In Maharashtra, Art of Living shows ideal villages are possible

Salav has zero crime, no alcohol, everyone has jobs, harmony reigns

Gajan NavaDr 09970260145

Satar, Maharashtra: An ideal village is one that is free of alcohol and drugs, wherein no one is employed, where there are no disputes and women are respected, and every farmer cultivates organic products, according to Art of Living teacher Shiv Raj Kadam (09860336770). The model village has been followed in Salav village, Satar district, Maharashtra. This village was rehabilitated after the construction of a water dam near Naigaon in 2004. Villagers had only nine hectares of cultivated land and the village lacked the resources to fulfill their basic needs. Several residents migrated to the adjoining villages in search of work. The youth soon became addicted to alcohol and smoking.

Shivraj Kadam said village Sanpanch Prakash Kulkarni took active part in the Art of Living workshop. After benefitting from the programme, he ensured that these programmes were conducted on a regular basis to reach out to different age groups. The youth were trained in different skills like the making of essence sticks and preparing medicines with cow urine. This helped them earn a monthly income and help them overcome their problems. These small scale industries have helped the villagers to become self-sufficient and financially independent. Now more and more youngsters from the village are engaged in such work and are earning a comfortable livelihood.

Volunteers have helped create awareness on hygiene and environmental issues in the village, and have emphasised on the use of smokeless stoves. For cooking, the organisation distributed smokeless stoves in the village, and Art of Living bore 70 percent of the expenses.

After the awareness of health and hygiene spread across the village, new toilets were built in almost every house. People from all the age groups have enrolled in several Art of Living programmes.

Regarding his plans for the village in future, Shivraj Kadam said gas plants will soon be set up across the village. To establish the plant, 100 residents have come forward to buy 1000 cows. Once it starts production, it will provide electricity to the village and its surrounding areas.

Prakash Kadam said the village would soon become self-reliant and self-sufficient, if this ambitious plan is implemented.

The village sarpanch was of the opinion that several youth could counter drug abuse by way of self-help. The village is now free of alcohol shops, he said. There is no demand for dowry in any of the marriages conducted in the village, he added.

The village is a shining example of peaceful living where the local police station has not registered a single case for the past two years. Said Additional Sub-inspector of Police Sandeep Shigat. Even if any dispute arises, it gets settled at the panchayat level, without the need for getting it registered at the police station, he said.

Salar village is a proud recipient of several awards and honours – the Nirmal Gram Puraskar in 2006, Mahatma Gandhi Tatmaeksha Award and the Art of Living Sarpanch award in 2007, and the Sant Gadge Baba Gram Swachhta Abhiyanma Taluka Pratam Kramam. In 2010, Art of Living office was set up here and in 2012 the village won the Purvyara Vayasanrathan award. A recipient of the Ghanakonda Vyavasthapan award in 2013, the village is now known as Guru Gram (Village of the Master).

The Art of Living teachers help in conducting regular activities and workshops. Somnath Aahb Sonwane, Sachin Bergh, Abhaghat Sat, Saini Sadhuke, Prakash Raskat, Rajendra Bhage, Anand Bhayre, Chandra, Vimal Tauran along with Art of Living teacher Shrivaj Kadam are working towards the success of its programmes.
Wells improve wellness of villagers in Valsad

Dilip Kumar Kohli 09984773001

Gujarat: The life of village women in Valsad district of Gujarat has become much easier now thanks to the enterprises work of Art of Living Yuvacharya and project Coordina-
tor Prakash Govindrao. The construction of 17 water wells has been completed and hundreds of villagers will now need not walk 7 kilo-
meters to fetch water for daily use.

Yuvacharya Sanjivy Chaudhry has helped the village to have its own bore wells, and women have more time on hands to take care of their children. Some children could not go to school as they had to take care of their younger siblings while the mother was out to fetch water, but now children have plenty of time for study.

People can also grow more crops by watering their fields, said Bhavesh Patel, Art of Living Yu-

vacharya. Art of Living volunteers have found some donors to buy raw mate-

rials for the construction of a natural water source. Earlier, the water used to get dirty and muddy.

Chikmagalur goes organic

To the future Project Director Ganagpi addressing Volunteers at Chikmagalur

Chikmagalur: The purchase of 20 Gir cows has paved the way for a prosperous and healthy society. The Sri Sri Krushi Vigyan Sahakar

20 Gir cows has paved the way for a prosperous and healthy society.

The next plan of action was formed in Lakya Hoballi Village of Andhra Pradesh.

To the future

Dilip Kumar Kohli 09984773001

The Sri Sri Krushi Vigyan Sahakar

Agriculture is one of the main sources of income for the poor in rural India. Under the Art of Living programs, farmers are taught how to maintain the quality of their crops, prevent pests and diseases, and increase their yields.

The success rate of these wells is 100 percent because even if it fails to find ground water, it can store rain water. With the easy availability of clean drinking water, families have now started cultivating vegetables. "The life of the villagers has improved overall," says Changgan Biai Buraf, a resident of the village.

One of the wells constructed at Valsad by volunteers

Villagers have come forward to construct wells with good material, to facilitate storage of more water and make it cleaner. They contributed free labour towards construction, and now hundreds of families have enough water. Very Koura or surface water well is not deep enough to extract ground water. But it stores rain water and can be 10-15 feet deep. Due to this, its construction cost is less. It can store water for drinking as well as for daily use.

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To breathe life into the barren land

Dilip Kumar Kohli 09984773001

Under this project, toilets are being constructed from the mud of the flood. The families that owned the land dug the wells and now hundreds of families have gained access to clean water.

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The cost is to be shared between the Government and the villagers. BCP has offered initial avolement for construc-
tion which shall be reimbursed by the Government on project completion.

Outreach to flood victims

Sanjivy Chaudhry, a 25-year-old volunteer from Valsad, has been teaching kids in the flood-affected areas.

To the future

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The sixth phase of Pamba River cleaning got a good start on 21 September, 2014 with 65 volunteers and pilgrims taking part. About two truckloads of muck was removed this time.

In April, cleaning was taken up in full swing and it has been repeated every month ever since. Pradeesh, a volunteer, said the waters looked black initially but now the colour has changed. He says "This shows that the water is cleaner now. It gives us immense joy, and I feel lucky to be part of this cleaning process. I'm proud that I'm one of the hundreds of volunteers who have worked to make these rivers cleaner.

"If the situation is brought to the notice of the central and state governments, it will get remedied," he thought. So he started a signature drive. He wrote a letter to the government about the prevailing situation in these areas and convinced all the villagers to sign the letter. The letter was sent to the collector and to the Agriculture Minister, and then placed before the Cabinet of Ministers.

The next big step is to create awareness through the Guru Pamba  cleaning 6th phase: 6 tonnes of muck removed

Breath of fresh air for inmates

More than 12000 prisoners in Jharkhand benefitted

Training rural managers for village transformation

Trained rural managers for village transformation

Flood victims demand Govt help

Policemen learn stress management

Get the latest news, analysis, and information on the current issues and events that are shaping our world. Stay informed and be a part of the conversation. Subscribe now and never miss an issue. 

Healthcare: Around 200 villagers of Khattarmal, Uttarakhand, 160 toilets were built in Lakhya hobali, Chickmangul. Yuvacharyas conducted workshops on health and hygiene, and motivated the villagers to construct toilets in their homes.

"After the construction of toilets, our lives have become easier. We were not aware of toilets in their homes."

"Initially, villagers were not ready to construct toilets as they were comfortable in using the open fields. It was difficult to convince them," said Siddling Shetty (09743317998), Project Coordinator. Plans are on the anvil to construct more than 4000 toilets.

Madan Bhaiya, one of the participants of the Prison Smart Course said, "I was very unhappy and depressed. I kept thinking of the past and was worried about the future. But after following the techniques taught in the programme, I feel very light and way better. I'm very optimistic and positive about the future."" Shrivindha Chaube, a 22-year-old student who is now in Latehar jail for attacking the Deputy Commissioner of Police, said the past six months have transformed him. "I learnt to control anger and handle negative emotions, techniques taught here helped in releasing all my stress and aggression." He has decided to concentrate on his career seriously and wants to help other youngsters to deal with such anxiety. He intends to be useful to the society by helping people overcome stress.

health & hygiene New toilets in Lakhya hobali

Unnirikshnan Vijayan pilla (0974383218)

Health & Hygiene

Policemen learn stress management

Rajesh Kunda (07766322719)

Jharkhand: In past five years, teachers from the Art of Living have conducted 275 Prison Smart Courses, and more than 12,000 prisoners from 36 prisons of Jharkhand have benefitted from it under the coordination of Birjesh Bahadur Singh (09431362406).

Under the programme, physical exercises, yoga, pranayama and meditation are taught to the prisoners, who help them to deal with mental and emotional stress. It initiates the prisoners to think positively and lead a normal and happy life after stepping out of jail, said an official of Latehar jail.

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false

Bikroner, Rajasthan: Rajasthan's Police Department took an initiative to enroll their staff members in Art of living programmes. Serving as a police personnel is a tough job, and AOL programmes are designed to reduce stress. Vineet Kishor Sharma (09414191810) trained 850 police personnel who participated in the programme with great enthusiasm.

Anurag Chatterjee, Superintendent of Police of the city, had taken up the course and is now keen on spreading the word. Most of the participants were on the verge of committing suicide before the course, but now they feel proud when their relatives and friends are about the prevailing situation in these areas and convinced all the villagers to sign the letter. The letter was sent to the collector and to the Agriculture Minister, and then placed before the Cabinet of Ministers. The drive started from August, and now covers Gaandhigram, Navchetna, Nimba phata, Antree, Ural, Motapansadji, Nirkatma, Paaras, Ballalpur, Batwaadi, Waadwangan, Chachini, Sasti, Bubbulgoan, Deulgoan, Hatalia, Lonagria, Haatrun, Kaaranja and Pastur. Many yuvacharyas and villagers have now joined Kishor's campaign of making these flood-affected villages self-reliant and prosperous.

Kishor Khole & farmers with Tahsildar of Shahatpur. (Inset, Deputy CM of Maharashtra, receiving the letter)

Sanjivani Warkade (08922584794)

Amaravati, Maharashtra: The flooding of Poorna River has affected several lives but the villagers are lumping back to normalcy, said Yuvacharya Kishor Khole (097921276828).

"The flooding of Poorna River has affected several lives but the villagers are lumping back to normalcy, said Yuvacharya Kishor Khole (097921276828).

All the crops have been destroyed completely, and these families have no other sources of income. Only the government has come forward and helped the villagers, he said.

"If the situation is brought to the notice of the central and state governments, villagers will get some help," he thought. So he started a signature drive. He wrote a letter to the government about the prevailing situation in these areas and convinced all the villagers to sign the letter. The letter was sent to the collector and to the Agriculture Minister, and then placed before the Cabinet of Ministers.

The drive started from August, and now covers Gaandhigram, Vaikhobag, Ujajaw, Khedadi, Navthal, Nimba phata, Antree, Ural, Motapansadji, Nirkatma, Paaras, Ballalpur, Batwaadi, Waadwangan, Chachini, Sasti, Bubbulgoan, Deulgoan, Hatalia, Lonagria, Haatrun, Kaaranja and Pastur.

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Getting equipped: Rural managers on completion of training

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Kishor Khole & farmers with Tahsildar of Shahatpur. (Inset, Deputy CM of Maharashtra, receiving the letter)
Reformed alcoholic works against farmer suicide
Touched 3000 lives through YLTP programs

Maharashtra: Sharad, a resident of Jaluna village, could study only up to matriculation. Though he enrolled for the ITI programme, he had to discontinue. He drifted to his brother’s place but soon fell in bad company and got addicted to alcohol and tobacco. His life became worthless and aimless. His near and dear ones lost all hopes of his recovery and a bright future.

Sharad (097663.38619) turned over a new leaf after his sister made him join YLTP (Youth Leadership Training Program), an Art of Living programme. Initially, he was reluctant to go there but he soon felt comfortable among many others like him. By the end of the programme, he realised that some change had come over him. He shed tears in front of Sri Sri’s picture realising that someone was there to take care of him.

After completing the programme, he became actively involved with the Ashram at Bangalore. He served in various departments like transportation, kitchen, and light and sound for four years. These four years transformed him and he had given up his addictions. He realised that he was capable of uplifting others.

Sharad was sent to Vadarba, Maharashtra, where farmers were committing suicides due to failure of crops and heavy loans. He worked very hard for two years and taught at more than 300 Nav Chetna Shibirs (free programmes for villagers). These programmes strengthened the villagers emotionally and spiritually to deal with any situation. The number of suicides came down in these areas.

Sharad’s tireless efforts were rewarded by the master who honoured him in a public event in Yavatmal. This honor uplifted him and motivated him to work even more. He became an Art of Living teacher in 2010.

Since then, he has taught more than 2000 youngsters in different areas of Marathwada, Maharashtra. The motivated youths are in turn doing a remarkable job in various places. Villages like Thokale in Beed district were awarded the Nirmal Gram Puraskar, and the Thokale School became Aadarsh School.

About 70 percent of the population here has been trained under Happiness programmes and 60 Yuvacharyas are actively trying to transform the area.

Youngsters are now being encouraged to enrol themselves in Art of Living programmes. A team of more than 50 volunteers is striving to make theynchayat free of drugs and chemicals.

A workshop on chemical-free farming was conducted, after which 15 farmers subsequently adopted organic cultivation.

Realise the joy of giving in seva

H H Sri Sri Ravishankar

Often, people who take responsibility do not pray, while those who pray do not take responsibility. Spirituality brings both together at the same time. This combination of prayer and responsibility has inspired millions across the world to a global phenomenon of caring, sharing and service.

Seva (Service) and spiritual practices go together. The urge to share increases, the deeper you go into it. If you do some work for others, you gain merit for yourself. Most intelligent businessmen do seva because it brings them a lot of gain. If people are happy, they usually say they must have done some seva in the past. Conversely, if you are not happy, do seva and gain more merit. It is like adding to the bank balance. The more you give, the more strength will be given to you. The more we open ourselves, the more room we have for God to fill in us.

Serving purpose

It is tested and proven that when we make service our biggest agenda in life, it eliminates fear, brings to focus in our life, purifies us. It nourishes your spirit and long-term joy. When we do seva, it brings naturalness and human values back in society. It helps in building a society that is free from fear and depression.

I find that for young people, spirituality is all about bringing up the sharing quality in the Have notes while enabling self-confidence in the Have notes.

If you have the desire to serve and help others, you don’t have to worry; your life is not a big responsibility for the divine, who can take care of you very well. Don’t be worried about money so much. Be filled with love instead, Be filled with gratitude and get rid of the fear in you by being in love.

The joy of giving

Seva always seems to give one a big kick. It is the most effective antidote to depression. The day you feel hopeless and horrible, just get out of your room and ask people, “What can I do for you?” The service you then do will change the tape in your mental deck to a song of joy.

When you ask questions like “Why me?” or “What about me?”, you get depressed because the Universe does not always hand you a straight answer. Instead, do some breathing practices like the Sudarshan Kriya and maintain a couple of minutes of silence every day. It will flood your body and brain with Oxygen and enhance your power.

There are two types of joys. One is the joy of getting. The child says, “If I get something, I will be happy! If I get toy, I will be happy!” This is the joy if a child.

We are mostly stuck at this level and don’t seem to grow beyond. But ahead of us is mature joy, the joy of giving.

Nilgiri tribal village lit up by solar power
24 houses in Kadamban Kombai see new light

Situated on the hills, the village has no roads and there is limited access to bus and other forms of transport. Public transport is available only six kilometers away from the village. For nearly 1.5 kilometers, there are no vehicles and this was a huge challenge that volunteers had to face. Yuvacharya Arul Murugan (09487592891), who wanted to set up solar lights in the village, found it difficult to bring the necessary equipment to the village.

In August, 2014, Arul Murugan, a young enthusiast set the project in motion. He found it difficult to bring the necessary equipment to the village and he reached out to YLTP to take it forward. Arul Murugan’s confidence and determination inspired YLTP to give a helping hand.

YLTP’s Green Tech for Poor (GTP), an initiative to help the farmers of Marathwada who are committing suicides due to heavy loans and failure of crops, assisted Arul Murugan with the financial aspect of the project. YLTP also provided solar panels, batteries, etc.

To set up solar lights in the village, Arul Murugan engaged young volunteers from different areas of Marathwada, Maharashtra.

Mansi Dharmraj

Conimatore, Tamilnadu: On 22 September, 2014, bright electric bulbs lit up 24 households in Kodamban Kombai, a remote village of Tamil Nadu. The families had to manage with only kerosene lamps till then. The villagers were thrilled to see the electric bulb burning in their homes and a 50-year-old man saw his dream of seeing light in his village come true.

The number of suicides came down in these areas.

4 houses in Kadamban Kombai see new light

Green tech for poor Above Kadamban Kombai villagers nearby the newly instilled solar panel. Right is a picture of batteries for solar installation

Gurucharan Ambreshvar

If you are working on any project or YLTP activities, please contact us on 08067433615, 08067433603, 09620169697, E mail: sevatimes@yltp.org

Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) and Dharma Shambha Yojana (DSY) are service initiatives of Vyakti Vikas Kendra, India [The Art of Living], a registered charitable Trust, head quartered in Bangalore with its registered office at No. 19, 39th A Cross, 11th Main, IV T Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore - 560041 - Ph: 080-67433600 | www.artofliving.org | Email: yltp@artofliving.org -

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Seva Launches ‘Seva times’ with YLTP Media & Documentation Team During Yuvacharya’s Refresher Meet (YRM) at Art of Living International Ashram, Bangalore on September 9, 2014