

SEVA TIMES

THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU



Deep into the
Written Word

pg. 2

IT Professionals Light a Lamp
in the Slums of Kolkatta

pg. 3



APRIL 2020

SEVA SNIPPETS

Creating Waves of Positivity
in These Stressful Times



Since a nationwide lockdown was ordered limiting the movements of 1.3 billion people in India, Gurudev has been guiding them through live online meditations at 12 noon and 7.30 in the evening, helping people to stay calm and peaceful and increase their immunity during these stressful times. These meditations began on March 22nd and lakhs of people have been meditating online under Gurudev's guidance every day. The online meditations can be accessed on any of these links:

YouTube.com/srisri
Facebook.com/srisriravishankar
Instagram.com/srisriravishankar
artofliving.org/app
Elyments.com

Art of Living Launches its 43rd
River Rejuvenation Project



The Art of Living in association with the Government of Tamil Nadu launched its 43rd river rejuvenation project in Chinnar Basin, Krishnagiri District, Tamil Nadu.

New Lease of Life for Prison
Inmates in Jammu



The Art of Living has established four skill centers in Jammu and Kashmir prisons and has so far trained 590 inmates in association with National Skill Development Corporation of India. 75 inmates who have completed training and are about to be released in 2 months received certificates issued by NSDC and also received toolkits for plumbers and electricians. This will open new avenues for them and help them to earn a decent livelihood when they go out of prison.

Sri Sri University Bags Award
at EdTechReview 2020



Sri Sri University bagged the Best University in India Award at EdTechReview 2020, an extravagant 2-day annual Conference/Expo/Pitch held at The Leela Ambience in Gurugram, Delhi NCR, on March 5-6, 2020. The event is one of India's biggest gatherings with over 1000 edtech stakeholders from over 10 countries. Participants included EdTech founders, educational publishers, institution leaders, educators, investors, venture capitalists, foundations, and NPOs.

The Art Of Living's Relief Measures During Lockdown



By Seva Times Network

Bengaluru, Karnataka: On March 24, 2020, a nationwide lockdown was ordered to contain the spread of COVID-19 in India. This much needed step would see all non-essential services being either operational from home or not operational at all. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's immediate concern was to help the daily wage earners and their families who would be stranded without an income and daily necessities being available to them.

With this in mind, to support the daily wage earners during the lockdown, The Art of Living and International Association for Human Values (IAHV) came together to launch 'Stand with Humanity' – an initiative wherein a million families would be provided 10 days' rations. Many members from the film and TV fraternity also joined hands in the effort. The initiative was flagged off by Gurudev on March 25, from The Art of Living International Centre, Bengaluru. The

1st batch of 12 trucks set off from the ashram carrying 108 tons of food material provided by Sri Sri Tattva to be distributed to families of daily wage earners. All over India, The Art of Living volunteers have risen to the occasion and are working for the distribution of food along with local authorities, keeping in mind the necessary precautions.

MAHARASHTRA:

The first truck load of materials was distributed to the needy families in Dharavi, Mumbai. Thereon the BMC helped distribute 300 kits at Govandi and 100 kits around Bharat Nagar, BKC. 500 kits to film industry workers. 600 kits were distributed in Dombivli. In Kokan, Chiplun 50 families received help. In Ahmednagar, 450 members from 102 families were distributed 1200 kg of ration.

GUJARAT:

Here, distribution of food had started before the lockdown itself and continued afterwards too. In Vapi, 301 kits were

distributed benefitting 1000 people. In Sural 450 were distributed covering the areas of Varacchha, Pandesara, Vadod Gam, Umarwada, Ring Road and Gopipura.

PUNJAB:

Kits distributed to 4000 families in Kapurthala, 1200 families in Faridkot, 150 families in Mandi Gobindgarh, 500 families in Bhatinda. More families have been reached in Muktsar, Nawanshahr, Rajura, Chandigarh, Jagraon and Rajpura.

MADHYA PRADESH

In Indore, The Art of Living volunteers started preparing food to distribute among 500 daily wage labourers, currently serving almost 3000 people daily. In Chindwara, 2000 kg of vegetables were distributed.

RAJASTHAN:

Kits were distributed to 500 families in Kota and about 50 families of Abu Road and 35 people in Ajmer. In Baswara, volunteers raised INR 35,811 to donate to the PM Cares fund.

WEST BENGAL:

More than 100 families have been reached in Maheshtalla, Kolkata and Tikiapara, Howrah. In Siliguri, distribution of food had been going on for the last 10 days.

HIMACHAL PRADESH:

40 families were reached with food kits in Nahan.

CHATTISGARH:

Food distributed to 120 families in Raipur, 18 families in Ambikapur, 23 families in Bilaspur Gram, Binuri Post, Katakoni of migrant workers who could not go home. In Ambikapur work is on to distribute 3000 masks to essential service providers.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR:

More than 2850 families have been reached with food in the areas of Channi Rama, Channi Himmat, GandhiNagar, Nanak Nagar, Preet Nagar Clusters, Nanak Nagar Sec, Narwal, Railway cluster and Regari. Relief is being replenished on a weekly basis.

DELHI:

7000 biscuit packets and bananas were distributed to the daily wagers and migrant workers. 3000 food packets were distributed to NDMS workers. Provision is also being made to distribute cooked food at venues where large number of people are stranded.

TELANGANA:

In collaboration with GHMC and Police Department, 30 tons of ration has been provided to 3500 families. Distribution work is in progress in the areas of Nallagandla, Gowlidoddi, Aparna, Hitec City, Kondapur, Nizampet and Kukatpally.

ASSAM:

Kits have been distributed to 40 families.

UTTAR PRADESH:

2800 kits distributed in Kanpur and Sant Kabir Nagar.

KARNATAKA:

50 kits distributed in a slum of Kalaburagi. 300 kits distributed to daily wage earners around The Art of Living International Centre.

KERALA:

12 tons of relief material were handed over to Kasargod District Collector.

HARYANA:

Around 1100 kgs of food material distributed in Kurukshetra.

(Information till 1st April 2020)

The Art of Living to Join Hands with Karnataka Government to Rejuvenate Rivers in 9 Districts

By Thoheja Gurukar

Bengaluru, Karnataka: The Art of Living will be joining hands with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj in the Karnataka State Government's initiative to rejuvenate rivers in 9 of its districts under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA).

At a press conference in Shivamogga on March 12, 2020, Eshwarappa,



Pictures from Cauvery River Rejuvenation project

Contd. on page 2

Lockdown - Crisis or Opportunity?



In Chinese there is a same word for crisis and opportunity. This is a huge crisis in the world today but we can turn this into an opportunity to reflect about our own life, to look into the truth of this existence – What this world is all about? What this life is all about? What is society? What are our responsibilities towards society? These many questions we can ask ourselves. We may not get answers to all of them right away but it makes us ask these questions. Crisis always puts us in a position where we have to ask these questions to our self.

Let us begin like this. Let us see the context of our life. What have we been doing? We have been busy, busy, busy all our waking state. We sleep less sometimes. Sometimes we are depriving ourselves of sleep and rest. At other times we take too much rest and we are lagging behind in what we are supposed to do. Let us keep all the scenarios right in front of us and contemplate and think. What should be the context of our life? This in itself can be of tremendous benefit for us. If we can put our attention on the facts about life, contemplating about our life, and death – death is imminent, it is going to happen to everybody. So if death were to come, what are our priorities? What do we want to do? How do we want to live the rest of our life? If we sit and analyze, think about it, a lot of confusion that we go through can be avoided and you can get out of depression.

Because staying alone, not socializing, getting out of a routine that in itself is a game changer. I want to tell you, please don't panic. No need to panic. We have the strength to overcome any crisis that comes in our way. Individually and collectively we all are capable of doing it.

So let us begin with - first see the context of life. Suppose you live for 80-90 years, how do you want to live your life? How you have been living and how you want to live your life. You can sit and chalk it out.

Then, time management. See how we have been managing our time. Half of our life we spend in earning money and then half of that wealth we spend to earn back our health, right? We do many such things. We sit in restaurants, spend so much time every day in talking about things that really don't matter to us or to anybody. So, let us take a look at how we spend time in our life.

The third thing is – what is the purpose of our life? Is the purpose of our life to acquire more? It could be anything – even acquire more knowledge, acquire more skills, acquire more money, more fame... what is it that you want to acquire? And suppose you have acquired all of that, then what next? This type of review of what we are doing, what we want to do, and what is happening around us, in itself creates a certain amount of awareness in us. It elevates our consciousness.

contd from page 1

Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, stated that the first phase of the project would be implemented in Shivamogga, Chitradurga, Tumakuru, Ballari, Yadgir, Belagavi, Kodagu, Udipi, and Uttara Kannada districts.

The Art of Living's methodology adopted for river rejuvenation involves locating proper sites using remote sensing technology, constructing boulder checks, percolation wells, injection wells and water pools to increase the infiltration of water. In addition, in order to prevent soil erosion and increase soil moisture, large-scale afforestation activities are carried out by planting saplings of locally suitable trees in the vicinity of the river banks.

Then, meditation. What does meditation do? It can settle your mind. It can center you. It can calm your emotions. It can give you enormous strength from inside, not just mental strength it can give you also physical strength. It can boost your immune system. Meditation itself can boost the immune system. You should not forget our will power is really supreme. If you have the will to survive through any adverse situation, you can do it and people have done it. There are many such examples where people have survived where it was almost impossible. So, we can survive through this crisis as well.

Many of us have never spent time with our self. Many of us have never known the taste of silence. We don't know what it is to be in the quiet inner space. This is an opportunity. Just do it. Take some time off. Abide by the seer. The seer, the enjoyer, the doer, is active most of the time. Now is the time for the doer to abide in the being. The seer to abide in the nature of the seer. The seer is lost in the scenery. Now is the time for the seer to come back from the scenery to the seer. This is yoga. Yoga is getting back to your own center.

I am with you in this hour of crisis. In this time of crisis, be reassured this is not going to be there forever. It is a temporary phase the world is going through. Soon we will get over this. We have seen SARS, we have seen the Swine Flu, we have seen many such influenzas. Before World War or just after World War II there was Plague which was one of the biggest epidemics in the whole world but we have overcome all those. Be assured, we will overcome this one too.

Things to do and things not to do:

Just follow the rules. Take immunity boosters – take turmeric with a little pepper, Amruth is very good, take Shakti drops which has eight herbs meant to boost your immune system. Cut down on your sweets and sugar. Don't eat too much.

When you have a lot of free time, you feel like popping things into your mouth while watching television. Even watching television, you should cut down your time on that. Reading would be good. Use the time to do something creative. Write some poems, write some stories. This is the time you can come up with many experiments in cooking food. Learn more skills. Those who have never played piano or guitar, you should start learning to play it – play guitar, sing songs, write songs. You can do paintings. There are a million things you can do. If nothing, you can learn other languages... learn French, Sanskrit. This is the time to do all that.

Now that most of you are home with your family members, you get to spend so much time with them. Listen, don't talk too much! Keep some silence as well. Talk less and avoid arguments.

Do not spend your day listening to negative news. That can be very tiring. We definitely need to be informed of what is happening, but do not keep repeating the same thing from 7 am to 10 pm.

Don't keep searching "Corona! Corona!" Otherwise, you are unnecessarily giving too much power to this and then your brain gets affected. See how you can keep your enthusiasm in this time of crisis. This will show the valor, the strength, and the resilience that you are born with.

Such gigantic projects cannot be successful without the involvement of the local community. The Art of Living with its dedicated team of volunteers will play a major role in mobilizing the people of the area through capacity building measures like meditation programs, skill development and leadership training to work for the implementation of the project.

The Art of Living has so far been involved in the rejuvenation of 43 rivers across Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. Over 19,600 recharge structures have been constructed, 5,83,361 trees have been planted, benefitting over 70,00,000 people in 5084 villages with an increased water storage capacity of 25,00,02,372.136 liters.

Learning from the EXPERTS

Deep into the Written Word



Rajeev Nambiar

Rajeev Nambiar is an engineer by education and holds a Masters Degree in Yoga. A Publishing and PR professional, he has worked as CEO of Sri Sri Publications Trust, Product Head at Reliance Adag, Head of Production with Harmony magazine & L'official, a French Fashion magazine and Account Manager at 20:20 MEDIA. He was one of the founders of Aranyam Trust, which used to bring out an annual environment film festival. He has been a part of the organising committee of several prestigious conferences like Security Byte and Uncommonsense Wellness. He has been a faculty of The Art of Living for 18 years now and currently serves as the CEO of Rishimukh, The Art of Living's monthly magazine.

Dr Hampi Chakrabarti in conversation with Rajeev Nambiar, CEO of Rishimukh, The Art of Living's monthly magazine

■ What is the vision behind Rishimukh?

Rishimukh was started on the premises of ancient wisdom, human values and universal love. As I understand it, it was a vehicle to spread Gurudev's knowledge, telling people about this ancient wisdom and connecting them to the humanitarian and service activities that The Art of Living undertakes. That was the broader vision.

■ Give us an overview about how you and your office go about curating such elevating content every month?

It has not been a fixed format and has changed from time to time. I have been doing it for more than 17 years now, for me the advantage is that I have understood my reader and their landscape and I know what to give them from an organizational perspective, keeping it in line with the vision. Understanding our readers makes it easier to curate a content that will provide value to them. At the beginning of the year we decide on an outline of what we want to give the reader during the course of the year. Over the past years we have sort of arrived at one level and then not tampered with it too much. At the beginning of the year only we reach out and engage with such people who have expertise in the topics or columns that we are interested in and we curate content for the whole year.

■ In the times when micro blogging and 3 min videos define the general attention span for content, how do you look at the changing prospects of a magazine like Rishimukh?

It has not been easy. There is a varied audience today and every person, depending on how they want to consume content, has a different perspective. What happens in a short format is that one tends to develop an opinion based on a headline. Rishimukh is not targeting such consumers at all. We are targeting such readers who want to read more and get more information and an in-depth understanding of any subject. If you search anything on Google several links come up and you don't know what to read and which one is authentic and how to get the right information. Like when you go to a vegetable shop, all ingredients of a salad are available in front of you but if you have no prior knowledge of salad making, you don't know which one to pick and what to do. But when a prepared salad is served to you, you relish it. Having said that, things are definitely changing and it is not the same what used to be ten years back. Going forward we might be restricted to a much smaller readership than it used to be. But the published medium will stay in its format, it's not going to die. That is what I feel. There will always be consumers for it. But instead of a mass content consumption, it will become a niche content consumption. Earlier whatever was written was considered the gospel. On the internet, I can go and edit or change the content anytime. The written and published word still has greater authenticity attached to it. If people see the value in it and take the effort to go through it, it will give them a lot of insights.

■ The popularity of digital content has also posed serious challenges for the business logistics of physical magazines. What are the measures in place to combat that?

The business logistics definitely have changed drastically since the coming up of internet platforms. If you think that you can override the challenge then that's not going to happen. In these times running a magazine and keeping it alive is a tough challenge. There are several measure that have been looked into like having a digital magazine run parallel to printed one for the content to be present in both the spaces, and each can compliment the other.

■ You have lead the team for 14 years now and been working for Rishimukh for 17 years, tell us about some of the highs and the lows?

When I came into the magazine, it was like a 24-28 page in-house journal. The high was to take it to a level of a magazine and for the people to understand that a magazine can be like this. Initially, we had issues with delivery, with content, which we overcame. In the next two years we were able to produce a 70-80 page magazine, its looks were developed, and we reached almost 10 times the subscription that we initially had. The low has been that from the highs we have tapered down. If once upon a time I used to get hundreds of letters from the readers saying that the content was great. Now I get like two letters a month. However hard we push it, it is not going beyond a limit. Having seen the high of it, this definitely is a low for me.

■ What are the future plans for Rishimukh?

Rishimukh is a brand that has grown and been there for more than 20 years. In a year or two if we realize that with the challenges from digital formats the content is no more going to be consumed in this fashion and we need to look into different formats, then maybe we can convert it into say a wisdom or talk show with different people along with a published and digital magazine. We definitely have the brand image which we can leverage upon.

“Understanding our readers makes it easier to curate a content that will provide value to them.”

IT Professionals Light a Lamp in the Slums of Kolkatta

Lakhs of children in India, although intelligent and capable, do not have access to the right kind of resources or mentors to give them a fighting chance to break out of the cycle of poverty. With a vision to reach out to such children, Sujala Roy and Chandrani Biswas started 'Light a Lamp' - a mentoring initiative - in Kolkatta's urban slums.

While helping the son of her domestic help with his studies, Sujala Roy, an IT professional, realized there was a huge gap between what these children knew and what was there in their books. With no guidance from parents or teachers, it was not surprising that many lost interest in studies and got involved in substance abuse, gambling, cyber-crime and so on.

She was deeply concerned and wanted to help. The Art of Living's Volunteer Training Program fuelled her aspirations. She visited a few slums and started teaching a handful of children. She saw the problems in slums first-hand: tiny rooms shared by families of six, few resources, and the constant struggle to make ends meet. Amidst this daily struggle for survival, how could parents really take care of their children's education?

This was born 'Light a Lamp' - an initiative that could provide mentorship and care to children in Kolkatta's slums.

Sujala's mentor, Shabari Chowdhury, suggested that she reach out to children on a larger scale. She would need more support to do this. Chandrani Biswas, another IT professional whom Sujala had introduced to The Art of Living, quit her job in Bengaluru to join Sujala in this venture.

From chaos to laughter, from lectures to conversations

Recalling the first day she took a class in the slum Dhapa, Chandrani says, "Making a difference is not as easy as getting excited to make a difference. I realized this in that classroom of 100 children yelling at the top of their voice. A rickshaw announcing free English classes had attracted children in good numbers. But while teaching, we realized that the children thought that going to English classes was enough to learn the language!"



The children did not take much interest in classes, and often skipped them. They rarely did their homework. Seeking the help of their parents to make sure the children sat down to study every day made little or no difference. Not ones to give up easily, Sujala and Chandrani continued their



Sujala Roy and Chandrani Biswas, the women who are changing the future of children in Kolkatta's urban slums

efforts but after 3 years they had made little headway and started to lose their confidence. That is when they met Gurudev at Bengaluru Ashram and told him about what they were doing and their looming failure. Surprisingly, Gurudev thought that their idea was great and they were doing a great job. He asked them to continue their work.

They returned to Kolkatta with renewed confidence. With one-pointed focus, they began solving their problems one by one.

Thinking that a change of curriculum would help to hold the interest of the students, Sujala sought the help of professional educators who turned the curriculum around. There were more games, activities, and simplicity in this curriculum. The children grew interested. The classes became livelier, ringing with laughter instead of the previous chaos. Chandrani adds, "More recently, we brought coding and iPads to our classes with the help of partner NGOs. The children are just loving it!"

They also changed their approach in talking to the parents of their students. Lectures about parenting were not really helping so they switched to having conversations with them. They blurted out, "What is the point of education? They anyway have to do what we are doing!"

Sujala and Chandrani showed them possibilities. Education could get them and their children out of poverty. They finally understood and they got their support. They began opening centers in other slums. They also started teaching science, math, yoga, and meditation. Volunteers started trickling in. The tide had turned. They were finally making a difference!

Light a Lamp has touched the lives of more than 1,000 children to date. It is much more than just an educational initiative. Over the years Sujala, Chandrani, and their team of volunteers have met hundreds of children with whom they have shared their stories, celebrated their successes, heard their problems, and boosted their confidence when they have been low. The deep bond that they share with the children motivates them. It has become a way for them to care, bond and bring out the best in the children. Chandrani says with a broad smile, "Love has kept all of us going!"

SEVA SNIPPETS

Effect of Sudarshan Kriya on Inmates in Danish Prisons

According to a recent research conducted by Professor Ross Deuchar, Director of the Interdisciplinary Research Unit on Crime, Policing and Social Justice within the University of the West of Scotland, on inmates in Danish prisons, the practice of Sudarshan Kriya had a profound impact on the inmates' ability to manage feelings of aggression and anger and deal with potentially destructive thoughts, feelings and stressful situations more productively. Some of them reported that they had begun to experience intense feelings of happiness, joy, and peace after they had practiced the techniques for some time. They felt that engaging with the practices had enabled them to get more in touch with innate, softer feelings associated with love and kindness for self and others, and to have an increased focus on empathy. The practice of Sudarshan Kriya had also enabled many of them to wean off medications they had been prescribed for mental health conditions.



SSIAST to Convert 560 hectares of Land to Organic Farming in Puducherry



Inspired by the success of The Art of Living's Sri Sri Institute of Agricultural Sciences & Technology Trust in natural farming, The Government of Puducherry has asked SSIAST to convert 560 hectares of land from chemical farming to organic farming. The natural farming model adopted by SSIAST is a sustainable, eco-friendly, integrated farming system using natural resources. Several success stories of farmers who have adopted natural farming techniques as taught by SSIAST have firmly established that natural farming is not only profitable but also a method to rejuvenate and replenish the soil which is the need of the moment.

The True Meaning of Being Healthy

Health is being physically strong, mentally calm and steady, and emotionally soft inside. One is not healthy when he or she feels rough inside. When the mind is stiff or the mind is in judgment, it is not in good health. When the emotions are rough, one is not emotionally healthy. Health is that flow from the innermost to the outer, and vice-versa, from the outer to the inner.

Life has four characteristics: it exists, evolves, expresses and extinguishes. And for life to exist, evolve, express and extinguish, it depends on the five elements: earth, water, air, ether and fire.

According to Ayurveda, life does not consist of rigid compartments. It is a harmonious flow. Even these five elements which the whole universe is made up of are not tight compartments of defined objects. They flow into one another - fire cannot exist without air, earth and water have space within them.

Ayurveda is the study of life. Veda means knowledge, to know; and Ayur is life. The holistic approach of Ayurveda includes exercise, diet, breathing and meditation.

How do you attain good health? First, by attending to the ether element, that is the mind element. If your mind is bogged with too many impressions and thoughts, it is draining you of your immunity and preparing your body for some illness. If the mind is clear, calm, meditative and pleasant, the body's resistance will increase and it will not allow an illness to come.

The first remedy is calming down the mind - coming from the subtlest aspect of creation, the ether. Then comes the air element. Breathing, aromatherapy, etc can be used to create a change at this level. And then light or color therapy. By energizing one's system with Prana, life energy, and breath, one can prevent the illness before it starts.

That is what yoga does. In the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali has said that the purpose of yoga is stopping the sorrow before it arises, to burn the seed before it sprouts. That is one of the most beautiful Sutras.

Next is the water element. Fasting and purifying the

system with water can bring a lot of balance in the system. And the final recourse, of course, is different herbs, medicines and surgery - the earth element. All this comes in the final stage when everything else fails or when one neglects the other steps and the illness becomes inevitable.

Our breath has a lot of secrets to offer us, because for every emotion in the mind, there is a corresponding rhythm in the breath. And each rhythm affects certain parts of the body, physically. One only needs to observe it and the person can feel it. Observing this correlation between sensations and moods of the mind is meditation, attending to it is meditation.

Proper food in the sense that one eats only as much as is essential. It should be well-digested so that one doesn't feel too heavy, even when the person goes to bed or when he or she wakes up in the morning or comes for meditation. One needs to take the right amount of food - sweet, fresh, and gently spiced.

Take one week off every year for yourself. During that time, align yourself with nature. Wake up with the sunrise, eat proper food - just as much as necessary - do some exercises: yoga and breathing exercises, a few minutes of singing, keeping silence and enjoying the creation. By aligning yourself with nature, your whole system gets recharged and you will feel vibrant and enthusiastic for a long time to come.



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Seva Highlights

Sri Sri Ambulance Seva in Molela

Molela, Rajsamand: Sri Sri Ambulance Seva, an ambulance service floated on a no-profit basis by The Art of Living family in Molela, has been operating successfully for the last 16 months in Molela. With no medical facilities being available locally, villagers in Molela and surrounding areas have to travel either to Rajsamand which is 28 km away or to Udaipur which is 53 km away to seek treatment. Around 185 patients have benefited so far from this service including critically ill patients needing emergency care, pregnant women, elderly, and children. The Art of Living, Molela, was awarded at a district level program on Independence Day for providing this selfless, continual service.



This service is the brainchild of Praveen Sanadhya, Art of Living faculty. He and some youth of the area first approached the government authorities with this proposal but it did not bear any fruit. Praveen then approached the Srinath Taxi Association for help and they generously gifted them the ambulance. The operational costs of the service are covered by donations from the local community.

The Art of Living team in Molela has been working since 2008 to implement the 5H program envisioned by Gurudev to ensure Homes for the Homeless, Health Care, Hygiene, Human Values, and Harmony in Diversity. Volunteers Ramesh Kothari, Tarun Jain, Lalit Kothari, Pratap Singh, Bhera Ba, and Kailash Prajapat among others have been actively involved in The Art of Living projects in the area.

Over 400 Undergo Free Medical Checkup on Women's Day



Mandi, Himachal Pradesh: The Art of Living Women's Club, Ojaswani, had organized a free medical checkup camp at Seri Munch on March 8, 2020, on the occasion of International Women's Day. Maya Vardhan, President of the club, stated that 410 underwent medical checkup and received free medicines (if required) at the camp. Doctors who rendered their services at the camp included Dr. Uday Bhanu, Gynecologist; Dr. Saru Thakur, Dermatologist; Dr. Pragya Kapoor, Dentist; and Dr. Anamika. Apart from the general health examination, other facilities available

at the camp included ECG, eye test, blood pressure measurement, and test for diabetes. All members of the club enthusiastically volunteered at the camp.

Gurudev in March 2020



29 Feb 2020

Addressing a gathering at the Vishwa Umiya Dham Shilanyas Samaroh in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Gurudev laid the foundation stone of what is going to be one of the tallest temples in the world at a height of 431 feet.



1 March 2020

Gurudev met participants of the Mega Happiness Programs that were conducted in Delhi. Over 7500 participants attended the final session with Gurudev at the Indira Gandhi Stadium while another 8000 participants gathered at the Thyagaraj Stadium for their final session.



2 March 2020

Gurudev met Ambassadors from 30 countries at the Embassy of Belgium in New Delhi. They discussed pertinent issues facing the world.



2 March 2020

Gurudev addressed participants of International Yoga Festival held in Hrishikesh from March 1-7. He spoke at length about the benefits of yoga and led the group in a guided meditation.



2 March 2020

Gurudev visited the homes of riot victims in North East Delhi. Post his visit, Gurudev said there is a strong feeling of brotherhood among the people and that anti-social elements are responsible for the riots and not members of any community.



6 March 2020

Performing Devi Puja in Sri Sri University on March 6



7 March 2020

At a teachers' meeting in Odisha



10 March 2020

Arriving in Bhubaneswar



12-15 March 2020

Daily Satsang at Bengaluru International Center before Government imposed restrictions



21 March 2020

With government restrictions in place, the Bengaluru ashram closed to all visitors, and his travel plans postponed, Gurudev is enjoying some quiet moments in the vegetable garden at Bengaluru International Center

Karmayog: The Art of Living's Ambition for Rural India

By Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti



The Art of Living is committed to Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's vision of an empowered India that shines like a beacon of wisdom, human values and sustainable living for the entire humanity. For this, what was of prime necessity was to empower rural India, for that is where the majority of our population resides. With this in mind, Karmayog was birthed as the service wing of the organization that concentrated its efforts in identifying passionate, motivated youth and providing the required training and nurturing for them to emerge as patriotic, spiritually centered, physically robust and motivated local community leaders. India cannot become a global leader if only the strong become stronger and the weak are left to fend for themselves.

Karmayog is a potent methodology that caters to the twin objective of empowering

individuals by bringing about behavioral change at the grass root level by means of awareness and capacity building, and at the same time raise a dedicated work force for effective implementation of social development initiatives. Karmayog primarily expedites the shift in mindset from a 'want state' to becoming the 'drivers of change' and leverage its wide range of expertise in almost all sectors such as agriculture, education, good governance, health, hygiene, watershed development, waste management, women empowerment, skilling, digital India, youth empowerment, de-addiction etc.

This is brought about by,

- Capacity building, wherein motivated youth are selected from the local communities and trained appropriately, equipping them with the right knowledge and tools required to take leadership in the task at hand
- Community mobilization, wherein local communities are sensitized towards the development needs and maximum utilization and management of natural resources
- Convergence of schemes under various departments, wherein the community gets a better understanding of the available schemes for them and how to best leverage upon it for their growth

- Encouraging active participation of the individuals and community in the planning, execution and sustenance of social development projects.

For this the Karmayog department is responsible for conduction of all the rural programs of The Art of Living including its flagship course, the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) along with Rural Happiness Program, Rural Advanced Meditation Program, Rural Volunteer Training Program and several other rural centric workshops offered by The Art of Living. Karmayog is also responsible for implementing Project Bharat, an ambitious project to create *pratinidhi* in every village of India who would be equipped to drive and lead development work for that village. Other than this, Karmayog is also tasked with generating human resources from its pool of program graduates on the field for all social development and service projects of the organization. It also conducts the Micro Entrepreneurship Training Program to help the rural youth become entrepreneurs. During calamities and disaster, it is they who reach the needy at the earliest with aid and relief and also long-term rehabilitation.

On the field, Karmayog operates through its State Council Members (SCM) who look into the daily workings of The Art of Living rural teachers and volunteers.

The SEB reports to the National Executive Board (NEB) wherein each member closely monitors the operations for a set of states to formulate the various activities in consultation with the National Director who is in charge of setting the vision and target in consultation with the Chairman of Vyakti Vikas Kendra India.

Currently, there are 7 NEB members, 104 SCMs, more than 500 rural Micro Entrepreneurs, more than 200 teachers conducting The Art of Living rural courses that has touched the lives of more than 3 lakh people. All this pan India work is neatly tied up together by the Karmayog Desk located at The Art of Living International Centre. The Desk looks into the finances, coordination among all rural teachers and volunteers, Micro entrepreneur training, partnerships, sponsoring, monitoring and evaluation and also promulgating the information through Seva Times and Social Media.

Debjyoti Mohanty, National Director, however mentions that keeping the motivation high at all times sometimes does pose a challenge but you have to skillfully maneuver out of it. Jaiychandran Menon, a NEB member adds that survival of the fittest has never been the culture of this land; we rather uphold the wisdom of *vasudhaiva kutumbhakam*, a one world family where belongingness shines through and everyone works to uplift the other.

SEVA TIMES

Published by:
Commodore H. G. Harsha,
Chairman, Vyakti Vikas Kendra
India

Concept:
Debjyoti Mohanty

Editorial Team:
Thoheja Gurukar
Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti
Ram Asheesh

Design layout:
Suresh, Nila Creations

Contact:
+91 9035945982,
+91 7004144397

Email:
editor.sevatimes@yltp.vvki.org,
sevatimes@yltp.vvki.org

Website:
<https://www.artofliving.org/in-en/projects/seva-times>

PROJECT BHARAT

29 STATES, 611
5410, SUB-DISTRICTS,
7 LAKH+ VILLAGES/WARDS,
35 LAKH+ PRATINIDHIS

Benefits of Pratinidhi:
• Opportunity to be part of the largest International NGO
• Platform to share and contribute towards the society
• Strong framework for holistic Sustainable Development

HELP DESK: pratinidhi@artofliving.org
Contact: 080-61125607



All of the knowledge series by Gurudev, guided meditations, books, music by your favorite artists available on

THE ART OF LIVING
YOUR HAPPINESS APP
artofliving.org/app

