

I was somewhat amused to learn that an organisation named *the ant* was doing colossal service in a remote area of Assam. Amused because it was named after the ant – small but always busy! It was even spelt in small letters! What was even more fascinating was that it was founded by a husband and wife duo, with roots in Kashmir and China, and who were bringing up their only daughter like a traditional Bodo girl.

Curious, I decided to go there and find out for myself. Accompanied by my brother, I undertook the initial journey from Guwahati (145 km) by train, and thereafter to Rowmari (8 km) by shared auto-rickshaw. Once there, it was easy to locate the place as almost every person in the area knew about it. In fact, whenever we asked the local people for directions, their faces beamed with a welcome smile as though we were their personal guests too.

## Small Steps,

Dr. Sunil Kaul did his MBBS from Pune's Armed Forces Medical College in 1983, and served as a doctor in the Indian Army for 11 years. While in the army, he came to feel that his medical training could be put to better use if he could work for the rural people in far-flung areas.

Rajeshree Deka writes about the man and how he is winning the trust of the Bodo people in Assam through his efforts to empower them.



Sunil gets excellent support from Jennifer (Jenny) who hails from a Kolkata-based Chinese family. "If I have helped built the house called *the ant*, Jenny is the one who has made it a home," says Sunil.

### Green Surroundings

The campus 'Udangshri Dera' (meaning freedom) is a green heaven. It beautifully blends with the serene surroundings, as the houses are mostly built with local material like bamboo and thatch.

We finally came face-to-face with the man himself, Dr. Sunil Kaul. He and his wife Jennifer founded *the ant* (an acronym for *The Action Northeast Trust*) in 2000. "We are working with the strengths of the weakest," Dr. Kaul said, explaining the objectives of the organisation.

Sunil and Jennifer were both working earlier in upper

## Big Goals