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Smt. Bhanumathi Narasimhan



Director, Women Empowerment and Child Care Projects of The Art of Living

Bhanumathi Narasimhan has played a key role in The Art of Living, since its inception. Founded in 1981 by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, The Art of Living is a non-profit, educational and humanitarian NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) engaged in stress-management and service initiatives. The organization operates globally in 151 countries.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, her brother and guide, has been a constant source of support and direction for her. Bhanumathi has been instrumental in instituting the "Care for- Children" program, which provides education for underprivileged rural children, free of cost. The first school to be supported by this program started in 1981 with 30 children in rural Bangalore. Now, 30 years later, there are 175 schools in 19 states of India educating over 24,500 children. She is especially

focused on education for girls and empowerment of women.

In 1997, Bhanumathi was one of the founding members of VISTA India (Value Integrated Services To All), an initiative that aims to provide economic and social self-sufficiency for disadvantaged women. The project was launched under the aegis of The Art of Living, and it has provided vocational training, entrepreneurship, and self-development workshops to more than 8,000 women in India. As part of their training, women are also introduced to programs that promote hygiene and women's health in rural areas.

Sri Sri Women's Empowerment Program is another initiative on similar lines of VISTA and caters to underprivileged women in rural areas. There are two centers currently operating – one in rural Tamil Nadu and another in the outskirts of Bangalore. Women are trained in various vocational skills like tailoring, candle making, incense stick production, packaging and marketing, and other related skills in order to make them economically self-reliant.

Bhanumathi started the HARA (HIV/AIDS Awareness in Rural Areas) project to create awareness about AIDS and precautions against the disease. The youth volunteers receive training under a qualified medical doctor in this field and disseminate information in the rural areas. 40,000 individuals across India have benefitted from this initiative since 2009. In support of traditional art and culture, Bhanumathi has initiated the Weaver-to-Wearer project. The project identifies skilled craftsmen in the traditional arts from rural areas and connects them with consumers around the world.

Bhanumathi has convened and chaired four International Women's leadership conferences since 2005. These conferences seek to provide a platform for women leaders to share their successes, and inspire one-another to succeed against formidable odds. The 5th International Conference is slated to be held at The Art of Living

International Centre from Feb 3-5, 2012. Bhanumathi has been instrumental in bringing together people from different countries for various forums and guiding them on humanitarian projects.

She teaches Sahaj Samadhi Meditation and has initiated thousands of individuals around the world. A gifted singer, Bhanumathi has several albums to her credit comprising devotional bhajans and shlokas heard by people across the globe irrespective of their nationalities. She holds a Masters Degree in Sanskrit Literature from Bangalore University.

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