.

I am happy to learn that the 2020 edition of the Veerangana is being released with the theme '**Touching lives through welfare**'. The theme has been aptly chosen considering that welfare activities are essential in sustaining a robust and vibrant community.

NWWA is the bedrock of our family support system and has grown into an effective and valuable organisation supporting the Navy at all times. I am happy to note that many new initiatives have been started this year which help our ladies in empowering themselves.

I convey my compliments to the editorial team for yet another excellent edition of the in-house magazine. I am sure it will encourage others of our community to share their experiences and display their creative skills through this medium. I wish NWWA the very best, with the assurance of unstinted support in all its endeavours.

Jai Hind. Śaṃ no Varuṇaḥ.

(Karambir Singh)

Admiral

Chief of the Naval Staff



Mrs. Sunita Ajit Kumar
President NWWA (Ex-officio)



*NWWA Kendra
Navy Nagar
Colaba
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MESSAGE

It is a matter of honour for me as a Naval wife to be a long-standing and valuable member of NWWA and pen this message as President of this wonderful organisation. With the involvement and contribution of every member, this organisation has seen positive and satisfying changes over the years.

From small beginnings, NWWA has grown into a full-fledged association which is involved in all facets of the community. I wish to appreciate and compliment all our Committee members and Group Coordinators for their valuable time and energy in enhancing NWWA's reach and also making it an intrinsic part of the Naval community.

As we move forward, let us strive towards achieving a happy community through effective welfare measures and work together to fulfill what we have envisioned for NWWA.

Jai Hind!

Mrs. Sunita Ajit Kumar
President NWWA (Ex-officio)



Mrs. Geetha Ashok
President, NWWA



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MESSAGE

It is time for the next edition of 'Veerangana', and I am delighted to share my thoughts and views. The theme chosen for this year's edition is '**Touching Lives through Welfare**', and it couldn't have been more apt. Our very raison d'etre and the underlying spirit of NWWA is welfare of our naval community through numerous measures and initiatives. For a sea-going service where family separations are frequent, involvement of NWWA in lending a helping hand has been historic and well appreciated since long. NWWA's committed and totally voluntary contribution in conceptualising, implementing and executing various initiatives towards empowerment of our ladies and children has complemented various naval schemes handsomely, and often enabled the service to concentrate better on their primary and core tasks. NWWA can indeed be proud of its contribution over the years.

Our new programmes, implemented based on comments, suggestions and feedback received from our members, continue to do yeoman service towards empowering our ladies for a better tomorrow. Initiatives such as the TISS SVE course, the Inlingua Spoken English Course, the capsule on Acupressure, etc, have been extremely well received. Inauguration of new Family Clinic and Welfare Centres have ensured better reach of various NWWA facilities to our community. Various initiatives at all our regions too have been impressive, with a special mention of the Navy-wide introduction of the Social Entrepreneurship Course in collaboration with IIM Kozhikode by the Southern Region. We continue to look forward to valuable suggestions from each one of you to further enhance NWWA's contribution to the welfare of our community.

My heartiest congratulations to Team-Sanchar for their committed efforts in bringing out a professional edition of this year's Veerangana and I thank every member for contributing towards making this edition come to life. Veerangana is 'our' magazine and I urge each one of you to use this platform in showcasing your own individual creative talents. We also seek your feedback on this edition in particular, and on welfare initiatives in general.

Thank you all, and Happy Reading.

Geetha Ashok
President, NWWA



Mrs. Meena Pawar
Vice President, NWWA

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Namaste! My greetings to all the readers.

It is a great honour to pen down my first message as the Editor of Veerangana, with the added privilege of also holding reins as the Vice President NWWA.

The idea of 'Welfare' has been an enduring one in the Indian civilizational ethos, and is even more relevant in a seagoing force like the Indian Navy- expected to go in the harm's way with all the attendant risks, consequences and familial pressures.

The nobility of the term is reinforced daily when I cross the aptly named '**Lok Kalyan Marg**' in front of the Prime Minister's residence, enroute to NWWA Kendra.

It resonates remarkably with the goal of our own organization which is primarily rooted in welfare as the name suggests. In fact 'Welfare' as a concept is so prevalent in our public consciousness and space, that we often do not perceive or realise its extent. Take for example the vedic saying // बहुजन हिताय बहुजन सुखाय च // (for the welfare of the many; for the happiness of the many) which you may have guessed is the motto of the All India Radio, or the concept of 'योगक्षेम' (welfare or governance) which appears in the motto of the Life Insurance Corporation of India. These and many more such aphorisms are very persuasive that '**Touching Lives through Welfare**' is a key and noble goal indeed.

This issue is dedicated to all those benevolent souls who work selflessly in the service of others. When I first joined the NWWA committee, my portfolio was that of Welfare Coordinator (Pragati) and therefore it seems a wonderful coincidence that my tenure as the Editor starts with the same uplifting theme. I observed then, and continue to do so even now, that our extremely talented and devoted members serve the community with enthusiasm, happy to be doing their bit, while also empowering themselves, as they enhance their own knowledge and skills in every sphere possible.

This edition covers a wide spectrum of related topics as seen through the eyes of our members - their own thoughts, stories and altruistic contributions of self or others. Be it in the realm of human, animal or environmental welfare, it is indeed heartening and inspiring to see how these persons and organizations, including you all, have touched many lives through such philanthropic deeds and actions! Proving that resolute passion towards nature, neighbours or the needy is the birthplace of true compassion and welfare, they admirably show us the way. We also share the views of those who have been the beneficiaries, and their words make us realise that any effort put in- no matter how small-is worth it! The Cover Design by Mrs Nidhi Gupta aptly and beautifully illustrates all the above sentiments. We have added a few sections in this edition - Word-Play, Real-to-Reel Movies, Quotes to Live By, NWWA in the Media and Guess Who Artwork page- to make it a more engaging and enjoyable read. We look forward to your feedback and thoughts on the same.

As I leave you now to read through, get inspired and discover the best versions of yourselves through Welfare, I must thank my teammates for their splendid efforts.

Happy Reading! God Bless.

Meena Pawar
Vice President, NWWA

TEAM SANCHAR



**(L to R) Mrs Arati Menon (Activity Coordinator)
Mrs Meena Pawar (Group Coordinator & Editor)
Mrs Geetha Ashok (President NWWA)
Mrs Paromita Ojha (Activity Coordinator)
Mrs Divya Prakash (Activity Coordinator)**

NWWA COMMITTEE - NORTHERN REGION



GLIMPSES



**FAREWELL TO MRS REENA LANBA,
FORMER PRESIDENT NWWA**



ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING



GIRLS HOSTEL



AROGYA - VISIT TO BASE HOSPITAL



TARSH



SAMUDRI



BANGLADESH DELEGATION VISIT



DIWALI MELA



ANUBHAVI



FEMME FATALE - FITNESS STUDIO



COFFEE MORNING



RELEASE OF VARUNI



ORIENTATION PROGRAMME



TISS CERTIFICATE DISTRIBUTION



SWAYAM SIDDHA



NARAINA BAGH - WELFARE TEAM



INAUGURATION OF FAMILY CLINIC - PALAM BAGH



MILAN



INDEPENDENCE DAY AT LITTLE ANGELS - PALAM BAGH



LITTLE ANGELS - GURUGRAM BAGH



LITTLE ANGELS - CHANAKYABAGH



NCS PRIZE DISTRIBUTION - JAGRITI



SPORTS DAY - SANKALP



PRAKRITI



SAHARA HOSTEL



VEER NARIS - SAHARA MEET



VISIT TO PALNA - OUTREACH



ARCHIVES

OUTLYING UNIT - DEHRADUN



QUIZ



YOGA ON CHILDREN'S DAY



OUTREACH



INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH CHILDREN FROM SHARP MEMORIAL SCHOOL

TOUCH A LIFE

Hold a hand to show the way
Help a needy or feed a stray
Think how many were happy
Amongst all you met today.
Did you selflessly give rather than take?
Did you make someone's day?
Or caused a heartbreak?
As you stand in front of the mirror tonight-
Can you contentedly say-
That you rescued a soul from misery's sway?
Did you ever provide a wholesome meal?
To at least one out of million hungry stomachs
Did you reach out before their hopes plummet?
Is there a single heart blessing you or your deeds?
Did your empathy help a wounded soul heal?
Did you leave behind a trail of happiness?
Did you hold an aged immobile hand with
tenderness?

Act now, share a smile, share a meal,
hush those agonizing wails
Let not the human in you fail
Your every selfless act of
reaching out to strangers
Will quell a bit of this world's misery
Touch a life, rescue anguished souls
from drudgery
Help weary feet tread on roads
leading to recovery
When you have taken a step towards
making a difference
Your selfless acts would always be
remembered with reverence
On the day of final judgement,
God would bless you
for your perseverance!

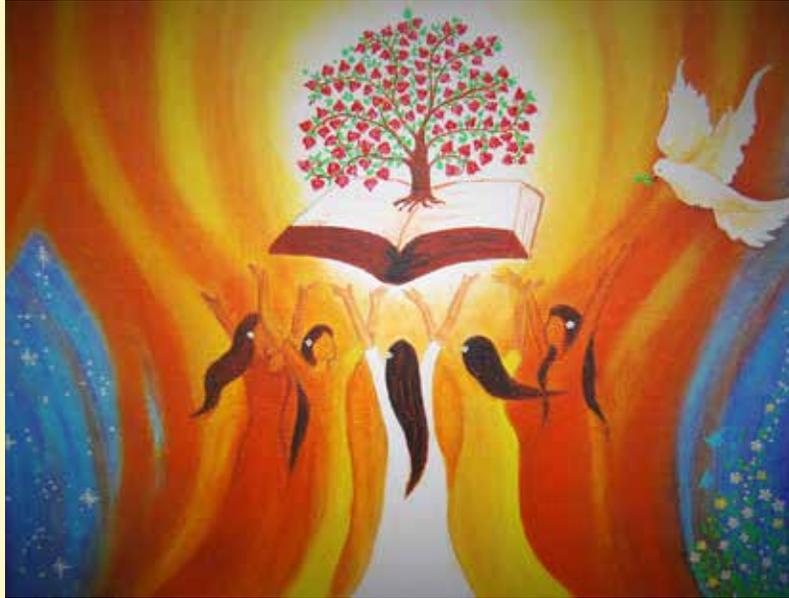


Dr. Paromita Ojha

A voracious reader, participating author/poet of multiple national/international short story and poetry anthologies, has published her poetry book, Sylvan Fragrance, available online. She expresses her thoughts on paromitamukherjeeojha.wordpress.com

EDUCATION IS EMPOWERMENT

A multifaceted initiative transforming lives in Jamshedpur



Artwork by Akoijam Tom Tom Chanu

A cup of tea can sometimes change lives. This is exactly what happened during early 2008, when a few friends, who had graduated from the same university, got together, and started discussing India's dismal ranking in the Human Development Indices report. The Human Development Index (HDI) is used to measure a country's overall achievement in social and economic dimensions based on the health of the people, their level of education and the standard of living. The discussion soon turned to the role of education as a prime enabler in the upward mobility of the underprivileged and the nation itself. With a little bit of research on the subject, they came across some startling statistics – of poverty, illiteracy and near absence of quality education in government schools, especially in the four states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The friends, all of them highly accomplished in their respective professional lives, decided to do something that would touch the lives of the most underprivileged sections of the society. This resulted in the setting up of **ALIG**

– **'A Literacy Initiative Group' (www.aligsociety.org)**, a Non-Profit Organization in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, with the aim of catalysing a positive change in the society through knowledge-based sustainable programmes in the fields of Education, Health and Skill Development.

Their first project was with a few government schools in the tribal belt, on the outskirts of Jamshedpur. The project, funded through a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Tata Power, was able to bring down the school dropout rate from 60% to 5% in just four years. The success of the first project gave an adrenaline rush to the founders and since then there has been no looking back.

Their flagship programme, namely **'Adopt a School'** in the Education vertical, is an innovative concept that leverages the infrastructure of the government's primary and middle schools and supplements it with educational interventions to improve learning outcomes. The programme is a data-driven, crowdfunded initiative that

encourages local people in a city to open their purse strings with very small amounts annually to sustain educational interventions in such schools. The project in each city begins with identification of government schools that need a helping hand. Permission to support these schools is sought from the Local Government Education office. The project then embarks upon the search of people who are in some way connected with the city and are willing to contribute small amounts to fund the initiative. Local teachers are appointed and trained in activity-based learning techniques.



A member from ALIG interacts with students as part of their Adopt a School Programme

Project accountability is through weekly reports shared on WhatsApp groups created for each city, with all the sponsors and teachers of that project as members. Each week, the teachers send an update about the activities being conducted in their respective schools along with photographs and videos. The WhatsApp group helps the sponsors develop a connect with the children whom they support, and the comfort that their donations are well spent. As most government schools lack furniture, individual sponsors are also encouraged to make a contribution towards purchase of furniture for the classrooms. The joyful expressions of the children on seeing the furnished classrooms are adequate compensation for the sponsors. While the efforts may seem meagre, the transformational effect on the children, whose only expectation from the school earlier used to be the free mid-day meals, is beyond description. The students have started acing learning outcome tests in their respective districts. The initiative is

now spread across 42 schools, impacting the lives of over 10,000 children.

The Health Vertical of ALIG is also closely linked with the school programme as children are taught about health and hygiene. Special classes are held for girl students on menstrual health and the concept of good and bad touch, through the programme's Diva Club. The brighter students are encouraged to help in ALIG's Adult Education Programme, where parents are given basic lessons in the three Rs (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) of education. Skill development programmes like Stitching, Embroidery, English and Computers are offered to empower the family (mothers and sisters) of these government school children. The aim is to create an ecosystem where all members in the family develop a stake in education.

I was approached by the ALIG team in early 2018 and I plunged headlong into their journey of inspiring the underprivileged to dream big. I am not only a proud sponsor in the project but also help ALIG with their outreach efforts and staff training. I must confess that it has been a very thrilling and fulfilling experience.

ALIG - A Literacy Initiative Group was established in 2008 as a non-profit in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand.
Tel: 0657 236 2538 Website: aligsociety.org



- Fawzia Jarannum

*Hubert H Humphrey Fellow,
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HEALTHCARE IN THE HINTERLAND

'Padmashris' Abhay and Rani Bhang are pioneers in tackling neonatal mortality



The story I wish to share here has its roots in the 1940s—when a young economist, recently released from British jail, went to the Mahatma. “I have been accepted into one of America’s best colleges to study economics,” he said. “On the eve of my departure, I am here to seek your blessings.” Gandhiji had only one sentence for him: “If you are really keen to study economics, go to the villages.” The young man went home, tore up his travel documents and went on to live the life of a farmer. That is the background of my story. But this man is not my protagonist. I wish to share the story of how Gandhiji’s teaching influenced the young man’s son, Dr Abhay Bhang.

I had the privilege to hear Dr Bhang some years ago. I am retelling his story. An unassuming, humble and motivating individual clad in a simple khadi kurta, there was really nothing about his outward appearance that would give you a clue to his inspiring story. The magic was in his work. Dr Bhang grew up in Gandhi’s ashram. After his MD in India, he went on to study public health at John Hopkins University in the US and returned to Gadchiroli, one of Maharashtra’s poorest districts. This was the 1980s. A sparsely populated district with few villages, cultivation is the main sustenance. The people are poor and there is only one hospital serving the entire district. It was in this scenario

that Dr Bhang and his wife Dr Rani Bhang decided to contribute.

One evening, Dr Bhang was resting on his charpoy after a long day at their clinic. It had been raining most of the week and some parts of the district were flooded. Incessant knocking shook him out of his reverie. Even before he could react, two women burst into his room and laid down a frail, sick baby, barely a week old, on his bed. “Save the baby,” they implored. The child was suffering from diarrhoea, dehydration and pneumonia. And even as Dr Bhang was beginning to think of solutions, the baby breathed his last. The impatience of his youth made him question the women. “What took you so long?” he yelled. “Could you not see the baby’s distress?” Their responses started giving him insights into the problems they faced. “The baby has been sick for a while, they said. He wouldn’t take cow’s milk. We even watered the milk down, but nothing seemed to work. As the baby got worse, we realized we needed to see you. We left the house early this morning and started walking,” they cried. “You must really live far away then,” said the doctor. “No,” replied the women, wringing their helpless hands. “We live in the next village. However, the bridge connecting the two is broken. As the river was flooded today, we waited at the bridge for the water to recede before we could get to you.”

This is a snapshot of the way things are in many of our villages. The neonatal mortality rate (NMR) is high. Frail young lives are ended even before they begin. The situation is complex with grossly insufficient infrastructure and almost non-existent

medical care. Even where it exists, access is a challenge, compounded by archaic child-rearing practices, traditional beliefs that are not in sync with modern medicine and political apathy.

Gandhiji has always been Dr. Bhang’s inspiration. “Whenever you are in a dilemma,” he said. “I will give you a talisman. If you cannot decide what to do, take the decision that will empower the weakest of the weak, the poorest of the poor.” Armed with this knowledge, the Bhangs embarked on their mission to reduce the NMR in Gadchiroli.

What struck me the most about Dr Bhang is that he couples his intelligence, high moral standards and spirituality with a great deal of scientific temperament and pragmatism. Many people do good but when people do good using evidence-based practices with measurable outcomes, developing standardised practices that can be duplicated anywhere in the world, the magnitude of the work done is exponential. So effective and influential has been the Bhangs’ work that it has been covered by the world press, UNICEF and WHO have written their policy statement based on it and the Indian Government has set its benchmark for NMR as set by Gadchiroli. In fact, today, their work is also being replicated by the governments of Nepal, Bangladesh and a few African countries.

What did the couple do? How did they do it? There was no way that just the two of them could address the needs of all the babies born in an entire district. How did they grapple with the lack of infrastructure? How did they deal with beliefs like not breastfeeding until the baby was

at least a week old—the women in the village believed that the yellowish, watery milk a new mother lactated was infected. In the absence of doctors and medicine to aid in delivery, expectant mothers were fed as little as possible as a smaller baby meant easier passage through the birth canal and less threat to the mother’s life. How did they weave their way into an existing system of village midwives?

They knew that the medical world had intervention practices that were quite simple and effective. Medicine had easy answers to sepsis, low birth weight and pneumonia. The challenge was in implementing them under these unique set of circumstances. There began the long search for solutions, which lasted 10-15 years. Trying out, going back to the drawing board, improvising at every stage and moving on. The village was educated, mothers were informed regarding ante and postnatal care, midwives were taken into confidence and resources developed.

The real breakthrough was in the way they developed human resources. Lack of trained human resources plagues all areas of the medical community today. There are solutions to many medical problems but in the absence of trained manpower these interventions do not reach the people who need them the most. So, how did they produce a hundred Bhangs? They created ‘*arogyadoots*’- women from the village to assist the young mothers once the babies were born. These young women with just a basic school

education and training, developed by the Bhangs, are with the mothers as they deliver, in their own homes. After the birth, they follow up closely until the baby is thriving. A strong system and training have been put in place. Dr Bhang has broken the science down to a series of simple steps that can be taught—a systems flow with safeguards at each level. There is a ceiling of limits that is drilled into the *arogyadoots* and they know the extent to which they can intervene.

Did the medical community accept this? To the Bhangs’ credit, the then chief of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) passed these women with flying colours! This is how the NMR in Gadchiroli became the national benchmark, Gadchiroli found its place on the world map, and the Bhangs—both Dr Abhay and Dr Rani—received the Padmashri in 2018 for 30 years of pioneering service to the rural community.



- *Deepa Bhat Nair*

*A speech and language therapist,
she runs an early intervention centre for autism,
DBN Com DEALL, Mumbai.*

DIFFERENT STROKES

An international perspective on care for the naval community

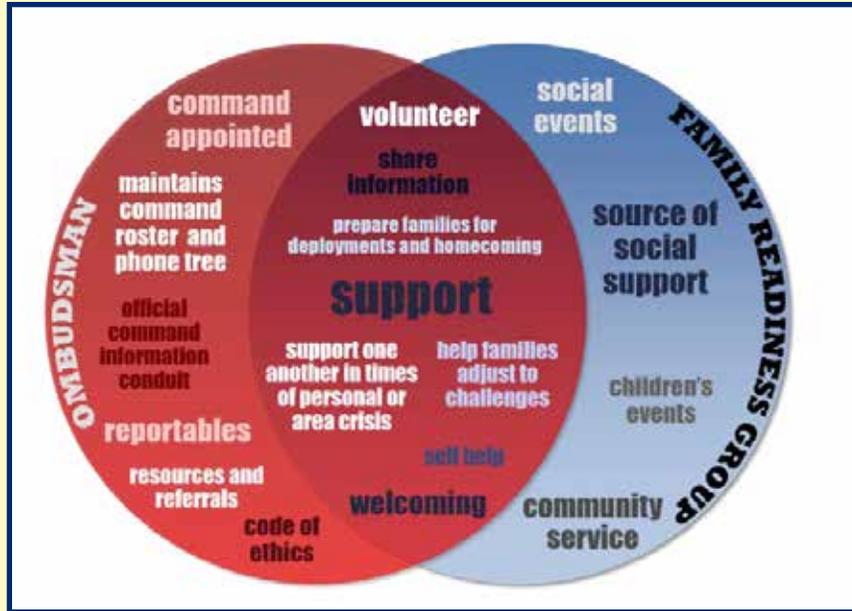


From its early avatar as the Naval Officers Wives Association (1948) through its transformation into the Naval Wives Welfare Association in 1985, NWWA has come a long way as the beacon of community welfare for naval families.

Today, NWWA can veritably boast of a wide spectrum of activities, from women empowerment, community support and education to social welfare and environment, which touch the lives of our naval families. All this is achieved by wives of officers and sailors who are motivated, selfless and sincerely believe a community can move forward only with participation from within—self-help is the best help, as someone once said.

Over the years, my wife Arati and I have had the opportunity to interact with naval officers and their spouses from many different countries. It has always been interesting to learn and understand how other navies look at family welfare. This is of great relevance as navies across the world have similar concerns for their families.

Having spoken to many naval families from across the globe, we were able to see some interesting contrasts. On one end of the spectrum, we learnt about countries like Sweden, Australia and the UK where welfare has been left to individuals themselves, and there was no real ‘community’ participation in the sense that we see it. When we expressed surprise about the ‘absence’ of an umbrella organisation that collectively looked at issues concerning naval families, we were informed that this had come about as officers and sailors no longer lived in ‘defence enclaves’ and thus community living was applicable in their own areas and did not necessarily have a military flavour. Moreover, we also realised that the societies and government agencies/machineries in these countries largely enabled individuals to take care of themselves and provided efficient services with social mechanisms well in place. At the contrasting end of the spectrum, we were pleasantly surprised to learn about the system in the US Navy where the Commanding Officer/ Command is by law charged with the responsibility of ensuring family welfare through empowered agencies, encompassing a large swathe of activities and facilities.



A Case Study

Our interaction with spouses of US Navy officers, over many cups of coffee, helped us to understand the scope and magnitude of the welfare network in place. In addition, a more coherent picture emerged through the multitude of websites with information on the facilities available to the family members of the officers and enlisted personnel of US Navy.

The underlying philosophy of the welfare system can be gleaned from the guiding principle of the 'Navy Family Framework 2.0' issued in 2019: "Navy families are an integral part of our Navy team and a vital contributor to mission success. The Navy Family Framework describes the role that families play in fulfilling our strategic objectives and the responsibilities that the Navy has to our families. It outlines our commitment to enhance mutual support between the Navy and our families. We recruit a Sailor, but we retain a family. Stronger families make a stronger fleet."

The document further goes on to exhort those in Command to ensure creation of an environment of welfare based on this tenet: "We need leaders committed to inspiring our Navy team and to building ready, resilient, integrated, and informed Navy families who support their Sailors and engage with their Navy community." The document further makes it clear that "Navy leaders are accountable for the execution of their individual plans to implement this Family Framework. Commands must include Navy families in setting local goals and objectives as well as evaluating their progress."

The enduring theme that emerges in the US system is that, just like us, they don't see family and community welfare for the sake of welfare but as an important tool to achieve operational and strategic goals—with naval families as an important contributor. One can always argue that social support, organisational maturity and resources are very different in the US compared to our environment; however, I feel the underlying philosophy is the same.

Interestingly, it emerged that the mandate of the Family Framework has been achieved not only through voluntary activities of naval spouses but organisationally through the mandated charter of 'Navy Families Ombudsman Programme' and 'Family Readiness Groups (FRGs)'. The FRGs were earlier known as the Navy Wives Club and a change of name was warranted as more and more women joined the Navy as officers and in enlisted ranks. The Ombudsmen are dedicated volunteers appointed by the Command/Commanding Officer to serve as the link between command leadership and Navy families. They are also trained to assist families in navigating the challenges of lifestyle that the Navy brings and to act as the single-point source of relevant information to naval families. The US Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) usually appoints two Ombudsmen-at-Large. One is the spouse of a senior naval officer and the other, the wife of the Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO) of the Navy.

In contrast, FRGs are non-official entities comprising serving personnel (in their personal capacity), family members and children of serving personnel, and even civilians who are willing to contribute to family welfare efforts. The FRGs are mandated to provide family members with a support network that is informational and social. They plan, coordinate and conduct social events and informational activities designed to promote and improve family readiness, sense of community and welfare. The FRGs provide family support and networking opportunities during deployments and welcome members who are new to the Navy life.

The Ombudsman and the FRGs operate independent of each other, but it is evident that they would need to collaborate on many aspects of family welfare. The graphic above illustrates this symbiotic and cooperative relationship.

The welfare of family members of naval personnel is delivered under seven main categories, namely:

- **Transition assistance:** Helping naval families transition from the service environment to a civilian one after retirement, including aspects of employment and skilling
- **Relocation assistance:** Helping serving personnel and families make inter-station moves smoothly and with the least administrative disruptions
- **Family employment:** Helping spouses and children to find employment by supporting them with counselling services and negotiations with employers
- **Personal finance:** Assisting families of officers and sailors in exercising financial prudence and making sensible investments
- **Emergency response:** Dealing with disaster preparedness and recovery
- **Life skills:** Providing advice and support to naval families in positive and healthy living, constructive communication, thought management and problem-solving skills
- **Counselling, advocacy and prevention:** Providing family members counselling, victim intervention, prevention education and awareness programmes.

Another aspect that may be worth examining from the US model is the concept of a National Military Family Association (NMFA), an advocacy group that examines issues of interest common to all military families, across all uniforms: a 'Purple' (all-service) organisation for families, so to speak. The NMFA also provides inputs to the Services on what could be done better and supports government agencies for legislations that affect military families.

In conclusion

Underlying philosophies being the same, there are organisational differences in the way that the US Navy and the Indian Navy have addressed aspects of family support and welfare. The US Navy family welfare system has existed in some form for almost a century and has transformed in response to its force structure, worldwide deployments, combat tasks and prolonged separations.

Our Navy is a microcosm of the nation and as the larger social milieu transforms, bringing with it changes in our own set of values and attitudes, 'welfare' must also keep pace with the expectations of the community. There is, I believe, a need to evolve a model where welfare activities and facilities are an optimum mix of a 'Pull' and 'Push' system, wherein certain activities that promote community living, safety, community consciousness and integration need to be delivered in the 'Push' model; and activities like assistance for legal, financial, relocation and vocational issues designed on a 'Pull' model. No longer are militaries insulated from the open, transparent and inclusive social structure that is fast empowering India. And our welfare organisation will need to remain responsive, agile and transformative to cater to the welfare needs of our families.

As a voluntary and not-for-profit organisation, NWWA has played a central and stellar role over the years, taking a leading role in delivering support, welfare and prosperity to our families. In pursuance of furthering this spirit of selfless service, there is a definite case to look at 'best practices' from other parts of the world and examine what could be adapted to suit our context and requirements.

Interactions between ladies involved in steering welfare activities for our families with persons/ organisations involved in similar efforts in other significant navies could provide us with a plethora of ideas that can be examined for relevance and applicability within our specific environment. Also, with the increasing focus on jointness and bringing efficiencies in allocation and utilisation of resources, perhaps it is also time to look at how the welfare organisations of the uniformed services can come together at various levels to share practices and resources and create a larger web of support. In many cases, the economies of scale thus created would benefit our families immensely.

The ladies of NWWA proudly announce, "While the men in white brave the high seas, soar through the skies or prowl the dark, silent depths of the ocean, their families are assured of support and care from NWWA." That makes our tasks and missions easy. A salute to the ladies who have been the strength and support of our community!

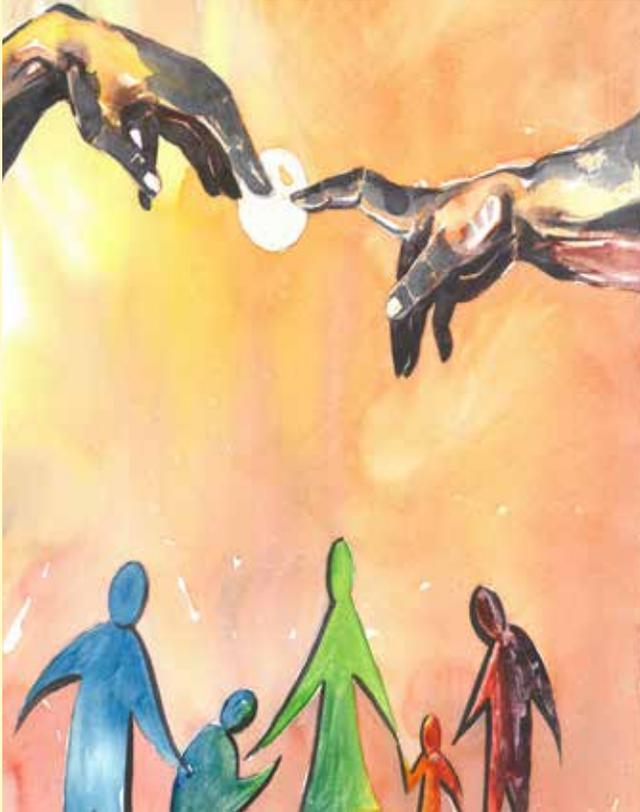
Śaṃ no Varuṇaḥ.



- Commodore Susheel Menon, VSM

THE EMBRACE OF CARE

Read about a doctor making a difference in maternal welfare



Artwork by Lt. Madhusudan

Human service is a broad and incredibly important field and can be seen at work, in public or private environs. Medical professionals can touch many lives every day. As a doctor, my attitude and spirit can greatly influence the healing process and overall patient wellbeing. This I personally experienced in Delhi when I had the golden opportunity of enriching people's lives at their doorstep. Here, I would like to recollect those unfaded wonderful memories.

After my husband's transfer to Delhi in 2002, I got ample job opportunities in cosmetic clinics, corporate hospitals, and NGOs. I preferred to join a NGO called PFI, since in the interview I was fascinated by my job responsibility which was fulfilling my wish to serve the underprivileged.

The PFI or Population Foundation of India, a renowned NGO (founded by JRD Tata), played a vital role in implementing certain crucial, government projects for the welfare of the underprivileged living in slums to improve reproductive and child health as well as encourage microcredit system for the women. I was appointed as a Medical Officer in a mobile health clinic, i.e. a Swaraj Mazda van with an internal clinical set-up and support staff. The van would visit the assigned major slums of New Delhi such as Sanjay Colony in Kalkaji, a thickly populated, overcrowded environment, with an unhealthy living status, water shortage and rigid mindset. It was believed to be a factory for sexually transmitted diseases, particularly AIDS. Another slum was Rangpuri Pahari in the interior of Mahipalpur. In the van, my team would carry out antenatal check-ups, immunization of children, issuing OC pills, and treatment of reproductive tract infections and minor general ailments.

Additionally, we had to orient, educate, counsel, motivate, insist on the practice of personal hygiene, family planning measures, antenatal check-up, hospital delivery and immunization to promote safe motherhood and child care. It was a herculean task to transform the community into a positive environment despite having the support of assigned volunteers, self-help groups from the same community.

During the tenure of 21 months, I did not restrict myself only as a doctor but also played a very tiny role in reforming our society by voluntarily participating in various health promoting IEC (Information, Education, Counselling) activities and Sunday camps in the slums. I was the only doctor who could sustain till the end of the

project, as there were too many workplace-related genuine inconveniences, particularly in Delhi with seasonal extremes, non-availability of toilets and no designated parking place for the van, which was mostly parked in the perennial pool of drainage water which would become worse during rain with mosquitoes, flies, pigs and dogs around. In a nutshell, one cannot visualize the scene until it is visited.

A question might rise in the reader's mind about my pay. When the project began there were two interns from a medical college as a part of their curriculum with full stipend and they would visit thrice a week. As the only medical officer with a six-day routine and challenging execution, I was drawing half of their stipend. I wish to serve the genuinely needy, underprivileged humankind in all possible ways, hence I continued to work with involvement. Here, I would like to thank profoundly my husband and my five-year-old (at that time) single child who understood my interest and extended their full support.

Though initially there was resistance and non-acceptance in the slums, the mobile clinic services attracted many beneficiaries who came forward to utilize the facilities. Our efforts became fruitful which became evident by the rising strength of pregnant women visiting for check-ups, clients seeking family control advice and willingness to adopt those measures, treatment for reproductive tract infections, vaccination for the kids under the age of five. Further, there was active community participation in the training sessions like many volunteers for door-to-door counseling to enhance knowledge about healthy practices and microcredit saving (a small-scale saving system for women to become confident and independent).

As a clinician with limited resources, in Rangpuri Pahari, a deserted place that time, few instances gave me the pleasure of doing justice to my

profession. In this slum, childbirth at home was very common. During one of my visits, a full-term pregnant woman (first child) was about to have a home delivery by an untrained person. I volunteered to visit her place and was shocked by the scene on entry. The woman was made to lie on sand spread on the ground and the so-called obstetrician was about to conduct the delivery with bare hands. Without any hesitation I forced them to shift her to the closest maternity hospital though our van was equipped with a disposable delivery kit, as I felt it was a complicated delivery. In another instance, while checking an eight-month pregnant woman, I could not monitor the baby's heartbeat with the only available tool that moment, my stethoscope and referred her immediately to a higher centre. The ultrasound confirmed the intrauterine death of the baby (two days prior to check up) which can endanger the mother's life too. Non-clinical services which gave me immense pleasure included counselling sessions for adolescent girls to promote healthy lifestyle, realize the importance of education and self-employment, while motivating them for knowledge transfer in their community. Apart from these core activities, I participated in the school health screening and drug de-addiction programmes.

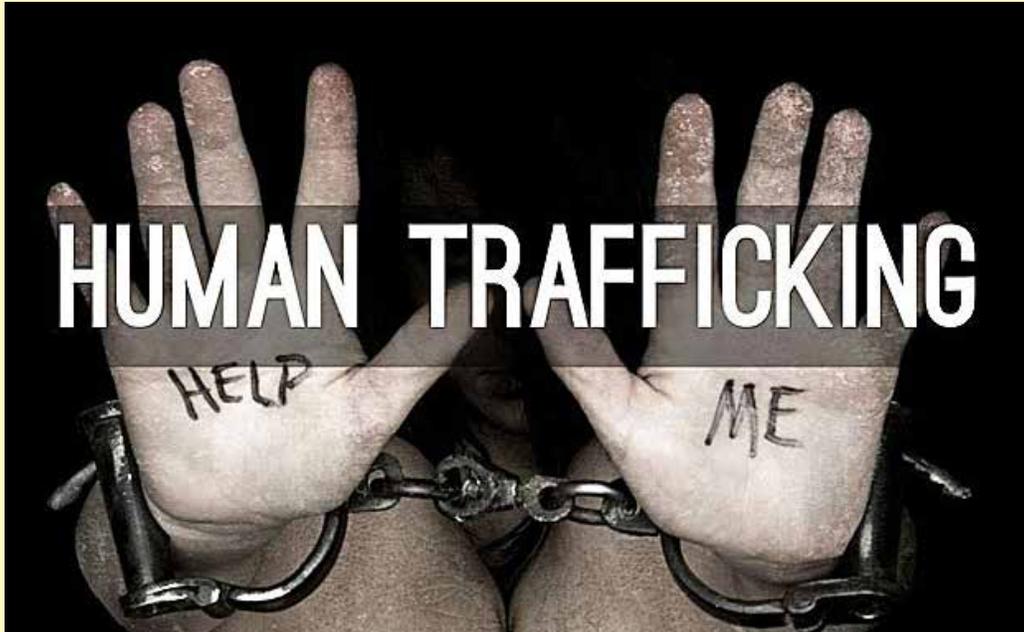
I strongly believe that each one of us has an equal and important role to enrich our society. For any society to prosper, it is extremely important for its citizens to proactively participate. Our responsibility towards society does not end with casting our vote but begins from there.



- Dr. Lakshmi
*An ophthalmologist by profession
who loves to work for the
welfare of the community.*

RED LIGHT

Creating awareness on human trafficking and online child abuse



These poignant words of Mahatma Gandhi demand reflection: “If we are ever to have real peace in this world, we shall have to begin with the children”.

Trafficking in Persons (hereafter, TIP) involves an act committed for the purpose of exploiting someone’s labour or services, through coercion, force, violence or threat of violence and psychological manipulation. It is the fastest growing organized crime in the world. Globally, the crime generates illegal profits obtained from the use of forced labour at more than \$150 billion every year as per the International Labour Organization. It is likely that 79 per cent of all detected trafficking victims are women and children according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. No country is immune from trafficking. In India, trafficking is done for sexual exploitation, forced labour, organ transplant, forced marriages, and illicit adoption of children.

Despite the obvious formidability of this problem, it remains hidden in plain sight, continues to destroy lives, and weakens the social and economic fabric of the nation.

Traffickers (the criminals who commit crimes of human trafficking) use traditional methods of entrapment through false promises of employment and relationships, or through kidnapping. But the new trends reflect that they are increasingly adopting other methods by using websites, social media, and mobile phones and applications.

Over the past 20 years, the Internet has become an integral part of our lives. We have eagerly embraced its potential for communication, entertainment and information. For today’s youth, the Internet, mobile phones and other technologies are a constant and familiar presence. For them, the distinction between online and offline has increasingly become meaningless and they move

seamlessly between both environments. Added to this is a total lack of awareness and information of the potential threat of abuse and exploitation.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

On the occasion of International Women’s Day on 8 March 2018, President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind said, “Human trafficking is a social evil. It is not a common crime but a crime against humanity. The entire society must unite for its eradication. Awareness should be increased”.

According to international agencies, two important factors that push people into trafficking are poverty and the lack of education/awareness. Research confirms that not all people in India understand human trafficking, nor do they see it as a problem in their daily lives. This is despite the fact that in India, 1.1 billion people (87 per cent) use mobile phones and 560 million (41 per cent) of the population uses the Internet, making children and women vulnerable to trafficking. UNICEF has identified that along with trafficking, children are increasingly becoming prey to online abuse such as cyber-enticement, solicitation and online grooming; webcam live streaming; ‘sexting’, ‘sextortion’, revenge porn; cyber-bullying, cyber-harassment and cyber-stalking, with an increasing amount of material on child sexual abuse being generated.

Parents, too, are inadequately informed and ill equipped to guide their children on the safe use of the Internet and digital technologies that would prevent harmful and abusive online behaviour and avert online sexual exploitation.

SHATTER THE SILENCE

A broad spectrum of stakeholders is responsible for generating awareness on issues related to

human trafficking and the online abuse and exploitation of children. Leading the efforts would be the government, police, civil society and media. Informing our own selves and equipping our children with correct information remains the most important step to protect our children and young women in a wider digital citizenship approach that gives equal weightage to access to Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and participation in the digital world, while remaining ‘cyber-safe’ and ‘cyber-secure’.

Some solutions would lie in creating communication strategies and national campaigns towards providing citizens with information on the meaning and nature of human trafficking and online child abuse; the vulnerability factors that cause these to happen; the modus operandi of traffickers and abusers; and where and how to report its occurrence.

National campaigns, however, need to be augmented with individual efforts towards equipping ourselves with appropriate knowledge, communicating with our children and young people, and ‘shattering the silence’ in society to create a healthy discourse and conversation.

Each one of us needs to be vigilant and be cognizant of what Albert Einstein said; “The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything.”



- Dr. Geeta Sekhon

Global Consultant, United Nations

THE IMPACT OF WELFARE

An altruistic concern for human advancement, welfare can touch and transform lives



Artwork by Swapanthy Pernikil Bala

The theme of this year's Veerangana, 'Touching lives through Welfare', set me thinking. The topic was philanthropic, action-oriented and demanded introspection.

My mind was flooded with questions: How do I touch lives of people other than those of my family and close friends? How do I or can I make a difference? What is my attitude or my intention when I reach out to make that difference? What are my expectations from these efforts that I make?

My train of thought continued and I turned to the dictionary to find out the textbook meaning of 'welfare'. As you can imagine, there were many explanations and definitions of the word; here are a few:

- Welfare is a statutory procedure or social effort designed to promote the basic physical and material well-being of people in need.
- Help given, especially by the state or an organisation, to persons who need it, especially because they don't have money.
- Social efforts made to look after the physical and mental health and happiness of persons (e.g. immigrants) or living beings (e.g. animal welfare).

As an avid reader of Indian mythology, I am aware that Hindu culture and religion, like other religions, give a lot of importance to charity (*daan*) and philanthropy/welfare (*kalyan*). The mascot of charity from Indian mythology that instantly came to my mind was Karna, also known as 'Daanveer Karna', for he never turned anyone away empty-handed. Numerous examples of kings and rulers giving away land, cattle, jewels, etc, in charity are well-known. But then, this is charity... it's done once in a way and there is always a rider attached to these acts, such as '*daan karo aur punya kamao*'. Charity is often done out of pity, guilt, social pressure or custom. Charity makes the giver feel superior and powerful and he also subtly seeks the allegiance of those he showers the charity upon.

But not so with welfare. Welfare is mostly done with compassion. It aims to seek the best interests of people. It is a well-thought-out, long-term plan or solution to end problems and suffering by providing skills, tools and other aids to make people physically, mentally and economically strong and independent.

Indeed, welfare is an altruistic concern for human advancement. The *Bhagavad-Gita* teaches us to work selflessly for the welfare of others. Our leaders like Mahatma Gandhi have always urged us to work for the welfare of all, and his Sarvodaya schemes are fitting examples of the same. Another example is Vinoba Bhave's famous **Bhoodaan movement**, which distributed land to the landless. If we look closely at these two leaders and their work, we can clearly see that, to them, welfare was a deeply ingrained value stemming from a frugal and minimalist lifestyle. For those of us who cannot devote our time to welfare activities, we can emulate these great men by leading simpler lives, minimising our wants and distributing the excess to those in need.

Opportunities to engage in welfare activities do not easily come by in the world unless you actively seek them or you are a professional social worker. But we naval wives are lucky as we have an entire organisation geared towards welfare and outreach activities. NWWA offers each one of us many opportunities to extend a bit of our time and efforts to help upgrade the skills and the physical and mental happiness quotient of our women, children and senior citizens.

The joy and satisfaction I have received while doing my bit as a young naval wife who volunteered for such activities, later being part of Sakhi & also a welfare activity coordinator, is unparalleled. I am extremely grateful for such opportunities.

The smiles, tears, love and camaraderie that I have shared will always remain a rich part of my memories.

A gesture as simple as a smile, a word of encouragement or a slight nudge to someone to take the plunge and fight their fears can have tremendous impact and change their lives forever. I remember, a few years ago, a diffident lady walked up to me. I did not remember her name and was not sure where I had met her earlier. She said her husband had retired and she had moved with him to a small town where she had started her own beauty parlour after doing the course in NWWA. Another instance was of a friend telling me of the surge of confidence a young woman had experienced after completing the TISS course and getting employed as an assistant teacher in a nursery school. I am sure there are many such examples out there that are living proof that not only do we touch lives with welfare, we transform some as well!



- Ashwini Batra

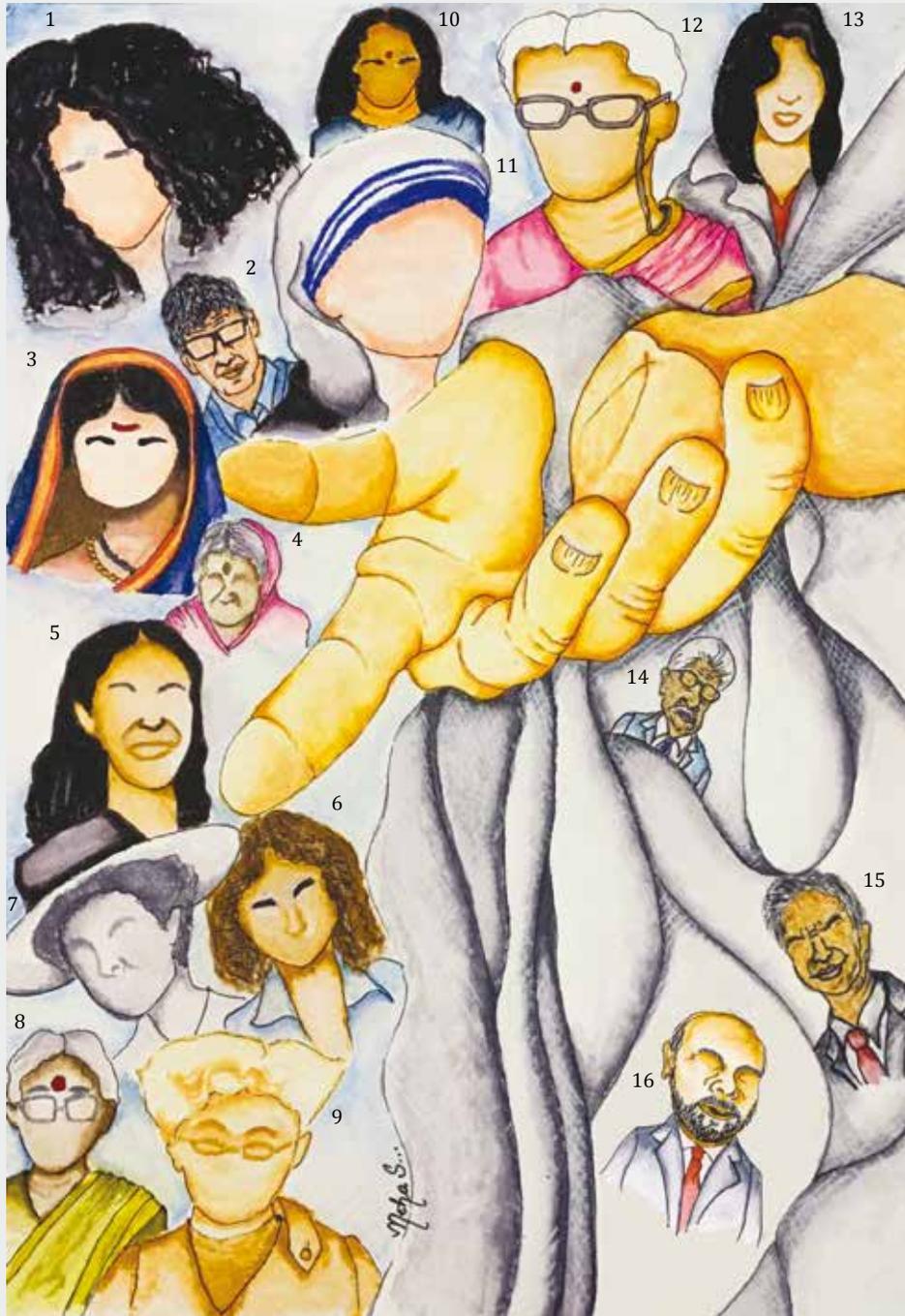
An MSW from TISS, Mumbai, she holds a diploma in Counselling Psychology and is a family therapist.

She has worked with children, teenagers, couples and parents as a psychotherapist, and has taken workshops for teachers in Naval KG, Mumbai.



The United Nations' (UN) World Humanitarian Day (WHD) is held every year on 19 August to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service, and to rally support for people affected by crises around the world.

**GUESS THE BENEVOLENT PERSONALITIES IN THE PICTURE.
SERVICE IS THEIR MIDDLE NAME!**



Artwork by Neha Singh

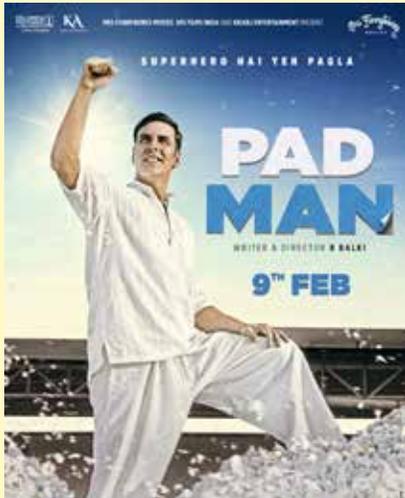
1. IROM SHARMILA 2. BILL GATES 3. SAVITRIBAI PHULE 4. SINDHUTAI SAPKAL 5. SHAHEEN MISTRI
6. JANE ADAMS 7. JEANETTE RANKIN 8. ARUNA ROY 9. ANNIE BESANT 10. ANITA REDDY 11. MOTHER TERESA
12. MEDHA PATKAR 13. RANGU SOURIYA 14. AZIM PREMJI 15. RATAN TATA 16. SHIV NADAR

SOLUTION

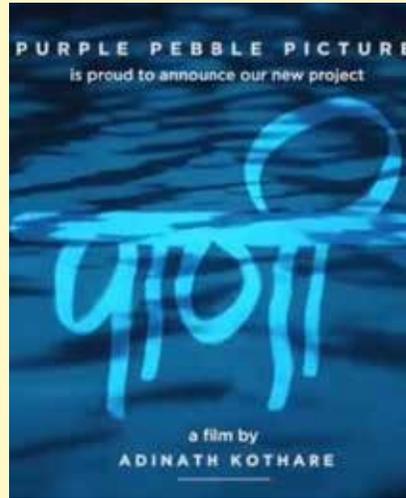
REAL - TO - REEL FILMS



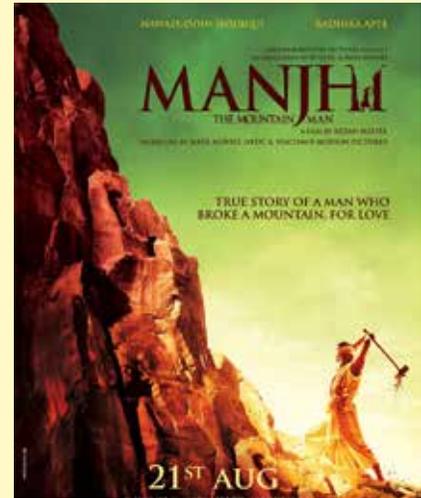
Go the extra mile with these inspiring movies as your guide



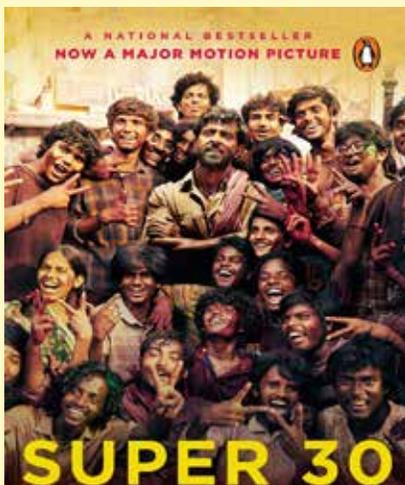
Inspired by the life of social entrepreneur Arunachalam Muruganantham who pioneered affordable sanitary pads for poorer women, the movie challenges the prevalent taboos in India related to menstrual hygiene.



Best Film on Environment Conservation at 66th National Film Awards. A true story of a common man living in a village plagued with drought, it revolves around his journey towards making the village a self-sufficient place, highlighting the importance of water conservation today.



The story of Dashrath Manjhi, who chiseled for 22 years to create a path through a mountain to provide his village easier connectivity and access to medical care, is testament to the power of perseverance.



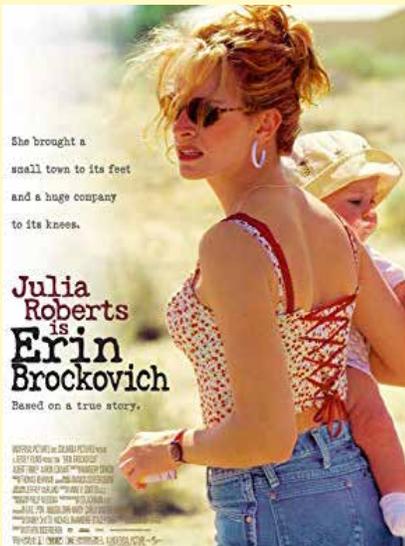
The true story of mathematician Anand Kumar and his struggle to set up an IIT training programme for poor children, the film is a celebration of one man's triumph over every challenge life throws at him.



Inspired by a real story and based on humanistic psychology, this is the story of an idealist jailor who seeks to reform prisoners into socially productive people in the real world.



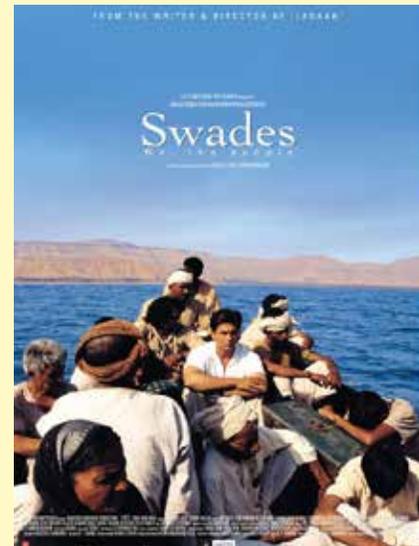
This is the true story of social worker, Padmashree Dr Prakash Baba Amte, who selflessly dedicated his life to the upliftment and well-being of tribal people in the Hemalkasa area of Maharashtra, through the Lok Biradari Prakalp project.



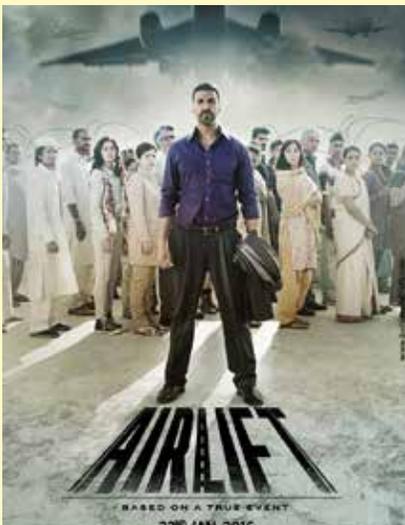
The real-life story of Erin Brockovich, an unintentional activist, and her fight against the contamination of the city's groundwater by California's Pacific Gas and Electric.



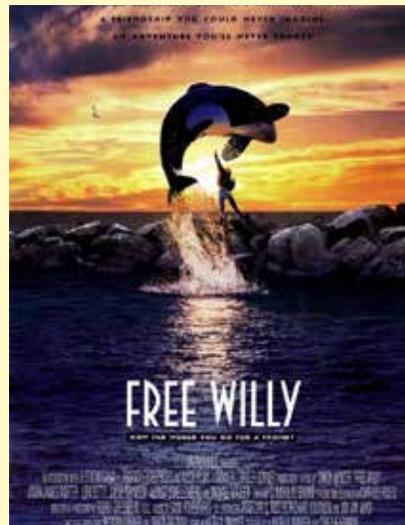
A Malayalam thriller film, based on a cardiac surgeon providing shelter to destitute girls who becomes the target of a group of criminals indulging in illegal human trafficking.



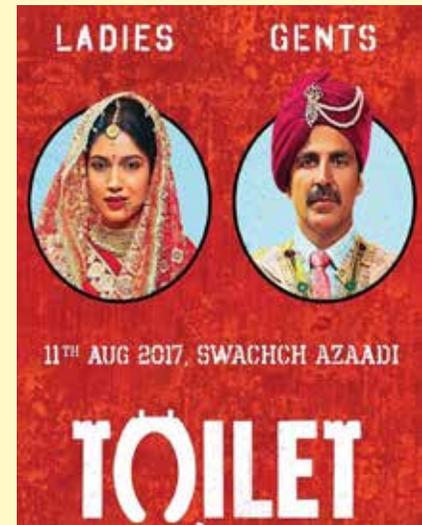
Based on the true story of an Indian expatriate who travels back to his country and during his stay, finds himself advocating for reform in a village.



Based on a true story of a Kuwait-based Indian businessman, as he carries out the evacuation of Indians based in Kuwait, when they are invaded by Iraq, putting his own life at risk.



A street kid, Jesse, becomes friends with Willy, a killer whale, and goes to great lengths to free it from the exploitative owners who want to kill the animal.



The movie dwells on social, psychological and safety related aspects emanating from open defecation. A newly wed bride discovers there is no toilet in her home & fights for her own cause, in the process helping the entire village break age-old notions & move towards sanitation.



Her acclaimed portrayal of Neerja Bhanot in the 2016 biographical thriller *Neerja*, won Sonam Kapoor the National Film Award – Special Mention. About a plane hijacking, the film shows how a flight attendant uses her presence of mind, risking her life to stall the terrorists from attacking the passengers' on board.

Indeed, an incredible feat of bravery, with only the passengers' welfare and safety at heart.



NWWA COMMITTEE - WESTERN NAVAL COMMAND





Mrs. Sunita Ajit Kumar
President NWWA
Western Region



NWWA Kendra
Navy Nagar
Colaba
Mumbai-400005

MESSAGE

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.” Similar to the words of Desmond Tutu, as part of the NWWA organization and also the Naval community as a whole, it’s the duty and responsibility of each and every one in doing good for the community and actively participate in welfare activities and initiatives that will ensure a better living environment and wellbeing of the elderly, ladies and children.

As individuals, we are responsible to society, as a community we are responsible to the organization, and as an organization we are responsible to the nation. Every Naval wife of the community should contribute to the betterment of society by either actively participating in the NWWA welfare activities or by taking small initiatives at their level which can help in achieving high standards within the community.

Through the years of being part of NWWA, I have realized that empowering women, through diverse welfare activities, is indeed the key to making a positive difference in our community. It should always be our aim to reach higher laurels by ensuring welfare activities that enhance this positive effect in the life of an individual or the community as a whole.

Throughout the years, Veerangana has been a perfect reflection of NWWA. This year's issue, with its significant theme, sounds a clarion call to every one of us for actively contributing in the welfare activities of NWWA.

I congratulate Team Veerangana for their passion and vision in choosing such a worthy theme and thank the contributors for sharing their thoughts.

Mrs. Sunita Ajit Kumar
President NWWA
Western Region

GLIMPSES



AROGYA - MUSICAL PROGRAMME FOR PATIENTS



ASHIRWAD



ANUBHAVI



BALWADI - JANMASHTAMI CELEBRATIONS



**COFFEE MORNING COMMEMORATING
GOLDEN JUBILEE OF WNC**



MILAN



FOUNDATION STONE OF NEW NWWA KENDRA



SPECIAL SENSORY PARK FOR SANKALP



JAGRITI - DRAMA CLUB



KALA KENDRA - STORYTELLING SESSION



PRAGATI - STITCHING WORKSHOP



PRAKRITI - NATURE WALK



SAHARA - DANCE RECITAL



SPARSH - WORKSHOP ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AND RESISTING BODY SHAMING



TARSH PRODUCTS ON SALE AT IMC WORLI



TISS



SWAYAM SIDDHA



TEAM SANCHAR

OUTLYING UNITS - WESTERN NAVAL COMMAND



VISIT TO GOVERNOR'S HOUSE - GOA



FASHION DESIGNING WORKSHOP - BENGALURU



NWWA COMMITTEE - PORBANDAR



DANDIYA RAAS - OKHA



BEST OUT OF WASTE - GHATKOPAR



TARSH INAUGURATION - KARWAR



VISIT TO SEABIRD SPECIAL SCHOOL URAN - KARANJA



SPECIAL MILAN - MANKHURD

GREEN MANTRA

NWWA's Prakriti spreads awareness and promotes conservation

NWWA has undergone a total metamorphosis, from an informal group of ladies to what it is today. The association is evolving everyday with increasing involvement and influence over the issues of community needs. Prakriti is one such great example. This arm of NWWA is changing lives through environmental welfare by creating an awareness of our environment and its preservation among the naval fraternity.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with NWWA Prakriti when we were in Mumbai. We prepared and delivered a presentation to make our people aware about the motto from the environmental movement, "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle". These three actions are all focused on reducing waste, whether through the conservation of raw materials and energy, or the reuse and recycling of products. We made them understand that everyone can do their bit in reducing waste by watching what they buy and reconsidering what to do with it once it is no longer useful. It was explained how simple habits can be adopted that can result in less water and electricity consumption. Being green isn't time-consuming, it saves money and gives a sense of satisfaction from making environment-friendly choices.

It was explained how simple steps like taking a reusable bag for shopping, avoiding disposables and donating used clothing can really make transformational changes. Thereafter, we had a quiz for our ladies, aiming to recap and encourage their understanding of the topic discussed. We also organised a painting competition for the kids to use their imagination and creativity in portraying a beautiful and green earth. and the ways by which we can achieve this.

This one-day activity may look like a drop in the ocean but we do know that little drops of water

make a mighty ocean. Even after understanding the need and importance of protecting the environment and saving the planet, if we don't do something about it, it would be a shame. We should take it as our responsibility to create awareness regarding this and do whatever we can to serve the environment.



The welfare of the environment is our mandate and over the years the quality of our environment has significantly deteriorated. In order to ensure sustainability in the use of our natural resources, the solutions we conceive today must be long lasting, which must especially minimize waste and maximize our conservation efforts.

To see NWWA work diligently towards multifaceted welfare, including the burning issue of environmental welfare, is absolute happiness because "happiness is the real sense of fulfilment that comes from hard work".



- Apoorva Rai

A practitioner of arts by passion, she is presently working on her book based on Applied Physics. She is currently NWWA Secretary, Bengaluru.

ALTERNATIVE THERAPY

Art can be an effective therapeutic tool



Have you ever noticed how you feel after listening to (or even better singing) your favorite song? Have you noticed what it feels like to immerse yourself in painting or sculpting, doing yoga or dancing? Chances are you felt relaxed and were able to focus on the present moment. In this day and age, stress and anxiety are hard to avoid. More and more people are finding themselves depressed and physically unhealthy as a result of their lifestyles.

While talk therapy, psychotherapy and counseling are extremely useful to deal with challenges that

life throws at us, using art as therapy has always been an integral part of indigenous cultures around the world - and it is becoming increasingly popular as an effective therapeutic tool once again.

Arts Based Therapy (ABT) is the evidence-based use of art forms to accomplish individualized and group goals within a therapeutic relationship. ABT uses elements of and methods from three artistic media: music, drama and visual art. It is based on the principles of Indian psychology and ethics, studies of human development and cognitive neurosciences.

Using these various modalities, an ABT Practitioner guides a person to come to terms with their bodies and process their thoughts and feelings or just relax. This can then bring about interesting reflections that just talking might not be able to reveal. It is seen that performing certain activities with the intention of bringing about positive changes in our lives can translate into powerful shifts in our lifestyle, health and emotional states. ABT can be used to develop self-awareness, group interactions, expressive capability, cognition, numerical and linguistic ability, gross and fine motor skills, mindfulness and many other areas.

Aarti Kuber is an arts-based therapy practitioner, tarot card reader and facilitator. After completion of a bachelor's degree in Business Management, she realized that her heart lay somewhere else entirely. She now uses the healing power of art to spread joy and freedom in the lives of people.



She has worked with adults with special needs and through her research found that this form of alternative therapy helped them find a channel of expression while also developing body awareness and improving group behavior.

Previously, she facilitated sharing circles and conducted art workshops at college and community level with a support group called "**The Circle**", on the topics of mental health, violence, gender and sexuality. What motivated her to hold such spaces was her own journey through dealing with trauma of sexual abuse. "Hurt people hurt people, healed people heal people" is a quote that has given her a lot of strength. Through forgiveness of herself and the person who hurt her, she is breaking the shackles of pain and violence with love and kindness - one step each day.

Her work now is focused not only on mental health, but on healing physically, emotionally and spiritually, using holistic well-being practices. The ancient practices of yoga and meditation, Buddhism and women's spirituality are her major influences. She offers individual sessions to people who are interested in doing the inner work to live



a healthy and purposeful life. She also conducts workshops and retreats for the youth and adults to reconnect with their authentic, magnificent and playful selves. Our fast-paced lives make it hard for us to be kind to ourselves, but she believes that when we give ourselves time, space and love, things would definitely start to get better.

We at Sankalp Mumbai have invited Aarti to work with our children with special needs as an alternative therapy to bring out their true self.

Feel free to connect with her & know more at
Email: aartikuber@gmail.com
Blog: <https://medium.com/aartikuber>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aartikuber>



- Malavika Vantak

*Special Educator, currently
 NWWA Coordinator, Sankalp,
 Western Naval Command*

NURTURE & NATURE

Parenthood requires love, not DNA

The nature versus nurture debate goes on and on. Though it is a fact that we do have traits that are predetermined by genes, we can still choose who we want to be as we travel through our lifetime. The physical features can be identified as identical to that of our parents. However, personality and talents do not always come from our parents. The environment in which children grow up has a lasting effect, moulding the way an individual talks, behaves and responds to life and its challenges.

Way back in the early nineties, on being allotted a house in the Naval residential area, I also acquired a new friend, my neighbour, a young mother like myself, who had an infant daughter like mine. We bonded over coffee, *paani pooris*, diapers, walks, swimming, pediatrician's views and so much more. The only thing we did not bond over was labor pains simply because my friend had adopted a beautiful blue-eyed beauty from a leading adoption agency while I had carried my loved one for nine months.

My friend and her husband chose to be different due to various reasons. They always had a different view, opinion, out-of-box thinking, then and even now, in every aspect of their lives. There was initial but minimal animosity from both sets of their parents with respect to their decision to adopt. Their siblings were, however, very supportive. Their pet dog, also an adopted beautiful stray, was the key in the whole process of mind-changing

attitude. The stray had visited them for a week as a newborn pup and chose to never go back to its birth mother after the seventh day. The stray, like the Star of Bethlehem, directed them towards adoption.

The initial few months with the new baby were harrowing. However, it did not stop my friends from visiting faraway places, attending parties with the infant, being a participant of a then nascent television talk show or even go on date nights at the local club with baby and stroller in



tow. Slowly but surely, their daughter developed her own personality, displaying mannerisms similar to her beautiful mother, while speaking like her handsome father. On turning about six, she demanded a brother, and lo and behold, they were blessed with an adopted, infant son!

Inspired by the couple, a few of our other friends also put in an application for adopting a second child even after having one biological offspring. They were lucky to be matched with perfect newborn babies. Most preferred to adopt infants, some toddlers, while one friend even adopted a preteen. Everyone's adoption experience was different. Diverse parents, unique backgrounds, different health circumstances and different views contribute to the "why" and "how" of adoption. In my experience I have seen many adoptive families find that once they bring their child (or children) into their home, their lives are irrevocably changed for the better.

Continuing with the story, on completion of the father's time as a Naval Officer, the family went back to their roots in a prominent city of India. The children were nurtured with the love of their parents, acceptance of grandparents and their extended families. They joined a leading school and worked hard at their respective achievements. Sometimes the parents were marched to the school principal's office due to the antics of their naughty but innocent little fella. Their children knew stories about adoption so widely mentioned in the tales of Krishna, Karna and other such stars in our Hindu mythology and, of course, Superman. They were taken every year to their birthplace

(adoption home) for an annual milan, organized by the agency. It was a well discussed and addressed fact in their home.

Today, after almost 20-plus years of being adopted, their daughter is a confident, independent-thinking young lady aiming to become an entrepreneur. Their son is an athlete, marathon runner, solo trekker, footballer, avid painter and an amateur cook, all rolled in one tall, lanky but fit body. He eats, lives and breathes sports; coaching and mentoring young children to get off their smart screens and be outdoors, dribbling a ball or just plain running.

Both the parents have done a brilliant job in raising their two children, with the right amount of discipline, copious measures of abundant love, freedom to think, choice of believing in their own abilities and of course nurturing their personalities.

The children were chosen, they were wanted, they were cherished. They were the missing pieces in each other's lives. They grew in their parent's hearts, they were loved, they were accepted, they were adopted.



- Julika Agarwal

A primary school teacher with a vast experience of teaching at private as well as Naval schools. Currently working in a leading corporate training firm for business development.

WHEN GRATITUDE SPEAKS...

NWWA brought new hope to the 'Wavare family' in Mumbai



When does an ordinary person become an extraordinary one?

When he practices gratitude in his life!

This is a fascinating story of Mr. Ajay Wavare, an employee who had been with NWWA from 1998 to 2007 as a cleaner in NWWA Kendra. He also assisted the staff of Sankalp whenever there was any requirement or during special occasions. Ajay is an ordinary person (read 'extraordinary') who is very reliable, positive and committed to his work. He is filled with compassion for the downtrodden and silently keeps praying for their wellbeing. He hails from Madhya Pradesh and came to Mumbai for employment. To make ends meet, he also sold nonstick cookware in Colaba Market and did painting work in Navy Nagar and other odd jobs during weekends.

During the monsoons of 2005, on one occasion it rained so heavily that Mumbaikars experienced one of the worst times of their life. Fortunately, Colaba remained relatively unaffected and people from here could extend their support to others, a typical Mumbaikar's spirit which continues even now. The Coordinator for 'Sparsh' travelled all the way to Holy Cross School in Kurla to donate stoves, ration, bed sheets and other essentials to people who had lost their houses and hopes. Ajay from the Kendra had accompanied her in the vehicle

with all the collected items. During their casual interaction, it emerged that Ajay's three-and-a-half year-old son was to soon join a not so well-established school (definitely not of choice) due to his financial condition at that time. The Sparsh Coordinator decided to seek help for him through NWWA. He then received a sum of Rs 10,000 for his son Sahil's admission in the same Holy Cross School at Kurla, which was also enough to buy books and uniforms. This was a stepping stone for his family. Ajay subsequently received help from different people for his children's education. It is a proud moment for NWWA to know that Sahil is now studying in Poddar College and is aiming to become a Chartered Accountant. Ajay's younger son Raju is in ninth standard in the same school.

Ajay feels proud to share with people that both his children are able to speak good English and he conveys his utmost gratitude to NWWA for that. He recalls the moment when NWWA brought new hope to his life. His family consists of his loving wife Sharda and his two sons. They are a happy family who keep remembering NWWA for this kind gesture.

Ajay now works in the VIP lounge of the naval enclave inside Mumbai airport and looks after the VIP guests. He fondly reminisces serving tea to many Raksha Mantris like Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, Mr. Manohar Parrikar, Mr. Arun Jaitley and Mr. A.K. Antony. He is proud of his job and admires all the defence personnel from the Army, Air Force and Coast Guard, but his loyalty towards the Navy is unshakable.



- Vindya Sivaram

An author and a life coach., she has published two books, Dews on the Cheeks (poems) and Many Hearts, One Beat (short stories), which are available on Amazon.in.

THE PERFECT BALANCE

Overcoming every challenge, with help from NWWA

Elegant, stylish, resourceful, adaptable and resilient – these are just a few of the traits to describe the quintessential Navy wife ! Just as the silent service is synonymous with honour, courage and valour, the Navy wife who commits herself to welfare is synonymous with grace under pressure.

Grace is an inherent quality that comes from commitment to compassion, understanding and appreciation. “She is so graceful” is not just applicable when she sashays into a party but holds equally true when she deals with frequent movements, forced separations, temporary accommodations, unplanned get-togethers and unforeseen emergencies.

Each young lady who marries a man in white sooner or later extends this romance to the Naval community as a whole and becomes as dedicated, if not more, than her spouse. With changing times come new challenges and all the women who go out to work are now coping with work responsibilities while they find the much needed balance to give time to their personal life.

Women have overcome many problems, broken many a glass ceiling and conquered many mountains but in the Navy, they do all this and more with an understanding of their responsibilities to the community. ‘Touching Lives through Welfare’ is a theme that resonates with the essence of a Navy wife as she copes with obstacles with grace and learns the ropes of the system with alacrity.

Online or offline, it is the magic of NWWA that builds innumerable connections that span the vast gamut of activities that range from parenting to fitness, recipes to book discussions, parties to welfare and so many co-curricular activities thrown in for good measure. Do you have a problem which seems insurmountable? Find a NWWA community or group and I can assure you that there is an answer to your prayers on every front.

In my journey with NWWA, I have had the opportunity to meet many Naval wives who seem to be carved out of steel as they support not just their home and workplace but also find time to be a part of this amazing support and welfare system. The sheer number of activities and groups under the vast NWWA umbrella are proof that there is something that is bound to be appealing to each one. Working in this set up has its own bonus of friendship and bonding as well as learning that ranges from Education to Healthcare, Environment to Vocational Training to Art and Culture, Counselling and Empowerment. At every step there is so much to learn, so much to contribute. Yes, there are challenges – of time, of different viewpoints, of unexpected roadblocks of misunderstandings but look at the glass half full instead of half empty and these will transform into learning opportunities for those who want to overcome them and move into a deeper awareness of themselves and their community.

The sheer joy of finding likeminded people and an opportunity to mentor and be mentored keeps me engaged with NWWA as I balance my professional and personal life with my bond with NWWA. So, be true to yourself and expand your horizon as much as possible but keep yourself anchored to the Navy community through NWWA and you are sure to get the best of both worlds!

**in my
view**



- Meenakshi Sharma

A postgraduate in Mass Communication from IIMC and an MBA in HR from Symbiosis, she runs an HR consulting company in Goa and is faculty at Goa University and Goa Institute of Management.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Born to loving parents
Crib soft surrounded by presents
Mother's arms soothing and warm
Father's touch that never did harm
Lucky to be safe and blessed
Love and care – a family that fussed
Across the road – many unfortunate
No crib, no food, no love – is that fate?

Stretch your arm, embrace those little palms
They probably never knew the touch of moms
Teens with no means, gone wayward
Adults abandoned by their own ward
Eyes filled with tears seeking just a 'touch '
Is that asking for too much?

Welfare is not just funds, food, books and pictures
It's a lot more than giving inspirational lectures
It's the warmth of touching hearts
Not creating graphs or pie charts
Let's make WELFARE real in every way
Making a difference each day
Baby steps now, giant leaps tomorrow
Why should anybody live in sorrow?

Many questions, not too many answers
Together let's make true 'Rainbow Colours'

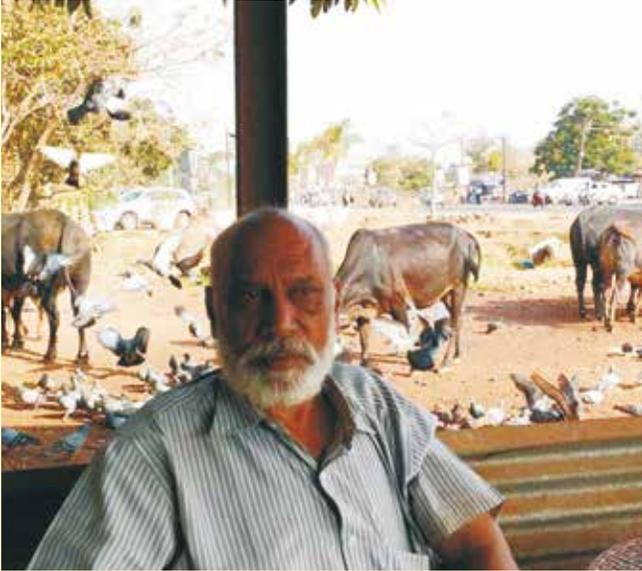


- Girija Menon

*A wife of a Retired Naval Officer.
She is passionate about poetry and believes that words
and verses could be one's best companions.*

REPAIRS MORE THAN TYRES!

A trip to a non-descript shed in Porvorim brings many a revelation



I recently went to repair a flat tyre in Porvorim, Goa. At first glance, it was a typical, non-descript roadside tin shed with a tyre hanging from the roof, a pile of old tyres against one side and an air compressor...you get the picture!

But while waiting, something interesting caught my eye: a *dabba* full of *gehu* (wheat) over which pigeons were feasting. What a nice thing to do, I thought! Then, my gaze began to wander: I spied a couple of cows munching on some husk and chapattis, two old bathtubs filled with water for animals and birds, and some dogs comfortably sleeping next to the shed where an elderly gent (the owner) was having breakfast.

Our eyes met and I strolled over to him: “*Aap ki jagah hai, sahab?*” I asked. He shook his head and pointed skywards, “*Jagah to uski hai sahib, main bas kuch samay ke liye reh raha hoon.*” His response started a long conversation between us.

The man, Brij Sharma, is the caretaker of stray animals and birds in the area—he has fed nearly

30-odd cows, many more dogs and countless birds. He also takes any animals that are ailing or have been injured by rash drivers to the veterinary hospital. Moved by his efforts, several people come to him to donate food for the animals; some donate their time. I spoke to a young man, an IT professional, who comes here every day for two to three hours to help with the animals. He told me Sharmaji refuses money from people; he only takes food for his animals. I was amazed by his selfless service without expecting anything in return.

Over a cup of tea, Sharmaji and I chatted about the need for human beings to help one another and live in harmony with nature. And I must mention that when he came to know I was in the Indian Navy, he said he was very impressed after reading about the experiences of ‘Dilip Donde *sahab*’, who went around the world solo in a small boat, and kept in good health because of his respect for nature and eating nutritious food made the way his mother taught him!

It was indeed such a pleasant and invigorating experience to meet this noble man. I will visit again—Sharmaji’s tyre shop repaired much more than my flat tyre!



- Captain Prashant Jole

EMERGING FROM CHRYSALIS

Namrata Shukla found her calling helping underprivileged children



I met Namrata Shukla for the first time long after her husband had retired from the Navy, though she is my husband's course mate's wife. I got acquainted with her on our wives' social media group where she would post pictures of her activities with underprivileged children in her locality. What caught my attention, invariably, was her sparkling smile and the joy reflected in the eyes of children she was surrounded by. I finally met her recently at a course mate's son's wedding where between festivities—singing and dancing—we caught up with each other and I probed into her journey in social work. A teacher for 21 years with naval schools in various stations and later with Ryan International School in Kharghar, Namrata's heart has been into children and their welfare since her early years.

The turning point towards her calling came one routine day. In her words: "I was buying chocolate for my little son; nearby, a bunch of ragpickers—kids who should have been in school—kept

peeping inside the shop. The shopkeeper shouted at them. Being a mother, I imagined my kid in their shoes and my heart sank. I bought chocolates for all of them. What touched me more was that these tiny tots, aping their parents, blessed me, saying, '*Bhagwan aapka bhala kare!*' Tears rolled down my cheeks. That was the moment I realised that God wanted me to work for underprivileged kids." With that aim in mind, she quit her job to do a year's training course as a special educator to upgrade her teaching skills and launched into social work with a newfound zeal.

She started supporting domestic helpers and their children in the neighbourhood on an ad-hoc basis. Soon she was visiting slums and orphanages engaging with children, teaching them about healthy eating habits and personal hygiene, and doing art and craft activities with them. By word-of-mouth publicity, she was able to collect craft material and food items in small measure from friends and acquaintances. Serendipity struck one

day in a vegetable market, when she was telling a friend about her work. A ‘Good Samaritan’ who overheard the conversation suggested she register her own charitable trust and helped her with the paperwork. Thus, an informal preoccupation took shape as a formal NGO, **Chrysalis Charitable Trust**, in 2016. She hadn’t planned it that way, but it helped her gain credibility and opened doors of donors and schools who became more receptive to her needs. It needs to be mentioned here that as far as finances were concerned, she had been dipping into her pocket, and even now often does so.

“Funds weren’t forthcoming, monetary support is still scarce, but people did come forward to help in kind,” she says. Thus, there is no dearth of clothes, food items, provisions, toys, stationery and school paraphernalia that keep landing at her doorstep. She hired a helper to do the running around for collecting items and disburse them among the poorest of the poor.

During one such visit to a slum, she and her team of trustees came across Prerna Suryavanshi, a contract labourer, who would work from morning to night leaving her five-year-old daughter Palak alone in the room. Namrata convinced her to send her daughter to school and went an extra mile to get her admission in New English Medium School in Kharghar. With her credentials as a teacher and social worker, a visit to the principal of the school was all it took to pave the way ahead.

Soon, her wide network of friends conversant with her work were asking for her advice or support to help rehabilitate poor families in their neighbourhood. “In a slum in Panvel, a family—a mother with five girls—was in dire straits. The pregnant mother was hospitalised for delivery of her sixth child and the girls were on the street without food, begging for days. I thought they needed to be protected; when I met them, I saw they were malnourished. We looked after them till the mother was out of the hospital. We admitted

them in a local government school and kept monitoring their attendance and performance. We are also looking after the newborn and the mother, who is now doing a part-time job of washing utensils in a catering firm for a modest remuneration.” Namrata ensures the needy get help but also encourages them to work to earn a livelihood, no matter how meagre. The instances of her successes in rehabilitation of families and children are numerous.

While she was engrossed in social work, Namrata was diagnosed with breast cancer for which she underwent treatment at Tata Memorial Hospital, for a year. That did not dim her desire or energy to continue her welfare work. Subsequently, she started visiting the hospital two to three days a week to spend time with children suffering from cancer. She carries art and craft material (often buying it from her own pocket) for small children or helps the older ones with their studies.

“It takes very little to give back to society—a little time, not much money, only inclination and a desire to support the less fortunate,” she says. Inspired by her work, many of her friends are emulating the same, in their own little ways. That, I think, is her biggest achievement.

To learn more about Chrysalis Charitable Trust, contact Namrata Shukla at +91 9967000665



- Padmaja Parulkar-Kesnur

A green blogger and nature photographer, she parks her creative work at Padmaja-earthletters@blogspot.in

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Dr Anuja Purandare serves tribal regions in Maharashtra with NGO Pragati Pratishthan



While many people write about the problems faced by marginalised communities in India, very few go out and do something about it. One such inspirational person is Dr Anuja Purandare.

A practising pathologist for the past 25 years, this gold medallist from Mumbai University runs a pathology laboratory at Dr Purandare's Chowpatty Maternity & Gynaecological Hospital in Girgaum, Mumbai. Her busy schedule running a day-and-night pathology laboratory and providing comprehensive health check-ups doesn't stop her from making a difference to communities beyond our cities through her association with NGO **Pragati Pratishthan**.

Pragati Pratishthan was founded by the late Vasant Rao Patwardhan in 1972 to empower the tribals of Palghar district in Maharashtra. His wife Sunandatai Patwardhan continues his noble work and Dr Anuja, in the capacity of trustee and treasurer, works with her and their team of dedicated workers. In fact, Dr Anuja has been

working in the tribal areas of Vikramgad, Jawahar and Mokhada talukas of Palghar since 2007.

Pragati Pratishthan's achievements are truly commendable. For instance, it established the Nilesh Laxman Murdeshwar School, a residential school for hearing-impaired children, in 1985. Since then, about 300 students have completed their schooling there and are now working in different fields like farming and government services. Some are self-employed and have their own Warli art workshops. A group of students also look after the maintenance of solar equipment in different villages. Further, the NGO has set up the Pragati Vidyarthi Hostel in Mokhada for students from remote villages who find it difficult to reach their school. Computer skills and other vocational skills are also taught here. Pragati Pratishthan also conducts a career guidance camp every year for the hostel children and about 500 other students from surrounding villages, following which some of them have joined agriculture colleges, nursing training, teacher's training and paramedical

courses. It is trying to connect defence personnel with the children to encourage them to take up a career in the armed forces.

Apart from its engagement with children, Dr Anuja shares with pride the initiatives Pragati Pratishthan has taken for the wider community. As part of its agriculture development project, it has reached out to about 5,000 farmers who get technical support through Syngenta Foundation, Borlaug Institute for South Asia and Bharat Agro-Industries Foundation. The NGO is trying to give them drip irrigation facilities and solar pumps, and encouraging them to grow cash crops like groundnuts and vegetables besides paddy, group and organic farming; and use modern techniques. What's more, Pragati Pratishthan has completed

of the same. A solar microgrid has been provided to 704 families and solar pumps supplied to 12 farmers' groups. And for rainwater harvesting, the NGO has constructed 40 cement check dams and over 100 vanrai check dams so far.



close to 100 drinking water schemes in 97 villages in Palghar district, thus reaching 4,733 families. Self-help groups have been formed for maintenance

Indeed, her work with such an organisation, which touches and transforms countless lives, gives Dr Anuja immense satisfaction. It further motivates those around her to follow her lead and be the change they want to see.



- Chitra Karve

A wife of a retired naval officer and a Banker by profession. She has a lot of empathy for social causes. Loves to travel and has a passion for the Sanskrit language.

YOU CAN HELP!

You can help Pragati Pratishthan by sponsoring digital hearing aids for children; adopting a child for education by donating Rs 8,000 a year; offering financial aid for repairs of facilities damaged by rain; or participating in the water conservation project. To learn more, email pragati.pratishthan7@gmail.com or go to www.pragati-pratishthan.org

WHAT WELFARE MEANS TO ME

Naval wives form an invisible safety net for each other

According to the dictionary, the word 'welfare' is a noun that means the health, happiness and fortunes of a person or a group.

As naval wives, we are a mixed bunch of women who are bound by one common feature: we love our seafarers! But being a naval wife is not all fun and glamorous lunches and meetings with other well-dressed women as is often represented in magazines, books, social media and the movies. It is so much more: the long periods of separation, the anxiety, the worry, the tension, the uncertainty, the necessity to become independent, the ability to learn to don multiple hats.

This doesn't come easy to anyone—least of all to a young woman with stars in her eyes and her whole life ahead of her. It is here, I think, that the camaraderie and friendships we make along the way with other women 'sailing in the same boat' come to the rescue and help us along our path.

It's those little moments over a period of years and years—when the husband is away sailing and your child falls ill, or something as simple as the washing machine breaking down or the MES complaint needing to be registered, applying and filling forms for your child's entrance exams, having to attend job interviews alone, learning to file your own tax returns. Or it can be something a lot more serious: your parents or in-laws falling ill, some calamity on the news, an accident, a cross-border skirmish, a terrorist threat, anything at all.

This is when you lean on your friends in the naval fraternity—the other wives, the iron women of the Navy. These are the women who consciously or unconsciously reaffirm the faith that, yes, we

can do it, for the boys, when they are not there, trusting us to handle life and the vagaries of living on our own. These are the ladies you know will have your back the most. You know that your child will be well fed and safe in a neighbour's or friend's home; that even if it's going to get late for you to come back home or you are handling an emergency, one call and your in-laws will be taken care of, your pets will be walked, your children safe.

in my view

These bonds that slowly knit themselves over years and years are not ones that break easily—they last a lifetime. I know for a fact that I have friends whose husbands may have since retired but being a naval wife is not something one can retire from—it's a lifetime thing; once a naval wife, always a naval wife.

I know this is not really something that is obvious or visible, but I believe that a large part of my peace of mind and happiness comes from these bonds. From the knowledge that I have this invisible safety net to help me whenever I need it. I don't really think any one of us at any moment thinks that what we do and how we are with each other is 'welfare'. But I believe it is. For if this is not the definition of welfare—an action that helps me as an individual and all of us as a group to maintain our health, happiness and fortunes—then I don't really know what else is!



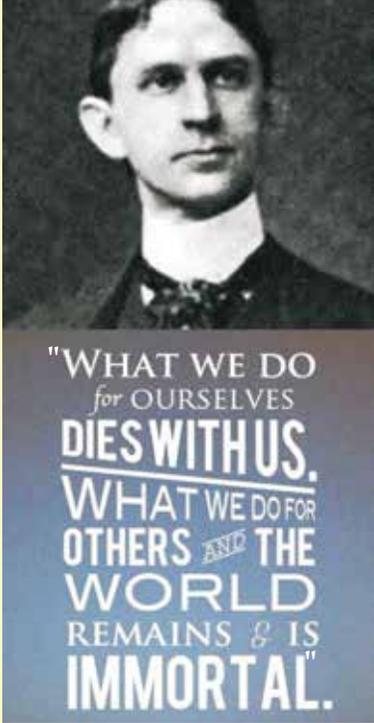
- Rajani Krishnan

A practising Consultant Radiologist currently working at a multidisciplinary super-specialist children's hospital in Mumbai, she loves to read, paint, run chores and shop!



Artwork by Neha Singh

QUOTES TO LIVE BY



ALBERT PINE

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

"Sarve bhavantu sukhinah; sarve santu nairaamaya

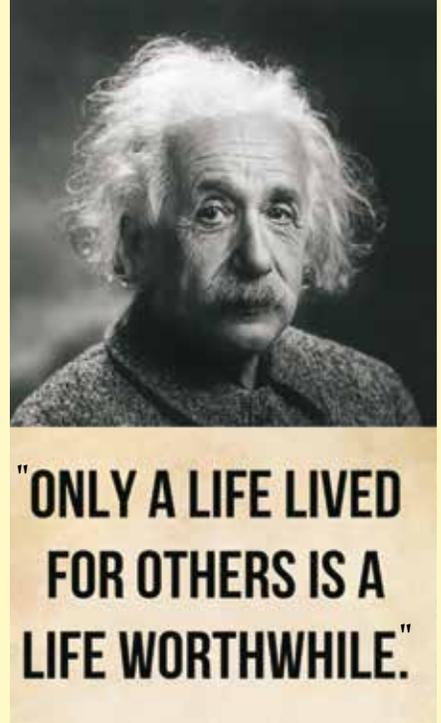
Sarve bhadraani pashyantuu maa kaschit dukhabhaag bhavet. Om Shantih Shantih Shantihi."

The translation is:

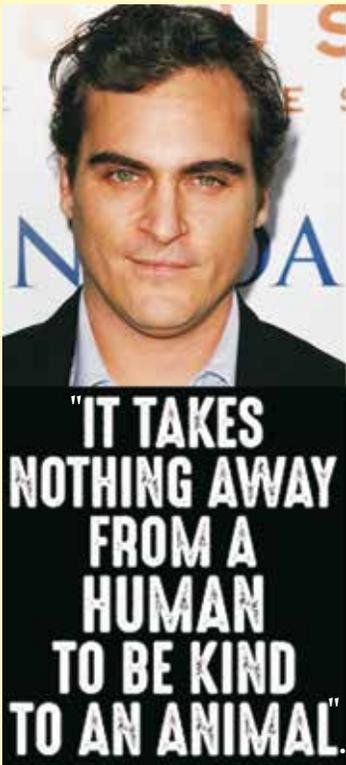
"Let all be happy, Let all be healthy, Let all see/experience auspiciousness, Let no one be suppressed/overwhelmed by grief. Om Peace, Peace,Peace."

This is a peace benediction for universal welfare. The word universe is all comprehensive. Thus here the welfare of the entire universe -humans irrespective of caste, creed, sex etc; birds, two legged, four-legged, legless animals-is sought.

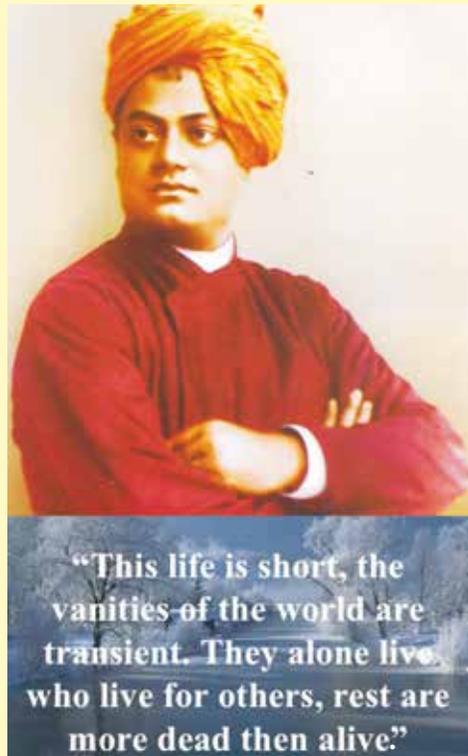
DERIVED FROM VEDA



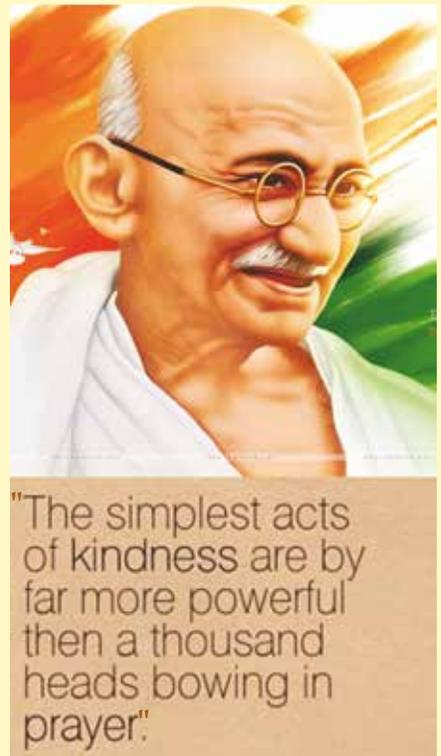
ALBERT EINSTEIN



JOAQUIN PHOENIX



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

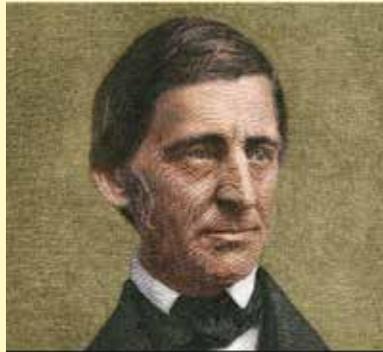


MAHATMA GANDHI



"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."

JOHN BUNYAN



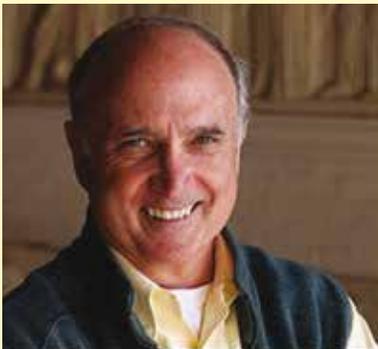
"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

WINSTON CHURCHILL



"WHEN WE HEAL THE EARTH, WE HEAL OURSELVES"

DAVID W. ORR



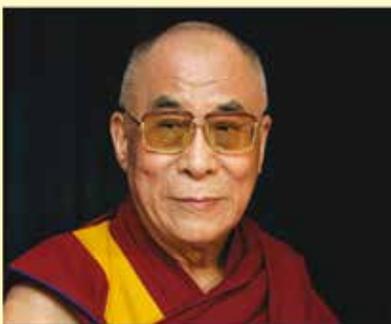
"EVERYONE HAS A PURPOSE IN LIFE... A UNIQUE GIFT OR SPECIAL TALENT TO GIVE TO OTHERS. AND WHEN WE BLEND THIS UNIQUE TALENT WITH SERVICE TO OTHERS, WE EXPERIENCE THE ECSTASY AND EXULTATION OF OUR OWN SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ALL GOALS."

DEEPAK CHOPRA



"The greatest good is what we do for one another."

MOTHER TERESA



"Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."

DALAI LAMA



"Helping others is the way we help ourselves."

OPRAH WINFREY



"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone."

RONALD REAGAN

NWWA COMMITTEE - EASTERN REGION





Mrs. Devina Jain
President, NWWA
Eastern Region



NWWA Kendra
Naval Park
Visakhapatnam -530014
Andhra Pradesh

MESSAGE

“The true essence of a woman lies in her attributes of who she is as a person, what she has to offer herself and to the people around her”.

I feel privileged and honoured as President NWWA (ER) to pen down my first Veerangana message. Having been associated with NWWA at various levels for almost three decades, I am immensely proud of ‘My Tribe’ travelling the inroads into uncharted territories and making significant a contribution to the Naval community.

The present times have empowered women in a positive manner. Their roles have changed tremendously and they have been able to create a lasting impression in society. Women have attained immense success in every field with renewed vigor and enthusiasm from all quarters to establish a healthy work life balance and better quality of life. To ensure that our ladies are a part of this women empowerment brigade, we need to make concentrated efforts in collating our resources and spearheading them towards their upliftment. It is the need of the time to dedicate ourselves towards preservation of the Naval ethics and groom the younger generation to shoulder the responsibilities of being a member of the elite Naval fraternity.

Veerangana has always been a reflection of NWWA’s vision and a medium to reach out to the Naval community. This edition with the theme of ‘Touching Lives through Welfare’ lies within the core value of our organization and resonates deeply with our vision towards women empowerment. I firmly believe that **“When we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another.”** Hence, I would like to divert all our energies towards the welfare of the Naval community including senior citizens, veer naris and children. This will eventually result in overall upliftment of the community with major impetus towards “Social Welfare”. An endeavour towards continued outreach programmes, workshops, skill development courses, charity programmes and community welfare activities will play an important role towards the holistic development of our fraternity.

“ I’ve come to believe that each of us has a personal calling that’s as unique as a fingerprint – and that the best way to succeed is to discover what you love and then find a way to offer it to others in the form of service, working hard, and also allowing the energy of the universe to lead you”.

Jai Hind!


Mrs Devina Jain
President, NWWA(ER)

GLIMPSES



ASHIRWAD



BALWADI



MILAN



COFFEE MORNING



CUDDLES



ORIENTATION CAPSULE



JAGRITI



MELA



PRAGATI



PRAKRITI



SPARSH



TARSH

OUTLYING UNITS



ANNUAL AGM - CHENNAI



HEALTH CAMP, NWWA - RAJALI



VISIT TO ORPHANAGE REFUGE - KOLKATA



SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN - KALPAKKAM



JANMASHTAMI CELEBRATIONS AT LITTLE ANGELS - BHEEMUNIPATNAM



GLASS PAINTING WORKSHOP - HYDERABAD



HEALTH AND DENTAL WORKSHOP - KATTABOMAN

COMFORT ZONE - A PLACE OF OUR OWN

NWWA Kendras have something to offer for one and all



Artwork by
Jyotsna Ramesh Kamble

On being asked to write an article on “Touching Lives Through Welfare”, my mind goes down memory lane on what my personal journey with welfare has been. Flashback to end August 2018, I’ve just about finished setting up

my house when the phone rings. Alarm bells go off when I get a call from the boss’s wife asking, ‘if I have any experience working with welfare?’ Sheepishly I answer, ‘I don’t really have any experience working with NWWA, let alone welfare’.

My inexperience fails to deter her, and I soon find myself agreeing to accompany her for her next Kendra visit, all the while thinking I could persuade her to find someone more experienced in looking after welfare.

Well, my Jedi mind games didn’t work and soon I realized I was entrusted with the role of coordinator for the new NWWA Kendra at Nav Shakti Vihar. Visiting the Kendra which was then a ‘flat’ in one of the buildings, I seriously wondered how relevant welfare work is in today’s day and age? After all isn’t everything available online these days?

From hobby ideas to baking and the numerous videos we can find online today on various topics, why again we still need to do something like this today? But after a few visits to the Kendra it was easy to realize that whilst today we are all digitally connected to our near and dear ones from far and wide, we are in reality disconnected from the very people that stay closest to us.

And that’s where our Kendras still have their charm! Bringing together women from various backgrounds and cultures, these Kendras have a lot to teach and offer. Be it a newlywed wife wanting to learn a new hobby or wanting to be

part of the dance recital for an upcoming Milan, to just getting together to interact with friends, it has something for everyone.

Proving age is just a number, more seasoned wives too are getting ready to take on the culinary classes and dish out something more exotic for their families. And there’s plenty in the offering at Kendras bringing everyone together. Whether it’s an event being conducted for senior citizens such as tree plantation or sports day being held for the ladies or just an art class being held for the children, these Kendras are a support system for one and all.

The successful Diwali Melas held just last month in each of the respective Kendras is a wonderful example of how the Kendras have been bringing people together irrespective of age and background. Joining in the festive spirit not only did we have ladies from different walks of life come together to put up scrumptious delicacies, but also husbands and wives teaming up and cooking up a storm. Not to be outdone were children who enthusiastically joined their mothers in putting up game stalls.

And no one can forget the excitement that abounds during NWWA picnic or NWWA Diwas. ‘Welfare’ offered through the Kendras has become a place to bond, hone your entrepreneurship skills, learn something new, or simply find a badminton buddy. We are fortunate to have such a facility that has been touching lives in many ways.



- Sandra Sequeira

An avid reader and music lover, she has worked as a banker and teacher. At present, she works for a private firm from home.

MY VISIT TO AN ORPHANAGE

A trip to Seva Niketan in Port Blair remains etched in the memory

My dream of visiting the orphanage 'Seva Niketan', in Port Blair, Dollygunj, one of the first to be opened in Andaman, turned into a reality just before the festival of lights, Diwali. A medley of emotions ran through me. I was excited, curious and elated, but at the same time I felt a little nervous as this was my first visit. On our arrival, cute little children greeted us and led us to the main hall. We met girls and boys of all age groups. As I sat amongst them, my heart was filled with joy as these children had nothing to give or share, no parents to guide, no special privileges, limited amount of materialistic possessions and yet they were happy. I tried to control my emotions as tears welled up in my eyes, recollecting all that I had, the benefits I enjoyed, the love and affection that I got and the blessing of having my family and house. A quiet prayer was all I said. The words of Dalai Lama ran through my head: 'If you want others to be happy, practice compassion.'

They were all sitting together, waiting patiently for their turn to talk. They had heart-rending stories to tell. Some were abandoned; some had single parents and most of them had lost their families during the Tsunami. Each story touched my heart, and I could barely believe how content they were. I rarely get moved, but after listening to their stories I felt emotionally connected with them and thanked God for all that He had given me.

It was nearly lunch time and I had decided to give them something different. They enjoyed the burgers, pizzas, noodles and relished the home-made sweet prepared by my mother. After lunch we played a few outdoor games like tug of war,

sack race, hula-hoop and cricket. We all enjoyed and I felt like one among them. I didn't realise how time flew by. With a heavy heart, I bid my final good bye with some handshakes, hugs and promises from both sides to meet again soon. I thanked my parents for the visit.

As I walked out of the gate, I realized the relevance of parents, relatives and elderly people in our life. This visit was going to be etched in my memory for sure. I learned that happiness could be found all round, in humble belongings and beginnings. The feeling of sharing, care and joy gave me a new high, a feeling I had never experienced before. I had a new perspective towards life, where the most important lesson was to appreciate as well as value people and resources, and always be humble and compassionate. The words of Albert Schweitzer resounded in my ears, 'The purpose of human life is to serve and show compassion and to have the will to help others.' And at that moment, I knew I would go back.



- Aakanksha Goswami

*A student from NCS Visakhapatnam,
she is an avid reader, writes poetry
and loves listening to music and travelling.*

IGNITING HOPE

Give children their best chance to thrive



At some point in our lives we have all had a moment of being conscious of our privilege, whether it is through an unexpected experience or just through reflection. Living a conventional life is not a privilege every person can experience. We become harshly aware of this when we see that little girl in rags clutching her day's earning of a few coins in shaking hands, or the trembling boy being pushed around without the support of both arms to defend himself, or that shy child being yelled at for being unable to spell and write words that other kids his age can. We observe their circumstances, feel a pang in our hearts and then get distracted by being called to dinner, or a notification from Facebook. Ordinary things for us.

But imagine doing something to bring about a change, a change that makes that pang a little less bitter and a little sweeter; imagine being able to touch lives, a touch of healing and help. Being in that position is a privilege in itself and it is a beautiful feeling to not only recognize, but to act on it. There are 20.42 lakh disabled children between the ages of 0 and 6 alone and 20 million known orphans in India. Whether it is through educating children with special needs, or volunteering at institutions that help the underprivileged, or even through simple free tutoring, a little bit of your time is all that is needed to turn someone's life around.

Work for and with those who are intellectually disabled to provide care and compassion so they can blossom and achieve their true potential. One more neglected child equals one extra dangerous adult in the future/society. Changing the initial circumstances in early childhood positively gives them reason to do good in their life and makes

sure they embrace the world instead of feeling rejected and alone. Sankalp is one such organization in our Naval community where every special child's talent is harnessed through activities and therapies. The child is taken care for his/her disability and also put through varied activities in order to develop independence in daily living skills, social skills and academics as per the individual's capability.

Amongst many organizations which work for social welfare in Visakhapatnam, 'Aashadeep' is a parent organisation that takes care of older intellectually disabled children. The Ichha Foundation, near Visakhapatnam, works for neglected children from poor backgrounds to foster an environment of love and care for them. These organizations, amongst others, do inspirational work and ignite a spark of hope that everyone deserves.

My mother is a Special Educator by profession, and it has been my privilege to see her work closely. She has been working with Sankalp and many such social welfare organizations. In my experience, nothing brings her more joy than someone making progress in a battle against their difficulty. So why not also contribute in whatever way possible to make the world a little bit better for everyone?



- Aarushi Chandegave

She is an avid reader, writes poetry and also loves dancing to Bollywood songs!

SANKALP AND MY SPECIAL STAR

Stellar support to children with special needs

Touching life through welfare is apt for our Naval Community. We have NWWA that looks after many portfolios and helps our families. One such organization is Sankalp, which looks after children with special needs. I am a mother of a special child, who has been going to Sankalp since he was five. Now 24, I must admit my son Mohit has blossomed into the best version of himself because of this school and support that Navy has extended to us. The facilities for special children, the guidance, warmth, training... the list is too long to pen. It has truly touched our lives.

I want to share my personal experience. My son was a fussy eater and never wanted to eat normal *chapati/puri* or *sabzi*. One day I happened to enter his class during the break and saw him enjoying *puri sabzi* from his friend's tiffin. I couldn't believe my eyes; he had never eaten this in years. Normally, he ate just bread-jam or chips. I was overjoyed. You can well imagine the happiness a mother would feel at that time and that too he was eating by himself.

I can't express it in words; the school, the children, the environment taught him how to behave, be disciplined and how to share with one another. For a special child who cannot talk or walk properly or eat solid food, this was nothing short of a miracle. It's the teachers' effort that needs to be commended as they are the guiding force for our children, and tell the parents how to cope with special children. I wholeheartedly thank the Navy and Naval community that looks after special children. We are grateful to be a part of this community that has helped me and my family.

Jai Hind!



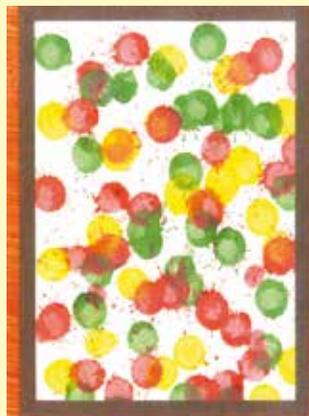
- Preeti Bawa

The proud mother of a special child, Mohit, she chose to be a homemaker as she wanted to devote time to her dear son, from whom she has learnt a lot.

HANDMADE CARDS BY SANKALP STUDENTS



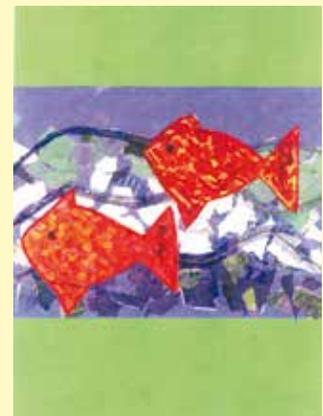
By Sukhwinder
Technique:
Combination of different
mediums



By Aradhya, Aaryan
Technique:
•Spot Dot Painting



By Vansh, Aayush
Technique:
•Cutting & Pasting
•Ear Bud Painting

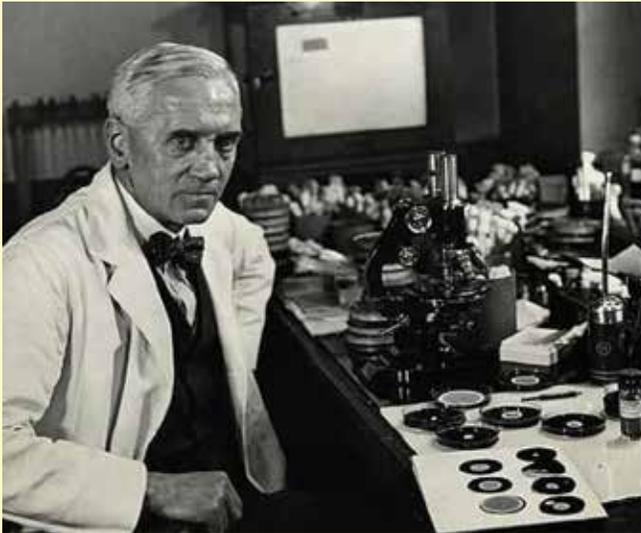


By Gungan
Technique:
•Tearing
•Pasting

START SMALL, THINK BIG

To make a difference in someone's life you don't have to be rich, brilliant, beautiful or perfect.

You just have to care. – Mandy Hale.



Sir Alexander Fleming & Sir Winston Churchill: The most unlikeliest of bonds formed over kindness

A few of my friends asked me for a “BIG IDEA” as they want to change lives or do some welfare for society. Changing lives starts with touching lives. To touch lives is to influence someone. But many of us don't realize that the small acts of kindness we show may make a very big difference to someone's life. For instance, I would like to share a story with you.

There was a poor Scottish farmer named Fleming. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death.

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced

himself as the father of the boy whose life farmer Fleming had saved. “I want to repay you,” said the nobleman. “You saved my son's life”. “No, I can't accept payment for what I did”, the Scottish farmer replied waving off the offer. At that moment, the farmer's son came to the door of the family hovel. “Is that your son?” the nobleman asked. “Yes”, the farmer replied. “I want to provide your son with the level of education my son will enjoy. If the lad is anything like his father, he will no doubt grow to be a man we both will be proud of”. And farmer Fleming agreed.

Farmer Fleming's son attended the best schools and in time graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London and went on to become known throughout the world as the Noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin.

Years afterward, the same nobleman's son who was saved from the bog was stricken with pneumonia.

What saved his life this time? Penicillin. The name of the nobleman is Lord Randolph Churchill, his son's name is Sir Winston Churchill. So don't ever underestimate the impact you may have on someone's else life.

Someone once said, "What goes around comes around".

First, don't wait for the big idea: Look around you now! I suggest you to get out of "big idea syndrome". There are simple acts of kindness you can start to perform. Help someone who cannot pay you back with anything except words of gratitude.

To touch lives or make a difference in someone's life is to solve small problems that people face every day, moreover with frugal innovation. Don't wait to construct a homeless shelter, even a small act of kindness matters! For example, when you meet that homeless person or beggar on the street, offer them something. Personally, I have a policy of not giving money to beggars. I usually prefer giving them food or something tangible.

Don't wait for great resources; do with what you have.

For welfare activities, the sky is the limit. Even with a shoestring budget you can do wonders. The most important thing is your determination to get things done.

Here are a few welfare ideas.

- Schools can encourage children by giving projects on creating awareness about

- a) Chronic diseases.
- b) Prevention of viral fevers
- c) Importance of vaccination or polio drops in kids
- There are lots of government policies and schemes for the upliftment of rural people, welfare of women and kids but most people are not being benefited because of lack of awareness.
- a) The youth can start up a culture of organising awareness camps in their localities that will ultimately enlighten people about welfare schemes and their benefits.
- b) Creating awareness about harmful effects of alcohol, smoking, etc.

We can all touch other people's lives every day. So, if you are concerned about doing welfare activities, start by touching lives - one at a time. In the end you will realize that your small step has caused change more than you hoped for. As Mother Teresa said, "It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving."



Krishna Julasi Malladi
Psychologist, INHS Kalyani



Greta Thunberg may only be 16 years old, but the Swedish environmental activist has already inspired a global movement campaigning for more to be done to tackle climate change. She was named the TIME's Person of the Year 2019



WELFARE WARRIOR

Gaining an identity through service to others



Welfare is not an external choice but an internal compulsion, a way to motivate yourself. Then, one looks outside and wonders what we can do for others.

In my case, I come from a Fauji background and was exposed to a lot of welfare activities around me. I would see my mother teaching students in the welfare centre. In those days, tuitions were a big 'no' but there were students whose mothers were not educated - my mom would teach them and come back home so happy. At the time, I would wonder how she is so happy and content spending so much time without being paid. Now, I understand her state of mind and appreciate it more than ever.

Life has given me an opportunity to work for children with special needs. It so happened that a senior friend of mine called me to Sankalp, which is a school for children with special needs. I felt a strong connect and a need to do something here. With time, I realized this was a place I loved to be, trying to understand the needs of these children

and working towards a goal for them. I feel as an artist and psychologist, I have made a difference to their lives.

Other than this, something very close is to my heart is the environment. I feel I can educate, truly motivate and sensitise the children of our community towards nature. A few days ago I met somebody who did not know my name but called me 'Prakriti' Aunty, thereby proving my love for nature. I think I can go on and on... these memories of welfare for society make me a better human and I feel I have touched someone's life and gained an identity for myself too.



- Swati Shukla

Psychologist and freelance artist

WELFARE STARTS AT HOME

Kindness and compassion in daily interactions will work wonders

Recently, I came across a video where a primary class school kid opens his tiffin box during lunchtime only to find it empty. All his other friends are munching their lunch around him. He feels low and takes permission from his teacher to go out and drinks water from the tap in the bathroom. He then comes back feeling pretty much the same and reaches his desk. He opens his lunchbox and lo! he finds it filled with goodies, veggies, snacks etc. He is surprised and looks around to see who parted with lunch for him but sees all the kids busy eating. He happily gorges the food from his box. Unknowing to him, a kid sitting far off smiles and continues his food. This very simple yet touching video can inspire us at various levels. It makes us believe that goodness still exists.



What is welfare? Simply the well-being of any person concerned. Do we need to take large steps for the welfare of our surroundings/ community? No. Only simple, small steps. Everything begins and ends with our mindset. We need to just think a little beyond ourselves, a little selflessly, for any welfare beyond our home. We keep making compromises for our loved ones at home, we need to think beyond those four walls. Tiny gestures can be incorporated in our everyday routine. When you pack your bags to leave for work every morning, carry a small pack of biscuits or leftover parathas to feed those street dogs you come across every

day. Avoid burning crackers or playing very loud music with pets or street dogs in the vicinity as it has a damaging impact on their ears. Be kind to all animals in general.

Similarly, when your maid comes home the next time, think of her as a human first, then a woman and finally a mother. Feel for her and compassion towards her will follow on its own. Do try to give, or at least offer, her a meal if you are having yours with her around. Those vegetables that you never cook, or good leftover food, those fancy clothes in your cupboard that don't fit anymore - give them away. They will be of more use to her and her family and you would have nothing to lose. When you come across that milkman who comes home to deliver milk everyday, smile while receiving it and add a thank you. Being friendly to all in general regardless of social status will contribute a tiny bit to community welfare. If left with a choice, buying diyas from a street potter is always a better idea than ordering those Chinese lights online as the former will light up two homes! Small acts of kindness shown by you in your everyday life will have a pleasing impact on someone else's life. Welfare is never quantitative; a little bit of goodness makes a huge difference.

**in my
view**

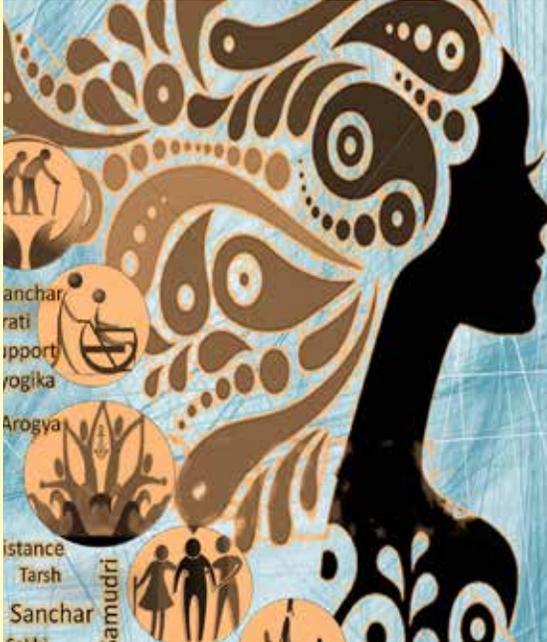


- Padmavati Venkatesh

She is a post-graduate in software engineering in Java, and graduated with B.Sc (Hons) Botany from Hindu College, Delhi University. She aspires to start an eCommerce venture in the near future.

THE LIFE WE LEARN FROM

When we contribute or participate willingly, we take back something worthy for a lifetime



Artwork by Swati Sachdeva

She raised her hand, totally confident this time that she would answer without a single mistake and without stuttering. With a degree in home science already in hand, she knew the day wasn't far when she could pursue further studies in English-medium. It wasn't that she had no knowledge about the English language; it's just that she had studied in Hindi medium.

Married at 20, she had entered the naval community with aspirations. Her husband introduced her to the defence services way of life. Accommodation wasn't easy so she agreed to sharing for a few months. Living in navy area, she realised that all wives managed their lives and homes in a similar way. They did everything themselves right from cooking, cleaning, bringing up the children to paying bills etc. Yet, they found time to learn new things and hone their skills.

She too got into a similar rhythm and routine, also joining up for various activity classes conducted at the **NWWA Kendras**. From stitching classes to painting, mehendi, self grooming, beauty parlour

training, designing jewellery to selling her own pieces etc, she trained herself in all these crafts so well, that she went on to become a teacher for the same!

Two years later her baby was born and in the same month her husband was transferred to an operational ship. There were long periods of separation and little time together. Her baby was demanding and she ran her house as best as she could. Her in-laws came to help, but that just increased her work further since her upbringing was conditioned like that and so were the expectations from the in-laws. She longed for moments of respite. Social gatherings had become rare. Her neighbours coaxed her to step out but it wasn't possible with their orthodox mindset. She was to stay at home, take care of the child and complete her chores.

It began to trouble her. The curtailed freedom added to her woes of other mundane chores. She started to feel unwell and uneasy. Aches and pains came without explanations. Visit to the family clinic led her to the laboratory for blood samples. Finally, she had to see a doctor for a result that showed low haemoglobin. Waiting for her turn at the hospital she found herself sitting next to a friendly lady. They spoke and feeling that she could trust her, shared her troubles. The small interaction gave her new hope. On learning about the **Creche** facility, she visited the Kendra with renewed vigour. Her baby now in safe hands at the Creche, she enrolled for Computer classes.

A year later they moved to another base. She settled into the new station with zest. The couple was soon blessed with a second baby, and it was yet again a busy routine handling two young ones. Time flew and soon enough both the children were in primary and then middle school. She had learnt to manage by herself. All her chores and duties she undertook with dedication. But even

through all this, she kept holding on to one of her deep desires – that of speaking English fluently, and thus took it up with great determination. She started off by joining **English speaking classes** at the Kendra, simultaneously participating in similar classes held online. She would also follow the English News, watch programmes and debates to learn. Going a step ahead, she even enrolled herself in the **TISS programme** for navy wives. She was now communicating fairly well. Her confident and articulate answers got her much appreciation from the teacher and a look of admiration from classmates. She was ecstatic.

Her husband began to respect her more and took pride in introducing her during unit functions. No more making fun of her 'Angreji'. She was well spoken. Her home management was excellent. Their saving and funds were healthy and children were doing very well at school. She was fit as a fiddle and good health radiated from her face. She attended all lectures conducted by the Naval community that would benefit her and her family. When opportunities came she grabbed them and made the best out of them. She was conscientious too and contributed to the community. As a friend or a good neighbour she helped and supported in times of need. During Milans and functions she participated wholeheartedly, inspiring many. The community began to recognise her abilities and acknowledged her as a super woman, multifaceted and talented. A true **“SwayamSiddha”!**

Then tragedy struck. She lost her husband in a road accident. Heart broken and lost she wondered how she would handle it all. Two school-going children and aged parents dependent on her, became a burdening thought for the time being.

On receiving instant help from NWWA and her husband’s unit, she stood up brave and strong. She was grieving inside, but challenges must be tackled by two strong arms and a stronger mind. Being thoroughly acquainted with the NWWA organisation because of her many interactive years, she approached **“Sahara”** on grants and scholarships. She started appearing for job interviews. Although she received a few offers,

she realised that it would be hard to juggle them with her family responsibilities. Finally, she moved back to her home town to support the parents, while getting a job there, thus enabling her to find a better work-life balance.

Just before she left I asked her, how she did it all? Her answer: the wellness quotient NWWA created in her was a result of all that she learnt and the opportunities offered, so she could rise to a level of self-sufficiency. But then, I said, “Most say it’s not enough.” Her reply was simple: “They don’t see the potential or recognise the worth.”

As I sit and write this story about 'Her', I wish to express that over the years during my interactions I met many women who showed great promise. From being inadequately educated they rose to become achievers in various fields. This story is therefore just one example of how all of these Naval wives have benefitted from the many NWWA welfare initiatives and turned around their lives for the better.

As a one-time NWWA President of a very small unit I realised that I too had received welfare from the organisation, in terms of over-all development. I learnt to expand my vision. I learnt compassion can be more than just charity or giving time to the old and sick. I learnt how to lead by serving.

In a nutshell, “Each woman who participates willingly or volunteers takes back something worthy for a life time.”



- Alpana Issar

A nature enthusiast and painter, who enjoys reading and writing. She sponsors nutritional meals, education, vocational training and coaching for persons from the lower economic strata.

STIRRING UP THE SOUL

Madhu Tugnait's Icha Foundation provides a haven for abandoned and disabled children



Personal power is most commonly associated with the ability to influence others. Some are born with good looks and feel empowered because of it while others are skilled in exuding self-confidence. But what is the real measure of personal power? In my view, it is the ability to follow your heart, do what feels right and not get unhinged by the pressures of any socio-economic norms that often dominate the voice of the heart. A living example of such personal strength is 60-year-young Mrs Madhu Tugnait, a Navy wife and fashion designer turned social activist who followed the voice of her heart.

She came across children with severe disabilities abandoned in an orphanage with no possibility of getting adopted. Their chances of survival were minimal and this stirred her heart. She made it her life's calling to care for these children. Her volunteering experience with the Bhagvatula Charitable Trust, in helping destitute women, and

her love for children eventually led to the idea and establishment of the **Icha Foundation**.

It was a family decision to sell all personal properties and invest in a rustic property. Outside the virtues of modern conveniences, she found an apt place nestled on the outskirts of Kondakarla Village, about 50 km away from Visakhapatnam. Registered as a trust in 2010, Icha Foundation started out with adopting two children. Now, the foundation provides food, clothing, therapy and schooling to 20 abandoned children with different disabilities, all under one roof. The foundation caters to the distinct needs of each child through tie-ups with paediatricians, psychiatrists, neurologists and orthopaedics based in nearby hospitals.

The dedicated staff that cares for the disabled children with love and patience are residents of the village. They are well-trained in their duties

of giving special care to the children as well as cooking sumptuous and nutritious meals including home-made fruit ice-creams. The children of the staff also receive support from the Foundation in the form of daily meals, medical support and other miscellaneous requirements. They are also a part of the Foundation. The cleanliness and tidy living habits learned at the Foundation have been imbibed by most homes in the village.



Madhu juggles her finances on a daily basis as her preference is to save money for the medical care and health of the children with multiple challenges. The medical costs of caring for the children are as high as Rs 2.5 lakh a month, because they need daily therapy sessions and one-on-one caretakers to look after them 24X7. In order to support the income, the Foundation accepts donations in the form of clothing in good condition, stationery items, grocery items and any financial help.

In 2017, Icha Foundation started manufacturing sanitary napkins to provide financial independence to the local women and also to bring a lifestyle change. Visakha Container Terminal Private Limited set up the machinery for it as a part of their CSR initiative. Initially, seven women were trained in making the napkins. The Foundation now produces 3,500 packets of napkins every month. Each packet holds seven biodegradable napkins costing Rs 45/- only.

In 2018, Icha Foundation received the **"ICICI #FundYourOwnWorthAward"**, including a cash

prize of Rs 55,000/-, an initiative by ICICI Bank. The story of Rani was selected over 19,000 participants who had applied from all over the country. Rani was adopted by Madhu as a months-old baby who had no nose and had to breathe through her mouth because of her cleft lip and cleft palate. She also did not have her right arm and all the fingers in her left hand were fused together. With the care and treatment she received from Madhu and her team, Rani is now an inquisitive young girl who was excited to receive the award from actor Vidya Balan.

Though the challenges the Foundation face are numerous, they fail to dampen the spirit of those who work there. The 'can do' spirit with which everyone works is truly inspiring. It is not about how difficult the problem is but about how to get it done.

The Sparsh team of NWWA (ER) visits the foundation once a year. This time, I also had the opportunity to visit the Foundation. The children, despite all the difficulties and discomfort in life, greet you with a happy smile. They were filled with excitement to meet us, touching us not only with their tug of hands and warm hugs but also the energy of their positive spirit. The aura of the place and people I met was incredibly positive and reinforced my belief in the personal power of a person that can make a true impact on the lives of those in need.



- *Nitinder Dutt*

She works as an Independent Market Research Consultant specializing in Consumer Behavior Understanding.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Waste segregation at Naval Park yields tremendous results



Environmental pollution has existed since the beginning of life. However, it has become a serious problem today and threatens the survival of mankind. It affects the air we breathe, the food we eat and the water we drink, causing a lack of natural resources, extinction of plant and animal species and damage in global ecosystems. In this context, waste generation and waste management have a great impact on the environment and, consequently, on human health. Negative consequences of human activities include air and water pollution, uncontrolled deforestation, destruction of the ozone layer, global warming, climate change, natural disasters and accumulation of various wastes (including radioactive). While it is difficult to stop these things from taking place, better management can mitigate the problem. Each of us has a right to clean air, water and food. This right can be fulfilled by maintaining a clean and healthy environment in our community.

Keeping in view our aim to touch lives through environment welfare, NWWA Eastern Region

joined hands with the local authorities and undertook a community-wide waste management campaign where every household had an active role to play.

With an aim to reduce the waste that goes to landfills and contributes to pollution, we at Naval Park embarked upon the initiative of waste segregation more than a year ago. Today, we have reduced waste by 65 per cent and the compost generated from domestic waste is being used to make the community greener. This has resulted in a cleaner environment, promoting better hygiene and health. We have over 3,000 varieties of plants in our community. A greener environment promotes better health.

So, how did we achieve this?

As a NWWA Prakriti coordinator, I have always felt great passion for working on issues where we could involve the entire community: women, children, serving officers and local authorities.



A club of volunteers called **‘Make a Difference Group’** would reach out for any issues related to the environment. They would come up for any number of sessions cum demos for residents. For three months, we were continuously interacting with residents on this subject, whatever time of day. A consistent follow-up by this team on what is going right or wrong is in progress.

Waste segregation and disposal has largely been possible because of the effort of each and every resident within the community. I would like to acknowledge in particular the special efforts of conservancy staff who have been collecting and segregating the waste and undertaking the much-needed work of generating compost and disposing of medical waste. Within Naval Park, an average of 32 staff members are engaged in conservancy (cleaning solid waste infrastructure) activities. They have been consistently turning up to everyone’s doorstep—on working days, weekends, festivals and holidays—with a smile.

‘It’s our duty to keep Naval Park clean,’ said one of the conservancy staff with a smile, speaking of their work. The team working on the educational campaign has been equally happy with the steps taken. “It was a great privilege to make people aware about this important aspect of our lives,” says Harpreet, NWWA Coordinator for Prakriti. “I

really loved working for this project and strongly feel every household of our country should enthusiastically implement this,” shares Shreya, Prakriti volunteer. Another Prakriti volunteer Komal Anand, who is also a fitness trainer, adds, “I loved being part of this project as I believe in purity and cleanliness of soul, body and environment. I felt happy to contribute in a small way to Prime Minister Modi’s Swachh Bharat project.” And Cmde A Madhavarao, GM Tech, says, “It has been a great opportunity working on this project and we appreciate the involvement of every household and the great collaboration and team work of NORA and NWWA.”

Indeed, to solve the herculean task of reducing pollution, each of us need to contribute in large numbers. Only then can we make a concerted difference to our communities and the environment.



- Sudha Rao

She has vast experience in financial services, and has worked closely on environment issues within the naval community, leading the education campaign on Waste Management.

WORD - PLAY

1. Search through the puzzles below for the words that matter in the world of Welfare

Kindness Counts

C J H M X T N E U N X D Y J C D C O C W U X R G
 A D K P U M F D T I E R O V A F C J W K E E L Y
 R C P Z E A Z Z O X C V K U K S Z H N V Z O S T
 I L Z Z S U X V S S E N H S I F L E S N U Z D I
 N E H S Q N N L R C B O C A W I N P E F X S U V
 G I Y S Y H G R A C I O U S N E S S Z B S Z L I
 S L Y Z N M A C C O M P A S S I O N M E B U S T
 C F H X R K P Z W J C K H G X G V H N O F S P I
 P F T G N I G A R U O C N E E D E D K T E P L S
 Z O A H N E Y J T R U J Y J Z X N G H N J R S N
 L A P L C M A C L H G G S H C I D G D K X T T E
 M R M K S Z A W Y G Y T S K K R U O E C A R G S
 X A E E V T B J W Z K E T A I O O F I Y I G Y J
 B N L F R V Y C L F E F V W H G E B V D U P I S
 R T R X Y M Z H U M A N I T Y E E V R H R O U N
 G I U K U H M A E I Q Y C N O L A A D Z F L A Q
 X B J L C F L C F V H D W L H L G R D B Z I N U
 V U H N T T I C G E N E R O S I T Y T U J T K O
 A L C J S V M R W M C B U B F S U O R E N E G A
 R L A V R Q L E G N I D N A T S R E D N U W M I
 R Y A E Z Q L L I W D O O G E G R I H M R W W H
 P I S A V C W Q I F C P S M W M E C N E I T A P
 N N Q G W G H K P T N P U V I R O W V B D G N F
 C G S W Q W N O I T A R E D I S N O C T O F G Z

WORDS TO LOOK FOR

tact	kindness
humanity	consideration
graciousness	sensitivity
goodness	encouraging
understanding	patience
unselfishness	thoughtful
sympathy	empathy
anti bullying	goodwill
service	compassion
favor	caring
generosity	generous
grace	polite
heart	

People Helping People

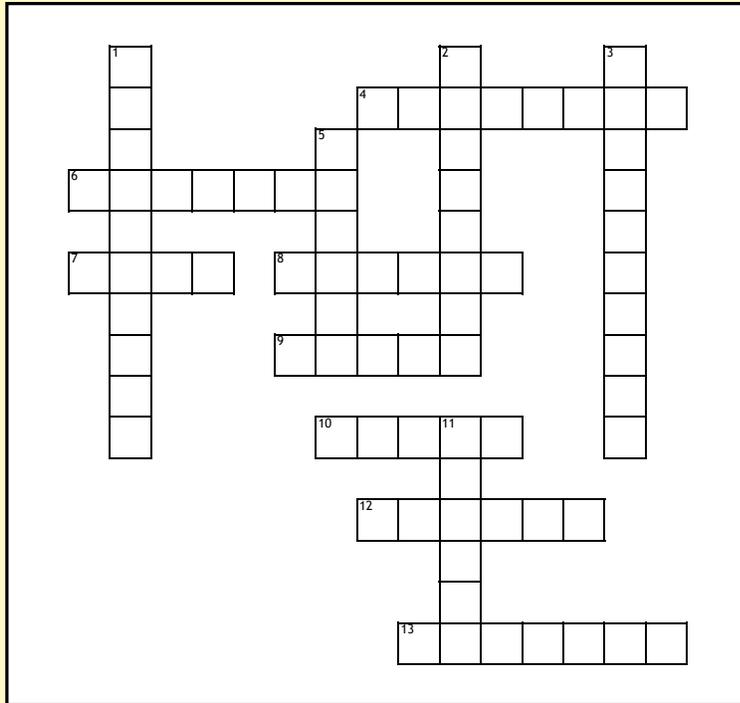
G V Z E Z C L B L S S E N D E T R A E H D N I
 G G L P D D M N X I Q A Y T I S O R E N E G N
 J X A Y H T A P M E F I G A T J D L N O A G O
 Y I K Y G Z M V G R X E K I N D N E S S Y V I
 L Z C T K L T L T T A A V Z L M Z B J O E J T
 I Y U I L M V V Y L X P L P M J B C W F A S U
 C G B N T B K K E V K M T H M D U O X K Z O B
 Z Y N U Q F Z J U V H B I P H H X P R U K C I
 H L J M I O T G C E C N E L O V E N E B A P R
 L P O M C M S T A B A F A C U J C N W I Z X T
 S C W O F M P Q G D R P L L U L J F C J G Q S N
 M O B C Z Y O G R W U A H Q K E F K D N T T O
 T B F Z B Z K N S G I V I N G C R J L I W L C
 N O I S S A P M O C P P Y L O N I A I R L V I
 B F P S E O V D A W W U F A T A E B C A Y U O
 S U F O V S E R V I C E B S D T N M W H J A O
 B T B I S R E E T N U L O V U S D X T S G N C
 C X J I Y D V G N I R A C N Q I L I R W D C Q
 H H H K L I X E P E T Q A A G S I F I I O B V
 A X U F I A Z Z A H B L X J C S N M B X N I U
 R K R X C C U K M K X P S J C A E L D I A K L
 I W S V D H R G K T L E H S T J S A V Q T X N
 T W W T R A E H I H T O G I F X S S L Q E O Q
 Y I K P I R T L G M H H Q O J X O L B B V A Y

WORDS TO LOOK FOR

aid	friendliness
assistance	generosity
benevolence	giving
caring	heart
charity	kindheartedness
community	kindness
compassion	service
contribution	sharing
donate	unselfishness
empathy	volunteer

COURTESY: WORDMINT.COM

2. Solve the crossword below to reveal pearls of kindness!



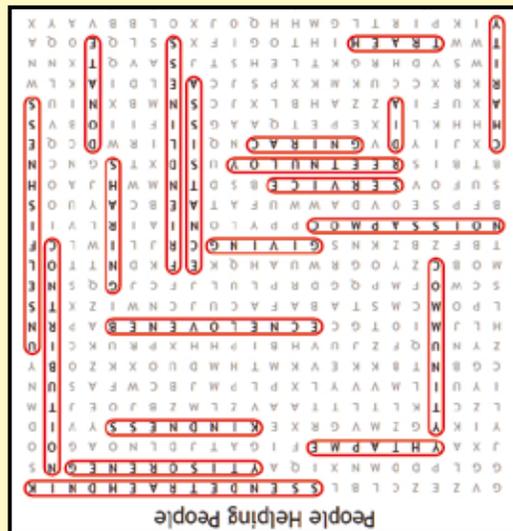
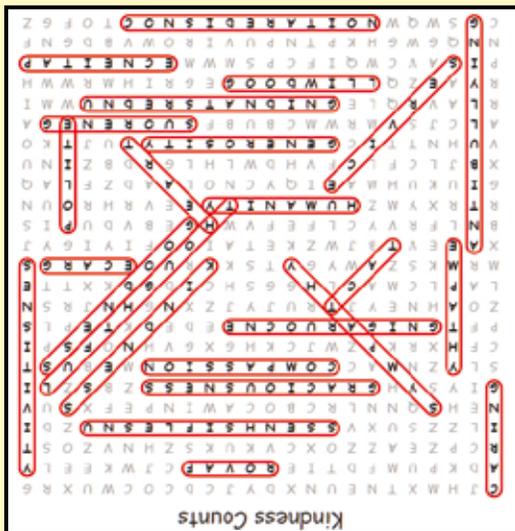
Across

- 4. Expression of gratitude (8)
- 6. Ready to assist (7)
- 7. Extreme fondness (4)
- 8. Feeling of concern (6)
- 9. A state of calm (5)
- 10. Divide equally(5)
- 12. Give to a charity or good cause (6)
- 13. Greet warmly (7)

Down

- 1. Greatness of heart (10)
- 2. It's a virtue! (8)
- 3. Concern for the misfortunes of others (10)
- 5. If you'd be so kind? (6)
- 11. In no particular order (6)

COURTESY: WORDMINT.COM



- Across**
- 4.Thankyou
 - 6.Helpful
 - 7.Love
 - 8.Caring
 - 9.Peace
 - 10.Share
 - 12.Donate
 - 13.Embrace
- Down**
- 1.Generosity
 - 2.Patience
 - 3.Compassion
 - 5.Please
 - 11.Random

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD

SNOLIUTOS

NWWA COMMITTEE - SOUTHERN REGION





President, NWWA
Southern Region



NWWA Kendra
Ashirvad Building
Naval Base
Kochi - 682004

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever"

- Mahatma Gandhi

At the outset, I feel privileged to lead and serve the Navy Wives Welfare Organisation, Southern Region. I would like to also take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to all our ladies who are doing sterling work for NWWA.

I am extremely proud that today the nation and the nation's leadership want the Indian woman to come to the fore and lead. Keeping in sight the aim of women empowerment, I am pleased to inform you that NWWA SR has taken a significant step by formalising an educational initiative with IIM, Kozhikode, to conduct a three-month course for naval wives on social entrepreneurship, which will significantly empower our community in the years ahead.

While many of our initiatives bring smiles and succour, I remain extremely concerned about environmental degradation and global warming. I have consistently stressed on the need to take specific initiatives and actions to do our bit to protect and nurture our planet. Humankind needs to reduce its carbon footprint and our egregious use of plastic has polluted our oceans and our land. Hundreds of animal and plant species are heading towards extinction and the air we breathe is often polluted and dangerous to our health. Every little step in this direction will help and is borne out of the need for immediate action – there is no time to lose. Let us, at this juncture, also derive inspiration from Greta Thunberg, a young girl of 16 from Stockholm, Sweden, to further spread our concern and spur everyone into action.

To tackle these global challenges, I am proud to state that our 'Prakriti' group and the entire NWWA community has taken several measures, such as conduct of awareness campaigns for our community and our neighbouring communities, especially our children, through lectures, presentations, movies and street plays. We have taken a solemn oath against single-use plastic. We are spreading the motto, 'Refuse, Reuse, Recycle and Replace'. Replacing plastic items with cloth bags, bamboo straws, steel tiffins in schools, copper or glass water bottles, etc, has been successfully implemented. Together we are making a difference and we are game-changers.

Our new initiatives include bringing a professional beauty brand called Panache to our naval base at affordable rates and opening a cafe next to the gym to serve healthy food and beverages and thus inculcate healthy eating habits. We have conducted 'Chai pe Charcha' with young naval wives to educate them about NWWA and also take their suggestions. NWWA needs each one of you to put your heads together and join hands towards community service, improving our environment, reach out to needy children, give a helping hand to old age homes, assist in education of meritorious students from humble backgrounds, clean our water bodies, rid the area around of plastics and bring changes to our lifestyle to combat global warming.

I implore each one of you to think out of the box, even if you are a working lady, by donating your time to see how you can contribute and give back to naval society. There is no denying the fact that this is your community, your place, your planet ... and therefore it's you, not an outsider, who has to take responsibility, make a beginning and change the environment around you for the better!

I wish you all the best and I stand steadfast, committed and hand-in-hand with each one of you to help our community to emerge stronger, better, more vibrant and purposeful.

Jai Hind.

Mrs Sapana Chawla,
President NWWA(SR)

GLIMPSES



SWAYAM SIDDHA CONTEST



ASHIRWAD



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS CAMP



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS



ONAM CELEBRATIONS



NWWA PROGRAMME



OUTREACH - VISIT TO KALADI



YOGA AT NWWA KENDRA

OUTLYING UNITS



VALSURA



HAMLA



MANDOVI



SHIVAJI



DRONACHARYA



EZHIMALA



CHILKA

LIGHT THROUGH THE GREY HAIR

The bright coloured summer,
Life became slower yet free
I'm roaming alone in my attic looking at your
trees
Thinking about
The sultry days, and many unraveled ways
Which one should I discover first in my idleness?
Should I write about my experiences?
But then I have made
Lists of books to be read
Should I explore myself in these years of
retirement?
Or just be at home?
How to know the things to be known?
How to know what makes a kid smile?
Which flowers to pick?
While I love them all.

The bright coloured summer,
Your afternoon shines on my lonely grey head
As I think about the life I led
Thinking about how I'll serve people when I'm
finally alone and free
Keep a count, my grey head is the only one
around me

It's weird that I want to make everything right
Just and fine
But which one to choose first?
I never thought
Kill the hunger or quench the thirst?
The dilemma of doing something good
Is now a non-chronological to-do list
And if I tell you the gist
I've wasted these years
Soaking my body in your cozy sun
Sitting near the fireplace when it was winter's
turn
While I did nothing to bring about a change
While I said I'd do it all

The bright coloured summer,
Thank you for listening to me
I had someone to talk to
Thinking about what to do
I picked up your flower
And I smiled
I then knew what I could do
I knew there are other people like me too
Who sit alone looking at trees
They have nothing to do once free
And hence are caged
So, I visit them every weekend
With your flowers in my hand
Talk about their hair turning grey,
And the games their kids loved to play.
About their partners and the love, they
discovered.

Kith and kin, they lost and how they recovered
Talk about how they fought when in the army
And about the time they retired with that glory
I changed something so little bit so hugely
The bright coloured summer,
Grey heads are no more lonely.



- Sonu Gulia

*M.Tech in Electronics and Communication
engineering from Mumbai University.
She is currently Head Mistress
Naval KG, INS Valsura. Also she is an ardent reader
with a strong passion for content designing.*

ARE WE AFRAID OF WELFARE?



“The things you do for yourself are gone when you are gone, but the things you do for others remain as your legacy.”

- Kalu Ndukwe Kalu

The country was jolted at the news of demonetisation and the next day I found myself in a rush to deposit the precious kitty money. Standing in the line at NOFRA, I got chatting with a dear friend’s husband. As we moved ahead in the queue, he asked why I was limping. I replied that I had some weird, untraceable sprain or pain in my legs. In all his wisdom, he quietly asked if I had been contemplating something and apprehensive of taking the step forward. I was taken aback. I had indeed been considering getting a little more proactive about animal welfare, specifically strays. However, the emotional involvement, heartbreak and anguish of this area of work were not something I was willing to go through, knowing my own self. Calmly, he pointed out that this was

probably the reason for my leg pain and that I should start in small measures. He added that future fear of hurt shouldn’t be a reason to not follow my heart’s wish—the hesitation in my heart and mind had led my body to experience pain. Many of us may not agree with this line of thought but, to me, these words were an epiphany.

The question I wish for all of us to ask is this: While there is good in every heart, an intention to help others, man and beast alike, what holds us back? What is that fear that does not let us take the step towards our calling? More often than not, we attribute it to lack of time or opportunity, lack of venue, other commitments, and so on. Instead, we should honestly explore the answers to the following questions:

- Are we apprehensive of losing the ‘happy-go-lucky’ streak in us?
- Are we scared of the sadness that accompanies such a line of work?
- Do we fear we will not be able to make much difference with the limited knowledge and time we can contribute?

While we may tick some or all the boxes above, in my opinion we could start with small strides. These are fears like all others that we face; don’t feed them and they will wilt and disappear.

To begin with, one can just find a ‘cause’ close to our heart and an ‘organisation’ in physical proximity to home—a faraway place is impractical to follow through. We could start by making short visits. Let’s just do that and see how and where it takes us. A small amount of involvement is better than none, both for the organisation and us. It brings huge amounts of mental and physical benefits. In fact, it’s an anti-depressant like no other!

Having said that, I would also admit that any welfare work or social service requires an emotional connect, an emotional involvement. One should be prepared for some tragedies, some agitating moments and, above all, a great deal of willpower to press on in a cause one believes in.

So, for want of a strong heart and will, should we forgo an opportunity and our duty to help? That’s the question we must all ask ourselves.

And, yes, in case you were wondering, that small talk at an unexpected time and place from my friend’s husband did wonders for me! It prompted me to take baby steps towards the world of strays with a wonderful organisation called ‘**Welfare of Stray Dogs**’ (WSD). A non-profit trust, WSD was set up in 1985 with its main office in Mahalaxmi,

Mumbai. They carry out mass sterilisation of stray dogs to ensure rabies eradication and dog population control. They also conduct on-site first aid and vaccination programmes. They hold education and awareness workshops and put up abandoned pets and pariahs for adoption. The work the employees and volunteers do is beyond belief and words.

Located in Parel, Mumbai, they have a shelter in Navy Nagar too—it’s a must-visit place to peek into the selfless work they do. I believe we should also take our children to such places. The seeds of empathy and affection awakened here will help them grow into better adults who can resonate with love and understanding.

Are you an animal lover? Then, contact

The Welfare of Stray Dogs

C/o Mr F Broacha, 2nd Floor, Yeshwant Chambers,
B Bharucha Marg, Kala Ghoda, Mumbai 400 033.

WSD Helpline: +91 22 64222838

Email: wsdindia@gmail.com

WSD Adoption Blog :

<http://wsdadoptions.blogspot.com/>



- Mamtha Srivastava

An ardent lover of all art forms who believes in self-discovery through learning new skill sets. Also she feels caring for animals leads to spiritual awakening.

THE JOY OF GIVING

"Help others and give something back. I guarantee you will discover that while public service improves the lives and the world around you, its greatest reward is the enrichment and new meaning it will bring your own life."

- Arnold Schwarzenegger



Veena Satish exemplifies this beautiful quote by Arnold Schwarzenegger. In her fascinating journey as a naval wife, she has touched myriad lives and sparked change in countless ways. The Veerangana team discovers how, for her, welfare has become a way of life:

You've had a wonderful innings as part of the naval community....

Yes, it is truly humbling and gratifying to look back at my long innings as part of the naval fraternity. As a new bride I was warmly welcomed into this wonderful new family. My journey of discovering the immeasurable joy of giving was sparked off by my initiation into the world of NWWA. I began

my welfare activities in a modest way in 1998 by volunteering in the outreach group of NWWA at Vishakhapatnam.

You are known among the fraternity as an animal lover! Please tell us more about your efforts.

In 2008, in Goa where we were posted, I noticed the large number of stray dogs that prowled through NOFRA causing inconvenience to the residents. Being a diehard animal lover, I realised that unless something was done to control the population of these dogs, the animosity against them would spiral into a situation of conflict. I contacted the Government Veterinary Hospital for a solution to the menace. With unstinted support from Mrs Rama Pillai, President NWWA Goa Region, I was able to successfully start the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme to sterilise the dogs, which eventually reduced the dog population inside NOFRA.

Subsequently, when we shifted to Kochi in 2011, I noticed the same dog menace prevailing in Katari Bagh and the Naval Base. In 2013, along with a few other naval ladies, I approached Cmde M R Ajay Kumar, who was Station Commander at the time. With his support, we started ABC in the Naval Base. It is a testimony to the single-minded efforts of all involved that we could sterilise close to 50 dogs within a span of one year.

I must admit that through these efforts to defend the lives of stray dogs in areas of naval accommodation, I have earned the reputation of

being the go-to person for any issues related to either a real or perceived dog menace!

You are also part of an NGO called 'Oneness'....

Yes, it is a non-profitable charity trust where we mainly rescue and rehabilitate stray animals. We work for environmental protection and human welfare also. During the floods, we played a major role in rescuing animals. After that, we conducted



an adoption drive where we gave homes to around 80 of them. Last year, we again held two adoption drives. We also organised a water bowl challenge where we gave away around 300 water bowls. In fact, I have kept a couple of bowls in my garden, where many squirrels, birds and crows come every day. If each one of us place a pot in our garden, it would be very beneficial to birds and animals. This year, we are planning another water bowl challenge as well as a food bowl challenge, tree plantation, adoption drives, fund-raising events, awareness and sponsorship programmes and even a marathon! Our dream is to build a shelter for handicapped animals, and we need funds for this. We hope people come forward and help us. In fact, every week, our rescued pets are featured in the 'Pet' column of *The Hindu*. This helps us in our mission to persuade people to adopt Indian breeds rather than purchase foreign ones.

Animals aside, little is known about your social outreach efforts. Do enlighten us about these.

As a naval wife, it has been extremely gratifying to build and nurture a warm and genuine relationship with the larger community in my personal capacity.

While I was living in Katari Bagh, I happened to talk to my helper's son Vineesh, who was studying in a government-run high school on Willingdon Island. He informed me about the pitiable state of the school, which had only 12 to 14 students from Class 1 to Class 10, all from very poor backgrounds. It was shattering to learn that most days, the kids were starving.

I met the school headmistress to find out the reason for this despite the government scheme of free food for students. She explained that not all students were entitled to the food owing to extant rules and regulations and therefore it was heart-breaking to serve food to only a select few. She also said teachers contributed money voluntarily to feed the rest of the students occasionally.

The only solution I saw was to prepare food myself and feed the students at least once a day. With assistance from my helper, I cooked food and delivered it to the school authorities. I still cannot forget the welling eyes of those kids waiting for me to arrive with their favourite meal. This continued for years and the school authorities expressed their gratitude by inviting me for various functions along with other dignitaries. However, when the new headmistress took over the reins of the school, she advised me to provide groceries and vegetables instead—the school staff would cook in house for the students. I continue this practice to date and consider myself fortunate to have the love and prayers of the teachers and kids.

You also succeeded in bringing more children into the school....

There was an orphanage close to the school and the administrator was ready to admit the children provided the school could facilitate free transportation for the children. I was successful in raising funds for hiring a vehicle through contribution from likeminded friends. Now, the strength of the school has increased to 53, out of which 20 students are from the orphanage and 19 children will be appearing for the Class 10 board exam this year. I make evening snacks for them to be served during their extra classes, knowing well they are keener on the snacks than the studies!



Do share some of your other initiatives.

During my stay in Katari Bagh, I happened to come across a gentleman who collected used clothes to distribute to poor workers in the tea and cardamom estates in Idukki. I spread the word in the naval community who contributed immensely for the cause. I also came across a shop in Njarakkal, near Vypin in Kochi, which took in donated clothes that any needy person could pick up, free of cost. When I shared the news with the naval community, the

response was very encouraging and the contributions are still pouring in continuously.

Elders are a very marginalised section of society. Please tell us about your efforts to help them.

The number of old-age homes is increasing at a rapid pace in Kerala. Knowing about my social activities, I was contacted by the caretaker of one such home in Thevara. He requested my help for laying floor mats in the rooms to prevent the residents from slipping and falling down. I managed the necessary funds and provided the floor mats for the entire pathway. Some of the aged mothers wanted homemade food, which I now prepare and give. My domestic help assists me without any hesitation. The home was also in need of a washing machine, which was donated by a naval wife when I spread the word. So, I feel I am just a link in a chain of like-minded people providing support and solace to the elderly.

We can always make a greater impact when we link hands with others. Are there any organisations you have worked with for a shared cause?

When one looks around at the state of our world, there are scores of heart-wrenching problems people struggle with. But, fortunately, there are also a lot of compassionate and empathetic people dedicated to resolving these issues. One such is an NGO named "**DilSe**" in Fort Kochi. This organisation rehabilitates girl children who have been victims of sexual abuse. It also conducts awareness classes at schools and workplaces on prevention of child abuse. I was successful in organising awareness classes at NCS Kochi and Naval KG Kochi and the response has been tremendous.

How has it been engaging with people in the civilian sphere for welfare efforts?

During my interaction with the civil crowd doing various social activities, many ask me about my



background. Upon knowing that I am a naval wife, the added respect they accord me is astonishing. With great pride, I consider myself lucky to be a part of NWWA, which has played a major role in shaping me and making me capable of doing these activities.

Please share a little about your own family. We are sure they must be very proud of you and supportive of all the wonderful work you do!

My husband, son and daughter are very supportive of my activities. Sometimes they even accompany me for various welfare events. My husband sets aside a fixed amount separately from our monthly expenses that I use for my charity work. From my experience, I can say that our deeds do influence the children to a great extent and show them how to be kinder and more compassionate to those in need. Without the support of my family, I wouldn't have been able to do my social services at this scale.

Other than your welfare efforts, do you find time for yourself? Any hobbies?

By profession, I am a beautician and an artist. I specialise in oil and fabric painting. I do find time

to pursue my hobby. In fact, I conduct exhibitions and I contribute the money I generate from the sales to my charity missions.

Many women are keen to make a difference to the world around us but are often hesitant to take the first step. What would you say to them?

I'd like to urge all military wives to use their platform as part of the naval community to help others in any way. Even the small things count. It would really be appreciated if we, along with our husbands, try and make a difference to society. We should feel extremely grateful for being a part of such a great community and I think this feeling of gratitude must broaden our minds to help others who don't have the luxuries we enjoy.

Contribute to the efforts of 'Oneness'!

Website: onenessforall.in **Telephone:** 075930 98013

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/onenessoflife/>

THE SNAKE CHARMER

Search and rescue missions that protect reptiles and keep humans safe!

I rescue snakes. It surprises people to hear this because there is a preconceived notion that certain jobs are a male preserve, and snake rescue has always been a man's job in small towns and villages.

So how did I get into doing this?

I have a passion for nature and all living creatures. It inspires me to see them thrive in their natural habitat rather than seeing them in a zoo. In my childhood, my father would take my brother, sisters and I for trekking. That is how my love for nature developed. The sound of birds and the greenery of forests caught my fancy. My father would bring injured birds and kittens home and apply medicine to their wounds. My mother, kind as she is, would feed them just as she would feed us. Knowing the type of bird that stayed with us and observing its habits became a hobby and moulded me into an ardent birdwatcher.



I often went for birdwatching trips and one such trip in the year 2000 changed the way I looked at snakes forever. At the time, my husband was stationed in INS Mandovi in Verem, Goa. I saw a man in the team catching a snake—I was fascinated and wanted to do it myself. Seeing my enthusiasm, some members of the birdwatching team, who were also familiar with reptiles, initiated me into this art.

However, before attempting a rescue all by myself, I observed expert snake catchers. I also spent a lot of time studying books about snakes and learning about various aspects of snake rescue. When I felt I had gained enough knowledge, I attempted a snake rescue on my own. I got my chance to hone my skills in Goa itself, when I rescued a saw-scaled viper. When the snake was sighted, the people around instinctively wanted to eliminate the reptile. But I requested them to desist and rescued it with a stick and a bag. I then called the forest officials to help release it. I was at peace after I did this, knowing both the people and the snake were safe.

It's important to understand that wherever there is greenery, natural cover and prey such as frogs aplenty, there are more chances of snakes coming across in search of food. We intrude into their natural territory with our habitations and then, ironically, blame them for being there!

Many people ask me whether I have ever been bitten during my rescue attempts. Yes, it has happened a couple of times, fortunately by non-poisonous snakes. I have been admitted in hospital in such instances and kept under observation before being cleared. A snake bites instinctively to defend itself. It is also scared of your intention,

though you could only be trying to rescue and relocate it. The first thing to keep in mind is not to make any sound, stamp around or beat the ground with sticks as the vibrations agitate the snake. Today, through years of practice, I am confident of judging the mood of the snake and deciding if it is aggressive just by looking at it.



With my husband’s transfer once almost every two years or so, I had the opportunity to rescue snakes in different parts of the country. When I receive a call, I ask for the location. If it is an identified non-venomous snake in an open area, I ask the informant to leave it alone and allow it to go away by itself. If it is close enough for me to reach the area in reasonable time, I go there. Before starting, I ask the informer to keep an eye on the snake and ensure all exits are barred. I also tell the informer

not to encourage a crowd to gather around the spot. However, over the years and irrespective of the state or location, in most cases there is always a large crowd already gathered by the time I reach the spot, and at least some among them are ready to kill the snake, even if it is non-venomous. I always inform the forest officials before reaching the place. I use a hook to bag the snake. Once it is bagged, I survey the area and give the informant and residents tips to keep the area free of frogs and rats so as not to attract snakes. Snakes play an important role in the ecosystem and rescuing life is the only way you can preserve nature. Hyper-urbanisation has endangered some snake species, but people are gradually becoming aware of the need to save them.

My family has always been supportive—whenever I receive a rescue call, someone in the family stacks my equipment and, in most cases, my husband ferries me across. It has now been five years since my husband retired. We live in Kochi, relatively close to the Naval Base. My association with the Navy continues as I get several snake rescue calls from the base. No matter how late it is, I never hesitate to go if a snake has entered a naval personnel’s residence. It is a pleasure to see a family relieved of anxiety and fear, especially with children at home.

With each snake I save or injured bird that recovers under my care, I remember my father telling us, **“Every living being is God’s creation.”** These words remain an inspiration to me.

- Vidya Raju

An active participant in welfare activities and a volunteer for birdwatching with Cochin Natural History Society (CNHS), Kochi, she has saved a number of injured birds, snakes and other animals. She spreads awareness amongst students on environmental issues and nature conservation.



Snakes are found on every continent of the world, except Antarctica.



RELIEVING STARVATION

The sky was amber, the sun to set
He walked in search of the regulars,
Exhausted, his temple covered in sweat
the street, kids role-playing 'wrestlers'

Faces shine as they recognize
This humble man, from afar
With a package, beyond their fantasies
Kid shouts, "Here's man with a scar!"
He bows to the old couples seated on the
footpath
Lifts up the kid, embracing his knees
Who's taken away for her routine bath
Before the feast would cease.

"It's gruel, and gravy and paapad! "
The tiny boy shrieks.
All hands up in the air,
Like awaiting delicious treats.
Devouring the dainty but dear feast
Like it's their last given morsel
Tame is even the roadside beast,
With gravy all down his torso.

He stood still perceiving the scenes
Fulfilment, from the filling guts
The eagerness, and how the bowls are clean
The old couples retrieving to their huts.

He walks away like always
As happy as he could be
Feeding his own share to the strays
who pounce, face lit up with glee.

A leaky, creaky dump,
His very own humble abode
Flumps on the hay mat in the corner
That he himself sewed.
Scrapes the empty bowl, impatient.
Longing for some food
Ran out of his ration
To enlighten someone else's mood

Life's unfair, he knows
For a minute he doesn't regret
To witness the smiles he goes
Shares all food without a fret.
Recalls the smiles of the homeless,
Their blessings in murmurs, even tears
He thanks almighty for the roof above
Rests his eyes, conceives about the world, how
Some stomachs remain empty
Some full to the brim
Some full with sufficient
Some merely happy.



- Gayathri Menon

She is currently pursuing B.A English and Communication skills in Stella Maris College, Chennai. She is an avid reader and a psychology enthusiast. Her hobbies include painting, watching stand-up comedy and singing.

NWWA COMMITTEE - PORT BLAIR



GLIMPSES



BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIP



ANNUAL GENERAL BODY - MEETING



DECODING ADOLESCENCE



OUTREACH - VISIT TO SEVA NIKETAN



HEALTH CHECK-UP CAMP



WORKSHOP ON MIND, BODY AND BREATH

SEWA PARAM DHARMA

॥ सेवा धर्म परम गाहनो योगिनां पयगमयः ॥



Unexpected kindness received can brighten up our day. A simple gesture can bring a smile in someone's life.

According to Indian civilisational ethos, "sewa dharma" is one of our prime duties. The concept of *sewa* is deep and often difficult to comprehend in its entirety. The common understanding is that it 'implies an act, word or thought that helps to mitigate the suffering of others and increase their happiness'.

Doing *sewa* is akin to worshipping god and helps attain ultimate internal happiness. I try to be associated with an old age home or orphanage wherever I am posted. Even though quite a few old age homes are well sponsored, there are times when expensive medical care is beyond the reach of these homes. Though medical officers are attached to every old age home, the guidance of specialists may be sought in certain cases, but this too may not always be affordable. I consider it my duty then to extend a helping hand especially being from the medical field; for example, when old, devastated people are brought in from the

streets, generally in a critical condition with co-morbidities, their malnourished & emaciated bodies perhaps infested with maggots or with uncontrolled biochemical parameters leading to complications. An external helping hand without any thought of reward in any form during such times lightens the burden of charity workers and motivates them to help more ravaged senior citizens.

Actual happiness is when these senior citizens greet me with a big smile after recovery. Visiting them whenever there is a need and spending time with the residents during festivals or joyous occasions gives me great pleasure. When I celebrate my birthday with them, it brings meaning to my life. I want my children also to experience this bliss, so I encourage them to celebrate their birthdays in orphanages. The importance of birthday cake and return gifts is only known when we share it with the underprivileged and needy. This is like a life lesson that will always remain with them, shaping them up to good, empathetic human beings.

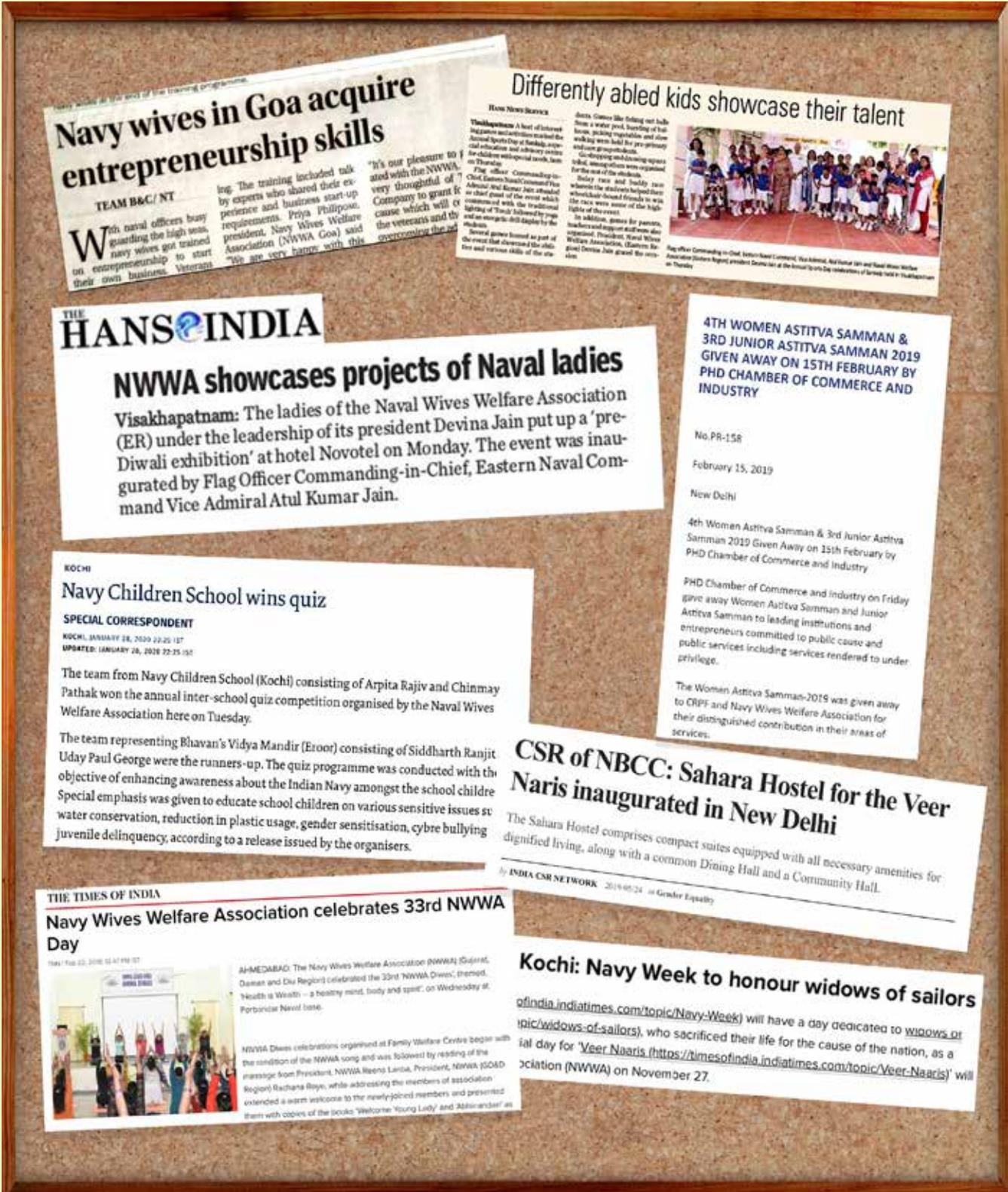
It is my ardent desire to serve the less fortunate so that I can alleviate their misery, grief and distress to some extent. '*Sewa*' acquires high position in one's spiritual life if it is done silently, without expectation of any reward, name or fame, and without hurting the sentiments of the beneficiaries. Once we immerse ourselves into this path wholeheartedly, it becomes a part of our system.



- Surg. Cdr Madhuri Matta

NWWA IN THE PRESS

Some NWWA Welfare initiatives from the past year that were covered by the media



Naval wives are carving out their own identities today, says first lady of ENC

Siligna Mehta
@timesgroup



Devina Jain

Vishakhapatnam: While Navy Week has been highlighting the achievements of the men-in-white, the multifarious activities taken up by the Navy Wives Welfare Association (NWWA) deserve accolades too.

NWWA is involved in a range of activities, from women empowerment, entrepreneurship, rehabilitation of widows to providing them a platform to showcase their talents, conducting outreach programmes and reaching out to senior citizens, orphans and educating needy children, says Devina Jain, president of NWWA and wife of ENC chief Vice Admiral Anil Kumar Jain.

She adds that the role of navy wives has changed with the changing times. "As president of Navy's Eastern Region, I ensure that all our branches perform

Placement-oriented vocational courses in embroidery, beautification, painting, tailoring are offered through Pragati, and fashion designing through Shyogdia. Another important committee is Sahara, which looks after the rehabilitation of deceased personnel's wives and extends moral support, medical aid, financial security and job opportunities. Sakshi is the counselling arm for various marital or family issues.

Besides being naval wives, these women are keen on car-

services and so on. They enthusiastically take part in various social and cultural competitions and activities," informs Devina.

Some of the prominent NWWA committees include Prakriti for environment conservation and plantation drives, Aarogya for medical, health and fitness, Sparsh to provide economic, basic utility and medical needs to orphanages, old age and destitute, home and Ashirwal for senior citizens, Saachar, which is the li-

School children connect with Indian Navy through art

By *Connect Digest* - November 15, 2019

As part of Navy Week 2019 activities, the Navy Wives Welfare Association (NWWA) Gujarat, Darrang Diu Naval Area and Navy Children School (NCS), Porbandar conducted a drawing and painting competition for NCS students. This annual event was conducted to promote awareness about Indian Navy amongst future generations.

Kochi: Navy hands over new house to flood-hit family

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Published Feb 10, 2019, 3:52 am IST
Updated Feb 10, 2019, 3:57 am IST

The project was being steered by INS Vendarathy and has been completed within four months," the Navy said.



facebook



Nirmala Sitharaman

18 फरवरी 2019 को 7:21 सुबह को

Smt #NirmalaSitharaman interacts with the members of the Navy Wives Welfare Association (NWWA) on 'Initiative to Empower Women' at New Delhi.



Organ Donation session with Navy Wives Welfare Association (NWWA)

ORGAN India conducted an awareness session on organ donation with the wives of Indian Navy personnel on 8th August, 2019 at Varunika naval auditorium, Chanakya Puri, Sunayana Singh, CEO, ORGAN India and Dr. Geetika Vashisth, Senior Project Manager, ORGAN India took the session. The session was attended by Ms. Renu Lamba, President, NWWA along with other board members and around 120 members of Navy Wives Welfare Association. A special thanks to Adithya/Anil and Commander V Viswanath for organizing the session.

ANC Observes NWWA Week

Andaman Sheekha (<http://reflectornews.in/author/andaman-sheekha/>)
February 25, 2019 (<http://reflectornews.in/2019/02/25/>)
0 zero comment (<http://reflectornews.in/city/anc-observes-nwwa-week/#respond>)



NWWA (ER) holds orientation capsule for young sailors' wives

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @vishakhapatnam

A two-day orientation capsule for sailors' wives married for less than five years was organised by the ladies of the Eastern Fleet under the aegis of NWWA (ER). President of NWWA (ER) Devina Jain presided over the programme. About 190 young sailors' wives attended the capsule on both days, according to a release here on Saturday.



On the first day, the orientation presented an overview of Navy organisation, key leadership positions in the Navy and NWWA and role of the wives in building a strong support system at home that becomes a pillar of strength for the might of the Indian Navy.

The orientation covered a variety of subjects including the do's and don'ts of

the importance of proper dressing, behaviour and conduct by the wives towards husband's seniors and juniors as well as in public spaces as they are also now the face of the Indian Navy.

Eleven wives received copies of Abhinandan book from Devina Jain. Jain encouraged the young wives to give time and talent contributions towards NWWA.

On the second day, a presentation on

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- Formed a Joint Venture Company named Hooghly Cochin Shipyard Limited (HCSL), located in Kolkata, to cater to emerging opportunities in Inland Waterways segment

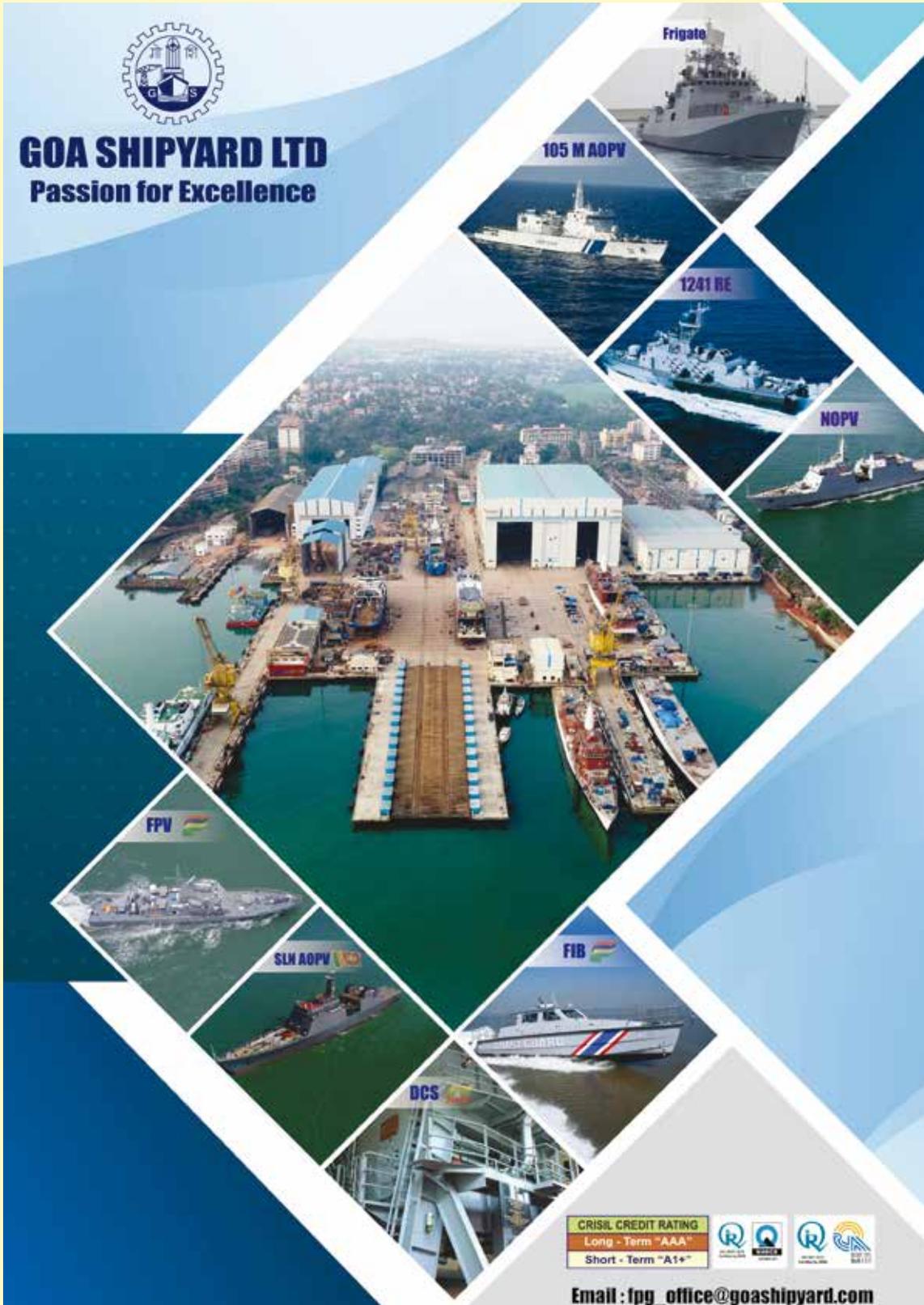


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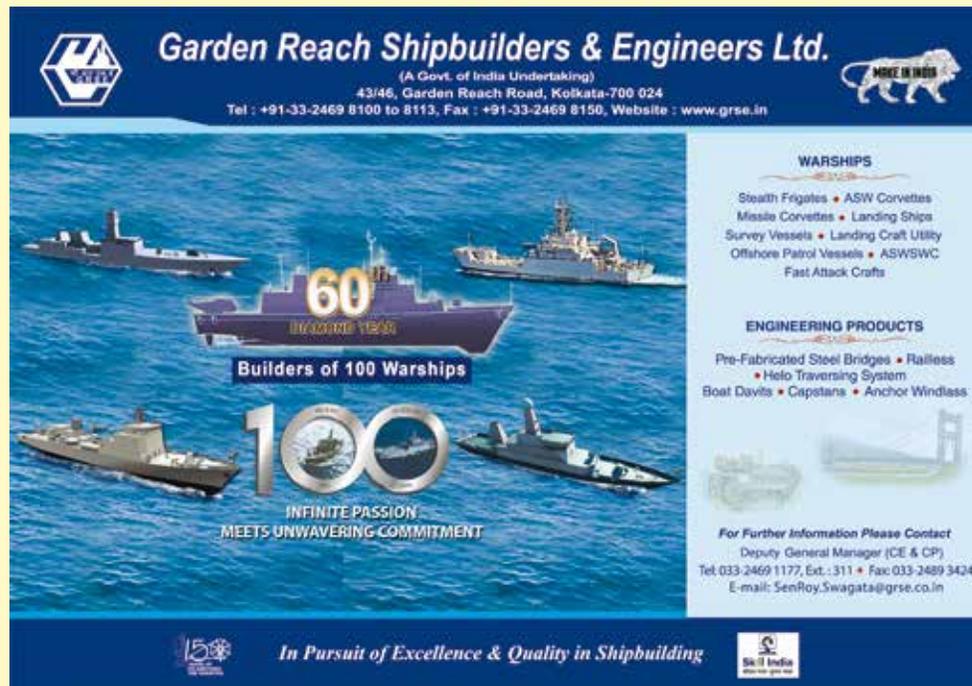
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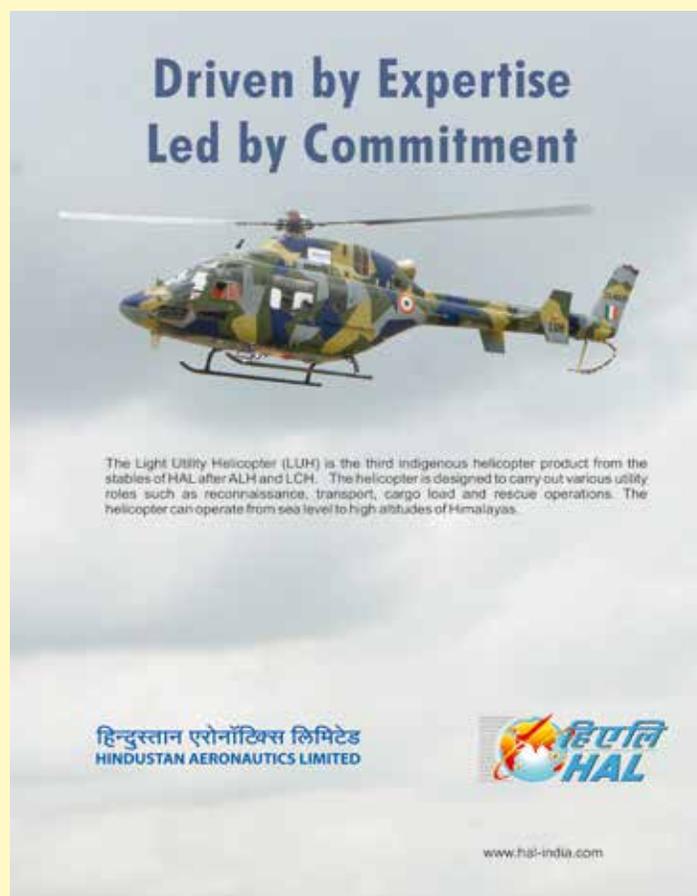
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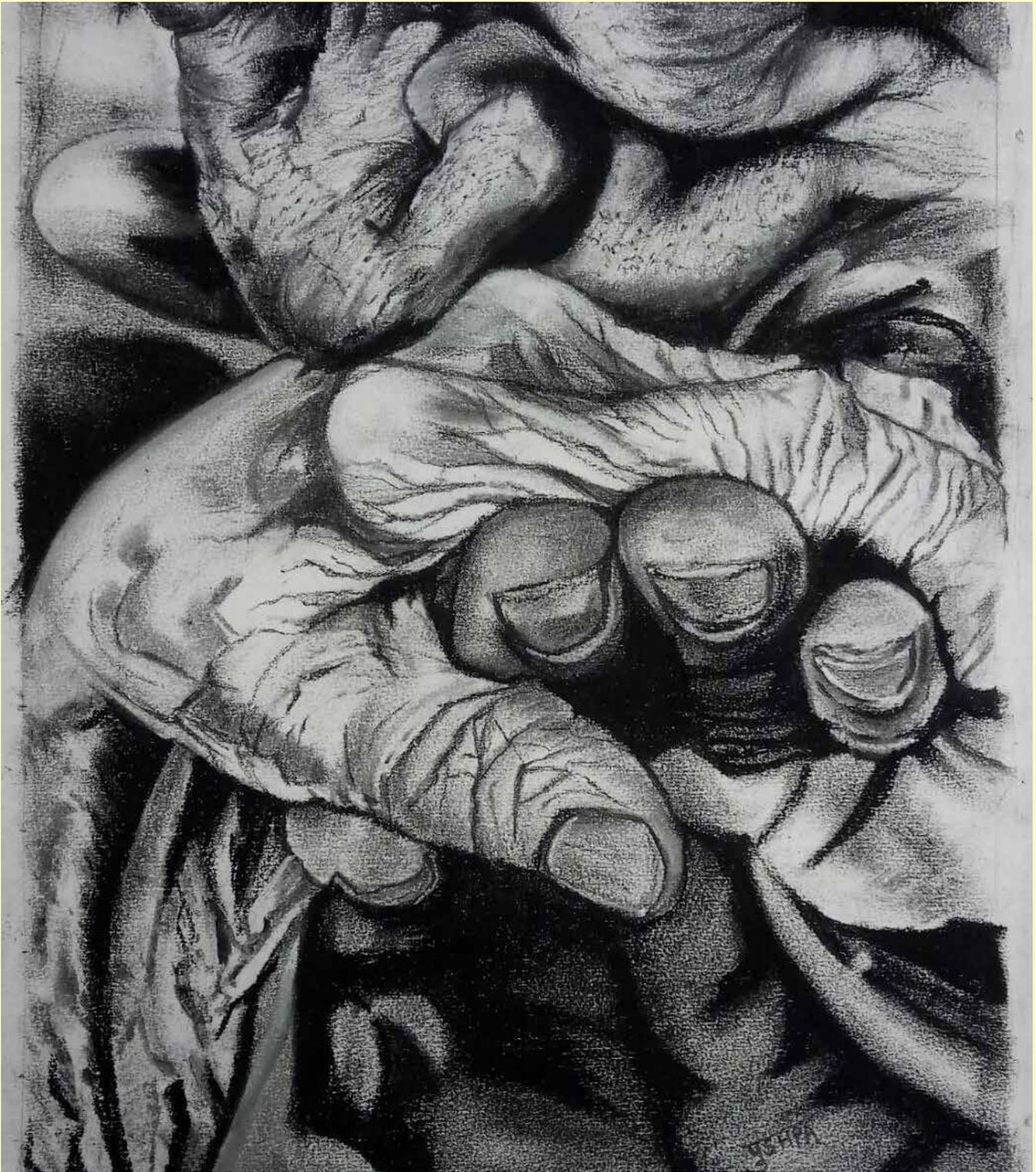
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Reach of NWWA





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