



MERC TIMES

Vol: 4 | No.: 1 | April 30, 2011

Lab newspaper of Media Education Research Centre

for private circulation only

5-day workshop held at MERC

Media students explore urban reporting skills



Lead trainer Alope Thakore conducts a session with MERC students.

Ibrahim Wani

A five-day workshop on reporting issues related to urbanization and diversity using new media was held at Media Education Research Centre (MERC) Kashmir University from April 19 to 23.

The workshop, organised by Panos South Asia in collaboration with the University of Kashmir, aimed at strengthening skills of MERC students to cover issues on urban poverty and diversity. The workshop covered areas like journalism ethics, principles and techniques of reporting social affairs, dealing with official and non-official sources of information, editorial dilemmas, writing skills, interviewing techniques and investigative reporting.

The trainings were led by experienced media professionals including Sanjeev Srivastava, ex India Affairs editor, BBC Hindi Service and Dr Alope Thakore, media analyst and co-founder of Journalism Mentor Foundation. As part of the workshop, the students produced media products for print, radio and television which were reviewed in the concluding session of the programme.

Head, MERC, Dr Shahid Rasool expressed satisfaction over the conduct of

workshop. He thanked Panos and the resource persons for sensitizing students about urban affairs and providing them necessary research and news writing skills. He appreciated efforts of students for coming up with good stories on various themes related to urbanization.

Dr Shahid urged the students to benefit from the experiences of the workshop. He said the department will be organising more such workshops for the students in future.

Project Director, Panos South Asia, Dr Harpreet Kaur said the workshop is part of the larger project implemented by Panos South Asia and financially supported by the Ford Foundation.

“The project aims at influencing mainstream media to initiate urbanization dialogue particularly in Jammu and Srinagar cities. The project also focuses on training young media professionals so that they are better sensitised and equipped to cover social issues,” she said.

The course covered areas like journalism ethics, responsible reporting of issues relating to social affairs, principles and techniques of reporting social affairs, dealing with official and non-official sources of information, editorial dilemmas, writing skills, interviewing techniques and investigative social reporting.

Waging a lonely battle for life



Feroz Bhat

Sitting on a traditional mat 'wagu' Taja Begum, 65, spins Pashmina while chatting with her sister-in-law, Mukhti Begum about their household affairs.

"We don't have enough food material stocked for this month," says anxious-looking Taja, while sharing her concerns with Mukhti.

Taja has a two-storey house with only three rooms in Wangund locality of Telbal area. The upper storey is filled with scraps and other thrown-away material. In the ground storey, there is one room divided by wooden blocks- the front part serves as a bedroom and the rear part functions as a bathroom and kitchen.

Taja shares the house with Mukhti, who is in her 90s. Since her divorce, about 50 years back, Mukhti is being looked after by Taja.

Taja lost her husband eight years back. He was an artisan. Now there is nobody to support them. But she has not stopped living. She survives every hardship by her will and determination. Spinning is her lone source of income. On an average she earns Rs 40 to 50 per day.

Taja starts her day on spinning wheel early morning and continues till noon. She stops only

when Mukhti says, "Shehre meh batih (serve the meals)". After lunch, she completes other household chores and resumes her work.

Taja had five children- three daughters and two sons. One of her daughters and a son are dead. Financial condition of her other son is weak. "He too has five children. He fetches boulders from the nearby stream earning Rs 200 to 300 per day, which is insufficient to meet the household expenses. How can he afford two more," says Taja.

"I don't want to be a burden on him."

Seeing the condition of women, neighbours suggested them to apply for funds meant for poor and downtrodden. Taja went to officials at Social Welfare Department. "They always told me that they are short of funds," she says, adding that once she had to sit for five long hours outside the office.

When contacted, Director Social Welfare, Hilal Ahmad Parray said, "If somebody will not approach us how can we serve them. Since it has now come to my notice I will send somebody there who will inspect their condition. It is our duty to help the needy."

Villagers too are willing to lend a helping hand to Taja. "They have approached the concerned authorities on my behalf. They are good neighbours," says Taja.

Hospital waste management fritters away

Firdoose Ul Islam

Four dustbins – Red, Yellow, Blue and Black - are lined inside Ward 113 at Srinagar's premier maternity Lal Ded hospital. A poster above them gives guidelines for the segregation of different forms of hospital waste. The guidelines are being followed strictly but only by the patients and their attendants. Once outside, this hospital wastage is dumped together. Reason: the incinerator at the hospital is dysfunctional.

"We are trying to maintain the standards of hygiene in this hospital," says Deputy Medical Superintendent, Lal Ded Hospital, Dr Nazir Ahmad Chaudary. "But we don't have a proper biological treatment plant in Srinagar where this biological and other waste material could be disinfected. We have incinerator plant here, but that is not functioning".

The Supreme Court guidelines make it mandatory for every hospital and healthcare centre to have four colour-coded dustbins to collect different kind of waste for proper disposal. Yellow for biological solid waste material, Red for plastic material, Blue for surgical material and Black for food, paper and other common waste.

Though the colour-coded dustbins have been placed in the hospital but the wastage is not disposed off as per the guidelines. "We have a contract with a private agency 'Kashmir health care,' said the Deputy Medical Superintendent. "Their workers collect the waste material from our hospital, but we have no knowledge as to how they dispose or burn it."

The health experts warn that improper disposal of the hospital waste can lead to serious health problems for the people. And the Lal Ded hospital – Valley's lone secondary-care maternity hospital – produces a huge amount of bio-medical waste every day. "Around 100 surgeries are being done every day in our hospital," says Dr Razia Sultan. "We produce tons of biological waste material, which contains highly infectious chemicals. If this waste is not decomposed properly, it can be dangerous for people".

Achen: Inside City's largest garbage dump

Muhammad Rafi Dar

A six-foot wall separates a residential neighborhood from the city's largest garbage dump - Achen. On a large swathe of land, heaps of garbage, dumped in open, is a major health scare for the local residents.

More than 300 tonnes of garbage are deposited everyday at Achen garbage dumping site, spread over 700 kanals, on the fringes of Srinagar city. Step inside and you will crave for fresh air. Every few minutes, a vehicle of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) enters inside and dumps the waste in open. It is left without any chemical treatment.

"We approached authorities many times to get rid of this menace but in vain," says Abdul Rehman Mir of Achen.

The dumping site, he says, is serving as a breeding ground for many communicable diseases.

In fact, the government has failed to provide any protective gear to its employees working at Achen.



Nazir Ahmad Sheikh has been working as a daily wager in SMC for the past three years. With no protective gear, the work has taken toll on his health.

"We are working here continuously without shifts as authorities are not allowing shifts," he says.

Sheikh, who earns Rs 2100 and has four children to

feed, says he cannot afford to leave the job

While the dumping site is a concern for the people residing in the area, it is a treasure trove for the non-Kashmiri scavengers. More than a dozen scavengers – men, women and children – sift through the waste every day to earn a livelihood.

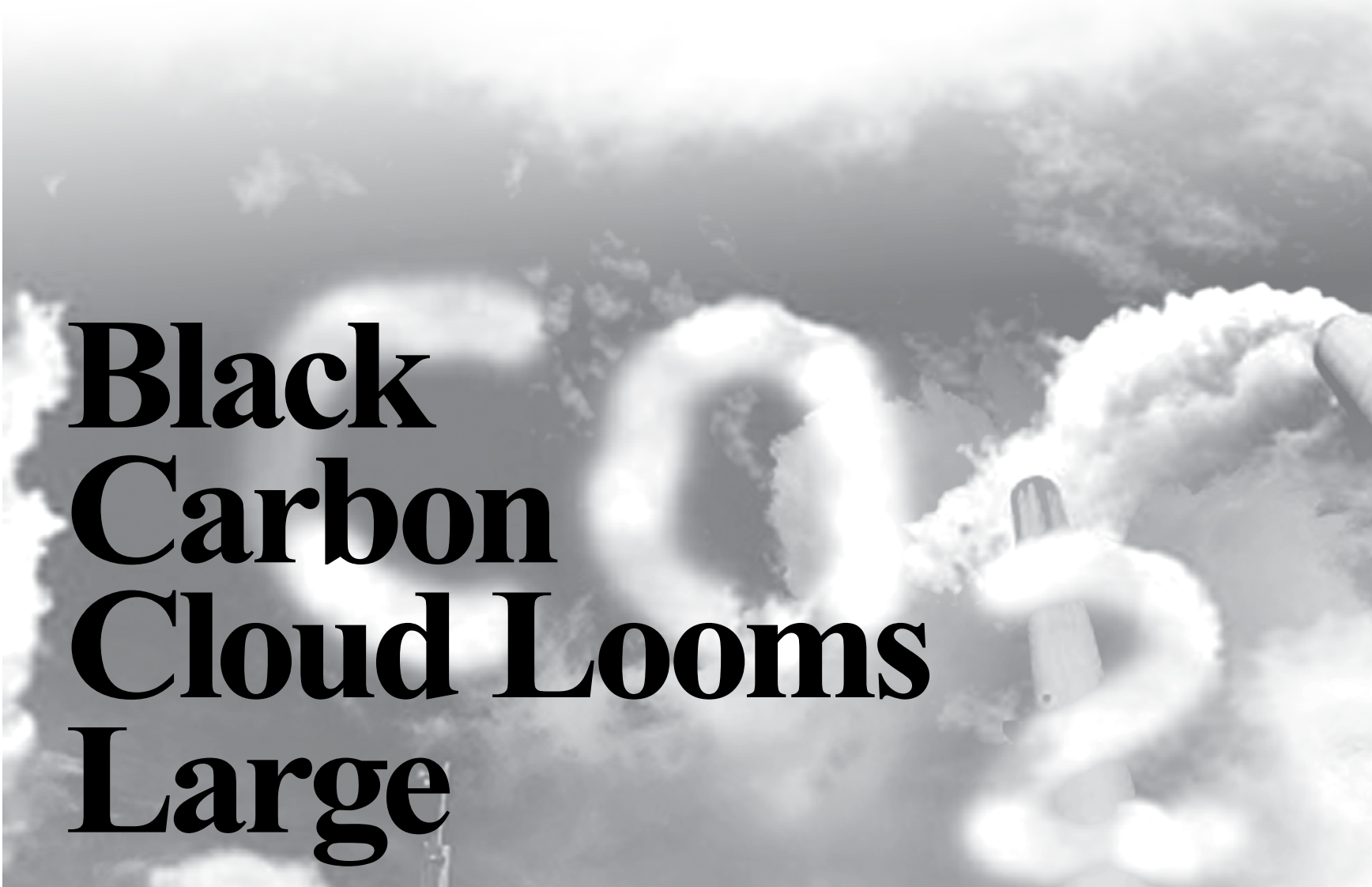
As each truck comes in, these scavengers jostle to search for plastic items in the new heap of garbage.

With a slim frame and dirty hands, 15-year-old Muhammad Sujjan tells a story of hunger and poverty.

He has been collecting plastic items and cardboard boxes from the garbage daily for the past ten years. "Being eldest among my siblings, the responsibility of the entire family fell on my shoulders."

"I am earning Rs 50-60 everyday. I would not like that my siblings do this kind of work. I want to admit them in school so that they can study," says Sujjan.

While Achen poses health concerns to local populace, for people like Nazir and Sujjan, the place serves as a means of livelihood.



Black Carbon Cloud Looms Large

Mir Iqbal

The climate of Kashmir is facing new threat-Black carbon. Produced through diesel combustion and biomass burning, this form of carbon is now being recognized as a major contributor to climate change by environmentalists.

Moreover, experts say the complacency on part of the government is a major concern as “various sources of black carbon emission loom large.”

In Kashmir, vehicles plying on the roads, brick kilns, cement factories or the lime quarries constantly pump black carbon, formed through the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, and other harmful pollutants, into the air.

“Black carbon is a major contributor to climate change across the world,” says Prof Shakeel Ahmed Ramshoo, who teaches Geology at Kashmir University.

“The chemical property of black carbon is such that it stays in the atmosphere for only a short time. However, it is capable of causing rapid environmental damage in the short period of time,” he adds.

Giving its tendency to cause instant damage, black carbon emissions pose a danger to Kashmir glaciers. Perennial floods in the catchment areas of Himalayas, including Kashmir. In addition, the impact of black carbon on

melting snow pack and glaciers is more than that of Carbon Dioxide. Warmer air resulting from the presence of black carbon contributes to an increase of approximately 0.6 °C in the temperature.

A report by the inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2008 reveals the presence of black carbon over highly reflective surfaces, such as snow and ice, or clouds, may cause a significant positive irradiative force.

“Temperature trends on the Tibetan side of the Himalayas reveals warming in excess of 1 °C. This large warming trend is the proposed causal factor for the accelerating retreat of Himalayan glaciers, which threatens fresh water supplies and food security in China and India.”

Increasing vehicles

Pollution from vehicles is the primary source of black carbon. Statistics from Regional Transport Authority Kashmir show the number of vehicles registered as on March 28, 2011 are 3, 15,273 that include both commercial and non-commercial vehicles.

Pollution norms not followed

According to the State Pollution Control Board, more than 55 per cent of Kashmir's vehicles do not conform to pollution norms.

“The certificates issued by various pollution checking centres across

Kashmir are unreliable,” according to officials of Pollution Control Board, “since the issuers accept money for providing fake certificates.”

According to experts, switching over to fuels such as compressed natural gas rather than diesel and petrol can help significantly cut down black

carbon emission. Making public transport a more comfortable, alternative to private cars could be another step. Terming the reduction of black carbon, a 'low-hanging fruit,' experts say it should be plucked immediately to buy time when the world is driving fast toward a cliff in terms of climate change.

Brick kilns: Adding fuel to the fire

Besides vehicles, brick kilns are among the major emitters of black carbon. A recent survey by the Pollution Control Board found 374 kilns operative among which only 59 are running under proper government authorization.

The survey also revealed that there are 204 stone crushers, of which only 83 are government authorized.

Closure orders ignored

Pollution Control Board ordered closure/suspension of brick kilns but the orders were not implemented on the ground. The authorities say “we are not issuing any new licenses”. The people of

the affected areas say “such orders never lead to action.”

Facts and Figures

In district Budgam, 102 brick kilns were ordered to stop operating but only 15 were closed. In Pulwama, out of 58, closure orders have been issued for 19; in Kulgam, 31 kilns were ordered to be closed out of 38.

Effect

Conservative estimates say that an average kiln burns 20 tons of fuel a year, meaning together they all burn around 6,000 tons of fuel. In addition lowest quality coal and rubber tyres are being burnt in kilns to save fuel costs.

Srinagar lives upto dirty city tag

Rakib Altaf

Every morning, Abdul Aziz knocks at each door in the Nowpora neighbourhood of downtown Srinagar. His job is to collect garbage. Aziz is not a municipal worker but a private sweeper hired by the residents- each household pays him 50 rupees a month.

"It was urgent. We had to do something to keep our houses clean," says

Abdul Rasheed, a resident of Nowpora.

A year has passed since Srinagar was named as the fourth dirtiest city of India in a report of Union Urban Development Ministry. The report evoked a sharp reaction from the people and the government alike with Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah vowing to remove this 'stain'. But people like Rasheed believe the government has not succeeded. "Honestly we could not wait for the government anymore to clean our

sales. The shed is cleaned on daily basis but in late hours when the shops have already opened.

"Even today, I myself cleaned the front path of my shop. You tell me what else can I do?" says Majid Jehangir.

area," he says.

Outside the homes, however, little has changed. Narrow alleys still have open drains with human waste flowing in them while the main roads are littered with garbage.

Even some areas in uptown city present a sorry picture. At the Poloview market on Residency Road, which is a tourist hub, a garbage-shed is used for dumping the waste from the adjacent areas.

Shopkeepers say this has led to a decline in their

The Union Urban Ministry report was more embarrassing to the state as the tourist season had just begun then. But drivers at a taxi stand situated next to the garbage shed at Poloview say they haven't had many customers this year either. It is not the foul smell they blame, but the stray dogs lured by the unattended waste.

"Yesterday two tourists were walking on the road when dogs ran behind them. They ran and did not come back to take our taxi," a driver, Sajad Ahmed says. "We are in a big problem."

Many people blame the authorities of failing to deliver on the promises of making the city clean. A 350-metric ton capacity waste dumping cell at Achen, Srinagar, which was set to be made functional in May this year, is yet to be completed.

However, Director of the Economic Reconstruction Agency (ERA), Khalid Muzaffar says work on the cell was stopped due to rain.

"But I'm sure the cell will be operational by this June," he says.

Locals also accuse the various government departments of negligence. Shafiq Ahmed Dar, a driver at a taxi stand near Lal chowk, says his colleagues had to clean an open manhole and got it covered.

"Municipality said it will be done by Roads and Building (R&B) men.

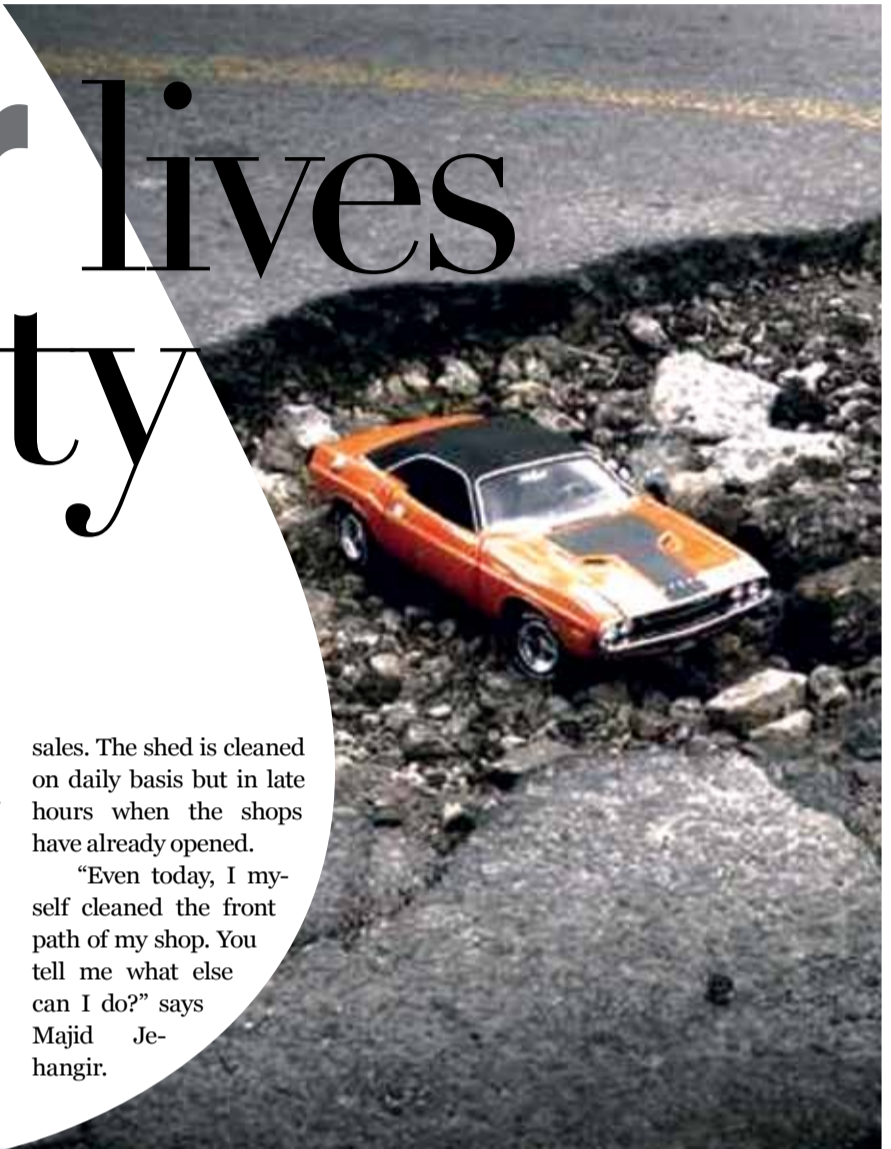
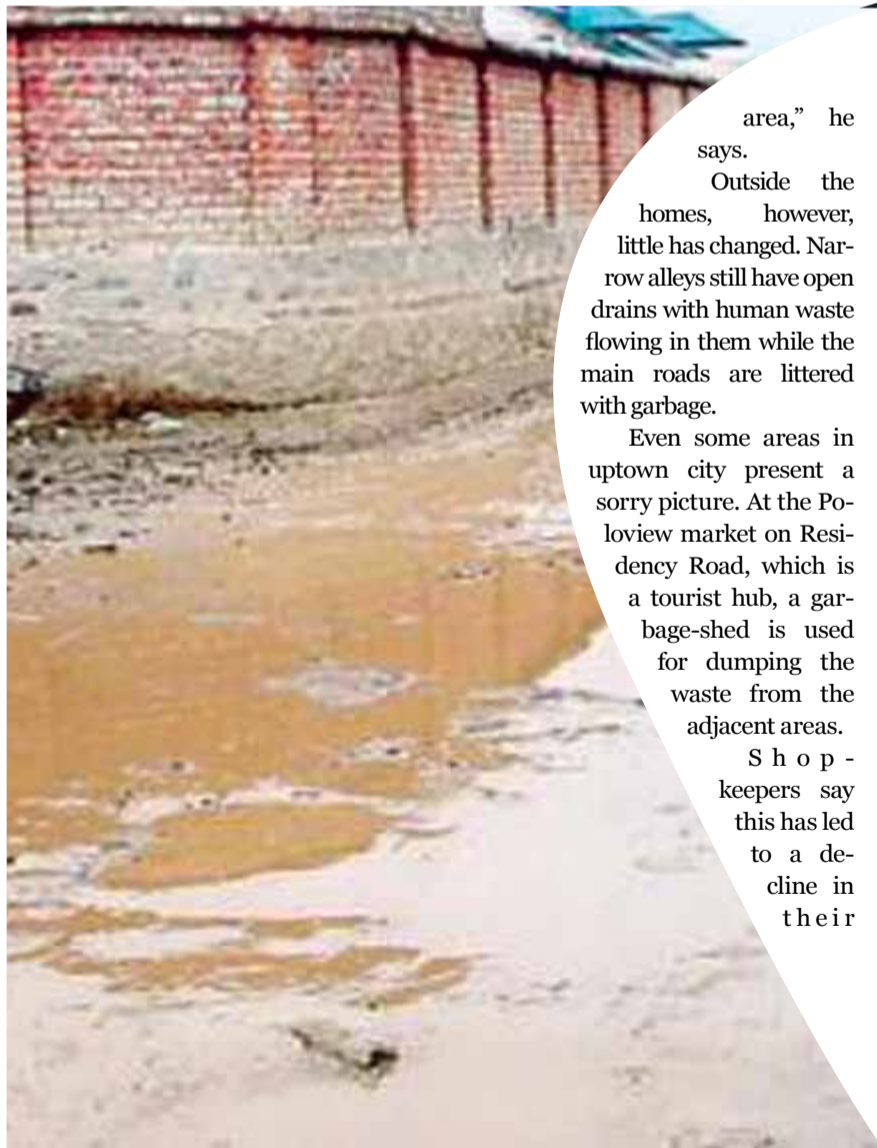
They (R&B) said it was not their job. What else could we do?" he adds.

Last year the government had also planned to launch awareness campaigns in schools and colleges by roping in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for help. But with turmoil in the valley, which lasted for months, no such campaigns could be organised.

However, many among the ordinary people believe it is not only the government to blame. Farooq Ahmed, a school teacher, says people are also responsible for the city being still "very dirty".

A municipality dustbin continues to be outside his school only because the people living in the vicinity don't want it outside their houses. This, he believes, will have a bearing on the health of young children at the school.

Srinagar may or may not retain the tag of being among the dirtiest cities of the country next year. But come April, the city is bound to look a bit cleaner. It is time for Durbar Move, when the government shifts to Srinagar from winter capital Jammu for six months. This is when the roadside naalis or drains are cleaned, streets are marked with lines of white chookna and traffic crossings are painted anew. "After the move Srinagar is like a Mahrin (bride)," says a shopkeeper. "Till then, we Kashmiris are left like cattle."



Familiar roadblocks hit traffic management

Younus Mohammad Dar

A minibus tries to push through a narrow gap. An auto rickshaw nudges past a Maruti car parked on the roadside and a pedestrian is moving in the middle of the road. In Srinagar, a 15-minute walk from Dalgate to Lal chowk takes half an hour in a vehicle.

In the name of traffic management, there are less than 200 traffic policemen in the summer capital to deal with around two lakh vehicles. Result: frequent traffic jams across the city.

Top officials of Traffic department admit it. "Yes, this is a problem," says Deputy Inspector General of Police (Traffic) Vijay Kumar. "We have very few cops to regulate the traffic. Most of them are on duty with VIPs."

On Residency Road, one of the busiest city avenues, private vehicles are parked on both sides of the road leaving little space for smooth flow of traffic. Even as there are three parking lots in the area, the traffic cops look the other way and don't act against these violators.

An autorickshaw driver gives us the reason. "We regularly pay (bribe) them," he alleges. "That's why they don't act against us."

The vehicles parked on the roads are not the only problem. Street vendors too have occupied a good part of the road and the sidewalks built for the pedestrians. At city centre Lal chowk, half of the roads are blocked by fruit sellers, garment and crockery vendors. "The traffic cops are hand-in-glove with these street vendors," says a shopkeeper.

"They allow them to put their carts on the roads after taking money from them. This creates traffic jams."

Though the state government has designated specific passenger stops for the minibuses and other public transport, they are hardly used. The mini-bus drivers stop vehicles on their will at any place, any time.

"The government is not implementing its own laws," says a pedestrian. "If they (government) want smooth flow of traffic, they have to enforce the laws and book the violators."

The Traffic Department is not ready to take the entire blame. They point fingers at other departments as well. "You need to ask questions to the Regional Transport Officer and the officials of Municipal Corporation also," says Superintendent of Police (Traffic) City, Maqsood-uz-Zaman. "They have also a role to play in the smooth flow of traffic."

Hazardous means of livelihood



Mir Usman

Once famous for its medicinal properties, the water from "Teilbal Nallah" (rivulet) is proving to be a major cause of diseases in Wangund-Teilbal.

Located in the outskirts of Srinagar city, a major part of population here has developed health problems due to consumption of contaminated water of the Nallah.

Piles of garbage in and around the Nallah as well as in the Mohallah (locality) have deteriorated the water quality, putting the health of inhabitants at risk.

"Our children have fallen ill," says Muhammad Amin, a local resident, whose two children are undergoing treatment for enteric infection.

"Summer has arrived and the danger of spread of diseases has increased manifold," he adds.

Apart from providing water for domestic consumption, the Nallah is a source of livelihood for many. People collect "Bajri" (gravel) and sell it to run their household.

"I developed a skin infection

because of contaminated waters of the Nallah," says Firdous Ahmad, 25, a bajri collector.

"But there is no other option for me. This is my main source of income."

The area, based on a population of few hundred, has a poor drainage system, which has added to their woes. Water from kitchens and bathrooms has nowhere to go. Garbage has accumulated in the drains, blocking them at many places.

A 500-foot-long drain, a major waste carrier, is blocked. As this drain is surrounded by houses and runs through the centre of the area, the risk of diseases has only increased.

According to Dr Sameer Tak, a gastroenterologist at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), the risk of catching waterborne diseases as well as other diseases becomes higher in the absence of proper sanitation.

"Cholera and Diarrhea are the most deadly."

Officials pay deaf ear to their complaints, say the local residents.

Ali Muhammad Baba, the head of Mohallah committee complains, "Although the drain was

widened in the year 2000, but for the last couple of years nobody has bothered to clean it up."

No dustbins are installed in the area and no garbage carrier from the Municipal Corporation comes to collect the waste.

"We are forced to dump our garbage nearby. Nobody from the municipality comes to take it away," says Hajra, a housewife.

Authorities have set up four hand pumps in the area in a bid to provide clean drinking water. But the step has not had much of impact. The water from these hand pumps is still unsafe for drinking.

"Only two hand pumps provide somewhat clean water but it needs to be kept in a bucket to allow the grime to settle," says Hajra.

In addition to the danger of drinking the water, there is a threat from the drains also. The manholes are totally uncovered which is a threat to safety of children. They have been temporarily covered by people themselves.

The concerned official of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

Farmer's scary friend

Zubair Mohammad Wani

It has legs but it doesn't walk. It has arms but it doesn't clutch. It looks like a human but it has no life. The structure is a scarecrow.

It is a crude image or effigy of a human made up of wooden sticks with clothes kept on. Essentially, it is a decoy to deceive birds and to discourage them from disturbing and feeding on the recently cast seeds and growing crops.

In Kashmir 70 per cent people

live in rural areas with agriculture being their main occupation. Scarecrows are placed in the field's right from the day when seeds are sown and up to the day when crops are harvested.

As they are taken for real by the intruding birds, scarecrows keep them away from the fields for getting rich cultivation.

"Scarecrow is the best means of protecting our crops from any damage by the birds especially crows," says Mushtaq Ahmad Shah, a farm-

er from Kulan, Ganderbal.

Not only birds, scarecrows keep away small children therefore ensuring more safety for crops.

"Its man-like structure also deceives thieves during the night. We cannot think of a rich cultivation without scarecrows. Its advantage can't be described in words," he adds.

Varying in size and design, scarecrows can be placed at different positions in the field depending on the density of the crop.

Despite new methods of agricultural development coming forth, scarecrows have retained their traditional place and are helping farmers to get better yield.

"In Kashmir, scarecrows were introduced by farmers in the ancient times. Its exact date of evolution can't be traced," says Jana Begum, a 70-year-old woman from Bandipora.

"It performs its duty without any demands and favours. Its fidelity cannot be doubted," she adds.

VERITE FILM FESTIVAL

MERC film bags top honours



The team of 'Life on Wheels' pose for camera after winning the award.

Ikra Fayaz

'Life on wheels', a documentary made by a group of second semester students of Media Education Research Centre, Kashmir University won the first prize in Verite film festival held at Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora (IUST) on April 20.

"It is gratifying that the film of our students has won the award at the film festival competing with the national-level films. This vindicates our belief that our students are highly talented and are being provided proper training at MERC and EMMRC," said Head of MERC, Dr Shahid Rasool, who was present on the occasion.

"I congratulate the students and their supervisors for doing an excellent job and bringing a good name to the institution," Dr Shahid said.

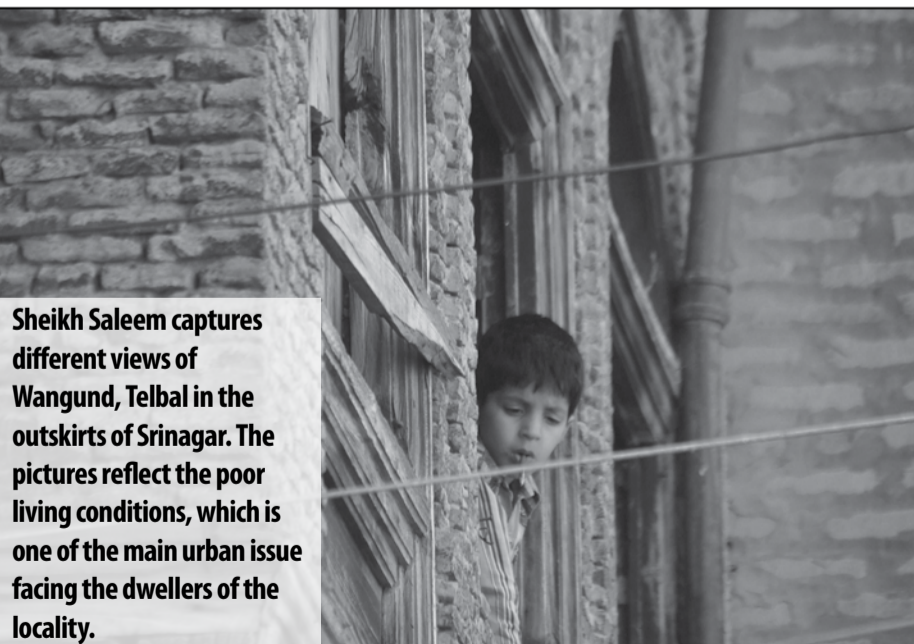
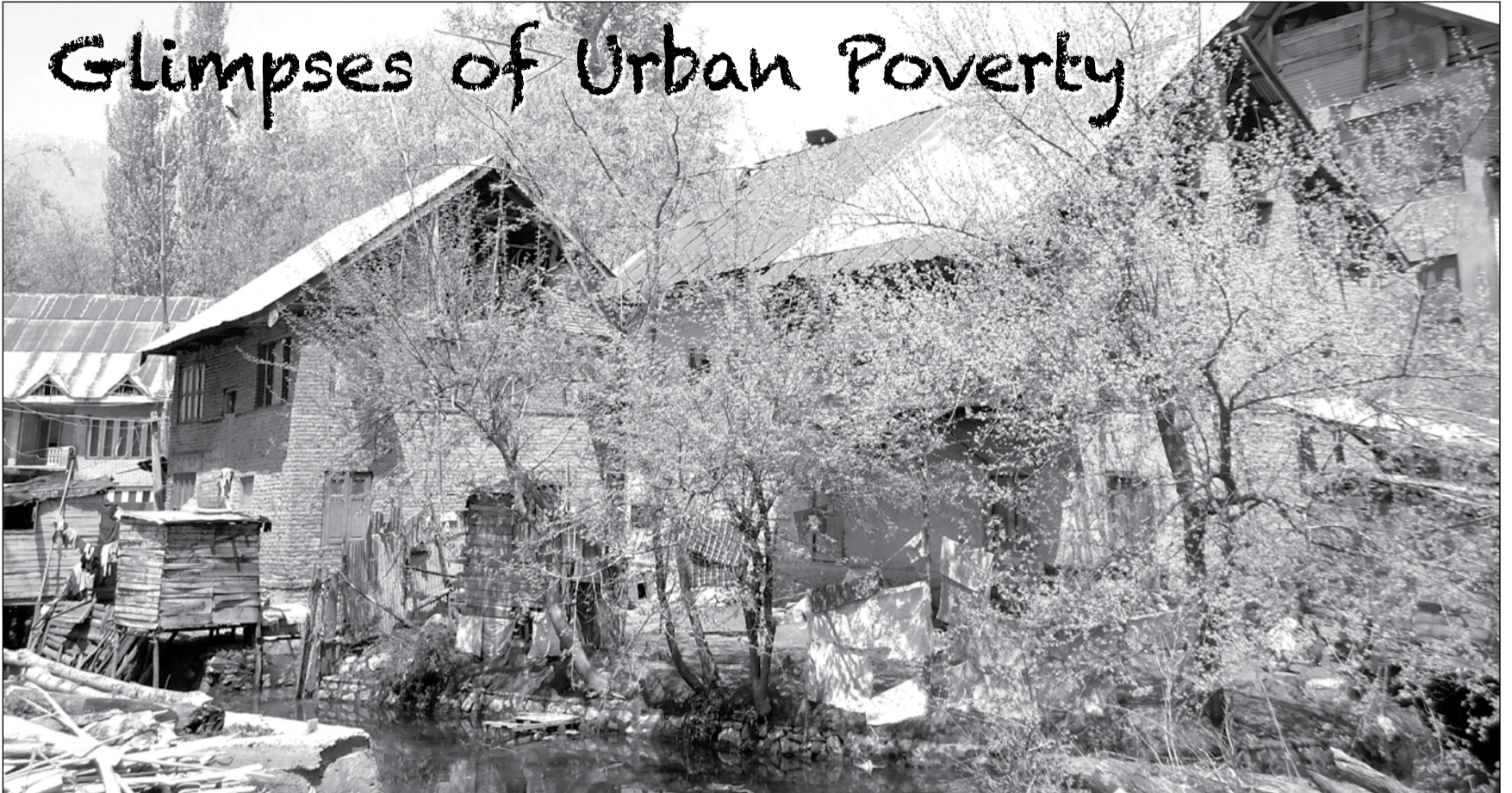
The students who were a part of the film feel a sense of recognition.

"We worked very hard while making this documentary. We are thankful to the whole team of MERC who helped us in making this picture. The film is about the life of bus conductors and the hardships they face in life," said the students, who made the film under the guidance of Akmal Hanan, Assistant Producer at Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMMRC).

"Film making is learnt through film making. Talent wise, the students are second to none. As a mentor I gave my inputs which were very well utilized by the students," Hanan said.

He congratulated the entire team, adding that the students are being given good platform to exhibit their talent and their work is being applauded.

Glimpses of Urban Poverty



Sheikh Saleem captures different views of Wangund, Telbal in the outskirts of Srinagar. The pictures reflect the poor living conditions, which is one of the main urban issue facing the dwellers of the locality.



TOUR DIARY 2010

MERC students interact with media stalwarts

Excellent opportunity for media students: VC



Students having an interactive session with P. Sreedharan, Chief Executive Lok Sabha Television at bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training, New Delhi.

Naveed Iqbal

Students of Kashmir University's Media Education Research Centre (MERC) met prominent media personalities during their 10-day tour to New Delhi between February 21 to March 2.

A group of 27 fourth-semester students under the supervision of senior faculty members Syeda Afshana and Muslim Jan, and Section Officer G M Mir visited several media institutions and organizations.

Vice Chancellor of Kashmir University Prof. (Dr.) Riyaz Punjabi said the tour provided an excellent opportunity for media students to interact with prominent media persons.

"This is for first time when students visited the Parliament besides meeting significant number of people from media and other shades of life within a short stint. These trips enhance the skills of students

and such endeavours would continue in future to broaden their vision," he said.

Head, MERC, Dr Shahid Rasool thanked Director Consortium for Education-Communication (CEC) Dr T R Kem for providing free accommodation to MERC students at CEC and IUAC Guest House during the tour.

The students visited CNN-IBN, News X, Hindustan Times, Indian Express, The Times of India, Tehelka, Outlook, Riverbank Studios, United News of India (UNI), Press Trust of India (PTI), AJK Mass Communication Research Centre of Jamia Millia Islamia, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, APEEJAY Institute of Mass Communication, Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC),

journalists Siddharth Varadarajan, Sandeep Dixit, Vinay Kumar and Iftikhar Gilani shared their personal experience with the students. During this interaction, students raised queries regarding covering of Kashmir by national media, job opportunities in any media organisation and a lot of other issues.

The media students also visited the Press Galleries of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Bureau of Parliamentary Studies & Training (BPST) and Lok Sabha Television Channel (LSTV) where they had an extensive interaction with K.S. Sachidananda Murthy, Resident Editor 'Malayala Manorama'. Besides, students also met Asaduddin Owaisi, Member Parliament and Leader 'All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen Parliamentary Party' in Lok Sabha.

Three students Harris Zargar, Shaqoor Rather and Ibrahim Wani were selected as trainees in Press Trust of India, after they appeared in the tests conducted by the news agency during the tour. The CEO of CNN-IBN and executive editor 'Indian Express' also promised to place some of the students in their organizations after proper vetting.

The students expressed satisfaction over the conduct of the tour.

"Unlike others, for us the incentive of travelling to Delhi was based on the opportunities it offered to young aspiring media professionals like us, and it proved quite valuable", said Shaqoor, the class representative.



IGNOU, Delhi Media Centre for Research & Publications, Delhi Union of Journalists (DUJ), National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), and other institutions.

They interacted with more than 70 media persons including media stalwarts like Tarun Tejpal, Vinod Mehta, Rajdeep Sardesai, Jehangir S. Pocha, Seema Mustafa, Aziz Burney, Unni Rajen Shanker, Raj Kamal Jha, Ranjan Roy, Subhabrata Guha, Sudeep Mukhia, Sunit Tandon, M K Razdan, Mike Pandey and Ashok Ogra.

At a special gathering organized at Press Club of India, senior

Patron: Prof. (Dr) Riyaz Punjabi

Editorial team: Mir Usman, Adil Mushatq, Muhammad Rafi Dar, Feroz Bhat, Ikra Fayaz.

Chief Editor: Dr Shahid Rasool, **Editor:** Muslim Jan, **Sub-Editor:** Suhail Ahmad, **Graphic Designer:** Aga Shahi

e-mail: merctimes@gmail.com

The opinions expressed in the write ups are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of MERC Times or the department of Media Education Research Centre