

Hill Echoes

Bulletin of Rotary Club of Thane Hills

Issue # 9 - March 2023

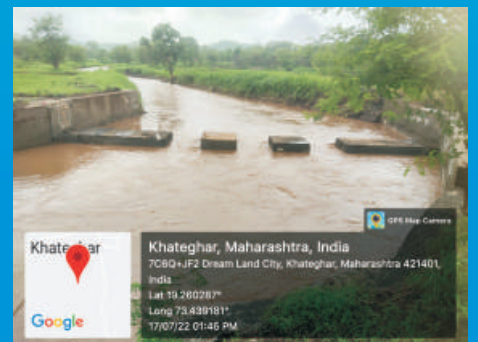
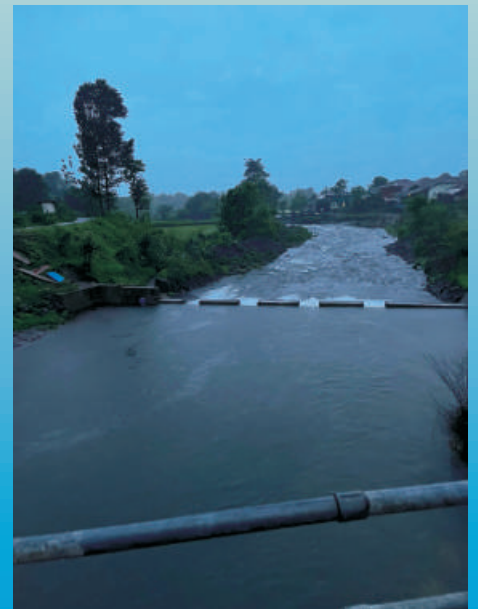
RI President: Jennifer Jones

Club President: Jayaram Mendon

Club Secretary: Samir Limaye

DG: Kailash Jethani

Water and Sanitation





President's Message

Rotary Pranam to All Hillers...

"Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all. Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfill themselves."
- Nelson Mandela.

February was the Peace and conflict Prevention Month - Rotary's goal today is to create peace environments where peace can be built and maintained through sustainable and measurable activities in communities worldwide. Peacebuilding remains a cornerstone of our mission as a humanitarian service organization.

But Is there peace without bread? There are thousands around us who cannot get their ends meet. Mobility is a big question for them. With very little education and almost no skill these poor souls got trapped here. With no vision the world is not the ideal palace to live in. A kilometer long line with support of each other they move around the stalls to get ration for 15 days. Heard a blind guy narrating a satyaki story to people around him from Mahabharatha. Similarly one gentleman chanted about killing own ego. everything was unfolding in that one queue. Never experienced such agony and pain. Every Amavasya at Yogi Hill (Mulund) some good samaritans like Pawan gather and provide ration to approximate 1600 blinds. Request Hillers to join this cause every month and experience it.

Last month Holy Cross School for mentally challenged acknowledged Thane Hills & PP Vijay Shetty's effort on building Vocational center. They requested us for a fundraiser. Ann Radhika Padmanabhan single handedly took the initiative of Collection Drive at AM Naik School, Powai for incurring various expenses in Holy cross special school. She encouraged Holy Cross special school to set up their counter in AM Naik school on 25 & 26 Feb 2023. Radhika accompanied them & ensured that the parents donated generously. She was able to garner around 1.50 lakhs in these two days.

We had a memorable outing at Discon bagging the highest participation award. Many members got felicitated at the hands of DG Kailash Jethani. On March 11th we are celebrating women's day and Vocational Excellence Award ceremony together. PP Rajeev Tipnis has been working hard to make it a successful event. Requesting Hillers to join in large numbers.

Club secretary Samir Limaye raised two lacs for toilet blocks and PP Atul Bide is on mission to raise around 7 lacs for the same cause. We will be launching a toilet block in schools in the month of March.

The Church for our lady of salvation at Seawoods has come forward to provide a place for our autism center. We will be working on the documentation and take required approval from all concerned parties.

Once again praying almighty that "Let there be bread for everyone. Let there be peace for everyone"

Jayaram Mendon



Editorial

March is water and sanitation month.

We in Mumbai and Thane are lucky to get good quality water that hardly needs to be treated before drinking. I doubt how many cities are as lucky in our country. Presently I am in Banglore and the water we get has very high hardness and there is scarcity. Water tankers are the norm. Can't drink water without RO treatment.

In rural areas the problems could be more than the cities face because of problems of sanitation. We, in RCTH have done our bit by contributing towards rural water projects like over twenty check dams, and also over eight hundred toilets in rural areas in last few years. Apart from these, we have been providing toilet blocks to rural schools. Detailed report by PP Atul Bhide on the "Right to Go" project gives glimpse into our contribution as Rotary Club related to water and sanitation.

In fact our club got solid foundation in the initial years of formation through the then mega project of Shirol dam in 1993 that was initiated through an NSS project in which Charter President of our Rotaract club was a participant as student. She made us aware of the health problem local tribal population was facing due to acute water shortage. I remember her mentioning that ninety seven percent of locals suffered due to scabies. We initially thought of providing a borewell but there was no ground water, we ended up with twenty metre height dam. A visit to the site still fills us with immense satisfaction.

Though our track record in this area is very good a lot more needs to be done. According to PP Varsha there have been many requests from rural schools for toilets after she initiated and completed two such projects this year. I am sure we will definitely helping the rural schools in this matter. Remember, girl students tend to leave school education in rural areas for want of toilet facilities especially in secondary schools, that's the implication and risk, setback to girls education because there is no toilet in school.

Rajesh Salaskar

Why, Who, When, What and How of Right-to-Go

"It would be good if you experience the on-ground situation and arrive at the need instead of me suggesting it" - my father who involved in rural development, especially women empowerment, in villages of Murbad-Shahapur taluka for 3-4 years replied, when requested him to suggest a cause that I can take up during my incoming Presidential year of 2013-14.

It was around November-December 2012. I decided to act on his advice and for the next 3-4 months, almost all week-ends and at times during weekdays, started visiting villages in Murbad-Shahapur taluka.

Challenges at the village level:

Fortunately, few of the villagers, the volunteers, mainly the women, active in my father's work agreed to accompany during my visits to villages. I categorically ensured in my approach during all such visits, that the villagers, who in my experience are very smart, should not get a feel that I was there to plan a Rotary project.



They were used to this, government authorities or politicians visiting them to implement some government schemes. It was less about the people for whom those schemes were meant and more about gov's or politician's wish and interest. I started meeting different groups in each village. Starting from Sarpanch and 'Panchayat Samiti'. Then I would meet villagers who would be in opposite team of Sarpanch. My small group meets with those whom I would come across, at some shop or at the temple or at someone's home (people inviting me, an unknown person for a tea was a bit surprising for me initially), would be very effective.

A meeting with Women Self Help groups, and with 'Bhajani Mandals', with youngsters and with senior citizens who used to be most talkative, and lastly with the local school teacher, would complete my agenda. Yashodhara too had accompanied me during few such visits that used to ease my interactions with women.

My approach would be – "I am from Thane, a Rotary member and wish to understand the village life, problems you face and see if I can be of any help." It is very difficult to gain villagers' confidence. At times villagers would ask me straight – "you are neither from Gov nor a politician, why are you interested in us?". I think, looking back, a part from background of my



father's selfless work at few villages, something else also might have worked for me. The fact that I was having a tea with anyone who would offer/invite or the fact that I used to make it a point to have a glass of water whenever at home visits helped me in gaining the villager's confidence and make them talk.

From right price to their farm products, jobs for the youngsters, redevelopment of local village temple, better medical facilities, to non-availability of Mobile network, there were so many issues I got to listen from villagers. But one prominent, especially from women's group would be the need for toilet. While men would agree when asked, it was not a priority.

I also realized that over the years many Governments had 'schemes' to provide toilets, but it used to be Gov's wish or Politician's interest to 'construct' a toilet (implementing a sanitation project is much wider aspect). Also, due lack of people's whole hearted involvement, many unscrupulous practices marred achieving the goals.

Arriving at the 'right' project for RCTH:

But again and again, village after village, this toilet issue used to come up during my visits. The fact that one needed to walk, for at least 10 minutes for a 'safe' place to relieve oneself, or a woman had to hold back herself, plan ahead even the simple act of defecation, and need to have another woman to accompany her to attend to nature's call, or had to get up early to take advantage of darkness risking snake bite and not so kind fellow human beings was too much to face on a daily basis for the women. All this had badly impacted women with physical as well as psychological issues.



The issue of access to toilet was dire but the patriarchal society had less importance for it.

After one such visit to a village where I might have some 'Bhaji', I suffered with stomach ache on my return home. I had to attend nature's call throughout the night. That night, Yashodhara pointed out the stark difference between our life and that of villagers', in basic infrastructure that any civil society must have. While we take it for granted, 'an attached bathroom' verses the hard reality at the village, for the simple basic need of defecation. It dawned upon me the 'right' need and the project for RCTH in Rotary year 2013-14 was finalised in my mind.

By March, I had covered 100 plus villages. I shared it with my father, who was happy to note my journey in arriving at the project based on my sensing the needs of villagers.

Once the cause was finalised, the next step was to decide the 'right' village. I kept three basic criteria for this:

- Availability of water
- Active women's group in the village
- Eagerness of village 'Grampanchayat' and Sarpanch for having toilets.

Based on these, the Sogav village in Shahapur taluka was finalised. The added factor at arriving the decision was a woman as Sarpanch along with many other women involved in overall betterment of village actively.



I first shared this with Sharath. He was aware of my visits and I had kept him updated on everything. Then with Sharath's advice we formed a small group, Club Secretary designate Ajay Rathore, Sachin Jog and Vijay Mandelwal.

Seeking technical advice – Sulabh:

I visited Sulabh International's Mumbai office in Chembur. Met their technical team. I still recall my meeting with Mr. Sudhakar Kini, a technical expert at Sulabh. I explained my plan and sought their advice. He suggested and explained the 'Two-Pit' system toilet. He then advised me that in order to finalize this model, one needs to first ascertain the technical feasibility of the soil at Sogav.



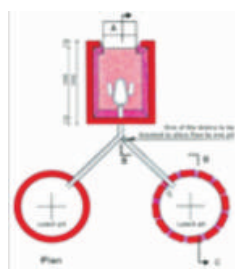
He assigned two technical staff who with our core team (Ajay, Sachin, Vijay and Mihir Mehta) visited Sogav. The Sulabh team tested the ground at various places in Sogav and confirmed that the 'Two-Pit' System would be good.

'Right' Model - Cultural factor:

I noticed few toilets that were already there in Sogav were the same Two-Pit system. People were aware of this model over the years.

We also tried option of FRP Ready Made Toilet Blocks. We travelled to Pune to check with one of the manufacturers. Those were equally priced and we could save on time. But from people's acceptance and sturdiness over the period of time, we decided against this.

In order to have a sustainable use of the toilet, it is paramount that the users feel comfortable and confident. So, it was decided to continue to go for the Sulabh suggested model with civil construction, which was also a part of people's culture. Many a times in order to provide a 'latest' technology a ready-made solution is thrust upon that's unsuccessful in the long run



Today one can sit on those soak pits and have food without even a smell. Each pit takes 6 to 7 years to fill and to shift to the second pit for a family of 7 adults. Human waste in the first pit gets converted in 18 to

24 months post discontinuation of its use into a manure which can be used for the kitchen garden.

Added Beneficiary involvement:

To have a sustainable project, we involved villagers at every stage. I also suggested that beneficiary family should put in their sweat-labour for all the unskilled work involved in construction. This would add feeling of belonging and reduced cost.



The Target:

When it came to the target, I just came up with the number 200. I shared this with Sharath and Ajay. Both were excited. And then we decided to provide 200 toilets through project 'Right-To-Go' in Rotary year 2013-14.

Selection of beneficiaries:

We assigned Sarpanch BayadiParadhi and her team to select the deserving beneficiaries with two criteria. We also involved the Gramsevak in the process who is State Government employee assigned for Sogav village.

- Economically challenged families
- Families with max number of woman members
- Families who are ready for sweat-labour contribution

Selection of Contractor:

One of the crucial factors in the success of 'Right-To-Go' project has been the Contractors. The criteria was to have local contractor with good track record and integrity towards quality work.

Having a local contractor had an advantage of every beneficiary knowing the contractor. There was moral pressure on the contractor to do good work and comfort factor for beneficiaries.

चमत्कार बिना नमस्कार नहीं: The first 10

At the informal BOD meeting of 2013-14 in May 2013, I shared about funds required for the proposed 'Right To Go' project, Nilesh Likhite promptly committed to sponsor two Toilets. Subsequently as the new Rotary year started many Hillers came forward to sponsor the toilets.

Meanwhile Sachin Jog suggested me that if we can complete few Toilet blocks and handover it to the beneficiaries on the day of my installation as Club President along with by BOD, it will create a positive impact. It will prove our capability and intent which will help raising funds for the larger goal of 200 toilets. I liked the idea and shared this with Sharath and Vijay Mandelwal who out to be messiah for this. In just three days he brought donation for 10 toilet blocks.



On 22nd June. 2013, we arranged a formal consecration ceremony at Sogav. I was very happy to have my father along with Sharath, Vijay, Sachin, Nilesh Puranik and Ajay at Sogav for the consecration ceremony along with the villagers & Sarpanch

On 5th July 2013, the installation day, the 10 beneficiaries from Sogav were

formally handed over the ownership of their own toilet block, in presence of Sarpanch Mrs. Bayadi Paradhi, Police Patil Shri. Khandu Maniar and contractor Sase during the installation.

Thanks to Sachin's idea & Hillers' support, the desired 'Chamtkar' was achieved.

Global Grant – First ever in RCTH

In February 2013, RCTH Innerwheel member Dr. Pallavi Bhat introduced her college friend, now a US citizen, Rtn. Dr. Renuka



Desai to the then RCTH Club President Ravi. But during that period, we at RCTH were busy in building one of the biggest projects till date, the Thalassemia Day Care and Blood Bank. So, Ravi did not move ahead with Dr. Renuka Desai and her plan for Sanitation project.



Persistent Dr Desai once again contacted Ravi by email in July 2013 requesting him to connect with the new Club President of RCTH for possible joint venture through a Global Grant. Ravi forwarded the mail to me. That was 17th July, 2013.

After several calls and emails about our project, Dr Desai and her Rotary Club of Cherry Hill, RID 7640, USA, were convinced with our plan at Sogav and agreed to be 'Foreign Matching Partner Club' for our proposed Global Grant.

None of us at RCTH had experience of applying for Global Grant. The acceptance criteria of The Rotary Foundation are very stringent.

I wrote and rewrote answers to questions many times, shared with Sharath. I had shared number of drafts with RISAO staff as well as with Foundation staff at RI HQ and sought their guidance.



After very tense 70 days of waiting, I received an email from Regional Grants Officer, The Rotary Foundation, Ms. Janna Glucksman informing the acceptance of our Global Grant application on 10th

January, 2014! It was a happy and historic moment for RCTH.

We received the funds from Rotary Foundation on 3rd March, 2014.

The Consecration Ceremony for the Global Grant funded Rural Sanitation project 'Right-To-Go' of Rotary Club of Thane Hills was held on International Women's Day, 8th March, 2014 at Sogav, with Dr Ashes, the then Chief Co-ordinator of RID 3140, as the Chief Guest.

The Execution:

From very next day actual construction work started. Kudos to Nilesh Puranik who provided free of cost one of his technical staffs, Mr. Dinesh to supervise the civil work, who used to visit the site almost on alternate day. Nilesh too came with me at times to Sogav. I recall many such visits with Hillers, especially Rajesh Salaskar, Satish Shetty and Vijay Mandelwal were regulars with me.

Nilesh Puranik also provided all the 200 tiles for individual signage on each toilet, free of cost.

Not Just About Toilet:

The project 'Right-To-Go' is not just about construction of toilets, it's just a part of the total process. The major work involved training involving good sanitation and hygiene habits and use and maintenance of toilet. Apart from my personal visits, in all the projects we had assigned outside professional trainers who undertook several individual and group trainings at all the four villages.

The training involved right from primary school students from local schools to women, men and senior citizens.

Completion and handing over to the People of Sogav:

Exactly in 90 days we finished the project and on 8th June, 2014 the project 'Right-To-Go' was formally handed over to the People of Sogav with PDG Dr. Jayant Kulkarni as the Chief Guest.

The 211th - With last donation coming from RCTH Inner Wheel Club, we built the last 211th toilet at Sogav.

On 25th June, 2014 Mr. H. C. Agrawal, the then Post Master General Maharashtra Circle, GPO, Mumbai came down with his officers to Thane District Collector's Office and a Special Envelope and Cancellation on our project 'Right-To-Go' was issued at the hands of the then District Collector IAS Mr. P.V. Velarasu to acknowledge our efforts and importance of the project. The Special Envelope are available in all major Post Offices of India

Many Hillers, the Sarpanch and villagers of Sogav, Contractor Sase attended the event. I was so happy that my father was also there with us.



Key features that ensured sustainability of success of this project:

- Need assessment
- Beneficiary involvement at every stage from planning to execution
- Sweat-labour by beneficiaries – for the unskilled work by the beneficiary family members
- Rs.3000/- beneficiary contribution for their toilet, except in Sogav
- Extensive training on Sanitation, health and Hygiene involving professionals
- Involving students from local schools, men and women, senior citizens and youth for behavioural change towards use of toilet
- Our efforts to give Toilet an aspirational value amongst villagers
- Selection of local contractor

Direct beneficiaries:

Project 'Right To Go' is making a positive difference in the lives of more than 5000 people, every day.

Indirect Beneficiaries:

Apart from these direct beneficiaries, thousands of people are benefited in and around those 4 villages, thanks to the reduction in soil, water and air pollution and the spread of diseases. Imagine the amount of human excreta when 5000 plus people stop going out to relieve themselves in the open, every day and which has been discontinued thanks to the use of toilets, resulting in a reduction in soil, water, and air pollution

It's Not Just about the Toilet:

Our project is not just about the construction of the Toilet, it's more about behavioural change amongst the villagers regarding their sanitation and hygiene habits. Apart from the construction, our efforts in hygiene and sanitation training have ensured the sustainable success of this project. The participative approach is at the core of this initiative. That's why the highlight is the regular use and maintenance of toilets by villagers.

Training, an integral part

Our 'Catch-Them-Young' program for students in local schools involving practical training by professional trainers was one of the highlights of our training modules.

Inclusive model:

From need assessment to execution, our project has been beneficiary centric involving the villagers, local governing bodies, and state government authorities (Gramsevak) that gave a sense of ownership to all.

Each beneficiary has contributed towards their toilet through their sweat labour and cash contribution (except in Sogav). This has increased a sense of ownership amongst beneficiaries.

New Value addition: Tippy-Tap (in 2018-19 'Right-To-Go' project)

At the Aghai village we introduced easy to use hand-wash system Tippy-Tap to villagers and encouraged them to build their own. We also provided cleaning brush, nail cutters, cleaning chemical & plastic container for Tippy Tap for all 170 beneficiaries, donated by Pavan Adnani. (PRID Ashok Mahajan appreciating the girl demonstrating hand wash at Aghai)

Real Life impact incidence: Multiple dimensional benefits

"I couldn't wait more than 10 minutes to pick the passengers at Sogav earlier due to lot of foul smell. But thanks to your toilets, now I wait till my jeep is full as there is no smell now. I am happy & it has increased my business too." – Basir, a ferry jeep driver shared once & thanked Rotary during one of my visits to Sogav.

Environmental

Better Soil, Water, and Air quality, not just for 4 villages but for the entire Shahpur Taluka

Imagine 5000 plus people releasing themselves in the open, every day. The amount of human excreta that used to get generated every day resulted in polluting the soil, water, and air. Now, thanks to the Right-To-Go project, it has stopped completely.

Health

Due to the non-availability of a Toilet at home, everyone needed to walk at least 2 kms in search of 'safe' space (increasing deforestation resulting in longer walks each year). Also, women and senior citizens needed to 'wait' till someone could accompany them for their safety on the way. Many a time women and senior citizens used to prolong their urge to relieve themselves resulting in health issues.

Due to piling of human waste in the open every day, faster spread in various diseases was common. Many villagers used to succumb to bites of insects and serpentine animals like snakes in the bushes, resulting in further health issues. Toilet at home backed by the behavioural change training efforts has solved all these problems.

Financial:

Reduced medical expenses and discontinuation of loss of pay due to absenteeism resulting from the above health reasons have indirectly helped families increase in their income too.

Dignity:

"तुम्ही फक्त आमच्या ओरोग्याचा प्रश्न सोडवला नाहीत, तर आमच्या महिलांचा सर्वात मौल्यवान दागिना म्हणजे त्यांची लज्जा, याचे सुद्धा तुम्ही संरक्षण केलेत"

(You have not only taken care of our health but have protected our women's dignity too) - when **Mr. Vilas Dhandke**, one of Sogav's beneficiaries pointed out this and thanked RCTH during the handing over event in June 2014, yet another important dimension of 'Right-To-Go' project's benefits got established.



Availability of In-House-Toilet provided safety and dignity to village women. From unscrupulous men causing trouble on women's long walks to 'safe' places to lack of privacy leading to sheer shame of public scrutiny and dependence for this routine biological function. Now women of these villages are free from all and feel safe.

Sustainable Success

The highlight of the project 'Right-To-Go' is not just in providing 792 individual green toilets in four villages but the fact that it is being used and maintained even today is the most proud fact for each of us, the Hillers!

It is not just Rotary's project but that is of those 5000 plus beneficiaries who on themselves are maintaining it without any



Dr. Renuka Desai at various villages and at 'Right-To-Go' pillars along with the Hillers



further support from us. This is sustainability is what an USP of project 'Right-To-Go'.

PS: In Rotary Year 2021-22, RCTH also upgraded Bendekon ZP School toilet in Shahpur Taluka.



- PP Atul Bhide

Fund Collection for Special Children

The drive at AM Naik School Powai was for incurring various expenses in Holy cross special school. Ann Radhika Padmanabhan took lead and encouraged Holy Cross special school, to set up their counter in AM Naik School on 25 & 26 Feb 2023. She accompanied them & ensured that the parents donate generously. With her efforts

we were able to garner around 1.50 lakhs in 2 days. Now this is out of box thinking and also reflects the dedication and conviction towards our projects.

Kudos to Ann Radhika!



There is no other single **issue** that can **impact** the health, education, economy, equality and progress of all people than the need for **clean water** and **sanitation**



विद्यादान – श्रेष्ठ दान

We all know the impact and importance of education. It isn't just about learning reading, writing and arithmetic at school. Instead, formal education is about gaining the knowledge and the skills needed to become a better person and create a better society to live in.

"Give a man Fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime".

RCTH strongly believes in the above principle and helped a few aspiring students to build their career in the past.

President Jayaram called for a preparatory meeting for the year 22-23 and asked which program one would like to initiate and I immediately put forward the long lingering concept in my mind of starting the scholarship program for the needy aspiring students. President Jayaram and Club Secretary Samir also liked the concept. Rtn. Kalita and Rtn. Madhumita showed keen interest in the program. Both of them showed readiness to raise the funds for the same. Without wasting time President Jayaram made a core team of the scholarship.

I knew that R C Mulund is doing this scholarship program on a grand scale. We decided to invite a veteran Rtn. Sudhir Joshi of R C Mulund who has started this program in their club to guide us on the same. He not only explained to us about the program but he involved four (Samir, Kalita, Sentil, Madhumita and myself) of us while executing this program in their club to understand the processes right from selecting the applications till the disbursement of the scholarship cheques to the aspirants.

With the help of Rtn. Sentil, we made the guidelines of the program and started implementing. Though it was a first year, we decided to



take help from R C Mulund and picked a few applications from their pending list. After a detailed scrutiny, we shortlisted a girl student from Nursing College - Institute of Nursing Education and Paramedical Sciences, Vadavali, Dombivli.

Kalita and myself visited the institute, met the aspirant and the CEO Ms. Sheetal Choughule of the Institute and also had

a detailed discussion with the aspirant's parents.

During our discussion with the CEO, she introduced one more needy aspirant to whom they promoted to the second year of nursing but his first year's fees were not paid and the boy was staying with his relative. After meeting that boy and his relative, we felt it was a genuine case and decided to support him too.

The team along with PP Vikram Mane revisited the CEO's office along with the scholarship cheques for both the students and handed over them to their parents and asked them to give it to the CEO Choughule madam. Kalita and Vikram will mentor these

aspirants and help them not only in their career building but for their personality development also.

We received one more application. The aspirant is

studying in the second year of BA in Multimedia and Mass Communication in Vidyalankar School of Information Technology.



The aspirant's mother took out a loan for paying the college fees. The aspirant's mother is a widow and working as *Aayabai* in one of the private hospitals in Worli. The aspirant has two more sisters who have just started working on a very meager salary and the family resides in BDD Chawl. They

approached us before but we couldn't pay them that time as our program was not functional.

In the meanwhile we received a few applications which after making the thorough scrutiny, we had to reject.

We are giving this scholarship on a loan basis. Once the aspirant completes his/her education and starts working, he/she can repay this amount in monthly instalments. RCTH is not going to charge any type of interest on this scholarship loan. This amount is chargeable only to inculcate the principle Giving Back to Society.

President Jayaram has given us the sanction of Rs. 7 lacs for this Scholarship Program for the year 22-23. So far we have disbursed Rs. 2,16,425/-. And Rs. 79,000/- is in the pipe line to be paid as the second year's fees of the second aspirant.

Knowledge is not information but transformation. Are we ready for this transformation? It is our goal to keep the embers burning in the pursuit of this transformation. Isn't it?

We have decided to make donation boxes and keep those boxes at the offices or at the hospitals or at the establishments of our members to raise the funds. We have many benevolent members who will support this program with their generous hands. Many of us can approach the CSR wings of the corporates and thus together we can raise the funds for this most needy cause not only for this year but for the years to come.

We are confident that one day this scholarship program also will be one of the flagship programs of RCTH.

क्योंकि हम हीलर्स हैं और हीलर्स ही रहेंगे। है ना ?

-PP Sucheta, Rtn. Kalita and Rtn. Madhumita
Core Team - RCTH Scholarship Program

FAB DISCON

Some of the highlights of the district conference

Thane Hills got the highest Registration award with 35 Members.

Many of our members were in the core committee and helped Discon team to achieve the perfection.

PP Vijay Shetty was instrumental in designing the event in terms of finance and sponsorships.

PDG Ashes Ganguly brought Speakers like Ronit Roy and sponsorship from Audi.

Our Master Blaster Paddy brought the Title Sponsor with 20 lac along with Host Radio Jockey Gaurav Sharma he brought other imminent speakers.

Sunil was part of the core team in designing schedule etc. He presented the Fab projects and took Panel Interview.

Narendra Rao with his Rotary India App was responsible for Digital marketing etc.

Lata Gwalani got felicitated for her various professional achievements.

IPP Varsha was informing about the proceedings to Hillers as it happened.

PP Chandru felicitated for starting Endowment Fund on his son Balguru's Name.

PP Dr. Raju & Dr Sita Raju's contribution for Autism center is one of the highest individual contribution for the project in Fab Year, highest in 3242 since it's inception. He was felicitated at the hands of District Governor Kailash Jethani

It was PP Sucheta's effort because of which we could achieve the highest registration ably supported by PP Dr Radhika.



Rotary's Timeline

Rotary has been creating connections and making an impact for more than a century.

Our 1.4 million members join community leaders, friends, and partners in a global network that is addressing challenges around the world. It started with the vision of one man—Paul Harris. The Chicago attorney formed the Rotary Club of Chicago in 1905 to exchange ideas and form meaningful friendships. He saw Rotary as a force for ethical leadership, civic service, and peace - ideals he would promote throughout his life.

Founding Years

(1905-1911)

Starting with the first club meeting in 1905, our founding years focus on building an organization that encourages community connections based on friendship and service.

1905: Rotary begins

Attorney Paul P. Harris convenes the first Rotary meeting on 23 February in Chicago, Illinois, USA. Harris envisions a professional club that brings together local men from a variety of vocations.

1907: Early service project

The Rotary Club of Chicago meets with civic organizations to discuss the need for comfort stations (public toilets) to improve sanitation in the city. 1911.

1908: Rotary's second city

San Francisco, California, USA, becomes the second city to have a Rotary club in November.

1910: Clubs form an association

Members representing 16 Rotary clubs gather at the first Rotary Convention, in Chicago in 1910. They create the National Association of Rotary Clubs of America, adopt a constitution and bylaws for the organization, and elect a board of directors. As members of the association, Rotary clubs remain autonomous but share core values.

1911: The Rotarian magazine

Rotary publishes the first issue of The Rotarian magazine in January 1911, with the purpose of delivering standard messages to all clubs and sharing news from clubs and members. The magazine's name changes to Rotary in 2020.

1911: Our Motto

Rotarians at the 1911 convention embrace an early version of our primary motto, Service Above Self. They also adopt an early version of our secondary motto, One Profits Most Who Serves Best. Two slogans were formally approved as official mottoes in 1950: He Profits Most Who Serves Best and Service Above Self.

Expanding Our Reach

(1912-1930)

During the next few decades, Rotary's presence expands to new lands. The creation of The Rotary Foundation encourages members to think about Rotary's role in serving the needs of communities in the present and in the future

1912: Rotary becomes International

Rotary becomes an international organization with the chartering of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, in April 1912. To reflect this, the organization changes its name to the International Association of Rotary Clubs. The name Rotary International is adopted in 1922.

1912: Rotary expands to Europe

The chartering of a club in London, U.K. in August puts Rotary in Europe. Although the Rotary Club of Dublin, Ireland, had been

organized earlier, it wasn't charted until May 1913. Rotary's presence spreads to continental Europe with the chartering of a club in Madrid, Spain, in January 1921.

1914: Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland

In May, Rotary clubs in Great Britain and Ireland form the British Association of Rotary Clubs to facilitate connections among the growing number of clubs there. In 1922, the name is changed to Rotary International – Association for Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI) and the relationship with Rotary International further defined.

1917: The Rotary Foundation

Rotary president Arch Klumph proposes establishing an endowment "for the purpose of doing good in the world," which becomes a precursor to The Rotary Foundation. The Rotary Club of Kansas City, Missouri, USA, makes the first donation of \$26.50. In 1928, the Foundation is formally named and a Board of Trustees is created

1919: Rotary extends to South America

Rotary expands to South America with the chartering of a club in Montevideo, Uruguay, in February 1919. In 1920, a club is chartered in Argentina. Brazil becomes the third country on the continent to have Rotary clubs in 1923.

1919: First International Assembly

Rotary holds its first International Assembly in Chicago, an annual training event for incoming leaders. The practice would continue yearly, building connections between incoming leaders worldwide.

1919: Rotary arrives in Asia

A Rotary club is chartered in Manila, Philippines, in June 1919, and in Shanghai, China, four months later. The Rotary Club of Calcutta becomes the first club in India in January 1920.

1921: Rotary reaches Oceania and Africa

The Rotary Club of Melbourne becomes the first club chartered in Australia in April. In May, Rotary chartered clubs in Auckland and Wellington, New Zealand. Rotary reaches Africa in July with a club in Johannesburg, South Africa.

1921: Prioritizing peace

Rotarians meet in Edinburgh, Scotland, for the first convention held outside the U.S. They add the advancement of peace and international goodwill to the RI constitution. Prioritizing peace becomes part of the Object of Rotary when the Object is adopted at the 1922 Convention in Los Angeles, California, USA.

Cultivating Leaders

(1931-1957)

As Rotary clubs continue to spread around the world, we establish ourselves as leaders in international cooperation. Within the organization, we change our governance structure to give members a greater voice in leading Rotary.

1943: The Four Way Test

Rotary adopts The Four-Way Test, one of the world's most widely printed and quoted statements of business ethics. Herbert J. Taylor, a member of the Rotary Club of Chicago, drafted the test in 1932 to help an aluminum company on the verge of bankruptcy during the Great Depression.

1945: Rotary and the United Nations

Rotary International serves as a consultant to the U.S. delegation at the United Nations charter conference in San Francisco. Eleven people officially represent Rotary in this capacity. Other members attend as delegates or consultants to their countries.

1947: Paul Harris dies

After a prolonged illness, Rotary's founder dies in January.

Members contribute more than \$1 million in his memory in the following 18 months. The money is used to support the Foundation's scholarship program.

1947: The first Foundation program

This Foundation program supports scholarships for graduate study abroad and is designed to foster international understanding. Rotary would continue to support education, and the program would be known by many names, including Ambassadorial Scholars and Rotary Scholars.

1957: Rotary recognizes donors

Paul Harris Fellow recognition is established in 1957 to show appreciation for and encourage substantial contributions to the Foundation.

Global Service

(1958-1984)

We create programs that emphasize leadership through local and global service.

1962: Interact - a program for youth

The first Interact club is certified on 5 November, 1962 at Melbourne High School, in Florida, USA. Interact empowers students in intermediate and secondary school to learn leadership skills.

1965: Grants support service projects

The Foundation begins supporting club and district projects with matching grants, the first regular program to fund these service efforts.

1965: Group Study Exchange

Through the Group Study Exchange program, teams of young business professionals visit each others countries to learn their culture and gain business insights. Today the tradition continues through vocational training teams.

1968: Rotaract targets young adults

Rotary certifies its first Rotaract club at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in the U.S. Rotaract is created as a program for college-age students and young professional, but in 2019 Rotaract clubs are redefined as a unique type of membership in Rotary.

1971: Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA)

Rotary adopts the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA). Events teach secondary school students through young professionals leadership, communication, and problem solving skills.

1975: Rotary Youth Exchange

Rotary clubs have been facilitating student exchanges since the 1920s. In 1975, Rotary recognizes Rotary Youth Exchange as an official program administered by clubs and districts.

1978: Health, Hunger and Humanity grants

Rotary develops a program to improve health, alleviate hunger, and enhance human and social development. Rotary members use the grants to create access to clean drinking water, support literacy programs, provide medical care, and more — setting the stage for today's global grants.

1979: Rotary International fights polio

A multi-year grant project to immunize children in the Philippines launches Rotary in the fight to eradicate polio.

Bold Goals

(1985-2004)

We establish some of our most ambitious programs and partnerships. Building peace and fighting polio take on increased importance as we look for ways to make a lasting impact.

1985: Rotary launches PolioPlus

PolioPlus supports the commitment Rotary made a few years earlier

to "eliminate polio through immunization." Today, that commitment remains a top priority and the PolioPlus program coordinates the efforts of Rotary and its partners.

1987: Women join Rotary

Women join Rotary clubs throughout the U.S. following a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1989, women join clubs worldwide.

1988: Peace Forums and advocacy

The Foundation holds its first Peace Forum in Evanston, Illinois, USA, as part of a pilot program. The program is later broadened and peace-focused events continue under many names.

1988: Partners in the fight against polio

Inspired by Rotary's immunization work in the Philippines and global fundraising success, the World Health Assembly sets a goal of worldwide polio eradication. Rotary is a founding member of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

1999: Peace Centers empower leaders

Foundation Trustees approve the creation of the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution, now known as Peace Centers. An inaugural class of Rotary Peace Fellows begins studies in 2002.

2004: Arch Klumph Society recognizes donors

Rotary creates the Arch Klumph Society to recognize individuals, couples, and organizations that have contributed \$250,000 or more to the Foundation. The first annual dinner is held at the 2005 convention in Chicago.

Focusing Our Impact

(2005-present)

As we look to the future, we continue to build on Rotary's core values and develop dynamic partnerships to create lasting, positive change in communities worldwide. A cause-driven approach to Foundation grants increases our impact.

2009: Rotary-USAID Partnership

Our unique public-private partnership with the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) begins in 2009. It combines our members' business skills and community leadership with USAID's technical expertise and government relationships to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene.

2013: New grant model focuses on impact

The Foundation rolls out a simplified grant model that includes district and global grants. The matching grant, ambassadorial scholar, and Group Study Exchange programs are discontinued.

2014: Progress against polio

India was once thought to be one of the most challenging places to end polio. In 2014, India goes three full years without a case of polio caused by the wild polio virus and the World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia region is certified polio free. In Nigeria sustained efforts to vaccinate children, who previously couldn't be reached because of a lack of security in the country's northern states, finally results in that country reaching the three year milestone. The WHO African region is certified wild poliovirus-free in 2020.

2019: Programs of Scale supports large-scale initiatives

The Foundation creates Programs of Scale in 2019 to support evidence-based programs that have already demonstrated success. This highly selective grant provides members with longer-term resources to implement large-scale, high-impact programs in Rotary's areas of focus. In 2021, Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia is named as the first Programs of Scale recipient.

Destiny takes me to a Destination Wedding!

Long ago, forty years back, I had visited the famous temple of Guruvayoorappan (Lord Krishna) in Kerala. This was the temple where the upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony) of my brother was solemnised in the year 1984. I got an opportunity to visit the shrine once again in the year 1993. The temple and the cute idol of Balakrishna holds sweet memories for me. There is a special feeling that this kshetrah brings forth in us; a divine, mystical perception beholds us as we set foot in the temple premises.

After almost three decades, there came a sudden, unforeseen opportunity to revisit Guruvayoor.... something I hadn't anticipated at all. An extended family wedding was being organised there and I



received the invite almost 4 to 5 months ahead. Plans of the trip began revolving in my head with the velocity of light....and I couldn't ignore these at all. I discussed it with my husband who agreed with me on the condition that he'd be spared of the ordeal of accompanying me.

This was a perfect fusion of TAMILIAN and MALAYALI cultures; the girl being a Tambrahm (a common name of Tamil Brahmin)! while the boy belonged to the Menon clan from Ernakulam. We were from the girl's side of the family. Most of the wedding rituals had been arranged in a traditional Kerala cottage located at about 15 km from the temple town of Guruvayoor. This resort was to our delight, steeped in old world charm. The entire structure was replete with a portico with pillars, bronze lamps, brass urns, tastefully done floral decorations and the like. The Tamil style 'vratham' (vrata) and 'nischayartham' (engagement) marked the beginning of Day 1 celebrations.

The 'vratham', in Tamil Hindu Brahmin Iyer weddings, is a ritual that is performed separately by the bride and groom as part of the pre-



wedding celebrations in order to seek permission to start their married life. The vratham (fasting) is observed to get the blessings of the elders who have departed to the nether world. The 'nischayartham' commences with the invocation of Lord Ganesha. The two families exchange betel leaves, coconut, haldikumkum, sandal powder, fruits and sweets. The lineage of the

two families is pronounced and the vivahpatrika is read out. After these two solemn ceremonies, a sumptuous lunch was served on a banana leaf; the cuisine reminded us of the confluence of the traditions of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Some of us rushed to the temple to catch a glimpse of guruvayoorappan and steal an early evening darshan. We were gratified by the very sight of the idol of Lord Krishna bathed in fragrant sandalwood.

The evening festivities commenced with 'Thiruvathiraikali' in which the Malayali girls and ladies dressed in white sarees danced gracefully around a decorated brass lamp, while the sangeet programme which followed saw young girls and boys dancing to popular Tamil and Malayalam filmy numbers. Of course the parents of the young couple, too, did shake a leg! Bride and the groom proved their mettle with delightful dance performance.

The next morning began with the 'maalaimaatral' (garland exchange) in which the bride and the groom are assisted by their uncles during the proceedings. It was a kind of a tussle between the girl and the boy in garlanding each other and proved to be a hilarious one! Young girls were crooning appropriate songs meant for each and every ritual. Following this was the 'oonjal' activity in which the couple is made to sit on a swing and all the elderly ladies offer them a banana milk concoction. Oonjal literally translates to a 'swing'. The swing symbolises the vicissitudes of life which the couple is expected to face and cope with, in perfect harmony.



The next ritual was the most significant aspect of the wedding...tying the nuptial knot or 'thalikettu'. This solemn ceremony was materialised in the Guruvayoor temple premises. It was a very brief affair in which the traditional thaali (mangalsutra) was tied around the bride's neck by the groom in the presence of a pandit. The couple also exchange tulsi garlands and three pradakshinas around the lamp to complete the marital vows. The couple is indeed blessed to be wedded in such a sacred venue, right in the abode of the Lord himself.

The action shifted back to the resort as the couple and the relatives prepared for the 'Podava Kodukkal' (saree gifting) ritual. The nilavilakku (brass lamp) and the nirapara (brass vessel filled with paddy and decorated with coconut flowers) adorn the stage in a beautiful manner. The groom and his parents gifted a saree to the newly wedded bride to mark her official entry into her husband's family. This is supposed to denote the beginning of a long journey of trust between the groom and the bride.

The traditional Kerala lunch called 'Sadya' followed. Numerous delicacies like avial, pachadi, olan, kalan, eriseri, thoran, sambhar, rasam, two types of payasam (kheer), pickle, chips and more are served on a banana leaf along with rice and ghee.

As we prepared to leave, the girl's mother handed us 'thamboolam' which includes betel leaves and nuts and coconut and 'bhakshanams' which includes delicious sweets like laddoo-



mysorepak and savouries like murukku and chakli. She also ensured that each of us received a bag with idlis, tamarind rice and curd rice for our journey back home. This is called 'kattusaadam' in Tambrahm tradition.

As I tried recollecting this destination wedding, I realised that it was a cordial collaboration between people of two vastly different cultural backgrounds. How beautifully the two families -one from Tamil Nadu and another from Kerala – worked in sync and harmony to bring about the successful culmination of the marriage of their children! While the 'vratham', 'nischyathartham', 'oonjal', 'maalaimaatral' and 'kattusaadam' were typical of the Tamil Brahmin culture, the 'kaikottikali' dance, the 'thaalikettal', 'podavaikoduthal' and the 'sadya' typified the practices of Kerala.

The Tamil-Malayali alliance emphatically indicated that in current times, people have begun to discard narrow societal beliefs and are more than willing to embrace a secular approach in the conduct of weddings. The adage 'Unity in Diversity' may sound cliched but there's no denying that this kind of a broad outlook is very welcoming in a multi-cultural Indian society. We should sincerely hope that this open minded attitude stays on....



Radhika Padmanabhan

Health benefits of drinking lemon water everyday

Hydration is essential for overall health but when you add lemon to your water it becomes more palatable and subtly increases your water intake. Not only lemon is a healthy fruit, it is also versatile in nature. It is a nutrient powerhouse of Vitamin C, soluble fibre and potassium.

Drinking a glass of warm water with lemon in the morning will kickstart your day right. Vitamin C, fibre and potassium at the start of the day will get your system prepared and keep you active through the day.

Here are eight health benefits of drinking lemon water everyday

1. Mood enhancer – Lemon oil is a common ingredient in aromatherapy oils. This is because the citrusy smell helps keep calm and reduces stress. You will experience the same stress relief by drinking lemon with water. Due to the potassium content in lemons it helps regulate blood pressure and has a soothing effect on your mood.
2. Improves Digestion – Lemons contain soluble fibre that improves gut health. Drinking lemon water with its pulp will help stimulate healthy digestion, it reduces acid reflux, and relieves from constipation problems. Citric acid in lemon helps break down food more efficiently making it easier to absorb as much nutrients from every meal. It also helps maintain sugar levels.
3. Skin Hydration – Lemon water boosts Vitamin C intake and it also helps expel toxins from your body. It leaves your skin hydrated, and smoother, reducing the appearance of lines and wrinkles. Vitamin C is a powerhouse nutrient that plays a key role in the production of collagen and elastin, the elements in skin that keep it strong yet flexible.

4. No more bad breaths – Lemon's citrusy smell can neutralise any kind of odour, whether that is your countertops or bad breath. It stimulates saliva production and this itself cleanses the mouth while the bad breath is taken care by the citrusy smell. Drinking lemon water after a meal wipes out the lingering odour of the foods you consumed.



5. Prevents kidney stones – Kidney stones are calcium deposits and by adding lemon water to your diet you reduce the risk of forming one. Citric acid in lemon boosts urine volume and increases urine pH levels, this prevents formation of kidney stones and can also help pass existing kidney stones
6. Protects against UTIs – Drinking lemon water daily helps maintain an alkaline pH level in the urinary tract. Though lemons are acidic in their whole form, citric acid produces alkalising byproducts after digestion. However, it is essential to understand that lemon does not alkalise your whole system.
7. Improves bone health – The minerals in lemon is vital for bone health. These minerals help neutralise certain acids that disrupt calcium absorption. Potassium helps your body to absorb calcium strengthening your bones.
8. Good for brain health – Lemon juice keeps your brain healthy. Potassium content in lemon ensures your brain gets sufficient oxygen to function efficiently. It stimulates cognitive function and prevents strokes

Inner Wheel Projects

Following projects were carried out in the month of February.

- Donation of new born baby clothes at Kopri maternity hospital



- Cancer awareness talk for parents and teachers at Bal Vidyamandir on 13th February



- Donation of ECG and two Foetal Doppler machines for gynecology department at Kalwa hospital on 15th February



- Donation of One Foetal Doppler, One Manual BP apparatus, Two pulse Oxymeter and stethoscope at Kores Hospital on Tuesday 21st February 2023
- Donation of Wheel Chairs at GODS Airoli sponsored by Rotary Club of Thane Hills on 15th February 2023



10 facts about sanitation in India

In recent years, India has invested tremendous resources to mitigate its public health pressure, especially with respect to sanitation. The problem of the Ganges catches most eyes, however, uneven distribution of precipitation and demographic density cause issues as well. Due to the lack of appropriate access to clean water and related infrastructures such as toilets, waterborne diseases cost India more in actual societal and economic losses than the average level across the world. Here are 10 facts about sanitation in India.

The Ganges river provides water access for around 400 million nearby dwellers, and unfortunately, cities directly inject over three-quarters of untreated sewage into the river. The government approved *Namami Gange* program has achieved operation of 75 sewage treatment plants, a river surface cleaning action plan and a desire to rejuvenate the river from heavy pollution.

Open defecation and communicable waterborne disease are highly concerning in India. Water relates to 21 percent of diseases in India. Around 99 million people have no access to safe water and 500 children in India each day cannot survive through their fifth year on the earth due to diarrheal disease.

Lack of adequate and appropriate toilets used to contribute to the main reason for open defecation in India. Only 32.7 percent of its rural households previously had access to toilets. This figure has now grown to 98.8 percent as 92 million newly constructed toilets cover most of the rural area. Research suggests that a great decrease is emerging while the coverage rate of toilets is rising.

Mental and societal reasons determine the preference for open defecation. Research suggests that even in rural households with toilets or latrines, some of the household members prefer open defecation because they believe it is more pleasurable and desirable compared to the use of available toilets. Women's risk of being sexually assaulted is higher when private and safe toilets are not available. At least 50 percent of sanitation structures remain unused or not used properly. Many women (300 million) have no or limited access to safe bathrooms. In some extreme cases, the problem puts females' life at stake because of the unfamiliarity of toilet facilities. Vulnerability against seasonal changes undermines the capacity to provide sanitation in India. In the monsoon season, water treatment

plants in low lying basins must shut down to avoid flash floods and power outages, while some water scarcity villages will only use the toilets during this period. In turn, villages cannot maintain sustainable water supply when periodic drought strikes.

Water supply is the cornerstone of the sanitation system, yet the network is incomplete in both urban and rural areas. In rural areas, villages are draining unsafe underground water for daily usage, and in cities, poor water management rises the potential pressure for water shortage.

Limited water access in rural regions directly impedes children's possibility to receive an education. In general, the shortage of water in rural areas gives people the added burden of carrying the water home. Instead of attending school, children are supporting their families with such undesired labor.

The *Swachh Bharat* (Clean India Mission) contributed incredible achievements. India built about 1.5 million toilets in 2019 and over 100 million toilets during the past 5 years. In total, when the mission completed in October 2019, 60,000 villages were open-defecation free. The Individual Household Latrine (IHHL) coverage reached 100 percent of the state's households.

Partnership with Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) represents an outstanding international intervention of sanitation improvement in India's local communities. It secured over \$5 million in funding from the private sector. Fueled by this funding, 175,000 people have access to safe water and 25,000 communities are open-defecation free.

Today in India, diseases from untreated water and unhygienic defecation impact society not only through triggering the public health crisis, but also impacting females and children. Limited drainage systems and a lack of water preservation systems are two issues that could prevent India from fully integrating sanitation into rural areas. Fortunately, the Indian government's campaigns keep sanitation in India on the top of its to-do list. The imperfections cannot overshadow the progress that India has made in promoting its sanitation.

