

# When nature helped 2 girls find the solution

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**W**hile walking through the desert in the Little Rann of Kutch and learning from some of the economically poorest people, once again we are discovering the knowledge richness of local communities who have spent their lives in making our food salty. Today, there is hardly any evening or for that matter afternoon, when people would not implicitly thank those, who add salt to their life. And yet it is irony that the life of those people, who make salt, continues to be on the margin.

More about this I will share in the next column, but today let me explain as to why SRISTI and Gantar decided

## MINDS ON THE MARGIN



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**Schoolchildren test board games designed by IIT students**

to organise this Shodhyatra in Little Rann of Kutch, essentially to learn from the people and stamp the erosion of knowledge. Many of us don't realise that more traditional knowledge is being lost and the current generation than ever before in the history of human kind.

There are many reasons for that, but one reason, particularly in the ur-

ban areas, semi-urban areas and many of the villages, is loosening ties between grandchildren and grandparents. Currently, lot of children are celebrating their vacations and I want to address those children by giving examples of the children who have been very creative and have developed extraordinary examples of technological innovations by trying upon the traditional knowledge.

The story of two girls from Guwahati in Assam, Sapana Talukdar and her sister is interesting. These two

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sisters, when they were in tenth class, were very much troubled by the mosquitoes. I am sure lot of Amdavadis face this trouble no less and they use, chemical-based mosquito repellents, creams and what not. But these two students were ecologically and environmentally sensitive. They wanted to develop a system of repelling mosquitoes, which will be based on the traditional knowledge and will not cause harm to their health and for that matter to the environment. So they went to their grandmothers and their neighbours and asked them as to what they were do when they were young like them, to repel the mosquitoes, and at that time there were no such medicines or modern mosquito repellents. So they collected the names of the plants, went around and got the plant samples, dried them, mixed them with dung cake and made a herbal mosquito repellent cake or coil. We got this coil tested in Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants and they found it to be very effective and non toxic.

—To be continued...