

# Network

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### Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of NETWORK, IRMA.

## Editorial

Soaring temperatures have left the country parched, with parts of it in the grips of a crippling drought, not to mention forest fires all across the mountainous bandwidth. Even as the heat wave is sending people scuttling indoors, it is the rural sector that appears worst hit with women, especially, having to walk long distances to fetch water for the entire family. Some villages have resorted to instant polygamy ensuring a greater number of hands to fetch water! This ritual of convenience reinforces the notion of discrimination women face in our villages. Prof. Saswata N. Biswas, who conducted an extensive study in rural India, discovered the extent to which rural women are exploited and discriminated against in spite of the government's attempts at empowering them through Mahila Sabhas. His article 'A rickety platform' is deeply perceptive and worth a read as it ponders many gender-related questions.

Moving away from the ruralscape and into the city the gender question can stand on its head sometimes, as showcased in the movie 'Ki and Ka'. The blockbuster by R. Balki goes beyond the gender equation, however, to question why a woman's worth needs to be evaluated against norms set up for men. The movie review 'Not simply a gender bender' by our in-house film critic tackles these truisms and more.

Scholars have always sought to uncover truths about the universe. This is a given in civilizations seeking advancement and development. That is the reason scientific exploration is so important. Karl Popper, an Austrian born philosopher and a critic of conventionalism and relativism in science, contended that a theoretical statement or hypothesis needs to come into conflict with observation if it is to be questioned. He was of the view that the unfalsifiable is important for science. Suddhachit Mita, an FPRM student at IRMA, has written an interesting piece on Popper's views in 'Falsifiability as a criterion'.

On a more utilitarian note, marketing is the mantra of success in the present consumerist age. Marketing gurus have, for long, argued in favour of marketing contributing to economic growth. Prof. Pratik Modi writes in support of this view in his article 'The missing market orientation', throwing up some interesting revelations.

IRMA has been, for long, an icon of rural management and development- a unique institution for that reason alone. We take pride in the fact that our graduates prefer to make a difference instead of big bucks. An interview with an alumnus, who heads a well-known care giving centre, illustrates the point amply. At the end of the day, we are all proud to be part of the Colossus called IRMA.

Towering over its contemporaries, the Colossus serves as an inspiration to many. This is what drives people from all walk of life and all ages to visit the institution. An enlightening piece by Pooja Mannari's entitled 'Just visiting' makes an entertaining and insightful reading.

The rest of the fare, including columns like 'The Last Word' and 'Book Review', not to mention Hindi poetry from the erudite pen of Prof. Paresh Bhatt, will continue to regale you, I am sure. We have added another column entitled 'Showcase' to highlight some of the happenings at IRMA.

Last, but not the least, I cannot thank the readers of 'Network' enough for their unstinted support and encouragement. Do keep reading us and providing your valuable feedback. Thank you all and good luck!

**Indrani Talukdar**  
(Editor)



## Caring when life comes full circle

*An interview with an IRMA alumnus who is also the founder of a prominent care giving centre*



Looking at Anant Kumar, Managing Director of Life Circle Senior Services, one is assured of one fact- IRMA's cap will never be short of feathers. Before launching

the organization that is now almost synonymous with his name, Anant Kumar was the founder CEO of the Life Spring maternity hospital chain in India. It was under his stewardship that Life Spring won twin honours- the UN World Business and Development Award and the Frost & Sullivan Award.

Kumar has also served on various prestigious committees including the European Union funded project for strengthening Human Resources for Health in India and Merck's expert forum of maternal mortality supported by WHO and USAID's Market Based Partnership for Health.

Anant Kumar spoke about his Hyderabad-based organization Life Circle Senior Services in a free-wheeling interview with Network.



*Home nursing services for the elderly*



*Life Circle provides care giving services to the elderly*

**Network:** How would you introduce your NGO to a novice?

Anant Kumar: Life Circle Senior Services provides subscription-based professional care giving and home nursing services to chronically ill and bed-ridden seniors in India. Our team of caregivers and nurses provides hourly to daily care giving and nursing care –vitals, injection, and dressing – depending on the seniors' needs.

**Network:** Can you tell us a little bit about yourself in terms of the context of your present work?

Anant Kumar: I live in Hyderabad, while my aging parents live 1500 km away in Delhi. My father has multiple health problems including diabetes and hypertension. My mother, too, has similar health problems with added issues around mobility such that she requires a care taker to help her perform her basic day-to-day activities that we all take for granted including eating, washing up and so on.

**Network:** Do tell us about the genesis of your organization Life Circle.

Anant Kumar: This was around 2012, when I was working as CEO of Life Spring in Hyderabad. My mother was required to undergo a kneecap replacement surgery in a Delhi hospital. Unfortunately, the surgery was not successful and the recovery took nearly six months, which left my mother so mentally and physically exhausted that she stopped walking altogether and became bed-ridden. At that point my family felt an urgent need to engage a care giver to look after her. It turned out to be a monumental task. Despite my being part of the healthcare industry, I was unable to find a caregiver for my mother. After talking to several people and trying to get recommendations for well-trained and qualified care givers, I realized that I wasn't the only one in need of such services.



Life Circle, let me tell you, came up in 2013.

**Network:** What were some of the difficulties that you faced? More specifically, what was the turning point?

Anant Kumar: We faced situations of wrong practices with informal

providers. At one time, one of the providers we had hired ran off with our money. Even when we were able to locate someone finally we realized that the person only had experience as a housekeeper, but not in caretaker services. We were left with only one solution, which was to take turns looking after my mother. This was posing difficulties in the context of coordination and execution for my family. For someone working in the healthcare industry I felt frustrated in being unable to identify the right person

to take care of my mother. Just consider this: we were not in a small town or village but the capital city of India! This was the turning point that made me think about the need for professional care

giving and nursing to our seniors in India.

**Network:** Care giving is a common problem, meriting more attention than it getting at the moment.

Anant Kumar: Yes, that's true. Many families in India have similar issues and end up taking care of the sick person in their family by themselves.

*Unfortunately, the surgery was not successful and the recovery took nearly six months, which left my mother so mentally and physically exhausted that she stopped walking altogether and became bed-ridden. At that point my family felt an urgent need to engage a care giver to look after her. It turned out to be a monumental task.*

India's senior citizen population of 103 million is the second largest in the world, and is growing rapidly. Almost 36 percent of urban seniors above 60 are immobile. This figure goes up to 60 percent by the time seniors cross 70 years. Very high rates of medical complications have been seen among the bed-ridden patients. Studies have shown that most bed-ridden patients suffer from urinary infections (as high as 83 percent) and bedsores (54 percent). In most cases, the care giving is provided by relatives of patients who divert their time from economically productive ventures to care for bed-ridden elders. Alternately, families engage informal service providers whose services are untrustworthy heckled by frequent absenteeism, lack of training, or very high costs without any service guarantee.

**Network:** Please tell us a little bit more about Life Circle

Anant Kumar: Ever since its inception, Life Circle has been focusing on delivering professional care giving and nursing services to hundreds of families in Hyderabad, India. With more than 200,000 hours of professional caregiver services provided so far, we differentiate our services by providing trained and

verified care givers to seniors. We also help prepare an exhaustive Patient Care Plan to guide care givers and family members about the level of care required, providing flexibility in care giving services delivered (two hours to 24 hours depending on the level of care needed), which makes terms and conditions of the care giver engagement transparent. Our web and mobile platform for patients and family members enable easy search, engagement, and monitoring of care givers.

We also partner with neighbouring hospitals or primary care centres to ensure the continuity of care. After leaving a hospital the patient does not, generally, have any care continuity. By connecting with hospitals the elderly are guaranteed comprehensive and coordinated care since patient information is shared with the hospitals. This is a crucial aspect of our holistic approach towards addressing this social issue. By connecting doctors, specialists, physicians and other allied services we can improve the quality of care delivered to everyone, especially senior citizens.



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## A rickety platform

*Meant for women's empowerment, Mahila Sabhas are yet to justify their existence in the villages of India*

The introduction of the 73rd amendment to the Constitution (1993) was a landmark move. For the first time in India's history was a revolutionary step taken in the direction of bringing political power to women. In terms of women's participation in local governance, this was hailed as one of the biggest achievements anywhere in the world. According to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj there are about 1.2 million elected women representatives in Gram Panchayats spread across India. The question still remains: has the move translated into real power for women? The picture mirroring the answer is a pretty sobering one. Amplified feminine presence in Panchayats has not resulted in a proportionate increase in the mainstreaming of gender issues. Power inequality in the context of gender is still very high in rural India. While decentralization of power embraces the notion of equality pretty naturally most women in rural India appear untouched by it.

It has been more than two decades since the introduction of Panchayati Raj Institutions or PRIs wherein positive discrimination had been enshrined through constitutional amendment. Whether women feel empowered having become effective participants at local-level democratic institutions or whether they feel subjugated and deprived still needs to be assessed. A recent path-breaking study regarding the effects of female reservation in Panchayats on certain outcome variables reported that both the quality and quantity of



participation have increased in reserved Panchayats. Gender discrimination remains dominant, however, and is part of the rural reality. Reservations notwithstanding, social inequities involving gender and caste seem to have restricted the women from participating with any degree of effectiveness.

Evidence across the world suggests that wherever female participation has not been mandated by law women hold fewer positions in the elected bodies of local governments. Positive discrimination on its own, obviously, does not empower elected women representatives. In India, where they hold one-third of the positions, the women either remain silent spectators or follow the dictates of their husbands.

Several reasons have been cited for the women's lack of involvement in Gram Panchayats including the conservative structure of rural areas, illiteracy, restricted media access, a patriarchic familial structure, and economic dependency. All these factors serve to deprive rural women of requisite skills and, consequently, the power to effectively participate in local governance. Discrimination occurs





despite their wielding the same legal sanctions as their male counterparts. Reportedly, social taboos prevent elected women members from speaking during Gram Panchayat meetings. Studies conducted throughout the country seem to indicate similar outcomes. A case study from Tamil Nadu suggests that women do not, usually, get invited to meetings in male-dominated Panchayats while another study in Odisha suggests that women rarely participate in the electoral process or in the affairs of the Panchayats. Discrimination is sensed constantly and while the women may strongly dislike the discriminatory attitude of men covertly there are large numbers of Panchayat women members who take refutation of their points in the meetings without any form of protest. In Gujarat it was discovered that women were only nominal members of the Panchayat with actual responsibilities being shouldered by male family members. It is in Gujarat that the common term used for the husband of the female Sarpanch is 'Sarpanch Pati' since he is the person who wields the real power.

Caste politics, too, play a role in the rural scenario rather uncompromisingly.

A study conducted by Jayshree Mangubhai, Aloysius Irudayam SJ, and Emma Sydenham in 2009 found that the dominant caste men controlled the resources of the Panchayat while also dictating terms. The female dalit Sarpanchs simply acted as proxies and faced strong opposition from dominant caste males while implementing decisions that could stand to benefit their communities.

There is, however, a flip side to all this since it has been observed that the inhibitions or implicit sanctions imposed by the men tend to diminish once women members start attending the meetings regularly. The former Chief Secretary of Chattisgarh Nirmala Buch observes, "There is a transformation taking place and women are slowly, yet decisively, realizing their new role in terms of asserting their identity, respect, and status. They have now started questioning the male dominance and marked attitudinal shifts are being observed in terms of enhanced status, confidence levels, and increased political aspirations."

A study conducted in Karnataka found that the women associated

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with some form of collective, i.e. SHGs or NGOs, are likelier to participate in political processes at the grassroots level compared to women who are not associated with such organisations. This is partly because such organizations motivate their members even as they organize political awareness activities that include the importance of voting and participation in Gram Sabha meetings among other things. Encouragement on the part of women-oriented social and economic organizations is also likely to push female participation in local-level politics.

According to another Karnataka-based

study women from villages with an NGO in place had greater awareness with regard to the timings and agendas of Panchayat meetings, the powers of the Panchayat, and its sources of income. Female attendance at Grama Sabha meetings is also significantly higher in such villages. Conversely, villages bereft of NGOs were witness to a significantly lowered female participation at meetings. Those who did attend these meetings never raised an issue specifically related to women.

Obviously, structural changes are in order for introducing greater participation in the running of Gram Panchayats. While there is strong merit



**Female attendance at Gramasabha is higher in villages with an NGO presence**

in the argument that the Mahila Sabha is one such step in this direction it needs to be acknowledged that social change is a difficult and slow process. Societies do not change because of changes in legal provisions. Legal provisions create enabling conditions that need to be leveraged in terms of accelerating the process of change. Significantly, one-third reservations for women in Panchayats have given rise to enabling conditions for the fairer sex without making a dent on cultural norms set in concrete. Launching

Mahila Sabhas is, undoubtedly, a step in the right direction as it helps facilitate an enabling environment for the empowerment of rural women. However, in order to create a new social order of equality between men and women in an essentially patriarchal society, a lot of effort has to go into building a gender sensitive society.

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## Not simply a gender bender

*A movie on role reversals is more than the obvious meriting a deeper look*



What happens when a woman works towards building a career and the man a home? R. Balki's blockbuster movie *Ki and Ka* answers these questions and then some. A pleasant roller coaster ride ensues when thirty-something Kia (played by Kareena Kapoor Khan) meets the younger Karan played with underplayed effortlessness by Arjun Kapoor. The dialogues flow sharp and crisp and before the two protagonists know it, they have tied the knot. Karan's proposal to Kia inside Delhi's rail museum is riddled with hilarity, thanks to some witty

dialogues sparking the screen with humour.

R. Balki, the film's director, makes no bones about challenging the set norms surrounding Indian marriages even with a shoal of critics and doomsayers pouncing on him mercilessly. This is not a celluloid commentary on gender issues as most critics and cine-goers have touted – from the rooftops, if you please – but goes down deeper. Yet, unfortunately, most people – including the so-called cognoscenti – don't seem to have got it right. On the surface it does seem like a slick plot with all the right materials for a pot-boiler owed to a clever storyline, punchy dialogues, and some good acting. Some might even say that it stands the gender question on its head thanks to the role reversal on the part of the protagonists. Others might believe that it is still about reinforcing

gender issues, which is what most critics (rather predictably) have done. But matters go down deeper.

Balki, very cleverly, sets the film in Delhi, a city known for not treating women right. Plus, he has a macho-looking

*Balki skids on slippery ground by introducing his hero as an IIM graduate, something that could disturb a lot of film pundits and viewers given today's competitive environment. This is where one needs to dig deeper as graduates from many top business schools (IRMA included) choose to work with grassroots' organizations shunning the lure of mega bucks. Karan's efficient home management and deftness at pulling off a lucrative career bespeak managerial skills of a high order. Kia's envy of her house-husband who becomes a household name overnight is a tongue-in-cheek obverse of Abhimaan.*

north Indian actor essaying the main role. He has, in fact, a bus conductor throwing a question at the heroine, “*Arrey madam, Delhi kab se auraton ke liye safe ho gayi* (since when Delhi has become safe for women?)”. It is a sly jibe at Karan’s masochism but the director allows the hero to be a Delhi guy pulling the punches, literally speaking. Never mind that his high end corporate businessman father (played by Rajat Kapoor) runs down his yin attuned son at every given opportunity, even when he becomes a mega hit with housewives who make him their dream man.

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home management and deftness at pulling off a lucrative career bespeak managerial skills of a high order. Kia’s envy of her house-husband who becomes a household name overnight is a tongue-in-cheek obverse of *Abhimaan*. Getting the late Hrishikesh Mukherjee’s blockbuster’s protagonists, Jaya and Amitabh Bacchhan, to act in a delightful cameo is a *coup d’état* that only Balki could have pulled off. Jaya’s observation that she had “no choice” but to give up her career does not fail to rub off on the audience.

On a final note, if *Ki and Ka* is seen as nothing more than a film about role-reversal it will be a pity. Because it is, ultimately, about valuing the tireless toil of the housewife who goes without, as Arjun Kapoor says, “recognition, designation, and a visiting card”.

A must see for those who haven’t already.

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## Just visiting

*The guest program at IRMA plays a vital role in projecting the institute's image to the outside world, reveals an insider in charge of it*



During my last guest program the sight of agricultural college students go filing past with earnest and set expressions made me smile. Quite a few of them, predictably, came up asking me about admissions to IRMA. When the chimes rang out some of them rushed – once again, predictably – towards the towering icon clicking away furiously with their cell phone cameras like excited children...

Some things never change. It has been almost 15 years now- a decade and a half, no less. Yet I feel the same rush of excitement as when I did all those years ago while hosting my first guest program. But wait... did I just say that things have remained the same? Well, not really. For 15 years ago things *were* different. That was when India was steeped in the aftermath of the White Revolution and the air was imbued with a kind of bucolic idealism. IRMA, obviously, was not unaffected by it. At

the helm of it all was India's White Knight, the late Dr. Verghese Kurien. Walking tall, above the heads and shoulders of his contemporaries, he was firmly grounded in reality. It was this quality that all of us working at IRMA had imbibed from him. This realistic-spiritual infusion did not fail to touch the visitors to the institute.

Guest programs fell into my lap rather providentially. I was working at the reception desk and was used to attending visitors to IRMA. The MDP Program Officer, Janak Patel, was also in charge of the guest program. I was partially influenced by him and more strongly by some senior officers who would come to the institute with visitors in tow. I found myself deeply impressed with their presentation and style and, above all, the confidence they exuded while introducing IRMA and its high points. Working in India's premium management institute I wanted to

know more about its inception, working, the entire narrative associated with it as a matter of fact. So, I began to accompany Mr. Patel in his guest programs and found myself rapt by what I was learning.

*That's how it all started and it has remained so till today. Today the 'guest program' has a place of pride in my head and heart. Meeting people from different walks of life and mingling with different cultures and nationalities has enriched me as a person and contributed to my growth and well-being.*

in making me shift uncomfortably. These plastic Madonnas are in sharp contrast to the enthused youngsters who dash super charged into their parents' distinguished alma

Whenever Mr. Patel would be on leave I willingly undertook the responsibility of showing the guests around. That's how it all started and it has remained so till today. Today the 'guest program' has a place of pride in my head and heart. Meeting people from different walks of life and mingling with different cultures and nationalities has enriched me as a person and contributed to my growth and well-being.

And that's not all.

Over the years, I have been able to mentally class IRMA's guests into categories. There are some who turn up as though they were 'born to visit', so bright and vivacious are their personalities. They are the ones who are genuinely delighted to pay the institute a visit and pay rich tributes to it and, in some way, leave, enriched.

Then there are those who wear a plastic smile pasted with the patina of cordiality. Such guests always succeed

mater. This progeny sect displays unprecedented enthusiasm in meeting the IRMA staff and faculty vicariously living, thereby, their progenitors' golden years.

There is one class of guests that always put me on my toes. These are the business and delegate types. Some pay a visit seeking a lucrative tie-up with IRMA while others turn up exploring ways of being connected with the institute. Making a good first impression becomes a priority with such visitors. Since they, too, want to leave a good impression behind the whole exercise turns into a subtle jugglery of tact and self-interest. Some associations, I need to mention, have been lasting ones while others faded into oblivion with time.

Like everything else, there is a downside to this (additional) component of my work profile. This is constituted by overbearing, boorish guests. These pompous floaters waft inside the



institute full of “information” on how to run it. Some of these self-appointed authorities on rural management want nothing better than to douse my ears with their superior “information” and “knowledge”, especially where rural management is concerned.

The most predictable guests are the politicians who are full of “why isn’t special granted to students with agricultural backgrounds?” and “why is IRMA charging such a high fee knowing full well that the rural poor can’t afford it...?” I have also learned to brace myself against questions pertaining to the institute’s reservation policy and the most predictable of all, “We want to start a similar institute in our state; will IRMA help?” Follow ups, needless to add, are a rarity.

And last but not the least, who can forget the ‘tourist’ group that drops in with the sole purpose of sightseeing? This group looks around with eager eyes, drinking in the sights, without paying a single heed to my brief.

But then, who cares? On my part, I love having guests over. They have taught me so much over the years. I have learnt the importance of positivity, of maintaining eye contact, and modulating my voice. And that’s not all. Doing guest programs has made me something of a professional at it while enhancing my personality overall. Thank you IRMA!

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## 2016 Placements at IRMA

The placement week for the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) was scheduled during February 22-28, 2016. With an unprecedented batch size of almost 200, placements at the institute for the graduating batch of its Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management (PGDRM) has been 100%. Prof. Madhavi Mehta was the placement coordinator for the year.



Over 350 jobs offers were received from about 100 recruiters for the batch. While 13 participants accepted the pre-placement offers made to them during their internship phase, one was a sponsored

candidate and four opted out of the placement programme this year.

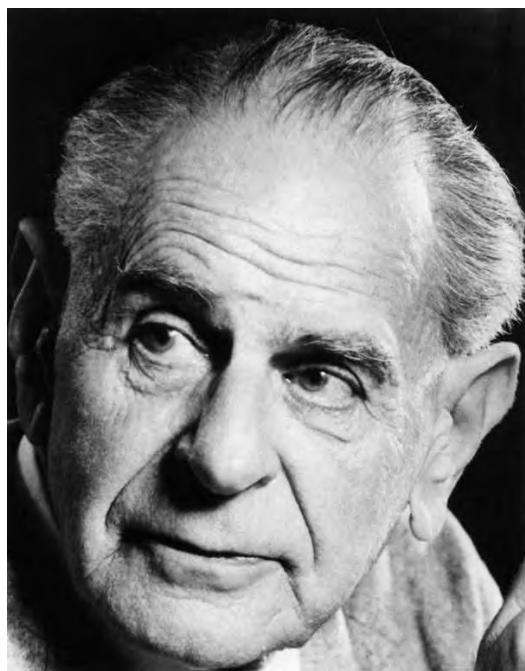
The largest number of jobs offered by a single company was by the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), as it did last year as well. Cooperatives/Producers Collectives as a sector offered job to one fourth of the batch. The other single largest recruiter this year was HDFC Bank in the agifinance-microfinance sector with 11 selections. This was followed by ICICI-Lombard and National Payments Corporation of India, taking 10 and 9 students respectively.

Continued on page 17...



## Falsifiability as a criterion of demarcation

*Austrian-British philosopher Karl Popper was well known for his rejection of the classical inductivist views in favour of empirical falsification*



Sir Karl Raimund Popper (1902-1994), a critic of conventionalism and relativism in science and a self-proclaimed “critical-rationalist”, is a seminal figure in the philosophy of science in the twentieth century. He was born in Vienna, which was regarded by many as the cultural capital of the world at the time. His mother was instrumental in instilling in him the love for music, which was pivotal in shaping his thought, including his ideas regarding the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. He attended the University of Vienna where he was exposed to the psychoanalytic theories propounded by Freud and Adler as well as Marxist theory. He also had the opportunity to listen to a lecture on the theory of relativity by Einstein in

Vienna. He was very impressed by the ‘critical spirit’ in Einstein’s theory. The complete absence of the latter in Marx and Freud, on the hand, rendered their theories impervious to disconfirmation according to Popper. This too, he believed, was of crucial significance.

A key difference between the two theories (Freud’s Psychoanalytic theory and Einstein’s Theory of Relativity), Popper conjectured, was the inherent ‘risk’ in Einstein’s theory that could lead to its potential *falsification* whereas the psychoanalytic theory was, even in principle, not falsifiable. The element of risk in Einstein’s theory came from the fact that highly improbable or even seemingly impossible consequences, in the light of the Newtonian paradigm (such as light bending towards massive bodies, a fact confirmed by Eddington in 1919) would – potentially – follow from the theory. If they did not, the theory would be falsified. Similarly, Popper was critical of the Marxian account of history while admitting that it had started out as a truly predictive theory; when it was falsified on facts the theory was worked on by the addition of ad-hoc hypotheses to reflect these facts. Hence, Marxism, a scientific theory, was reduced to a “pseudo-scientific dogma”. Popper concluded that “theories” including the psychoanalytic theory and revised Marxism were synonymous with primitive myths and not with modern science.

Such experiences propelled Popper to use falsifiability as a benchmark for

demarcating science from non-science. A theory, he said, would be deemed to be scientific if it were incompatible with at least some of all possible empirical observations. On the other hand, a theory compatible with all such possible observations, either because it has been modified on an ad-hoc basis to accommodate these observations (Marxism) or it has been constructed to be compatible with all possible observations (such as psychoanalytic theories), is unscientific. A theory that is unscientific, being unfalsifiable, may however, become scientific with the development of technology or its further refinement.

Popper wrote three major books between 1935 through 1957. The first book, in German, was *Logik der Forschung* (1935), which was translated

*Popper wrote three major books between 1935 through 1957. The first book, in German, was Logik der Forschung (1935), which was translated into English as The Logic of Scientific Discovery in 1959. This book provides an overview of his ideas on science and its philosophy.*

into English as *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* in 1959. This book provides an overview of his ideas on science and its philosophy. His other books include *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957), which criticizes the notion of historical laws, and *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945), which is a treatise on philosophy of society, history and politics.

### Demarcation and Falsifiability

According to Popper, the key issue in the philosophy of science is that of demarcation, that is, distinguishing science from non-science, such as metaphysics, Freudian psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology, which is a psychological method formulated by the Austrian psychiatrist Alfred Adler. The 'individual' in individual psychology refers to an

"indivisible whole" patient. It, however, takes into consideration societal factors in determining a person's psychology. Popper accepts as valid Hume's critique of induction saying that induction is not used by a scientist, generally speaking. He further argues that all observation is theory-driven and selective and debunks the Baconian-Newtonian paradigm of "pure observation" as the initial steps in theory formation. Or, in other words, there is no observation without theory. Thus, he challenges the hitherto dominant view that the inductive methodology distinguishes science from non-science. Popper, then, rejects

induction as a valid method for scientific investigation and, instead, substitutes falsification for it. Popper says that a theory may be corroborated as

scientific only if it endures truly 'risky' predictions that have the potential to turn out false. Logically speaking, the test of a scientific theory is an attempt to falsify it with only one counter-instance rendering the whole theory false. As is clear, Popper's idea of demarcation follows from the fact that there exists a logical asymmetry between verification and falsification. That is to say, as Hume argued, it is not possible to conclusively verify a universal proposition by induction, whereas one counter-example falsifies the universal law.

A true scientific theory, thus, according to Popper, is prohibitive since it forbids or prohibits certain events. Hence, testing and falsification of the theory is possible but not its logical verification.

Hence, a theory, even after being subjected to very rigorous testing for years, should not be assumed to be verified. One can say, on the other hand, that it has been highly corroborated and is a fit candidate for the best available theory till it is (if and when) falsified.

However, Popper distinguishes between the *logic of falsifiability* and the relevant *applied methodology*. For instance, if a single ferrous metal (such as iron) can be shown to be unaffected by magnetic fields, then it cannot be said that all ferrous metals are affected by magnetic fields. This is the Popperian paradigm: a scientific law is falsifiable but not conclusively verifiable. As can be seen, it goes against the grain of inductive thought. However, experimental or methodological errors bring in a dimension of uncertainty and it needs to be asked if there was an experimental error that affected the outcome of the experiment.

Popper admits that in practice, a single counter-example is not sufficient for falsifying a theory; that is why scientific theories are retained in many cases, in spite of anomalous evidence. One recent example follows. In 2011, the OPERA experiment, a collaborative effort between CERN, Geneva and LNGS, Italy, for detecting neutrinos – a subatomic particle – reported that neutrinos travel faster than light. Scientists announced the results in September, 2011. However, the scientific world retained faith in Einstein's

theory of relativity specifying an upper limit to the velocity of a particle. Later the team admitted two errors in their experimental set-up .

Another interesting point that Popper makes is that there is no 'unique way' or unique methodology such as induction that paves the way to a scientific theory. The exact manner in which a certain scientist comes to formulate a scientific theory is of no consequence in the philosophy of science. Einstein says something similar:

"There is no logical path leading to the highly universal laws of science. They can only be reached by intuition, based upon something like an intellectual love of the objects of experience."

Based on the criterion of demarcation through falsifiability Popper classified, *inter-alia*, physics, chemistry, non-introspective psychology as sciences, psycho-analysis as pre-science, and astrology and phrenology as pseudo-sciences.

### **A Challenge to Falsifiability**

Gillies describes a challenge to falsifiability as the demarcation criterion, known as the Duhem-Quine thesis. The following presents the gist of the thesis.

Consensus runs high regarding Newton's first law of motion being a scientific law. It turns out that it is not falsifiable. The law states that a body

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continues in its state of rest or in a state of uniform motion in a straight line, unless acted upon by an external impressed force. Let us suppose a body is found neither at rest nor at uniform motion in a straight line and, seemingly, is not acted upon by an external force. This observation apparently refutes Newton's law, but in reality this is not necessarily true. Newton himself observed the elliptical orbits of planets and came to the conclusion that they were acted on by gravitational forces from other celestial bodies.

The issue at hand here is discussed by Duhem (1954) as cited in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

"...the physicist can never subject an isolated hypothesis to experimental

test, but only a whole group of hypotheses; when the experiment is in disagreement with his predictions, what he learns is that at least one of the hypotheses constituting this group is unacceptable and ought to be modified; but the experiment does not designate which one should be changed."

Newton's first law cannot be tested on its own as a standalone hypothesis but only as a theoretical group of hypotheses. In order to achieve meaningful results the law should be used in conjunction with:

- Further assumptions, such as Newton's second and third laws and the law of universal gravitation
- Auxiliary assumptions, mainly that the mass of the sun is much greater than that of the planets

Since the first law is used in conjunction with so many assumptions, it is not possible to refute the law in case what the law predicts is not realized, since further assumptions or auxiliary assumptions could be at fault. Hence, going by the Duhem-Quine thesis Newton's first law is unfalsifiable. Popper answered the issue mentioned above by using a three-level model of types of statements divided on the basis of their falsifiability and confirmability, which Gillies extended.

Gillies points out an interesting area of convergence between Kuhn and Popper. Thomas Kuhn, it may be mentioned, was

*Gillies points out an interesting area of convergence between Kuhn and Popper. Thomas Kuhn, it may be mentioned, was one of the greatest philosophers of science. He propounded the idea of "paradigm shifts" or periodic revolutions when the nature of scientific inquiry in a particular scientific discipline undergoes a drastic and sudden transformation.*

one of the greatest philosophers of science. He propounded the idea of "paradigm shifts" or periodic revolutions when the nature of scientific inquiry in a particular scientific

discipline undergoes a drastic and sudden transformation.

Level 2 theories, such as Newton's first law, cannot be directly falsified through observation. Thomas Kuhn was of the view that the Newtonian paradigm was replaced by the Einsteinian paradigm not through one observation but through a process of scientific revolution. This is expected to be the case of level two theories that are not falsifiable. However, the Popperian schema of falsification applies to level-one theories.

Further, a level one hypothesis such as Kepler's first law (which states that planets orbit around a star in ellipses with the star at one focus of the

ellipse) may be tested by observing the positions of the planet and validating whether these points lie on an ellipse with defined parameters. This may be called *direct confirmation*. Newton's laws, along with a few additional assumptions mentioned earlier, can deduce an approximate form of Kepler's law. Newton's theory is confirmed by observation on planets, motions of pendulum and projectiles, among other things. Confirmation of the Newtonian theory, along with the fact that Kepler's first law in an approximate form obtains from Newtonian theory, points to an *indirect confirmation* of Kepler's law.

### Conclusion

In the social sciences, Popper's falsifiability remains a very strong criterion, where research may be founded on value-laden assumptions. Social scientists willing to subject their research to more difficult tests can show

the way to sound research practice. However, as a student of philosophy of sciences, one would contend that Kuhn's idea of *probabilistic verification* is, in many cases, a superior philosophical guide. Normal science, according to Kuhn, advances by the *probabilistic verification* of competing theories wherein the better theory becomes the most viable one through a process akin to natural selection. There is always an imperfect data-theory fit and if the inconsistency is severe, then testing the theory through falsification will require a *degree of falsification* or *level of improbability* leading to probabilistic verification. Kuhn and Popper, though in many ways at odds with each other, have a semblance of unanimity in this regard.

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(The author is an FPRM participant)

### Continued from page 12...

The average salary of the current batch was Rs. 8.56 lakh per annum, and the median stood at 8.4 Lakh per annum. The maximum salary for the batch stood at 27.39 lakhs.

Like placement 2015, the amplified emphasis on financial inclusion and revival of the Micro Finance sector continued to reflect in the placements at IRMA with Agri-finance and Microfinance sector emerging as the biggest recruiters with about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the graduating batch joining the sector.

Interest in Social entrepreneurship sector continued to increase amongst the graduating batch with six of them recruiting 14 participants.

A total of 25 students chose to take up offers made by Non-Government Development Organizations and Government Development Organizations. These included organizations such as Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, PRADAN, Gramin Shiksha Kendra. Arghyam is a new entrant to the list. In the Government Development organizations/missions Rajasthan Grameen Ajeevika Parishad was joined by MP State Rural Livelihoods Mission as well as the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society and Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) Andhra Pradesh.

## संसार ही बदल गया

निश्छल नयनों में  
 बिरहा की सरिता का,  
 देख कर प्रवाह  
 हृदय हाथ से निकल गया

वेदना के प्रतिबिम्ब की  
 नयनों के आईने में,  
 अठखेलियां देख  
 हृदय मोम सा पिघल गया

असमंजस है मन में  
 एक थिरकन है तन में,  
 सम-अर्पित भावों की  
 प्रतिच्छाया नयन में

निःशब्द नयनों की  
 भाषा को पढ़ सका तो  
 मेरे जीवन का  
 सार ही बदल गया

वेदना की अथाह  
 करुणा की गहराई को  
 देखने में मेरा  
 संसार ही बदल गया

परेश ज. भट्ट

## And thus changed my world

*From eyes guileless  
 The bereaved torrent  
 Is a heartbreak  
 Simply to behold*

*Mirrored through eyes  
 The wounds of pain  
 Melt the heart  
 With miseries untold*

*The mind is in conflict  
 Somatic self undulating  
 A sense of accession  
 The eyes reflecting*

*My life changed  
 When I translated  
 From expressive eyes  
 Their mute argot*

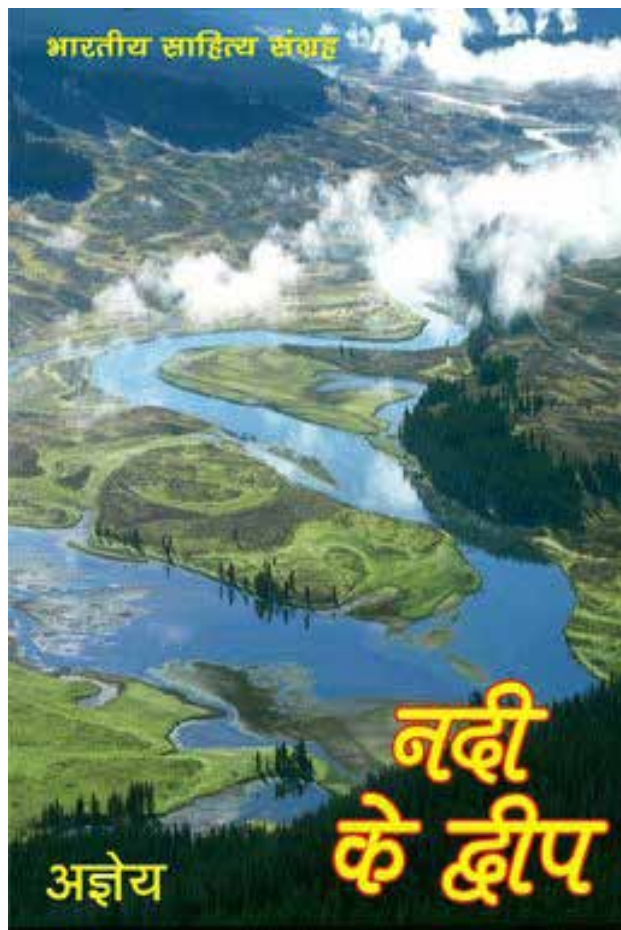
*Diving into the  
 Sea of anguish  
 I paused to look;  
 Thus changed my world*

Translated by  
 Indrani Talukdar



## The essence of being

*Agyey's immortal Hindi classic is a must-read for any lover of world literature, mostly owing to its appeal to the higher self*



loosely translated by many of Agyey's admirers into English as *Islands of a River*. Conversation, both external and internal, serves as a bridge between the four main protagonists- Rekha, Bhuvan, Gaura, and Chandra Madhav. The dialogues and letters reveal the tension and upheavals – the crests and troughs – within and between the main characters. Much like the waves of a river, it is their inner turmoil and ecstasy that drives the plot of the novel, which is a far cry from Agyey's other blockbuster, *Shekhar Ek Jeevani*, which delineates its progressive trajectory within the discourse. As far as the *Islands of a River* is concerned, the trajectory is autonomous and open to scrutiny. The journey within, far from being gradual, is almost evanescent.

Set against the backdrop of the Second World War, the *Islands of a River* questions traditionally held beliefs and convictions (pun fully intended) while underpinning the

philosophy that the greatest joy of life lies in non-fulfillment. As the Physicist philosopher Bhuvan tells Rekha, "Let beautiful things remain beautiful, do not touch them or else they will be spoiled." The invocation is so deeply reminiscent of Gulzar's immortal lines, "I have seen the fragrance of those eyes, do not touch it to impute a relationship..." This is one book that liberates the reader without offering a societal crutch. Besides, one cannot help

There are very few books that can be said to be truly life-changing. *Nadi Ke Dweep* by Sachidanand Hiranand Vatsyayan, who wrote under the nom de plume Agyey, is one such. Written entirely in the reflective genre the book is about personalities, perceptions, and interactions. It is about the essential isolation of the human being who, being part of an enormous heaving entity known as the human society, is essentially an island. Hence the title, *Nadi Ke Dweep*, which has been

commending the writer for conceiving of a male protagonist so replete with yin tendencies.

The mystic master Osho, while strongly recommending *Islands of a River* – the only Hindi novel to feature in his list of must reads – has written, “It is so beautiful that I want to enjoy rather than say anything.

To talk at this height is so difficult...” The dialogues are creatively crafted with citations from the works of literary masters like DH Lawrence, Yeats, and Eliot. It is enough to spark the interest of a die-hard

English Literature aficionado. I cannot help adding that votaries of Bengali Literature, too, will be rapt reading passages of Tagore’s poetry.

Readers of this great epic (can’t think of another word) are bound to be influenced by the chief female

protagonist Rekha who emerges as the most mature character, a contrast to her rather flippant alter ego Chandra Madhav who pursues her and, in one sense, betrays her to her estranged husband. At the other end of the narrative spectrum is the lively Gaura whose character is both complex and

humane and who, ultimately, wins over the hero Bhuvan at the urging of Rekha while still managing to fall short of the latter’s lofty ideals. The islands of the river coexist without touching, in a manner of speaking. Rising above the petty needs of the

self and seeking spiritual - as opposed to mortal – fulfillment is the essence of this brutally honest piece of great fiction. Readers cannot come away without a sense of heightened awareness and self-growth.

*By: Palabra Critica*

## IRMA and Grameen Foundation India to examine how Digital Financial Services can be scaled up

# J.P.Morgan

J.P. Morgan has awarded IRMA a grant of INR 3.9 crores for an 18-month program for building the financial capability of individuals from low-income households. As part of the program, implemented in partnership with Grameen Foundation India, IRMA will investigate the reasons for dormancy of bank accounts held by low-income households and the usage of digital financial services within the same population. The study team will comprise Profs. Rakesh Arrawatia, Vivek Pandey, Shyam Singh, Jeemol Unni and Hari K. Nagarajan and will be supported by the team at Grameen Foundation India.

## *Extracts from Nadi ke Dweep*

Chandra and Rekha are having arguments with each other on “What is Truth...?”. Chandra was saying that Truth is everything, whatever we see around, whatever we experience is Truth. This is the basis and the foundation of Truth. Rekha interrupted...but there is also false in this world, there is also untruth, fraud, illusion...is this also Truth? Or you would like to define Truth in a different way, if you say that everything is truth then all these things also comes into truth. Chandra replied... “No, whatever is...Is Truth and this means it also includes false and doubt. So if I have a doubt or an illusion then its existence also signifies that it is Truth. And if I see ghosts then they are also part of Truth, whether they are there or not, if I see them they are Truth. Or you can also say that existence of Ghosts is my Truth and it might not be yours.” “So this means Truth depends

upon me, on my personal thinking and belief and it's not universal...”, interrupted Rekha. “So Dr. Bhuvan you also think the same way...?” But before Bhuvan could say anything Chandra said, “Yes, Truth is according to you and ‘Your Truth’ cannot be according to anyone else, but you. Everyone has one's own Truth. Truth has a direct connection with you and Truth cannot be indirect. Indirect are the things – the matter. Matter is not the truth but only matter. Knowing about the matter, being aware of the matter are Truth and knowing is different to everybody. My knowing is different from your knowing”. Bhuvan said, “I feel that we are not being able to distinguish between the Truth and the matter. Ghosts exist or not but if they exist for me then it's a reality. So whatever Chandra is saying about matter and truth is understandable but it seems to be the incomplete Truth”. “Why? What is ahead of

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*“Why? What is ahead of it”? Chandra questioned.*

it"? Chandra questioned. Bhuvan, "Matter is a part of the reality. In reality many things come....thoughts, imaginations, incidents, circumstances... these are all a part of the reality which you cannot really call Matter". "I am not saying that but at least it can be called reality, Truth", said Chandra in a way to win the discussion. "In fact this is what I was saying". "No...I would like to differentiate between Reality and Truth. Or you can say that I would like to differentiate between the direct and the indirect Truth", Bhuvan then stopped for a while and resumed, "for example, if we add 2 and 2, it will

come to 4. What you will call this"? Chandra, "Truth...how else can you define it"? Bhuvan, "But I'd not. I will say that it is a reality and all these types of "truths" are called reality. And we can only call them Truth when we have a direct relationship with them, a relationship in which your senses give you the experience of truth. That means the realities which are coming out of our own experience, our feeling and emotions are Truth and those realities which are part of this material world, the realities with which we are not connected to via any emotion then that is called reality but it is not Truth."

### **IRMA enters in to an agreement with the NHPC for Collective Enterprise Promotion**



IRMA has entered into an agreement with the NHPC to work on promoting collective enterprises for livelihood augmentation in the command area of Subansri dam in Assam. This project is a collaborative action research envisaging active participation of NHPC, partner organizations, district administration, and communities. The project also envisages identifying sector-based value chains, climate resilient livelihood opportunities by creating productive assets to be owned by the communities. While NHPC plans to support the project-based interventions to be jointly planned with IRMA the project teams has been trying to encourage government agencies and local communities to contribute keeping in view the convergence of various sector specific development schemes. The project envisages interventions to be time bound and that agents will withdraw. The withdrawal strategy involves training and capacity building of collective enterprises and linking these enterprises to sustainable supply chains. The team comprises Prof. Pramod K Singh, Prof. Harekrishna Mishra, Prof. Madhavi Mehta, and Prof. Ram Manohar Vikas.

### **Ira Tayal, winner of YES ASPIRE Scholarship 2016**



Ira Tayal, a participant of PRM 36, has done IRMA proud by winning the prestigious Yes Aspire Scholarship 2016. Running into its second year the YES ASPIRE to Innovate initiative has rewarded 30 management scholars across India for their entrepreneurial vision, leadership qualities, holistic academic performance, and passion to excel. The competition, which began with 250 students, involved three rounds of rigorous screening and short-listing. All the rounds were conducted online except the personal interview that was conducted telephonically. The winning participants were felicitated during a ceremony in Mumbai on March 30, 2016. Miss Tayal has been awarded a scholarship of Rs. 200000 and an opportunity to participate in various exclusive knowledge events throughout the year. She has also been awarded mentorship by the senior manager of Yes Bank.

Ira Tayal became the second participant from IRMA to be awarded the scholarship in two consecutive years.



## The missing marketing orientation

*A market-based approach is a necessity if income generating interventions are to succeed*

What makes market-based livelihood generation programs tick? Or, in greater probability, not tick?

Marketing researches have, for long, argued, in favour of marketing contributing to economic development and, thereby, raising living standards. Undoubtedly, nurturing linkages between buyers and sellers leads to poverty alleviation. Based on this premise the Government of India (GoI) initiated schemes like IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Program), JRY (Jawahar Rozgar Yojana), SGSY (Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana), SGRY (Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana), and the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) - all aimed at poverty reduction. Provisions under these schemes were meant to provide an integrated package of financial and technical assistance to the rural poor who, by engaging in income generation activities, would be able to improve their standard of living.

The reality is quite the reverse, however.

Many poverty alleviation programs of government and development organizations fail because they ignore the market side of the intervention having focused excessively on the production side. Most development sector organizations begin by concentrating on a product and investing heavily on building the productive capabilities of beneficiaries. Then, subsequently, they go looking for a market for the product. In marketing parlance, such an approach is known as a sales' orientation involving aggressive selling and promotional efforts. The aim, under this orientation, is to sell what has been made as opposed to making what the market wants.

In order to understand how market-based livelihood generation programs work we studied three programs- the making and selling of apricot jam, sea buckthorn juice, and *pashmina* wool clothes. The study was conducted in the remote Ladakh region, which is relatively cut off from the mainland markets of the country. The markets here are based on the local supply of

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goods and tourist demand during the summer season.

The study showed that SHG members were unable to take advantage of the income-generating activities because, firstly, the producers were not connected properly to the market and, secondly, because the producers did not have market information on consumer preferences reducing product acceptability thereby. The principle reason behind the failure, however, is the way the interventions were conceptualized, designed, and implemented. In all the cases it was observed that the selection of the activity was dependent on the availability and proximity of the resources (apricot, sea buckthorn or wool). However, considerations related to market demand estimation, customer need assessment, customer taste and preferences, product variety, and designing in the context of customer demand were neglected- both by the development sector organizations and SHG members.

Let us take the case of Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), a government intervention. High attrition rate, poor accessibility to credit, lack of training and capacity building, and lack of dedicated implementation structure led to the failure of the well-intended employment generation program, which had been launched in April 1999. In its new avatar as the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) it has been addressing issues pertaining to skill building, financial assistance, and administrative

support. And yet, like the SGSY, it has failed to make provisions for building marketing capabilities and market linkages.

To conclude, it may be stated that market-based income-generation programs should not limit their planning to the availability of resources and production skills. They should, rather, take into account the demand size and availability of the market. Before developing production skills or building productive assets the front-end business and customer preferences should be understood. The skill training of beneficiaries should also include marketing skills, negotiation skills, market information collection and processing skills, among other things.

What, then, are the takeaways for policy makers?

From a policy perspective, a deeper understanding of market-oriented developmental planning is likely to improve the sustainability and success of interventions. As far as NRLM is concerned, its underlying policy supports the development of rural enterprises with either a sales or production orientation while neglecting the one aspect – marketing – that could dramatically improve its efficacy. The bottom line, then, is this: any policy guiding market-based income generation interventions needs to adopt a market-oriented approach for better chances of success.

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## Pulling strings in melodic ecstasy

*SPIC-MACAY organized a musical evening featuring the sitar maestro Sri Shubhendra Rao on March 17, 2016*



*Shri Shubhendra Rao (middle) just before his recital*

There is something bewitching about the penumbra of twilight embracing, as it does, the tangibles of existence in its nebulous folds. Add to that Raga Yaman, the supreme melody of dusk and what do you have? An acoustic treat, no less!

A SPIC-MACAY organized musical evening at IRMA was that and more. Featuring the sitar maestro Sri Shubhendra Rao, an able scion of the Senia Gharana and late Pt. Ravi Shankar's illustrious disciple, the event showcased a lively lecture-demonstration deepening the audience's delight and musical erudition. A video presentation

highlighting SPIC-MACAY's achievements was followed by a sitar rendition of Raga Yaman Kalyan, a close cousin of the torchbearer of the Yaman clan. During the alaap, while the soloist's fingers moved over the frets in an expert delineation of the seven notes

– including the sharp Fourth or Madhyam – banned notes like the flat Sixth or Dhaivat and Shuddha Madhyam found their way into the composition with ease and confidence that is the purview of a real master. As the evening sank into the crepuscular shadows of the night, the jod and jhala emphasized the climax of the recital.

The maestro regaled an eager audience with trivia regarding his instrument enlightening them about the double tumba sitar strongly favoured by Ravi Shankar and his followers as opposed to the single tumba preferred by the orthodox

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*The maestro regaled an eager audience with trivia regarding his instrument enlightening them about the double tumba sitar strongly favoured by Ravi Shankar and his followers as opposed to the single tumba preferred by the orthodox revolutionary Ustad Vilayat Khan. He also touched upon the origin of the sitar, which is normally attributed to the 18th century poet, mendicant, and musician Amir Khusro.*

revolutionary Ustad Vilayat Khan. He also touched upon the origin of the sitar, which is normally attributed to the 18th century poet, mendicant, and musician Amir Khusro. Other schools of thought, he said, ascribe the sitar to ancient instruments like the Rudra Veena and the Saraswati Veena and, alternatively, to the Persian lutes.

The next item of the evening was a vilambit gat in Raga Charukesi followed by a drut gat in teentala. A Carnatic raga essentially, Charukesi was brought into the Hindustani musical fold by Pt. Ravi Shankar. Extremely evocative it inspires

feelings of yearning. The song *Jab tu na raha to sari duniya mile bhi toh kya hai* composed by the late Madan Mohan is loosely based on this raga. Western classical aficionados might be enthused to learn that Schubert's Impromptu (Allegro Molto Moderato) from Opus 90 contains fragments closely related to the raga.

The maestro concluded the recital with a folk tune on his immortal instrument. An evening to remember, surely.

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## The saga of slippers

*When the family gossip's precious footwear goes missing chaos results...*



Whenever Naina mausi came down from Mussoorie we braced ourselves for a little family tittle-tattle. If there was anyone conversant with rumour and scandal it was Naina mausi, my mother's third cousin whose mother had married out of the community. It was Naina mausi who would know before everyone else who had got a promotion or who'd become recently engaged and when the nuptials were scheduled. Or who'd recently celebrated their son's *mundan*; in which venue and under what stars. Or which relative had been caught red-handed in a graft case. Her eyes, round as almonds, always expanded expressively and her hands, chubby and paw-like gesticulated wildly in the air.

The form – need I add – was always more enticing than the content.

Naina mausi's nefarious progeny, Abhishek and Anshu aged five and seven respectively, were less welcome on pretty justifiable grounds. On their last visit they had decimated our next-door neighbour's precious rose garden

and tomato saplings. Their gardener had, as usual, roared like an indignant tiger disturbed while sleeping and as usual Naina mausi had turned a deaf ear, smiling indulgently at her two little horrors.

The clan's chief snoop's unseemly apathy could madden the elders to hilarious effect sometimes.

On Naina mausi's last visit the previous summer little Anshu had spread the gram-flour batter for the onion *pakor*as our maid, Usha, had set aside for the evening's tea all over the drawing room sofa. The plush silk green cover now had a peculiar jaundiced appearance. My father had simply turned the young brat upside down and spanked

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him so soundly across the bottom that his screams were heard by the Superintendent of Police Mr. Sinha next door who sent his watchman down to enquire. The spanking was executed before anyone, even Naina mausi, could stop my father. Naina mausi had walked off in a huff, dragging a weeping Anshu with her, her loud brass ear-rings glinting in the afternoon sun. We also heard her swearing uncouth words, much to our amusement and to my mother's horror. My father had, characteristically, turned a deaf ear.

We were sure that Naina mausi wouldn't show her face in a long time to come but she turned up the next fortnight. And the fortnight after. Each time, my parents would be just as welcoming as if they'd forgotten and forgiven all past transgressions. As for the rest of us, we warmed to her gossip with keener zest.

Naina mausi was the illiterate of the family. Married off early, in her teens, to a chemical engineer, Naina mausi had conceived much later, in her thirties. The two boys had been spoiled rotten as a result. She had also put on enormous weight lately. Which is why she wore saris of georgette and chiffon even in summer as cotton would have bloated her figure further.

My cousin, whom I shall refer to here as Tara didi, had unkindly dubbed her the 'behenji' of the family. The term, I think, was meant to highlight the fact that Naina mausi lacked class and polish because she hadn't been to an English medium school. She also spoke with a coarse rural inflection which, to me sounded rather sweet, really.

What was the male equivalent of 'behenji', I had asked Tara didi once. She said she didn't know. It was probably 'Bhaiyya' or 'bhaisaheb', she said.

Naina mausi's visit around Diwali turned out to be the most memorable. But not because of her nefarious offspring. It wasn't her sons who'd caused the mini mayhem in our house, for once. Or, more appropriately, their mayhem managed to pale in comparison, unbelievable as that sounds. This time it was her slippers.

For the first time in months she'd led the little terrors straight into my bedroom. "Be good and don't trouble didi and..." noticing my brother who was sitting at my study table desk and reading the *Indian Express* she'd added hastily, "bhaiyya." Swinging like a clumsy, rather rotund, ballet dancer on her heel, she had drifted out of the room, her footwear thudding across the dining hall. Knocking over a Saharanpuri side-table, my father's favourite, she swore loudly enough to be heard across the whole house.

I saw my brother staring at Naina mausi's brats with a look of intense dislike. The brats, on their part, were staring back with large-eyed innocence. My grandmother had prepared some *til* laddus on her last visit. I gave the

brats a laddu each. "Now sit still or else I'll kill you," my brother growled in frustration as the sports' section of the *Indian Express* slid to the newly swept floor.

The terrors munched the oversized sugary balls for precisely six minutes before rushing out towards the lawn. Sugary crumbs had formed a trail attracting an army of ants. Two more side-tables crashed ominously in the dining hall and, finally, the living room door shut with a bang. Blood-thirsty whoops reverberated throughout the house. My brother hoped aloud they weren't attacking the zinnias that the gardener had so assiduously planted just after the monsoons. "I'll kill them with my bare hands if they do!" he snarled from behind the *Indian Express*. Wincing inwardly I could picture the brats gleefully trampling over the lawn strewn the precious petals in a heap of confetti.

Oblivious to the anarchy the rest of the household was busy absorbing contemporary gossip in the drawing room. The chatter was punctuated with lurid slurps from the maid's mop and bucket. This time the gossip involved a relative's engagement ceremony. The relative, a well-placed officer in the Survey of India, had blotched the family name by having an affair with a teacher from a lower caste who taught English at a little-known residential school. The relative, whose name I did not catch, was bent on marrying the school

teacher who was neither beautiful nor wealthy. The bride's father, a retired clerk in Kolkata, had insisted on a morning ceremony. "Can you imagine the impunity of the man, considering he's from the girl's side?" she was breathing loudly, the folds under her chin fanning.

"They did not even consult the *panchang*, can you believe it?" She'd opened her eyes wide as she always did when she wanted to sound dramatic. Tip-toeing across the hall I'd peeked through a split in the heavy burgundy silk curtain and run off to avoid detection holding my slippers in my left hand. "The bride only had one silk sari, nothing more..." was the last strand of the conversation that I had managed to snatch. Unable to hold myself back some half an hour later, I tip-toed across to the weighty burgundy sheath to hear her declare none too subtly about someone else's scandalous romance, "Where there is no wealth, love flies out of the window." I would have given away all my precious possessions to know who the subject of the discussion was. But my brother came and prodded me in the ribs just then. "Go back and do your homework. It is not a nice thing to listen to grown-up talk," he said self-righteously.

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It was that time of the day when the vendors would be ferrying their wares over their trolleys across the lane. The vegetable vendor had already gone past and so had the fruit seller. Hearing the *chanawallah*

ringing his bell, I rushed towards the gates with a fifty anna coin and stopped short.

The monsters were throwing water balloons at each other next to the gate. I dodged a few balloons myself. Where on earth had they acquired those vicious bombs? It wasn't even *holi* yet. "STOP IT!" my brother could sound like an army general when he wanted to. The command had sounded like a gun report. The boys dropped the balloons almost on reflex. "Let's do a march past. Come on. Left, right, left right.... About turn." Watching the pint-sized twosome parade diligently I munched my roasted *chanas* in satisfaction.

The neatly cut grass was being stamped upon unmercifully. The gardener would grumble no end. I turned to my right still munching: The crotons had been left unmolested, thankfully.

Getting tired of marching about the lawn aimlessly the young horrors dashed out of the lawn to chase after a stray cat with a stick. I saw poor Billoo, the next door neighbour's cat, cowering beside a tree. It wasn't long before I heard one of the boys shriek with delight. They must have aimed at the hapless animal and hit it. I ran after them to find them next to the pond this time.

I was restraining Abhishek from stepping on a toad when my father summoned the children to the drawing room. I grabbed little Abhishek's hand clutching a wriggling frog. Telling him

to drop the creature I led him indoors. Not that he listened, mind you. My brother, dodging some well-aimed water balloons, hoisted young Anshu over his shoulders ignoring his lusty protests.

Naina mausi was sitting on the drawing room sofa looking distraught. Abhishek, dropping the frog on the carpet, ran to his mother's side. "Has anyone of you taken Naina mausi's slippers by mistake?" my mother announced.

The maid was holding up a pair of henna-stained slippers enquiringly. "I've already stated those are not mine." Naina mausi looked ready to

burst into tears. From the corner of my eye I saw Anshu lunging at the samosas on the dining table. No one had noticed when he'd slipped out of my brother's grip. The urgency of the moment was Naina mausi's slippers,

however. They'd been purchased from Bata's at a sale, she moaned, her lovely, comfortable soft brown leather slippers.

"What about these?" The henna-stained slippers dangled from the maid's scrawny little hands. "How many times do I have to say: THOSE ARE NOT MINE!"

"Then how did they get here?" asked my mother, her forehead furrowing dangerously.

"How the hell would I know? They must belong to one of your servants." One could hear the tears in Naina mausi's voice.





"Did you forget them somewhere perhaps?" my aunt asked timidly.

"You know I don't forget things." No one could disagree. Naina mausi's faculty for recalling the minutest detail was

phenomenal. "And please tell me," she snapped, "How is it possible to forget one's footwear? Do you think I go around barefoot? Please use your head." My aunt looked offended but said nothing.

The house was tooth-combed by a motley search party that included the children. Closets were upturned, beds removed, and the rest of the furniture moved around. The maid and I even checked the garden and backyard. But of the slippers there was no sign.

"Has anyone, ANYONE," my mother's exasperation was apparent, "seen Naina mausi's soft brown leather slippers with the company embossing?" That no

*"You know I don't forget things." No one could disagree. Naina mausi's faculty for recalling the minutest detail was phenomenal. "And please tell me," she snapped, "How is it possible to forget one's footwear? Do you think I go around barefoot? Please use your head." My aunt looked offended but said nothing.*

one had was by now maddeningly clear.

Both Abhishek and Anshu departed with dignity with their mother who refused to wear the "disgusting-looking slippers that didn't look durable enough to hold a pebble".

She went home wearing my mother's leather sandals. We watched her depart in dismay. We knew Naina mausi wouldn't return for a good six months.

That evening we received a call from the Survey of India. It was Naina mausi's distant relative who'd scandalously married out of the community. He said a pair of cheap brown slippers had been left behind in his house. Someone had walked off with the bride's moccasin sheepskin slippers. The bride was hysterical as they were her favourite pair. Did we, or anyone, know if Naina mausi had been wearing them the previous evening?

*By: I.T.*

### IRMA receives grant from British Council for a social incubator



IRMA's Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Enterprises (CSEE) has received a one-year grant from the British Council for its proposal "Seeding Social Innovation and Enterprise in Universities". CSEE's proposal – jointly with The Hive, Nottingham Trent University, UK and UnLTd UK – was awarded a one-year grant of 20,000 pounds. The proposal seeks to create a collaborative ecosystem for post graduate teaching

of social entrepreneurship and enterprises, establish incubation services in university settings, and conduct research on Social Entrepreneurship and Enterprises. The CSEE hopes to launch IRMA's social enterprise incubator in the coming months with formal MoUs with a few social enterprises, both at early and growth stages. The CSEE will also launch a curriculum handbook on social entrepreneurship teaching in India and document some studies regarding the challenges of social enterprises. Cross visits by NTU and IRMA teams are expected to lead to collaborations and collective research outputs. The project is coordinated by Prof C Shambu Prasad.

### Cleanliness drive

A mass flash mop cum cleanliness drive was undertaken by IRMA students in association with the Anand Municipality Corporation on January 17, 2016. The drive took place near the old bus stand area of “Milk City” Anand, Gujarat. The locals, including municipality employees and hawkers, participated in the drive while the volunteers helped clear the waste and garbage lying around. Arjit Panwar, one of the students, mentioned, “The awareness campaign will encourage the residents to maintain cleanliness and their support will galvanize the milk city’s endeavour to execute a face-lift.” The students felicitated municipal authorities for acknowledging their efforts and maintaining constant vigil in terms of keeping the city clean and green.

The event was staged as a prelude to the town’s reputed marathon event conducted every year by IRMA – Anand Run. Anand Run is organized to spread a social message during Milaap, the annual alumni meet of IRMA

Inspired by the ‘Swachh Bharat Mission, launched by Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, all the students of the institute took a pledge of ‘Cleanliness’ in Anand, on January 17, 2016. The local administration thanked the student community for its efforts and appealed them to wholeheartedly participate in cleaning their homes and premises of the institute.



### FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

#### Publications/Journal/Journal Paper

De, Indranil and Tirthankar Nag. (2016). "Dangers of Decentralisation in Urban Slums: A Comparative Study of Water Supply and Drainage Service Delivery in Kolkata, India". Development Policy Review. Wiley Publishing, Print ISSN: 0950-6764, Online ISSN: 1467-7679, Vol. 34, No. 2.

Jeemol Unni (2016), "Skill Gaps and Employability: Higher Education in India", Journal of Developing Policy and Practice, Vol.1, Issue 1, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

Singh, Shyam & Yogesh Kumar, 'Social Security: A Situational Analysis of Social Pensions in Madhya Pradesh', Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. LXI (4), Oct- Dec, 2015.

#### Workshops/Conference/Seminars/Paper presentations/Lectures

Prof. Rakesh Saxena presented a paper titled "Urbanization and Environmental Performance across Indian States and Union Territories: A Regression Analysis" in the 8th Biennial Conference of INSEE (the Indian Society for Ecological Economics) on "Urbanization and the Environment" at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, January 4-6.

\_\_\_\_\_ attended "Gujarat-State Credit Seminar 2016-17" at Narmada Hall, Swarnim Sankul, Sachivalay, Gandhinagar (organized by NABARD Ahmedabad), January 21.

\_\_\_\_\_ attended workshop on "Sustainable Agriculture: Harnessing Technologies-Harvesting Prosperity" organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) at Hyatt Regency, Ahmedabad, January 27.

#### Other Engagements

Prof. Anand Venkatesh was invited by South Gujarat University, Surat to deliver two sessions on production efficiency measurement on March 31.

Prof. Girish Agrawal was Panel Member in International Conference on Rural Development organized by Xavier Institute of Development Action and Studies, Jabalpur discussion on 'Future of Rural Development Education' (Feb 4-5, 2016).

\_\_\_\_\_ was Keynote Speaker in 'Samhit 2016' Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility organized by 'Nav Rachna University, Vadodara (Jan 8, 2016).

\_\_\_\_\_ An impact assessment assignment is currently under negotiation with Hindalco Industries, Renukoot. This impact assessment is proposed to be carried out jointly by IRMA with Performance Management Initiative at William Davidson Institute of Ross School of Business, Michigan.

Prof. Harekrishna Misra (2016), Joined Editorial Board, Open Journal on Information Systems (OJIS), L?beck, Germany, February.

Prof. Jeemol Unni delivered the Keynote Address in the Catalyst 2016, a National Conference for students on Redefining Canons organized by HL College of Commerce, Ahmedabad, on February 19.

Prof. Jeemol Unni participated in the Global Action on Poverty (GAP) 2016, at Sabarmati Ashram, on February 20-21.

Prof. Rakesh Saxena attended the annual meeting of Client Consultation Committee (CCC), BIRD, Lucknow on 6th February 2016 as a member of CCC.

Prof. Rakesh Saxena Attended the Board meeting of India Natural Resource Economics and Management (INREM) Foundation at Paramkrishna Apartments, Anand, March 31.

Prof. Saswata Biswas was invited by Department of Dairy Science, Anand Agriculture University to present a paper on HRM in Indian Dairy Industry in the ICAR Sponsored National Seminar on Human Resource Management in Indian Dairy Sector, Department of Dairy Science, Anand Agriculture University, March 17. Department of Dairy Science, Anand Agriculture University.

### **Project Completed**

The study on “Impact of NDPI interventions on strengthening women’s empowerment in India’s dairy sector”, Team: Profs. Jeemol Unni, Vivek Pandey, Shyam Singh and Pratik Modi, Client: NDDDB, Anand.

### **Project initiated**

- Third Party Evaluation of 10 PPP Model based Eklavya Model Residential School” (Team: Profs. Shyam Singh, Vivek Pandey and Asmita Vyas).
- “Study on Status of Matured SHGs in Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal”, Client: NABARD (Prof. Ram Manohar Vikas)

### **IRMA Seminars**

Shri Pravesh Sharma, Co-Founder and CEO, Sabziwala; Former IAS Officer, ex-MD of Small Farmers’ Agribusiness Consortium (2010-15), Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India, “Adopting the orphan: can IRMA become the next champion for agriculture?” on March 29.

### **IRMA Working Paper**

*IRMA Working Paper can be downloaded for free from: (<https://www.irma.ac.in/ipublications/publication.php?cid=2>)*

Vivek Pandey and Shweta Nawani, “Market Reaction to Mandatory CSR Expenditure: Evidence from a Quasi-Natural Experiment in India”, Working Paper No. 276.

Saswata N Biswas and Debiprasad Mishra, “Making the Mahila Sabha Work: A Study in the Kutch District of Gujarat”, Working Paper No. 277.

Jeemol Unni and Sudipa Sarkar, “Exploring Increasing Graduate Intensity in Occupations in India”, Working Paper No. 278.



Harekrishna Misra, “Disruptive Rural E-Governance Services for Sustainable Development in Indian Context: Challenges and Opportunities”, Working Paper No.279.

## Visitors to IRMA

In the past quarter IRMA received more than 800 visitors from various walks of life from India and abroad. Majority of visits were by students of higher education. This includes students from various professional college including Management, Agriculture Universities, and commerce college (820 students and 40 faculty members), 12 Newly joined officers from NDDB, Managing Director and team from Karnataka Milk Federation, Bangalore, Lt. Gen RP Rai from Bangalore, Chairman and BOD members from Malabar Milk Union, Kerala, Managing Director from Sikkim milk Union, Sikkim, Maharani of Rajpipla, Gujarat, Team Leaders from Murugappa group (30 members), Team of Journalist from Srinagar (15 members), and Director , Rural Development Academy (RDA) Bangladesh, Chairman, Regenesys Business School, Johannesburg, South Africa.

ON CAMPUS MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (MDPs)				
S. No.	Title of MDP	Date (from)	Date (to)	Coordinator(s)
1	Data Envelopment Analysis	8-Jan-16	10-Jan-16	Prof. Anand Venkatesh, Prof. Rakesh Arrawatia
2	Effective Selling Skills	11-Jan-16	13-Jan-16	Prof. Pratik Modi
3	Strategic Inventory Management	3-Feb-16	4-Feb-16	Mr. Rishi Sanwal
4	Monitoring and Evaluation	23-Feb-16	25-Feb-16	Prof. Vivek Pandey
*5	Orientation Training in Communication Skills for KDC Bank	29-Feb-16	29-Feb-16	Prof. Hitesh Bhatt
6	Impact Evaluation	1-Mar-16	5-Mar-16	Prof. Vivek Pandey, Prof. Shyam Singh
7	Communication and Presentation Skills	3-Mar-16	5-Mar-16	Mr. Vijay Menon
*8	MDP for the Executives of Fullerton India- Term 2 (On campus)	7-Mar-16	12-Mar-16	Prof. Girish Kumar Agrawal
*9	Strengthening Dairy Cooperative Leadership	15-Mar-16	17-Mar-16	Prof. Girish Kumar Agrawal
*10	Strengthening Dairy Leadership and Organizational Excellence	28-mr-16	1-Apr-16	Prof. Girish Kumar Agrawal
*	Sponsored program			
Off. CAMPUS MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (MDPs)				
S. No	Title	Date (from)	Date (to)	Coordinator
1	Project Management Training	11-Feb-16	12-Feb-16	Prof. Hitesh V Bhatt

## First PRM batch visit



A confluence of the old and new brings with it a cauldron of emotions. Expectedly, excitement ran high and memories stirred as PRM 1 met PRM 36 on January 9, 2016. What ensued was a heady blend of camaraderie and illumination.

The current batch of IRMANS learnt from their seniors about the beginnings of the institute they are so proud to be part of. They learnt, for instance, that the first batch had been housed in an animal diagnostic centre as hostels hadn't been built around

the time. The batch also received a stipend for studying at IRMA. The PRM course was a one-year program initially; it was extended to two years later.

The air was vibrant with memories and recollections as old friends met up and exchanged news. They also sang to the tune of their batch song "Surangani" and shared their interactions with Dr. Kurien. One of them recounted how, when he went to receive Dr. Kurien at the airport, he was told to concentrate on his work and leave it to the Johnnies to take care of situations like this. Another ex IRMAN recalled Dr. Kurien had once driven him to a movie hall without revealing his identity!

The old batch imparted had a lot of sound advice gleaned from their life experiences. Their formula regarding the about entertaining fewer realizations. Their advice was: "When you look hazy but when you look able to connect the dots

Some of them shared beloved friend, the whose contributions to development remain While he was at IRMA and



secret to happiness was expectations and more to the current PRM batch forward everything looks backwards you will be perfectly."

memories of their late Sanjay Ghose, rural management and momentous to this day. during the initial phase of

his career he was a complete people's man. He rendered yeoman service in transforming the lives of the people in Rajasthan and Assam before being killed by the ULFA.

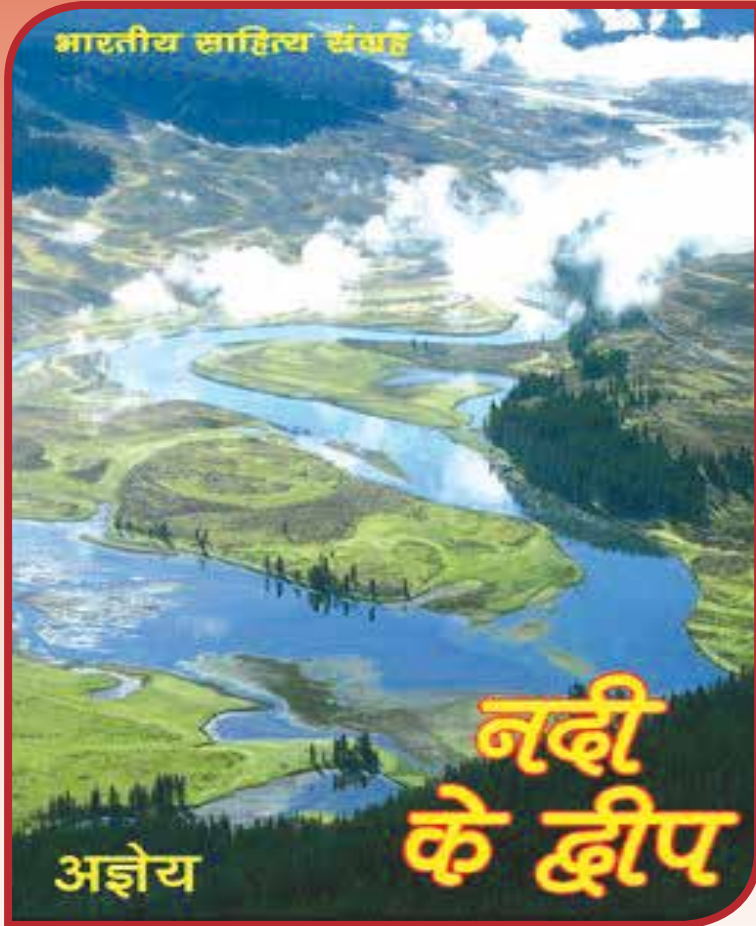
A major highlight of the event was the present batch's presenting to the oldest PRM participants a collage of their photographs taken all those years ago. The gesture left the old timers touched as it showcased long forgotten memories.

The informal session was followed by a tour of the campus. Some were stunned to see the state of the art classrooms while others expressed happiness at beholding a copy of their seating order. Quite a few paid a visit to the library. The tour was councluded with a visit to the Chimes, the enduring icon of IRMA.









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