

# One can make a big difference



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**T**oday when most institutions are coming under strain due to a mismatch between rising social aspirations and declining ability of public and private systems to deliver, will it not be useful to recall the contributions of those individuals who have kindled a ray of hope? SRISTI honoured many such distinguished individuals in the annual function at Satwik traditional food festival last week.

Rivers are becoming dirty everywhere, unworthy of being called holy and sewage still flows into them. Except in District Hoshiarpur where Kalibein originates. This river in which Guru Nanak is believed to have got enlightenment, was filthy, polluted and full of aquatic weeds. It has become completely clean, thanks to the voluntary participation of the people all along its 160-



km stretch till it meets Beas and Satluj. How did it become possible? Ask Baba Balbir Singhji Seechwal who achieved this distinction. There were many others whom we honoured from around the country and Gujarat to create new role models for our younger generation.

Who doesn't bemoan the decline of cultural diversity

## **MINDS ON THE MARGIN**

today, but what do we do about it? There is one person, who has played an extraordinary role in creating opportunity for those folk artists in Gujarat who otherwise might have abandoned that art form

without support. He is Joravar Singh Jadav, Lol Kala Foundation, who has linked about 5000 such artist from around the country and the state in a network and has been creating opportunities for them within and outside the country. He has published 86 outstanding books/monographs on people's knowledge, art, skills, stories. One I particularly liked was the motifs in traditional art forms depicting livestock or their parts to symbolise diverse cultural values of conservation and reverence.

Late Dashrath Majhi achieved before he died at the age past 80 in 2007, what most people will consider impossible. He dug, single-handedly a 15-20 feet wide and 360-foot long path over 22 years through the mountains in Gilahuar village, Gaya district, Bihar. The path reduced the distance by 80 km to the nearest town. We honoured him posthumously. Should not we add a lesson about such achievers in our school textbooks to encourage our children?

*To be concluded...*