

Inspira



Vol. No. 25 / Aug 2008

FROM MY HEART

Dear Friends,

I am so very happy communicating with you once again! LPF has now become a teenager; we just celebrated our thirteenth birthday! Wow what an exciting time ahead! **As a mark of entering our teens we extended our Scholarships to rural areas around Pune.** We now have Lila Fellows from Ambegaon, Baramati, Bhor, Daund, Haveli, Indapur, Junnar, Khed, Maval, Mulshi, Purandar, Shirur, and Velha. We are now charged up to experience new challenges together with the joys and pains of becoming a teenager. We need to reach out to more girls in rural areas and take them under our wings and cross the 500 mark before we become fifteen. Our endeavor is not only to support them to get an academic degree but also to build young confident ladies, ready to step out into the new world and reach out for the stars.

The 13th scholarship award ceremony was an excellent and very rewarding function which we cover in an exclusive feature in this issue. 45 new Lila Fellows were added to the family, taking our total strength to 430 Lila Fellows. It was a great experience having an outstanding personality better known as '**People's President**' **Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam**, as our chief guest. His message was very clear – "**LPF is doing a yeoman's task, but it should have a goal to reach out to every nook and corner of India**". In years to come we will brainstorm on how we can achieve this dream.

By the time you receive this issue 13 of our Lila Fellows would have left for UK on a three-week training program to return as **YOUNG PEACE AMBASSADORS**, well groomed in different aspects of wholesome leadership. There is more about this initiative of ours in this issue. Do read on.

Many of our senior Lila Fellows have started to work and earn; therefore a need was felt to educate them on how to become 'wealth creators'. **The key to wealth creation is regular savings and investment and not random one-time investing.** To help them in this task we invited experts from Axis Bank and Max New York Life Insurance Company to share some valuable experience and give *gyan* and insight on how to achieve this.

Ms. Ameeta Sanghavi Shah, a renowned trainer in family therapy from Washington University USA, conducted a very unique "**Personal Power Program**" for the Lila Fellows. The talk was focused on harnessing the power of one's sub-conscious mind to realize one's own unlimited potential. The objective of the workshop was to enable the girls to feel empowered in their thinking, their emotions and their mind so that they could influence their own life as well as those around them with positive energy.

Adding to our incessant efforts to develop our young Lila Fellows in multiple skills, the girls were given an opportunity to train in making chocolates! An expert, **Ms. Mira Vara taught the Lila Fellows how to make and wrap 15 different types of chocolates** like Roasted Almonds, Butterscotch, Truffle, Kit-Kat, Mint, Fruit-n-Nut, After lunch & dinner chocolates, Ginger & Nuts, Liquid Chocolates, to name a few. The girls left with a basket each of the goodies they had made. Eating good things is not enough; one also has to look beautiful. So, some of the Lila Fellows underwent a



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4-day training session on making herbal beauty and cosmetic products. The *Kasturba Mahila Khadi Gramodyog Vidyalaya*, a government enterprise conducted a special training course, and taught the girls how to make 20 different herbal products, such as shampoos, pain balm, oil creams gels from Aloe Vera, face packs, foot crack creams, *shatavari kalp* and many more.

Two special programs were conducted only for Lila Fellows going to UK. The author of the award winning book "Managing from the heart", Mr. Arun Waklu, enlightened the girls with new training models of "**Wholesome Development**" and "**Wholesome Leadership**", both of which are focussed at tapping our inner and outer freedom for Prosperity and Peace. Mr. Minochar Patel, founder director of *Ecole Solitaire* the only residential finishing school, and a corporate trainer of international repute talked to the girls about the importance of table manners, etiquette, good grooming and personality development.

Talking about grooming makes me share the philosophy of seven good habits that everyone should want to develop to become admired and successful. I list them below:

1. **Be proactive:** Take the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen.
2. **Begin with the end in mind:** Start with a clear destination to understand where you are now, where you're going and what you value most.

3. **Put first things first:** Manage yourself, organize and execute around priorities.
4. **Think win- win:** Win-win is the habit of interpersonal leadership. Win-Win is the attitude of seeking mutual benefit.
5. **Seek first to understand, then to be understood:** This is the habit of empathic communication.
6. **Synergize:** Synergy results from valuing differences, of creative cooperation and teamwork.
7. **Sharpen the saw:** Preserving and enhancing your greatest asset i.e. "yourself" by renewing the physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional dimensions of your nature.

I am sure each one of you will strive to develop these good habits, which will lead you to wholesome leadership. And finally have faith in GOD. **When God leads you to the edge of the cliff, trust HIM fully and let go. Only one of the two things will happen... Either HE will catch you when you fall, OR HE will teach you how to fly!**

GOOD LUCK!



Lila Poonawalla

ZENITH

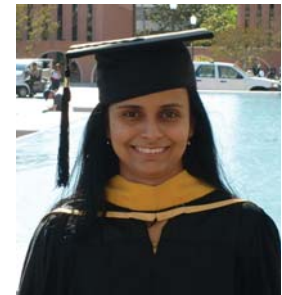
**Here is a brief account of the rungs LFs continue to climb long past the scholarship!
Each one of them is at the Zenith of their individual careers!**



Mona Dange (LF-1997) has taken over the role of Compliance Counsel for GE Healthcare for South Asia.



Ms. Archana Daundkar (LF-2003) completed her MD in Ayurveda from Satara. Apart from her private practice she is working as a consultant at the Hardikar hospital.



Ms. Rashmi Shukla (LF-2006) having completed her Master's joined KPMG Forensic Technology Services, Los Angeles, as a Software Engineer.

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Shraddha Chiplunkar (LF-2006) has been selected as HR Trainee at Godrej & Boyce (Mumbai). She is now part of the recruitment team in the Corporate Personnel & Administration department.



Ruta Inamdar (LF-1999) scored 740 with a 97 percentile in GMAT. She is currently working with the Krishnamurthy trust Mumbai chapter to help them prepare fund raising proposals and materials for various projects related to education.

Harshada Nagar (LF-2001) was recently awarded the CSIR-Senior Research Fellowship to pursue her Ph.D. in Physics from the Department of Physics, University of Pune.



Sayali Kulkarni (LF-2006) scored a magnificent 75.15% in her M. Sc. (Electronics) examinations and ranks 2nd in Fergusson College. She has been selected through college campus selection by Larsen & Turbo i.e. L&T Infotech Company.



Ms. Rajashree Ahirgawali (LF-2005) worked with Indoglobal Knowledge Ventures Pvt. Ltd as Consultant still Feb 2008 where she was involved in research process optimization and automated those processes in a user-friendly tool with the help of technology. Presently she is working in Mindcrest Pvt. Ltd. as an Advocate. It is a Private company provides offshore legal services to US and UK based clients.

M s . Pradnya Bokil (LF-2002) is pursuing a bio-organic chemistry from NCL and hoping to complete the same by March 2009. She is researching on PNA (Peptide Nucleic Acid) which is a DNA mimic and can be used in antisense therapeutics.



Swarada Angal (LF-2003), with innovation in classical dancing she performed a choreography based on leadership development in Symbiosis InfoTech Campus as well as the Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies. She has choreographed 'Rediscovering Bharatnatyam in modern time', a programme which blends modern day leadership principle with Bharatnatyam. She has also performed Dance programme titled 'SANCHIT'. Sanchit is her accumulation of principles and philosophy of Bharatnatyam, as she has understood them over a period of her training. She has received scholarship from Dadar Matunga Cultural centre, Mumbai to have advance training with her Guru Dr. Sucheta Chapekar for 2 years.



Mrs. Pradnya Kashikar (Harkare) (LF-2001) is working as a Corporate Trainer for BITS (Birla Institute of Technology and Science) Pilani MS Programme for Mahindra Tech. Ltd and Persistent systems Ltd. Recently her own book titled CYBER LAWS is been published by Vision Publications, Pune. The book is a reference book for MCM students. In the month of March, Pradnya received Best Lady Performer Award in the academic section in Karvenagar area on the occasion of.

Amita Nikam (LF-2005) quit as Asst. Lecturer in Agricultural Business Management College, Narayangaon (specializing in Post Harvest Technology for Commercial Crops & Horticulture Crops). She recently joined the world's number one micro irrigation company 'Netafim India Pvt. Ltd.' as a Design Engineer in the Projects Department.



Priya Kadam (LF-2007) perusing her PG in Biotechnology at Arts, Science & Commerce College, Baramati. She secured a 2nd prize at Avishkar 2007-2008 in the Medicine and Pharmacy category at PG level. Her project was entitled "Screening of medicinal plants for development of novel Anti-angiogenic drugs for Cancer treatment". She also participated in the 92nd Indian Science Congress and International Grapes Symposium.

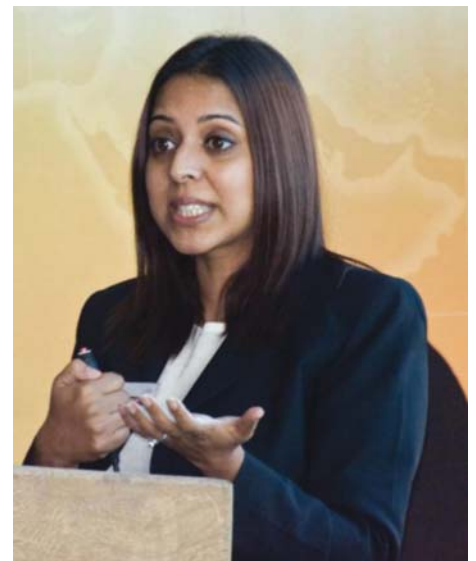
LEADING LADY

When LF Sanchita Thanedar and Prachi Harkare called upon this leading lady, it was a busy day for Entrepreneur Vandana Saxena Poria, an English bred resident of Pune. In Queen Elizabeth's Birthday Honours List, she was recently awarded the Order of the British Empire! She had to give another interview for a news channel as well, and our team from Inspira kept wondering if our interview would ever happen at all! ...they heard noise of some footsteps coming towards them and she walked in with big smile. Vandana, petite and jolie clad in salwar kameez, exuberated life and first thing we couldn't miss noticing was her British accent. Presented below are some excerpts of the tête-à-tête that followed.

Did finance fancy her right from the beginning? To our surprise she says no and then adds that earlier during her graduation days she was working for a radio station in London as a hobby. One fine day the radio station just closed down because of lack of finance. This made her realize the importance of finance and she chose to take up finance and become a Chartered Accountant. She says "I always wanted to work in business and see how business could succeed. Accountancy is a very important part of this. Becoming a chartered accountant teaches you to analyse businesses and strategically set goals to help business performance. It is the very crux of business, so it was important to understand". The journey had begun for her but all her near and dear ones challenged her that she won't be able to make it. This in turn reinforced her determination; in her own words, "Its fun to do those things which someone says you cannot do!"

After qualifying as a Chartered Accountant from UK she spent 10 years in Central and Eastern Europe where she worked with Earnst & Young initially. At that time, central Europe had 'the typical communist mentality' she recalls. She remembers she was posted to Poland, where she didn't even know anyone. Reading the newspaper at her hotel, she came across an advertisement of a conference of CA's. She decided to attend it. The moment she reached the conference room she saw all men and just one lady other than her. But that did not deter Vandana; she actively participated by boldly and confidently putting forth her views to all the others present in there. Later the other lady in the conference room became her good friend and helped her in finding an accommodation there. "So this is the Power of Networking. One must take the risk and initiative", she adds. For 8 years as the

CEO of the international division of the UK's largest listed Professional training Company, BPP Holdings Plc. She was also a vice chair of the British Chamber of Commerce in Hungary. My experience as a Vice Chair, I would say "Networking is very important and you get to meet many different types of people when you are in this role. I represented the Chamber of Commerce at various EU events, government events and organised events for the Chamber. This was a Voluntary role, while I was working for BPP, which has helped me move in my career" shares Vandana.



*The acclaimed public speaker-
Vandana Saxena*

What made Vandana quit her high profile job and come back to India? She replies "As kids, we use to come to India as all my aunts' children were in India. In UK we had no relatives. I was expecting my second child then. So I chose to be back to my own country then." She along with her husband had plans of setting up Get Through Guides (GTG), a 'content research and creation' company, which today develops and publishes materials for UK and international professional qualifications and delivers training courses to corporates across India. Get through Guides books are already being

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LEADING LADY

sold across the world at cost-effective prices, making education more affordable for everyone. The couple had visited 5 cities across India and they finally chose Pune. Pune a hub of education, IT talent and hard working people, Vandana believes that there are more opportunities in Pune than in Mumbai, Delhi or any other city in India.

To describe Vandana's transition from CA to CEO to GTG she says "I left being a CA many years back i.e. when I left Earnst and Young. But the transition was great because I had a chance to build my own business the way I felt it was right. I had not inherited something that someone else had created. So it is almost like having a child and teaching it how to walk, how to speak and how to treat others! That is and has been an amazing experience. I am very proud of the company we have created and hope we can go on to grow in the same way".

Vandana also chairs the British Business Group in Pune, which she has set up with the support from the British High Commission and local Indian Businessmen, with the aim of fostering bilateral trade and encouraging a deeper understanding of each other's culture. She says, *"Due to the success of the British Business Group, many more dignatories are coming to Pune. Recently Prince Andrew visited Pune."* Vandana introduced the Prince to the Indian business community and organized a lunch on behalf of the British Business Group where Prince Andrew met Asian Business women. Our very own Lila madam was also one to meet him.

Vandana has lots of ambitious plans for promoting more talent from India, developing and inculcating skills and knowledge at affordable costs. The "Get Through Guides" have lot of courses to offer such as diploma in International Financial Reporting. They also provide the study material which is very articulately prepared. She even showed us one book. Each of the chapters is followed by a brief summary which helps the students to recollect what they have learned in that particular section. The trainers also are given special training to train students. She believes, *"Intellectually Indian students are no less but their problem is that they cannot sit in class for 6 continuous hours whereas one needs to sit continuously for longer hours in the office later on"*.

Vandana has been recently awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to British Trade and Investment in India and for adding value to Indo-British bilateral relations. She has spoken at various events in UK about doing business in India and as an acclaimed public speaker, also speaks passionately about how to take India forward through professional education, honing skills and adopting the best in international practices. She is committed to ensuring that India produces the best and most sought after business professionals around the globe.

On the personal front also Vandana is equally active. Her day at home sees her playing saxophone and being with her children. She humbly gives the credit of her overall success to her husband who she says is as steady and strong as a rock. We quizzed her about the funniest moment and she told us that while she was in Europe whenever she used to tell her name people use to exclaim *"Oh the famous movie!"* and I use to wonder which is that movie? *"One fine day one of my friend called up and told the movie 'Vandana' is being telecasted on TV. To my utter shock I discovered it was 'ARADHANA' and not Vandana! Because of the similar pronunciation people use to misunderstand my name and thought the movie is 'VANDANA'"* she giggles.

So much energy and enthusiasm where does she draw her inspiration from? Zap came the reply, *"My mother, mother-in-law and Lila ma'am are my Inspirations."* So how does she manage her time? She says *"One has to find time; you never get time on your own."*

We ask her the message for Lila fellows. After some moments of thought she adds, *"You have got this scholarship which itself proves that you have achieved a lot in life! But as I told you the power of networking is very strong and it could take you much higher. You can make a difference. As Gandhi says 'Be the change you want to see'. Also remember this important proverb, 'Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for the rest of his life'".* Saying so, she signed off.

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EMPOWERED LILA FELLOWS...

Nisha believes, if one has strong determination and the will to work hard then nothing is impossible in life.

I belong to middle class Gujarati Brahmin family, where girls hardly pursue higher studies. My parents, especially my not-much-educated mother always encouraged me for higher studies. She believed that education helps to broaden our view on life and also makes us independent. I completed my graduation in Chemistry by doing a part time job in a clinic and giving tuitions at home. I procured admission to a Master's course in Analytical Chemistry at Abeda Inamdar Senior Girls College, Pune. I was able to pay my fees upto the first year by continuing to give tuitions. After that the economic conditions threatened the continuation of my studies. That is when; I applied for the Lila Poonawalla Foundation scholarship and was awarded the same in the year 2004. This scholarship not only helped me to complete my Master's degree but also opened up new avenues for my career!



Nisha with her colleagues on the oil rig

As a post-graduate, I joined the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL) as a Project Assistant in catalysis department. Here I was exposed to research. I first bagged the second prize for best poster presentation award at an International symposium held at Bhabha Atomic Research Center in Trombay, 2004. Then in 2007, I published a research paper in an International scientific journal. While working at NCL, I got an offer from Halliburton Technology Center Pune, an International onshore oil service provider. I joined in 2007 as Lab Technologist in production enhancement department. The oilfield terminology and analysis of the on-shore and off-shore samples for oil prospecting was all new for me! To enhance my knowledge about the working of the oil industry, the office sent me to their headquarters at Duncan Technology Center (DTC), Oklahoma, USA.

This was my first international trip; everything was new and very exciting. I landed in Duncan on a Chilly afternoon (Brrrr....-5°C!!!). Still trying to get over the numbing cold, early next morning I visited the Duncan Technology Center to meet concerned people who were to train me. It was a short trip with a lot on agenda... obviously the schedule was hectic.

But I was all charged up and excited about learning new things. One of the scheduled activities was a visit to the oil rig!

An oil rig is a drilling site with a technological setup for exploration and/or exploitation for oil and gas, which is formed and trapped deep beneath the earth's surface. One is allowed to step onto a rig only after her or she has cleared rig-safety training. It is an 8 hour training after which you have to clear a related test, only after which one gets rig pass. Our

colleagues at DTC had procured permission for us from one of its clients, to observe the on site job on the rig along with three experienced technicians. The rig visit meant a lot of preparations. Personal safety was of prime importance; arrangements were religiously made for cover-all, safety shoes, ear protection, hard-hat, gloves and safety goggles too.

And the day came when we had to visit the field in Oklahoma City, 40 km from Duncan; I clearly remember it was the 1st of February! ACTION was supposed to begin at 7am and so we were instructed to report half an hour in advance. Fully equipped with the safety gear, we four reached in time (I was the only Lady in this team!). We witnessed "water fracturing" which comprised drilling a well 9,000 ft. deep by injecting a water-based fluid along with the proppant (solid granules of definite size; usually sand) inside the bore-well with high pressure. The chemicals were injected at the desired rate from a height of 8,510 ft. above ground! Next day they performed ~9,363 ft. casing on the side walls of the drilled wall. Through out the entire process a crewmember was explaining to us the minute technical details of the job. First he showed us the mixing of chemicals in a big blender and then explained the intricacies of the pumping technique. The field engineers explained the rheology ('Rheology' is the study of the natural reservoir, the depth of the bore-well from where the oil is extracted from under different layers of rocks). The main aim of any oil field service provider is to satisfy the client's requirement without damaging the cased bore-well. The crew was quite happy to

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EMPOWERED LILA FELLOWS...

answer all our doubts and see our enthusiasm to know and learn about things on the rig.

It was a really freezing day in Oklahoma City; the temperature around -12°C. My hands and feet were freezing! The wind was blowing hard only getting hard on our breath. Being the only lady on field, I realized that working on a rig in such very extreme weather was very challenging for women. This has been a truly amazing experience.

Apart from my training I learnt lot of other new things too. I learnt to be independent. Every weekend I visited a Christian church where I made a lot of friends. I also joined the church school where they taught nice lessons, which gave me a beautiful perception of the God-gifted human life and how I could utilize it for service to society. The priest called us on stage one day and thanked us for coming all the way from India to visit his church. It was truly the happiest moment in my life. It was nice of people to invite me to the regular Sunday Church activities, knowing I was from India.



Nisha all donned for the Field Job

Indeed! With unforgettable experiences I returned to my country proud of the new-found knowledge.... that which I have shared with you all. I look forward to sharing some more similar enthralling experiences in the futurethis is just a beginning!

■ - **Nisha Pandya (LF -2004)**
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MELTING POT

We are a mixed bag! And we come in different specializations! The LPF banner says "Subject-No Bar! Just have the drive for higher education." LF Harshada Nagar and Sunetra Chaphalkar speak to a few new LFs as a representation of the 2008 batch.

Keertida Phadke (Overseas LF-2008),

has chosen to pursue Master in Management from ESCP-EAP (European School of Management). ESCP-EAP is ranked second in France and third in Europe for the programme she will be pursuing. ESCP-EAP is recognized not only in Europe, but also in India- it has tie-ups with reputed Indian Institutions like IIM Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bangalore, Lucknow and Kozikode. Besides, it has a very flexible course which one can mould according to his/her needs. Also it has tie-ups with over 60 Universities across 33 countries, giving students the option of doing one/ two semesters in one of these Universities and thus gaining through the exposure. "I seek to use my language skills in business sectors like Import/Export, International Business, since I



Keertida Phadke

know major world languages like Spanish, French, English and Hindi. In Europe, many fields lay open for you to explore provided you know their language. Since I already know major European languages like French, Spanish and English, and follow Italian and Portuguese, there are vast numbers of opportunities that are open to me once I pass out from a reputed institute like ESCP-EAP".

Her father pursued his MA in Sanskrit from the University of Pune, but later switched his field and joined the General Insurance Corporation (GIC) while her mother is the true homemaker. She says, "When I was one, my father was posted to Japan, and so, I spent 3 formative years of my life there. While I may remember very little of this experience, I believe it is this exposure to an alien land, where I had to make an effort to communicate in an unknown language that has given me a flair for languages and made me the assertive person that I am. On returning to India, I schooled at St. Anne's. I secured 86.53% in my 10th and though I could have secured admission to the Science stream as many

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MELTING POT

would have thought it logical, I chose to pursue Arts at Fergusson College. I signed up for Spanish at the University of Pune in 11th itself, and at the age of 16 was the youngest in class! However, age did not prove to be an excuse to under perform. Instead I secured an 'A' grade throughout my Spanish Studies at the University. Considering my record, my professor recommended my name for a vacancy at the Symbiosis University for a lecturer in Spanish language. I thus began teaching Spanish to the Bachelor of Business Administration students when I was 18, and was now teaching students who were my classmates in school!" Keertida pursued BA in English Literature, with Economics and Political Science as the general subjects.

"I had been reading about the Lila Poonawalla Foundation in the press for a long time before I applied. I believe that when you become part of any foundation, it is not the monetary aspect which takes precedence, but the innumerable opportunities that open up for you, due to the people you are exposed to and get a chance to interact with by virtue of being a Fellow of a foundation like the Lila Poonawalla foundation. The chance to interact with self-made people like Lila Ma'am and the other trustees, the opportunity to learn from them is what prepares us in this new stage of our life that we set to embark on". For Keertida special achievements or Awards won in life would be of course, the Lila Poonawalla Scholarship received at the hands of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam and her 2nd rank at the University. She was also part of the 1st All-Indian student drama troupe to stage a full length 3 Act Spanish play-in Spanish of course! "My group stood 1st in the English One Act drama competition at Fergusson in 2007", proudly states Keertida. "I have actively participated in Dramatics. I wrote for the Political Science Wall magazine at Fergusson and was also an active member of the Sociology Club at college. I love reading, Spanish poetry and walks on the hill behind my house.

I would like to share an experience of teaching Spanish... I started teaching when I was 18. Switching to being a teacher, while still being a student, required a significant change in thought process and implementation of the same. With the average age of the class double that of mine, I knew my age was going to work against me. I learnt to get my point across, to get my students to take me seriously and not take liberties because of the age factor and at the same time avoid being starchy. Teaching served to inculcate in me the qualities of punctuality, responsibility and commitment. My students ranged from software professionals to

housewives to ex- Ambassadors. I had to change and adapt my teaching content and method. With no uniformity to the student's background and their requirements, I learnt to make best use of the resources at hand to help them get what they looked at when they signed up for the course. As an LF I do see that we bear a social responsibility, definitely so! When I see the work done by Lila Ma'am, the trustees like Mrs. Tarapore and others, I feel not just humbled, but also inspired to make a difference to the society; if we as a nation are to develop, there must be development brought about in all quarters, not just lop-sided growth which would do more harm than good, and prove to be a deterrent in our progress. As Dr. Kalam said in his address during the 13th LPF function, each one of us, now that we have been given the opportunity must take it upon ourselves to make a difference to the lives of at least 100 other women. I think it would be great if we could start this chain reaction of one help another and a virtuous circle which would educate and empower the women, her family and consequently the Indian society. The Lila Poonawalla Foundation is one of the closest knit groups I have seen. Each and everyone who becomes part of this family feels included and has a sense of belonging, which further spurs them to contribute actively in the events and activities organized by the Foundation".

Varsha Shirke (LF-2008)

in the local category hails from Saswad and wishes to pursue her career in IT, attracted by the industries booming in Pune and its future scope. Her father worked as a clerk in the Yerwada jail press. Unfortunately he expired when she was just 14.

Since then her mother has struggled to see her daughters complete their education of their choice. Varsha's mother is a school teacher for the last 28 years and always dreamt that her children should receive the best of education always. "Recently my mother due to her transfer has to travel from Saswad to Loni Kalbhor and back (almost 40-50 kms) daily. My elder sister has completed BA,BED and is currently pursuing MA (English) for good prospects in the teaching field. **I completed B.Sc. (Chemistry) from Waghire College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Saswad, I wanted to excel in the**



Varsha Shirke

MELTING POT

field of Computers so appeared for entrance examination and got admission in the renowned Sinhagad Technical Education Society, Pune for pursuing Masters in Computer Applications. My mother somehow managed to pay the fees for my admission. First year was really difficult for me struggling to travel from Saswad to Pune daily and coping up with my studies was really getting difficult. At times I repented taking up this subject. But then my dream of making my mother happy and becoming financially independent is what kept me going. Came Second year and the soaring fees! It was then that I had heard about the LPF scholarship through my friends and also read about it in the newspapers. I applied for the same thinking I would surely get it but to my surprise I did not just receive this scholarship but was awarded the Lila Fellow of the year in the local category. Another feather in my cap was receiving this award at the hands of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. I was also called on the stage to speak few words regarding the scholarship and the foundation. This gave me a sense of pride and boosted my morale. Now, in the second year of MCA, I decided to shift to Pune and stay in the hostel so that I could concentrate on my studies better, as now I have more expectations to fulfill-my dreams and also those of the foundation," says Varsha. Varsha loves sports. She has played volley ball at Taluka level and have completed N.C.C. B-Certification in 'A' grade and C-Certification in 'C' grade. She loves watching Football and knows all the players of various teams. A hardcore Ronaldo and Beckham fan, dreams of traveling to Australia sometime. She has a sweet voice and has been trained in classical singing for 3 years and scored distinction in singing exams. What more? Varsha wants to contribute to her town Saswad by providing educational facilities to the children there. She feels it is necessary for girls in rural areas to acquire higher education so that they can progress with the world.

Sarika Nigade; daughter of a State Transport bus conductor at Swargate, is chosen to be Lila Fellow for the year 2008 in the special category. Her native village Titagar, Rareshwar which is right in the mountains where fulfilling basic necessities itself is difficult at times. Getting education is just next to impossible! Her family consisting of 5 members shifted to Bhore for a livelihood and education. Both parents wanted their children to pursue education and become independent in life. Sarika the eldest of all siblings, always had an inclination towards computers. But due to lack of guidance and financial support during her 12th Class she opted for B.Sc.

Zoology from Anantrao Thopate College, Bhore. "I stood first in the college for the first year of Bachelors and was awarded a certificate and Dictionary from my college", says a proud Sarika. "Getting admissions for Masters in Computer Management was like achieving a big milestone for me. The University of Pune recommended me to join in for Naralkar Institute of Career Development and Research, Pune as it is amongst the best and renowned institute for this Masters course. I cleared the Entrance and GD, PI of this institute and got myself enrolled for my masters. Staying alone in Pune away from my family was frightening. But then I remembered two small kids belonging to my native place who had shifted to Bhore just for education. They were earning their living and also funding their own education. The thought motivated me to move to Pune for pursue my dreams. I have taken a Bank Loan to pay the fees for my post graduation. Also my father has taken loan for continuing my sibling's and my studies. The support of my parents has helped me face all the challenges in life. I got to know about the Lila Poonawalla Scholarship through my College in Bhore which received the foundation brochure and forms. My professors and family asked me to apply for the same. I was called for the interview and what next! I received a letter which mentioned that I was awarded this scholarship. Our happiness was beyond imagination. Within a few days I became the honour to my village -Bhore and everybody knew me. The icing on the cake was receiving this scholarship at the hands of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam! I feel like I have become a celebrity myself and everybody knows me in Bhore! My parents are really happy and proud of me. I also realize that I have a social responsibility towards the foundation and also the small kids of my native village -Rareshwar, where kids do not get proper education. I really wish to do something for them in my future. But yes for that first I need to study hard and do well". A talkative and bubbly girl, Sarika loves to dance and sing and also cooks very well. She is the Biryani specialist amongst her friends; she wants to attend as many programs of LPF to enhance her skills and gain confidence.



Sarika Nigade

■ - Harshada Nagar – Babrekar
(harshada98@gmail.com)
- Sunetra Chaphalkar
(sunetrac@gmail.com)

AWARD FUNCTION

The 13th LPF Scholarship Award ceremony was held at the Taj Blue Diamond, Pune with unprecedented planning and orchestration under escalated security. As the Foundation stepped into its teens, this year's Awards were earmarked by the presence of one of the most acclaimed academicians in the world.... Former President and the Missile Man of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam graced the LPF celebrations as Chief Guest who imparted an aura of poise and wisdom to the event!

On 30th of July 2008, the Lila Poonawalla Foundation incorporated 45 new girls from Pune into its family. The scholarships were awarded to these girls for pursuing their post-graduate education in India and abroad in 29 different disciplines ranging from MCA, Political Science, Physics, Health Sciences, Computer Science, Law, Pharmacy, Statistics, Business Administration, Chemistry, Commerce, Ophthalmic Medicine and Surgery, Botany, Homoeopathy, Electronics, Biotechnology, Agriculture, MCA, MCM, Homeopathy, Indian Classical Music, Architecture, Economics & Finance, International Business, Healthcare Policy & Management, Microbiology, Bioinformatics, Foreign Trade, to Journalism. This year the scope of the scholarships was broadened to accommodate girl applicants from all over the Pune district. Till last year only girls from Pune (Haveli Taluka) were eligible for the scholarship.

Trustee Ms. Shaheen Patel (LF-1996) welcomed all the guests and invited the chief guest Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and the trustees for the symbolic gesture of inauguration i.e. for lighting the lamp. Chairperson Mrs. Lila Poonawalla then formally introduced and welcomed our celebrated chief guest. Mr. Firoz Poonawalla then requested the guest to felicitate the board of trustees and well wishers. A few of the older Lila Fellows shared their experience with the foundation. With no further delay, the current batch of Lila Fellows was introduced and they were handed over their scholarships.

Trustee Mrs. Shernaz Edibam announced the Foundation's new initiative of producing "Young



'Just inaugurated'! the trustees and chief guest Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam after lighting the lamp

Peace Ambassadors". Thirteen Lila Fellows who had been selected for this mission after rounds of applications and interviews were felicitated by the chief guest. These girls will undergo a 3 week training program with the Asha Foundation, UK. Mrs. Poonawalla speaks about this venture in an exclusive feature in this issue.



New Batch - Lila Fellows -2008 with Dr. APJ Kalam and Trustees - LPF

Then came the most awaited moment, Dr. Kalam's address, to which majority of the gathering was looking forward. He opened with praise for Mrs. Poonawalla's hard work and intellect. He congratulated the new Lila Fellows upon becoming a part of this family. He said "When a child is empowered with education, he grows up to be a responsible citizen. When a teacher is

Contd...

AWARD FUNCTION

empowered with knowledge and experience a good value system is born. When a politician is empowered with education, visionary bodies are formed. When an individual or a team of intellectuals is empowered with technology, it leads to higher production and achievement. When an institution is empowered it gives birth to leadership and assured success. **And when a woman is empowered, she keeps the society in harmony and leads the nation to prosperity.** Young girls should always laugh and smile, radiating energy and spreading happiness. Happiness is in giving. You have everything to give. You have knowledge, share it. ALMIGHTY is there to give you more and more! Reward someone and share the joy with yourself".

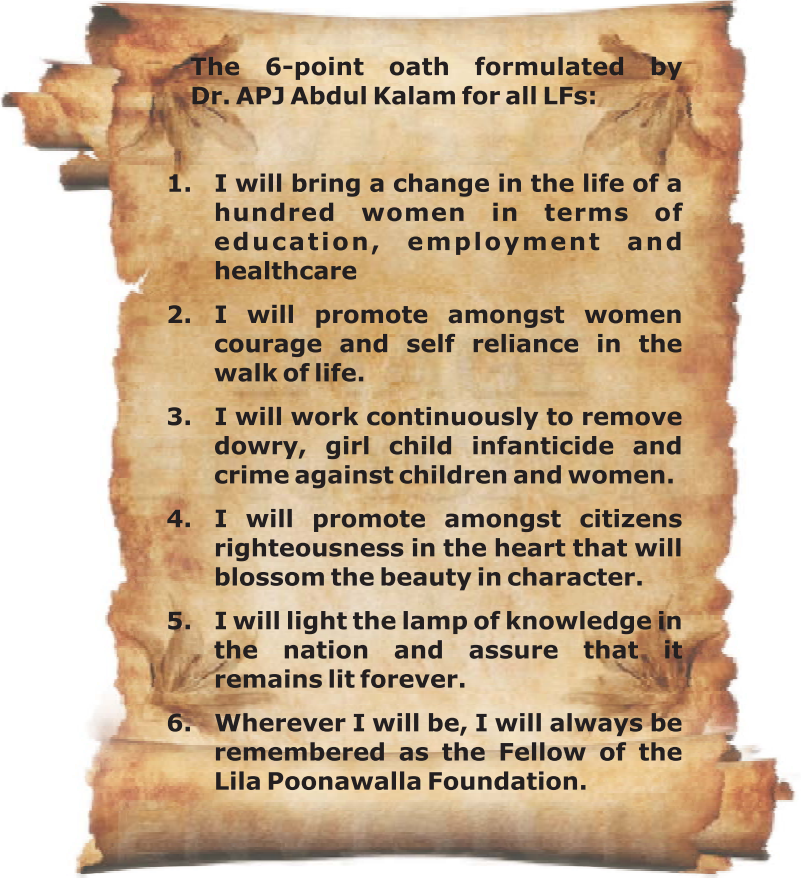
He sent out a clear message- **"Work with integrity and succeed with integrity"**. To supplement this philosophy of his he quoted 4 role models in his life: **Madam Marie Curie**, who dedicated her life for the discovery and research of radiations and finally also died because of exposure to radiations. **Mrs. Ranjana Kumar**, who took over the Indian Bank which was accumulating losses for two consecutive years and soon changed it into a profit-making body without sacking any old employees or hiring any new ones. **Smt. Tessy Thomas**, who was educated in Pune and was a very motivated worker on the guided missile and **Mrs. Asha Ramayya** who was abandoned by her husband and in-laws because she was infected by HIV and she later went on to remarry and had a child. She was a social challenge and went on to become a social reformer. He demonstrated through each of these examples how life could be lived with conviction and dedication to get the desired success.

Challenging the young minds he said, **"I advise each one of you to write one page in the history of India.** It can be a page of innovation, it can be one of new discovery, it can be anything that contributes significantly to make history. Writing such a page yourself is difficult. Try to do it". He said, **"Dreams do come true only when we own them and accept the responsibility of any possible risk to fulfil them.** He called upon everyone to repeat the words after him – *"I can do it, we can do it and India can do it."* He also proposed a 6-point oath which all Lila Fellows repeated after him. Towards the end of his heart rendering talk his words of appreciation were- "I congratulate LPF for successfully accomplishing the mission of empowering Pune women with knowledge so that they make a change to the

society around them. I wish them all the best. May god bless you".

No longer had Dr. Kalam stopped talking that the eager minds in the crowd wanted him to answer their queries which he handled very beautifully. When asked which role did he enjoy the most in his life, that of the President of India, that of a scientist, that of a researcher or that of a teacher, he said "Teaching is the best role because *when you are teaching you are learning as well*". He seemed very happy answering the questions as he was addressing the audience. There was so much to say and to hear from the great teacher.

Finally Trustee Freny Tarapore concluded the function by thanking the chief guest, trustees, audience, well wishers of the Foundation, Press and media for their support in making the function a grand success. With a target of reaching the 500 LFs mark by the 15th Award Function, the day ended after declaring a new eventful year at the foundation!



The 6-point oath formulated by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam for all LFs:

1. **I will bring a change in the life of a hundred women in terms of education, employment and healthcare**
2. **I will promote amongst women courage and self reliance in the walk of life.**
3. **I will work continuously to remove dowry, girl child infanticide and crime against children and women.**
4. **I will promote amongst citizens righteousness in the heart that will blossom the beauty in character.**
5. **I will light the lamp of knowledge in the nation and assure that it remains lit forever.**
6. **Wherever I will be, I will always be remembered as the Fellow of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation.**

SPECIAL FEATURE

Promoting Peace Leadership in a Globalised World: A Unique tie-up between Lila Poonawalla Foundation and the Asha Foundation

Asha Foundation-United Kingdom and Lila Poonawalla Foundation-India join hands in 2008 to float a meaningful program of training 13 young Lila Fellows as Young Peace Ambassadors Promoting Peace Leadership in a Globalised World. None other than the Missile Man of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam flagged off this event by handing over certificates to these young LFs recognizing them as "Ambassadors of Peace", who are expected to return to their home country and spread love, peace and harmony. As the team geared up to leave to Gloucestershire, UK on the 9th of August, Padmashree Mrs. Lila Poonawalla spoke to Inspira about her ambitious and noble venture.

Q. What is this entire buzz about LPF promoting peace leadership?

A. Recently I came across Zerbanoo who was compiling a book on the interviews of 500 women in the world who had excelled in their respective careers. During our interaction we realized that we both shared similar ideologies on Peace and Leadership for Peace. As the developing and the developed countries are moving into the globalised world, the world has become rather flat and cultural and social differences need to be dealt with. World history has seen wars but now it is very important to foster greater peace and understanding amongst diverse communities and religions. People need to understand and respect each others views and opinions so as to enhance 'global harmony'. We both agreed that war doesn't solve human problems; the only way to resolve human problems is to enhance peace and harmony. Coincidentally we also agreed that with so much talent, brain and creative energy at the foundation, we could initiate peace leadership from home!

Q. Could you please tell us more about your collaborator and her mission?

A. Mrs. Zerbanoo Gifford is an extremely talented writer. She is a strong proponent of the human rights approach, a member of Race Relations Forum and the Chairman of a Commission for looking into the ethnic minority involvement in British life. She is a commentator on current affairs & an author of a number of books and publications.

She has set up a humanitarian organization Asha Foundation, with the prime objective to bridge nationalities, religions and cultures i.e. basically to promote cultural integration and enhance peace at

large. The Foundation undertakes activities which include training young people in communication, public speaking, leadership, importance of relationships and many aspects which eventually build the youth into Peace Ambassadors. The role of these Peace Ambassadors is to promote peace and harmony.

Q. What are your objectives behind this apparent 21-day training Program in UK?

A. The objective is five-fold:

1. Building confidence and tolerance: Traveling to completely foreign lands and systems and interacting with people of diverse cultures will surely induce lots of confidence in these girls. They will be staying together wherein three Peace ambassadors will be sharing one room. It would mean making certain degree of adjustments and co-operation, especially during times of disagreement and conflict.

2. Knowledge building and cultural exchange: The Peace Ambassadors will be given an insight into foreign culture and tradition, in this case British. They would visit Oxford University, Shakespeare's birth place, Harrods, Knightsbridge and Handicap Center. Something which all of us have read in books. But seeing is believing! This is something which will enrich their knowledge. And finally Mrs. Zerbanoo herself has planned the "Mad Hatter's Tea Party" at the Asha Foundation. The Peace Ambassadors will make Indian snacks for this event.

3. Understanding Leadership: These days it is very important for the younger generation in every country to understand what leadership is all about. To bring about clarity in their thoughts, these girls will be exposed to following a "A Thought for the Day".

4. Stress Management

5. Finally, understanding woman's role in a man's world

Q. What do you visualize as the outcome of this program?

A. The Lila Poonawalla Foundation is planning to collaborate and connect with NGOs working in various spheres of development like AIDS, health issues, gender issues etc. We expect the Peace Ambassadors to don the role of peace-leaders and volunteer some time to either teach or play a meaningful role in a project of their interest. The Peace Ambassadors can promote peace at home, work place and their environment when they are back after their enriching 21 days trip at The Asha Foundation.

Contd...

SPECIAL FEATURE



Pease Ambassadors with Dr. APJ Kalam and Trustees

■ - **Anagha Mitra – LF-1996**
(anagha_mitra@yahoo.com)

The 'Ambassadors of Peace'

MS. ANJALI SARDA
MS. DEEPA KRISHNAMURTHY
MS. KASTURI PAIGUDE
MS. KIRAN PARDESHI
MS. MADHURI KAD
MS. NEELU NAWANI
MS. PRIYANKA KHOPKAR
MS. RAJASHREE AHIRGAWALI
MS. SAMINA DEOKAR
MS. SNEHA NIKUM
MS. SNEHALATA MAHAMUNI
MS. SMITA ACHARYA
MS. SWARADA ANGAL

**Trustee Mrs. Vasantha Ramaswamy,
Mrs. Jayashree Shahade and
Ms. Janet Anthony would be
traveling to Gloucestershire, UK
with these thirteen ambassadors**

NEWS FLASH!

The Lila Poonawalla Foundation joined hands with Abs Fitness & Wellness Club to give the LFs an opportunity to work on their physical fitness, an equally important aspect of overall development. The Foundation will select three Lila Fellows every year for the Abs Fitness Academic Course with the sole objective of training them to exploit the full potential of a healthy mind in a healthy body. A circular about the course was sent across to all LFs and as many as 20 girls showed interest! That is when a decision was made to choose 3 girls every year for the course depending upon certain health and fitness criteria laid down by the Club.

The Abs Fitness Academic Course will enable the chosen LFs to make fitness and wellness a career of they choose to. They will be exposed to the standard operating procedures of a fitness professional, to the latest and top-of-the-shelf fitness equipment, trends & innovations. They will be taught how to develop, market and manage professional fitness and wellness clubs. They will also be trained in Club Development and Management as well as Finance, Sales & Marketing. This course is affiliated to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) USA. The course will be conducted at the Abs Fitness & Wellness Club, Nucleus Mall, Camp, Pune. The duration of the course will be 3½ months. The first

batch will commence from 11th July'08. The Abs Fitness Academic Course will be conducted by Mr. Abhimanyu Sable who is an ACSM Gold certified. The other faculty will include Senior Physiotherapists and Doctors. This Course will be sponsored by the Abs Fitness & Wellness Club and the Lila Poonawalla Foundation

The first two Lila Fellows who have been selected for the first round of training this year are:



Ms. Nisha Pandya
(LF-2005)



Ms. Sonali Chavan
(LF-2006)

We congratulate the selected Lila Fellows for bagging the golden opportunity and hoping they make the best of it!

- Rajani Panchang
(rajanipanchang@gmail.com)

SPECIAL FEATURE

Looking and feeling good, goes a long way in feeling confident too! Thus, the Foundation this time provided the LFs with an opportunity to train in Herbal Beauty & Cosmetic Products. Two participants of this program, Ms. Mussarat Shaikh (LF-1996) and Ms. Sunetra Chaphalkar (LF-2001) give a brief account of their experience.

Gone are the days when we turn to our granny and mom for domestic remedies for common ailments and beauty tips. The mall-culture has brought the world at our doorstep with a multitude of cosmetic products at hand to choose from. Youngsters not only get attracted to, but also rely on brand names when it comes to maintaining and enhancing their looks. Most of the products in the market do not suit sensitive skins and people often suffer from allergies to certain products. Finding a customized product for oneself becomes difficult in such conditions. Recently the "Pune Mirror" featured an article on the seizure of adulterated duplicate cosmetics of famous brands in Mumbai! So for those who are too cautious to rely on the available products **'GOING HERBAL'** is a way out. Nature abounds in resources especially when it comes to simplicity and utility - there are no two opinions about it. Herbal beauty products can be made using natural oils, wax and herbs as the base product with absolutely no side effects. They are economical and easy to use.

Lila Poonawalla Foundation arranged a training programme for 15 LFs on 4 consecutive Sundays during April- May 2008 at the Kasturba Mahila Khadi Gramodyog Vidyalaya, Gandhi National Memorial, at the Aga Khan Palace. This Institute is approved by the Khadi & Village Industries Commission, Government of India. The basic objective of this Institute is 'Women Empowerment' and makes them economically independent. It imparts training in making more than 20 herbal products for household use and can be taken up as a small-scale business by women of self- help groups to enhance their income since the preparation is simple and can be carried out with minimum investment at home. This training for Lila Fellows was basically to understand the importance of Herbal beauty and how they can themselves make these products. They could even start a small-scale business of making and selling these products. Actually the duration of this course is three weeks, which was highly impossible to attend by all. Thus, the co-operation of the institute to conduct the classes on Sundays to enable the working



A trainer demonstrates making of a herbal product as LFs look on

girls and Post Graduate students of LPF to avail of this opportunity was highly appreciated! Their training co-coordinator, Mrs. Ujwala B h o s a l e , who is accomplished in this field and has conducted many such training programs successfully, provided this training for Lila Fellows. Her teaching emphasized more on practical training wherein the girls were involved in making the

products themselves. Every participating LF was awarded a certificate upon successful completion of the training program.

We were trained to make approximately 20 products ; 3 types of shampoos, a pain balm, Aloe Vera Oil, cream, gel, cleansing lotion, face pack, *Utane* (scrub), crack cream, *Shikakai masala*, scented petroleum jelly, rose water, *Shatavari Kalp* (Asparagus extract), hair / massage oil, henna-dye etc. Practical training was imparted to all and the samples were distributed to LFs and their family members to try them out. Yeah! Lila Fellows actually tried each product and had a good experience using these products. At the end of the training every one knew the use of the much hyped plant Aloe Vera in their daily lives in the form of oil, juice, shampoo, gel and cream. We expect a few of the LFs to start their own venture soon!

Here are a few beauty tips:

- Boil lemon grass in water till the colour of the water turns green. This concoction can be stored in the fridge and used as a face cleanser to remove dirt and grime everyday.
- Apply aloe-vera pulp to the hair for 20 mins before washing. It gives a shine to the hair.
- Always dilute the shampoo and then apply on hair, it protects the scalp from the effects of chemicals since most of the shampoos are detergent based for giving extra foaming.

■ - **Mussarat Shaikh & Sunetra Chaphalkar**
(sunetrac@gmail.com)

Down Memory Lane... GLIMPSES



The team of LF's who successfully completed the herbal training program at Aga Khan Palace



'A rupee saved is a rupee earned' A talk on Investments by Max New York Life Insurance Company



Firoz Uncle's B'day Celebration with lotttt..... of cake



LF's enjoy making & wrapping chocolates in a training program by Mrs. Mira Vara



The release of 24th Volume of Inspira



Prog by Mr. Wakhlu for UK Ambassadors

Contd...



LF's attend the 'Personal Power Program' conducted by Ameeta Sanghavi at Deccan rendezvous



Orientation Program for New Batch- LF-2008

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT TO THE FOUNDATION WITH YOUR GENEROUS DONATION



Ms. Sharmilee Rao (Nagudu) - LF-2003
(Donated Rs. 80,000/-)



Mrs. Preeti Chandane (Phadtare) - LF-1999
(Donated Rs. 10,000/-)



Ms. Kavita Vasant- LF-2000
(Donated Rs. 20,000/-)

Ms. Rashmi Amol Joshi (Soman) - LF-2001

Mrs. Kalyani Nanjekar (Pathak) LF-1998

CLIP BOARD

In its last edition *Inspira* proposed the following issue for discussion:
"What is your perception about the way IPL has branded itself and what do you all think about these branding styles/ strategies? Have they enhanced the market value of the players? Has it provided the opportunities to many young cricketers?"

Of the 21 feedbacks, many shared their outlook w.r.t. IPL in general missing out the catchword "branding". Presented here are those views, which catch the pulse of the issue precisely!

Contd...

CLIP BOARD

Branding has glamorized cricket. Sometimes I feel its more business less cricket.

-Madhavi Prabhumirashi (Lf-1997)

Due to the branding, players are selling at high prices and thus expectations from them to perform are also high. This will definitely help India identify good young players who have the capacity to play well even under tense situations.

-Anjali Sarda (LF-2005)

Branding has been very effective in commercializing Indian cricket.

-Ujwala Kulkarni (LF-2007)

The IPL has given a launching pad for many domestic players & the international branding has made India known globally. It has also been an extra source of income for many.

-Neha Gurikar (LF-2006)

IPL branding has been a boon to the Indian economy; A lot of foreign sponsors are advertised and domestic brands are also highlighted. It has given a good platform for new budding players. It will provide good players as well as a boost to the economy of our nation.

-Priyanka Khopkar (Lf-2006)

The IPL branding is good only for business promotion, but when it comes to players, team strength is of importance. It is like marketing, a promoter supporting his players. It increases their market value but does not nourish the talent of cricket in the real sense. More over, I feel, providing opportunity to young cricketers is not important but providing opportunity to the right one is important.

-Kausar Mulla (LF-2007)

The concept of branding different sports events is common in the west and that is adopted by IPL which is good. It had added to the entertainment element of cricket as well as increased its viewer-ship. However care should be taken that cricket does not lose its sportsmanship spirit in the race for money, fame and entertainment.

-Priyanka Padwal (Lf-2007)

IPL branding has been a money making exercise. The corporate sector is using this as a platform to make money.

-Anagha Mitra (Lf-1996)

I personally feel we are wasting a lot of money via the IPL branding. Instead money could be directed towards improving the standards of the national game and other sport teams of India!

-Yogini Karmarkar-Deshpande (LF-2005)

The topic for the next Clipboard is- **"Should India sign the Indo-US nuclear deal and why?"** State your opinion on the basis of how would it effect India's global position as well as the arm's race especially over south Asia. **Please send in your opinion independent of political parties and views in order to gain an unbiased**

reflection of what the youth of today feels about this issue. Mail your opinions to to Sanchita on meetsancho@gmail.com along with your full name and year of scholarship **on or before 30th November, 2008.**

■ - Kiran Pardeshi
(call2kirangal@gmail.com)

BOOK REVIEW



The Autobiography of a sex worker

Author : **Nalini Jameela. Translated & forwarded by J Devika**
Publisher : **West land Publication**
Class : **Biography**
Price : **Rs.150/-**
ISBN : **818997511**

Fierily, outspoken and often wickedly funny, this candid account of one woman's life as a sex worker in Kerala became a best seller when it was first published in Malayalam. Nalini Jameela, who takes her name from both Hindu & Muslim traditions, worked as a child in the clay mines. She has been a wife, mother, successful businesswoman & social activist – as well as a sex worker at different stages of her life.

This is Nalini Jameela's story of her search for dignity, empowerment & freedom, sought on her own terms, told in her inimitably honest & down-to-earth style.

■ **- Priyanka Khopkar (LF-2006)**
(priyankakhopkar7777@yahoo.co.in)

EDITOR'S DESK

Time flies! Little did I realise that it was a complete year since Inspira welcomed the last batch of LFs and here I am again trying to fathom the addition of 45 new girls! **Welcome girls onboard an odyssey of continuous evolution, which you could choose to last a lifetime!** Welcome to the LPF Family!

LPF has roped in a number of collaborations for the benefit of LFs, a couple of which we have covered in this issue. We will keep you updated about them from time to time. Clip Board has proved to be a very interactive column. Hope this issue's burning topic attracts lots of intellectual exchange. It's been a lot of training at LPF during the quarter gone by. **But it seems as if our 13th award ceremony has unleashed an array of festivals which will continue all the way till the next issue of Inspira is released.** Nag Panchami, Raksha Bandhan, Ganesh Chaturthi, Dussera, Diwali, Christmas and New Year! The next 4 months too are going to fly past amidst celebrations at home, college or university, work place and yes of course also at the Foundation!

Doesn't every celebration also call for associated responsibility and awareness for our environment? Our own Pune is facing harsh power cuts hampering business and education alike. Temperatures are soaring or rains are pouring. Either its no rains or its flooded dams! Our rivers are getting silted up. Inflation is at the highest but so are the numbers of vehicles hitting the road each day! Air, water and sound pollution, all are far beyond admissible limits. But so what? We all **MUST** celebrate and that too in **STYLE!** Each one of us will buy a Ganesh idol and also the biggest one on the block. Price not an issue.... Who goes for clay idols! Plaster of Paris idols are far cheaper. We have to immerse these idols in rivers only! Be it Ganesh, Dassera or Diwali, celebrations are incomplete without extravagant lights and blaring sound systems! Each one of us needs to



The Inspira Team

compete with our neighbour while buying firecrackers... they better make more noise and last longer!

Friends, we at the foundation are talking about being empowered... with education, with civic responsibility, about being peace leaders, about working with integrity and succeeding with integrity. Let's put to use our empowerment to the well being of society. Let's try to make our celebrations eco-friendly and promote this awareness amongst those around us. Let's celebrate in groups. **I invite our readers to write to me how eco-friendly you got with your celebrations (I may want to mention them in the next issue!)**. The team of Inspira will return with a detailed account of the forthcoming eventful quarter at the foundation. Till then we wish you all a very healthy and safe season of celebrations! Amen!

■ **- Rajani Panchang-Dhumal**
(rajanipanchang@gmail.com)

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