

## Newsletter of Fair Trade Forum - India



Friends,

Just as a new plant pushes through the soil, breaking free into the sunlight, so too does spring, full of new growth, emerge from the hibernation of winter — and so too do we allow the vibrant, visionary part of ourselves be born anew. Spring is the time of new beginnings, new aspirations and renewed energies and hope. It gives a fresh start and encourages us to become the one we were meant to be. It is also indeed a fresh new journey for Fair Trade Forum-India. FTF-I is fortunate that this new beginning has been marked by it being able to have its own new office premises. FTF-I wishes all its members, the best of this beautiful season, that you all may flourish and be successful in your work and in your lives. In this new year, we look forward to build a more stronger partnership with you and to work harder together for Fair Trade visibility and promotion.

Fair Trade Forum-India has shifted the office to the new premises of its own.

The Registered Office of Fair Trade Forum India is located now at:

**Fair Trade Forum-India**  
Flat No.206, 2nd Floor  
Plot No.62-A/1, Garhi (near  
Amritpuri supermarket),  
East of Kailash,  
New Delhi-110065  
Telephone: 011- 65264630

We welcome you all to visit the new office!

Kindly use this address for all future communication.

Thank you!

Fair Trade Forum-India acknowledges **Tara Projects** for their voluntary contribution of Rs. 60,000 to Fair Trade Forum-India.

We also acknowledge **Noah's Ark** for their voluntary contribution of Rs. 50,000 to Fair Trade Forum-India.

We are highly grateful to Tara Projects and Noah's Ark for their generous contribution to FTF-I and commitment to FAIR TRADE.

### Design Development programs organised by Sasha, Kolkata

As part of Sarba Shanti Ayog's flagship "Fair Support Programme", Sasha organised a three day interaction programme cum design development in Mcleodgunj, Dharamshala from 17th to 19th march 2014, with a clear message on conserving nature. A range of various accessories such as paper jewellery, Christmas hangings, paper table tops and up cycled stationeries were introduced at the creative project workshop. Upper Dharamshala Cleanup project is an innovative initiative at Mcleodgunj to keep the place clean by running regular cleaning operations that helps in collecting rubbish that later are used in producing papers.



Artisans attending the workshop at design development program on child safe toys

A three day workshop was also organised and coordinated by the SSA team at Prochesta, by Sasha for its artisans to create child safe toys with block printed fabrics and colorful patterns. Five groups participated in the detailed Design Workshop that introduced the artisans to fresh ideas on stuffed cotton products. Anu Ganguli, an experienced and talented textile designer, took the participants through a well planned activity that emphasized the need to revisit their approach towards delivering a child friendly product.



Design Development ,Photography and Case Study was also held at Little Flower Khadi Udyog Gram, Raxaul by MESH. The artisans were taught various weaving and dyeing techniques and bobbin winding techniques.

**Note:** All the information in the newsletter is taken from the members or extracted from their legitimate website and social networking sites. FTF-I will not take responsibility for any wrong information or references found in this issue.

#### For Private Circulation Only

This Newsletter is compiled and published by Fair Trade Forum-India. The Editorial Board consists of Mr. K. Panchaksharam, Ms. Moon Sharma and Ms. Sudeshna Mitra Woodhatch. For giving your feedback/suggestions please write to us at [info@fairtradeforum.org](mailto:info@fairtradeforum.org), [ftindia@fairtradeforum.org](mailto:ftindia@fairtradeforum.org)

## Hitachi learns about Fair Trade at Tara Projects, Delhi

Mr. Shuichi Nakahara, from Hitachi Company, Japan spent two months with Tara Projects under the International Corporate Volunteering Programme in February/ March this year. The goal of his assignment was to learn about Fair Trade and to have professional inputs on seeking new market opportunities in South East Asia, particularly in Japan. He also participated in the events organized by Fair Trade Forum-India and tried to understand the importance of Fair Trade in today's context. He also visited several producer groups in north India, as well as conducted a research on Fair Trade awareness in Japan. A Research Analyst by profession, at Hitachi, he had a good time of learning about Fair Trade and Tara Projects, to understand the need for efficiency and system building required by the groups in India.



Mr. Nakahara with Ms. Moon Sharma at Tara office, Delhi on his last day with Tara and FTF-I team

Congratulations and best wishes...

Chetna Organic  
Environment. Ethics. Equilibrium  
2004 - 2014  
Celebrating  
10  
Years  
of  
OrganiCulture



Setting up of Computer training Centers in Barmer, Rajasthan by SETU-the bridge to artisans. The Computer center will be used by the youth of the community. Various softwares and computer languages are planned to be taught to the youth.



Installation of 1KW Hybrid Conventional Power Plant at Kolaghat Block in Kumar Haat Village, West Mednipur districts of West Bengal by Kadam India, Kolkata

## Recognitions



Arunim India Chairperson, Ms. Sminu Jindal won the L'Oreal Femina Women Award in the "Favourite Face of a Cause" category for her tireless efforts towards the promotion of 'accessibility' in public infrastructure and to make it inclusive and barrier free so as to facilitate participation of the elderly and disabled on an equitable basis...

Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives (FTCI) CEO, Mr. Tashi Wangdu received the Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award by Indian Solidarity in Delhi...



## Community Radio Sammelan 2014



Ms. Selvi and Mr. Pratim of Keystone Foundation, Kotagiri participated in the Community Radio(CR) Sammelan from 13th to 15th March 2014. This was

organized by the Ministry of Information and broadcasting at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The objective of the National CR Sammelan is to nurture, promote and empower Community Radio Movement in the country, so that the potential of the medium is fully utilized.

Experiences were exchanged by the award winning stations, kicked off the meeting. Later group discussions on various topics, such as : community based disaster management, CR technical issues and solution, participatory content creation, community mobilisation, archiving and documentation of work, sustainability puzzle, CR for indigenous and marginalised communities, CR in the cities, challenges of campus CR stations, transition of management of CR to communities etc. took place. This was a wonderful opportunity for Keystone and Radio Kotagiri to get more information, insights and knowledge from other community radio stations.

## Participation in Events/Exhibitions and Festivals



Sasha shop, Delhi participated in association with Dastkar in the 'Green Mela' for promoting a healthy lifestyle. They displayed natural, herbal and organic food with a range of spices and grains. They showcased a wide selection of eco-alternatives that promotes rural craftsmanship. The Mela helped the urban consumer understand the needs with a contemporary bend. It was a perfect blend of rural traditions with urban style and elegance. Demonstrations of composting, organic gardening and clean energy were another highlight of the event.

### Upcycle Exhibition-Sasha shop,Kolkata

The upcycle exhibition at Sasha shop is an annual affair in which they try to emphasize the beauty of respectful usage and the aesthetics of reusing material wisely, beautifully & respectfully until they are completely spent. this year it was held from 7th to 16th March 2014.

By showcasing how to give a fresh lease of life to discarded materials Sasha has shown an inventive way to repurpose items.

Their supporting customers patronized the innovative ideas and gave a good coverage in Ei-bela- a section of Ananada Bazaar Patrika (ABP), one of the leading Bengali newspaper in Kolkata and Bartaman Patrika.



Few of the products displayed at the exhibition

### Participation in Fashion Access, Hong Kong-Arawali Exports, Jaipur



Arawali Exports, Jaipur participated in FASHION ACCESS, held in Hong Kong from 31st March to 2nd April 2014. Fashion Access is an international fashion fair for head-to-toe fashion, from high quality, bags, footwear and small leather goods to fashion accessories, travel-ware and leather garments. It is held twice a year, the March fair is the one in which fashion suppliers and buyers from around the globe showcases collections for the upcoming autumn-winter season. Held in business-focused and trends-savvy Hong Kong, visitors to the fair gain instant access to one of the largest sourcing hubs in the world.

### Upcoming/Ongoing Events...

#### Dastkar Summer Weaves

Nature Bazaar, Andheria Modh, New Delhi-Sadhna, Sasha

11th-20th April 2014

#### Home Expo 2014

Greater Noida, Delhi NCR-Arawali Exports

15th-18th April 2014

#### Gurgaon Fashion Week

Hotel Galaxy, Gurgaon, Delhi NCR-Conserve India

17th-20th April 2014

#### Fair Support Program

New Delhi-Conducted by Sasha

21st-24th April 2014

#### Giftex Summer Show

Nehru Centre (Worli) Mumbai-Shop For Change

Going on till 9th March 2015



### Last Forest, Kotagiri at Nilgiri Food Fair



View of Last Forest stall at the Nilgiri Food Fair at the Wellington Gymkhana Club, 6th April 2014..

Products displayed were Millet Cookies, Coffee, Spices and Honey. It was a celebration of traditional flavors and nutrient wonders!



The Brand that reaches the Grassroots



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Empowering the nation through Fair Trade



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FAIR TRADE INDIA

Dear Friends,

From March 2014 onwards, we have decided to devote a page to the FAIR TRADE INDIA brand in our newsletters. Our goal behind this step is to promote the FAIR TRADE INDIA brand and increase its visibility among the consumers at a larger level. Apart from that, it will also be helpful for other non FAIR TRADE INDIA brand members, to give them with a bird's eye view of what's happening under the umbrella brand flagship. This section will try to highlight the initiatives taken to promote the FAIR TRADE INDIA brand by the National Secretariat and its members. It will also contain news of activities and events of Fair Trade India branded shops and interesting articles/short write-up containing information and ideas you can use on day-to-day basis, in turn promoting your organisation and the FAIR TRADE INDIA brand.

## The Ethics of Clothing - Old and New

-by Shalini Seth Amin, CEO, MORALFIBRE, Gujarat

### History

Many years ago, India used to be the 'Cradle of Cotton'. Climate and soil condition of many of its regions were perfect for growing different varieties of cottons. The climate also helped dying and printing of the cloth to a very high standard. For centuries, Indian cotton weavers produced the finest range of cotton and silk to meet demands from different regions of the subcontinent. Via their trading routes, a vast quantity of hand painted and block- printed fabrics, muslins and brocades made by skilled Indian artisans were traded around the world, bringing wealth and prosperity to Indian cotton growers, weavers, cloth makers and Indian merchants. In the early 18th century, the colourful Indian fabrics were so popular in England that they seriously affected British wool and silk imports. From the beginning of time until the 1950s all textile clothing produced anywhere in the world was made from natural filaments and the fibre itself remains to this day the most important part of any textile. Skilful spinning and weaving used to convert fibres into precious cloth and due to the limited supply of these natural yarns, textile products would hold a distinct value. They were worn, used, and preserved for years.

### The Trading Triangle: Slavery and Cotton

In the 1770s, several inventions in Britain created the first industrial processes whereby machines spun raw cotton, fast and evenly. When the British first set up their textile mills, they were importing raw cotton from India and they produced cotton cloth in vast quantities. They also saw that British-

ruled India could become a large potential market for the British made cloth. To put an end to Indian competition and to open up the Indian market to British exports, an import duty on East Indian fabrics was imposed in 1790s. With trading laws, the British protected their markets. The problem now was the cost of cotton fibre. India lost its place as a supplier to the world of fabrics and very quickly, its raw cotton was not required either. In the early part of the 19th century, enterprising US planters invested their capital in the cotton farming industry. By using slave labour, they managed to keep the cost of cotton down. Very soon, the USA became the main source for raw cotton and it supplied three quarters of its raw cotton to the world markets. This cotton boom brought about a transatlantic trading triangle that sowed the seeds of some of the global, economic imbalances we still see today. The USA had trading links with England and Africa. British ships sailed to Africa with cargoes of cotton cloth, firearms, trinkets, and brandy. These were sold to African slave traders in return for a human cargo of slaves. Once on board the slaves were branded with hot irons and later sold in America to provide cheap labour on the plantations. America and England became business partners in this first 'cotton revolution' and great fortunes were made for a few, on the backs of the poor.

As a result, the Indian cotton farmers and weavers lost their place in the world. They were left out of the production chain. Indian merchants were forced to buy the British made cloth. Luckily, some exclusive textiles in small quantities continued to be produced thanks to the tastes of Indian women (and the

sarees they wore as a traditional garment) as they preferred finer cloths made by their own Indian weavers. It was due to the demands of the relatively poor womenfolk - overlooked by the British as potential buyers of the foreign-made cloth - these specialist spinners and weavers have kept Indian cotton cloth alive in India. This ensured that the Indian industry, once the 'Cradle of Cotton', did not break down completely as many others in the world did.

### The Spaghetti Machine

Between 1920s and 1960s, the invention of factory-made fibres in the UK and the USA dramatically changed the textile landscape again. In the last sixty years, synthetic fibres have almost deposed King Cotton. A sea change in the clothing industry and the boom

of retail as we see it now is partly due to that. Though it has made cheap clothing available to the masses, it has its dark sides. Behind the label of a cosy fleece lie some uncomfortable truths.

There are two types of man-made fibres. The first is a cellulosic fibre, sometimes known as artificial silk made from chemically treated wood or other plants. Polyester, Nylon, Acrylic and Polypropylene are synthetic fibres, made from oil. Polyester was first made in the UK in 1941 by melting and combining two types of oil derived from plastic pellets. Whereas cotton and wool can be turned into textiles by hand skills and small-scale

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## The Ethics of Clothing - Old and New contd...

units, polyester needs factories with huge capital investments, machinery, concentration of power and chemicals. Thousands of massive plants consuming vast energy resources and creating pollution produce tons of synthetic fibres. With every garment needing less than a kilo of man-made fibre, billions of garments are made in factories in poorer countries where the cheapest labour is available. The so-called sweatshops can produce over 10,000 pieces of clothing a day. Most synthetic fabrics are treated with chemicals during and after the processing. These chemicals not only leach into the environment, leaving an impact on groundwater, wildlife, air and soil, but they also sometimes get absorbed and inhaled by us directly. Synthetic fibres consume vast amount of finite energy resources in its manufacturing, creating pollution and they produce non – biodegradable, inert material, hazardous to the environment and health. Everything we have been making and buying will be with us somewhere on the globe as a polluting waste for about two hundred years to come. It is relatively easy to manufacture. To keep the machinery of clothing industry going, people in rich countries are encouraged to buy changing designs and seasonal throwaway clothing while poorer countries feed this fabric frenzy in the name of productivity and increase in market shares. Various environmental and health agencies have suggested that it is best to stay away from clothing that includes acrylic, polyester, rayon, acetate, triacetate and nylon. Many people have also realised that this spaghetti machine-like clothing industry is costing the earth.

### The pesticide and GM boom Kills

The cotton crops today have become a serious cause of concern. As cotton is particularly prone to insect attacks, the use of chemical insecticides and pesticides has increased. Since insects started to develop certain immunities to pesticides, the situation has worsened. Today, India, China, and America spray thousands of tons of pesticides on to their cotton crop fields. Cotton used in just one T-shirt takes an estimated 150g of pesticide to cultivate. Harmful chemicals are literally poured on

to the cotton plants at a horrific rate. Extensive use of pesticides makes soil barren and useless (Nicaragua – previously one of the biggest cotton growers – has almost entirely lost its trade to pesticides.) The world trade organisation (WTO) has estimated that about 20,000 people die every year because of pesticide use. Plants and wild life are destroyed when pesticides are sprayed from aircrafts. The situation of cotton farmers has become progressively worse with increased use of pesticides and handling of these dangerous chemicals. The other threat is genetically modified (GM) seeds. Over 75% of American cotton is GM. Only one company in the USA has a monopoly in this seed market. They sell 90% of all GM seeds. Farmers in India and China are beginning to adopt GM cotton. Penetration of GM in India has reached an average of 5% of cotton farmers in just three years. GM seeds cost a lot more and it can push the farmers into deeper debts. In India, more than 2000 cotton farmers have committed suicide in the last four years. The cotton crops are failing due to heavy use of pesticides and they are unable to pay the serious debts they have incurred to procure seeds and pesticides. Moreover, the extreme debts lead to migration of farmers into the cities. Environmental problems, barren soil and water pollution, lead to the ruin of common resources and create damage to the health of rural communities. Farming cotton is difficult and it is hard for farmers to make a living. They are fighting a triple surge of overzealous pesticide salespersons, concentration of trading cotton in few hands and a price fight of cotton against synthetic fibres.

### Ethical clothing

In the 1920s, Mahatma Gandhi made the people of India and the rest of the world aware of clothing with ethics. As defiance against the British-made mill cloth and their unfair taxation on Indian cloth makers, the Indian spinners and weavers, he began to hand spin the cotton on a wheel (charkha). The cloth made out of hand spun hand woven fibres was called 'Khadi'. By 1940s Khadi became a symbol of independence of India – Swarajya and freedom from the British rule. Millions of freedom fighters and supporters of Gandhi's movement

burned piles of imported clothing during a nationwide campaign. They took to hand spinning on the spinning wheel, the charkha, as a daily reminder and expression of their belief in direct action against colonial rule.

### MORAL FIBRE, the new Khadi - Clothing with a Conscience

Many people have now realized that clothes made of natural fibres are the best after all. Cotton, linen, wool, silk, bamboo and hemp tend to breathe better and keep moisture away from the body. In the 1990's, following early sweatshop scandals, Fair Trade and eco-pioneers were looking for clothing that is fair to all communities in today's global markets. They are looking for clothing that moves away from the exploitative environmental and social conditions it has created in the recent past and represents fairer ethics. Clothing made of cotton produced without pesticides - 'organic cotton' - is becoming popular amongst people who believe in clothing with ethics. Organic farming is more environmentally friendly but it is hard to do it alone and without markets. There is a drop in yield with organic farming in its first few years. It is advisable that the farmers convert to organic farming in 3-5 year period to minimise their financial risk. However, when more and more people choose clothes that are made of organic cotton and processed without chemicals, that are harmful to the environment and health, the organic cotton becomes more viable and sustainable.

Many people believe that Khadi can become one of the most eco-friendly textiles as it supports the New Ethics of the 21st century. MORAL FIBRE is the new ethical Khadi. The raw material is renewable and the product is biodegradable. It uses organic cotton and removes harmful chemicals from the processing and dyeing of the cloth. The hand spun and hand woven cloth has a minimum impact on the environment, as it uses almost no electricity. Moreover, small-scale units near the cotton growing areas reduce the environmental cost of long distance transportation. It will give employment to thousands and it would sustain the health of people, wildlife and the environment.

MORAL FIBRE can become the best cloth by far with new ethics - Clothing with a conscience. By increasing the market for MORAL FIBRE, locally and internationally, a variety of different organic

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## The Ethics of Clothing - Old and New contd...

cottons can be grown. Different types of yarns of superior quality can be spun, and different weaves by skilled artisans can be revived and reintroduced. This can give work to millions of artisans and spinners, many of whom are women trying to support their families. MORAL FIBRE becomes environmentally sustainable and a medium for self-sufficiency and new personal dignity. MORAL FIBRE promotes human effort and skills and delivers a message of non-violence and socio-economic as well as environmental sustainability.



Images of products (left onwards-Home Accessories like Cushions, Napkins and table-ware) made from Moral Fibre fabrics

## 'A Responsible Trip' at Sasha by Voyager Autrement, France

A "responsible trip " was organized by Voyager Autrement to the production sites located in West Bengal (Kolkata). It comprised of volunteer groups from Artisans Du Monde and numbered more than fifteen. The first visit was to Shanti Leather unit and the visitors were shown the entire embossing process. A visit to Asha Niketan, home to individuals with differing intellectual capabilities, was scheduled in the evening. The inhabitants are trained in the art of candle making and this gives them a sense of self worth. Brindavan Prints and Prochesta were the next stops and the visitors were introduced to the art of Block Printing and manufacturing soft toys respectively. For our guests it was an enriching experience to be able to witness the different stages of production. They made notes to share this knowledge they had accumulated with clients back home.



## FTF-I bids farewell...



Fair Trade Forum-India bid farewell and best wishes to Mr. Arun Kumar, who was working as an Accountant at FTF-I from 2012-2014. He was known to be sincere, hardworking and straightforward in his work. His contribution to FTF-I will always be remembered and cherished. FTF-I wishes him a bright future, good health and a beautiful life ahead.



Children of Apna Ghar and Mamta Apna Ghar celebrate the festival of colors at JKSMS, Jaipur...