



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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Stretching Our Funds in Tight Times

by Bruce Large
HOINA Board Member

The general tone of this month's newsletter will be quite a bit different from what is normally portrayed. Generally, we emphasize the positive aspects of the children, their accomplishments, HOINA, and Indian society. While we have some good news to report, the bad news presently outweighs the good. By this time you probably know that India is in the throes of severe economic hardship fostered by a decision by the central government to demonetize the two largest denomination currency bills in circulation. New bills were printed, and a requirement was set that one could exchange only a limited amount of old cash bills for the newly-printed ones. This action necessitated an extra trip to India by myself to try to salvage organization dollars that earlier had been converted to Indian rupees. It turned out to be an eventful, albeit relatively short trip.

The trip itself turned out to be the first event. Since it was short notice, the airfare was significantly more expensive than normal. I found a fare departing Philadelphia, which necessitated my wife, HOINA Mom Darlene, driving home alone from Pennsylvania to St. Charles, Missouri, after the



Waiting in line to exchange old rupee notes for new currency.

HOINA Board meeting in December. We are thankful her trip was completely uneventful.

The most significant event occurred on my arrival in Visakhapatnam. As I deplaned from the aircraft, there was no wheelchair to transport me to the terminal. I decided that I could walk, not being aware that the jetway was a very steep uphill slope. I made it to the top of the jetway, but at that point my body could not go any farther. After the episode at the airport, I agreed with the HOINA management team that I would see a cardiologist. The doctor said he was very certain that I suffered some arterial blockage, I should not exert myself while in India, and I

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must plan to see my cardiologist as soon as I was home. He prescribed nitroglycerin tablets for any chest pain that I might experience. I did, and they worked. By the time you read this, I will have had open heart by-pass surgery in Saint Louis.

Eventually, I began the process of converting our rupees back to U. S. dollars. On the surface this should have been a relatively quick transaction. However, with the confusion about the demonetization and the vast numbers of people trying to get to the bank or cash in their old rupees for the new bills, my “quick transaction” became an ordeal involving three trips to the city bank and a total of nine hours spent waiting, talking, and filling out endless forms. Fortunately, the mission was accomplished, and our money was spared.

However, we then discovered that none of our staff in India had received their salaries for December. The needed funds had already been transferred from the U.S. to the Indian bank. Thus, I made more trips to town with more waiting in lines and more harassment. On one trip, our General Manager, Mr. Anand, waited in line for more than

four hours just to get into the doors of the bank. The staff salaries had been transmitted to the bank, and all that was necessary was for the bank to transfer the funds into our individual HOINA staff members’ accounts. Obviously, banking procedures in India are somewhat different from ours in the U.S. That coupled with the chaos in the overall economic situation, the transfer was forgotten about. I am happy to report that the staff have received their salaries, albeit, three weeks late.

The big story was the demonetization of the two largest denomination bills in circulation. The 500 rupee note (worth approximately \$7.50 U.S.) and the 1000 rupee note (worth \$15.00 U.S.) were considered by most monetary experts to account for 86 to 88% of the currency in circulation in the country. This transition occurred in a country where well over 80% of all business transactions are handled by way of cash transactions. In contrast, we, and most of Western society, live and work in a cashless society.

Prime Minister Modi planned to accelerate the conversion of India’s heavy use of cash to electronic banking, using credit cards, electronic transfers, ATM’s,



Above: HOINA uses some of its land as a vegetable garden to help defray our costs and to teach horticultural skills. Left: An abundant eggplant harvest. Right: The banana harvest yields plenty as well. Back page: One of our drivers, Ramana, delivers fresh bananas to the children at the home. We thank God for stretching our funds in tight times.

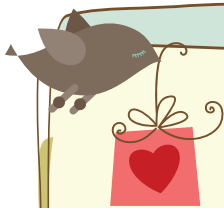
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and checking accounts. His reasons were valid. The huge volume of cash transactions were not traceable for tax purposes, leading to tax evasion becoming a serious burden on India's federal government. Along with federal income tax evasion comes a companion found throughout the world in the form of "organized crime." The so-called "Mafia" exists everywhere that corruption is permitted to flourish. A third valid reason to change currency was to crack down and eliminate the wide-spread practices of counterfeiting.

The intentions were good and honorable, even admirable. Unfortunately, the implementation was not well thought out, or in practice, put into effect. The overall economic effect may not be known for several years. The human tragedy in the form of shattered lives, loss of businesses and incomes, and even the loss of human life will never be known because there is no way of accurately measuring them. Indian

newspapers have reported varying numbers of deaths while waiting in bank lines. As in the Great Depression, people have committed suicide; but I know of no way to verify the numbers, as they vary greatly in the press. A known fact is that the populace suffering the most are the poorest people of India who live hand to mouth. Those poor laborers depend on today's wages to be able to eat tonight. This group of people comprise a populace of more than twice the number of the entire population of the United States. It is now two months since the demonetization occurred, and the pain for many people continues.

We are grateful that our HOINA homes were not seriously impacted because we have always been on modern banking, bill paying and accounting procedures using approved, verifiable, and transparent methods. We did experience some inconvenience, but with the help of our bankers our issues were settled relatively easily.



Remembrances

Thank you to the many donors who chose to give memorial and honorary gifts in the last part of 2016. When requesting a gift to be listed in someone's memory or honor, please include the name and address of the individual or family so we can send them an acknowledgment.

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Annual Statements

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HOINA is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization with international headquarters located at:
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This newsletter is published to inform our readers of the work HOINA does among the handicapped and abandoned in India.

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Feb 2017

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HOINA Goes Bananas

See page two for more photos of the produce grown at HOINA.