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## A lesson in waste management - by Kiran Zehra

There is a sense of urgency and enthusiasm in his voice when you ask Suneet Dabke, a waste management expert, about the project his club, RC Baroda Greens, RID 3060, and his Kachre se Azadi Foundation are carrying out in Asoj, a village 30km from Vadodara, Gujarat.

Dabke, who holds a doctorate in Waste Management and has worked with the government, found that policies for environmental conservation were neither strict nor comprehensive, “a gap that made community-led initiatives all the more vital.” His foundation works to “liberate villages from the burden of unmanaged waste by promoting segregation, recycling and sustainable community practices.”

“This is more than a project to preserve the pristine soil of our villages and keep their environment healthy,” he says. Urban cities are deeply dependent on villages for agriculture. “In recent times, people have even begun migrating back to villages, seeking a simple lifestyle and peace of mind. In cities, we have small green patches in the form of parks, but the very character of a village is green. The air quality is great and the food is fresh. We have a responsibility to preserve this pristine environment. Villages are the soul of our cities,” he says.

Plastic waste (shampoo sachets, chips and biscuit wrappers, PET bottles) has steadily crept into rural spaces. “Waste is a leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions, and while urban waste management struggles to cope, most villages have no system in place. People simply dump garbage in their backyards, creating piles that have multiplied over the years. The plastic piles near their homes occupy the surroundings like an uninvited guest, creeping into every corner of the village. What began as a few discarded bags and wrappers soon became a stubborn problem that no one knew how to solve,” says Dabke.

Determined to address this, he launched a pilot waste management project in Manjusar village in 2014 under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, with support from Banswara Syntex. The pilot began with door-to-door waste collection, simple waste segregation at home, and composting, creating a low-cost, community-friendly model that others could follow.

“Start with your own home. Segregate your waste before disposing. When we do that, we stop treating everything as garbage. Food scraps become compost, recyclables turn into new products, and only a small fraction goes to the dump. It is the easiest step an ordinary household can take to keep our city cleaner, greener and healthier,” he insists. The club has even encouraged its members to practice this with a quirky incentive of a plate of free *pani puri* at specific stalls. “Who wouldn’t want free *pani puri* in Baroda?” he smiles. (Source- Rotary News)



Diwali celebration at Meghalaya Hindu Mission.



LCD Projector, Desk Top Computers and Sports Shoes gifted by Rotary Club of Shillong to Send Khasi School, Mawphlang



## Love And Friendship Just Happen

**W**hen I was fourteen I used to hang around with a friend aged eleven years. Dad didn't like it one bit. At my age of fourteen, eleven seemed too junior, almost 25 % younger. But ten years later the difference wouldn't matter at all.

One day dad called me and asked me why was I spending so much time with a junior. What can I learn from him? I should befriend senior boys and learn from them instead. Dad seemed to be right but I was not convinced. I countered him and asked a question, 'dad why should a senior boy want to befriend me'? What will he learn from me? Dad was stunned. He didn't think of that and didn't expect a counter question. I further asked him how can I be a friend with some one only because he is senior. We have to like each other. I added on....if every one thought your way there will be no friends. Most people are either senior or junior to others.

We don't choose friends and lovers. It just happens. When two persons have mutual fondness everything else ceases to matter. My first crush at fifteen was a year or two senior. It didn't matter at all. Pyar kiya nahi jata, ho jata hai meri jaan! Love and friendship happen without reason. If a relationship is illogical, it must be love, more illogical would be more interesting (fun).

My three best friends are three years junior to me. Most of my close friends are younger or much younger to me....even half my age or much less. It has never mattered to us.

Sorry dad you were probably right. At fourteen I was a teenager and much taller and bigger than my eleven year old friend. I didn't learn much from him but he learned from me. I saw no harm in that. It didn't cost me but benefitted him. It's alright. We are still friends. I was being useful to him. Later I learned a lot from my younger friends. Life is give and take. We give to some we take from some. Every thing gets evened out, eventually. Dad you were prudent and right but I wasn't wrong either.....

Love you dad and always miss you.

*Contributed by Rtn. Gangadhar Jatiani*



*Members of Rotary Club of Shillong with village elders and social workers during distribution of Smokeless Chulhas and Eco-friendly bags at Mawphlang.*

### GREETINGS

*Rtn Hemant Bayan celebrates his birthday on 30th October.*

*Rotary Club of Shillong wishes you many happy returns of the day.*