

SEVA TIMES

THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU



Empowering the Future, Skillfully

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Joy Abounds in Kalyana Karnataka

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MARCH 2020

SEVA SNIPPETS

Water Conservation Project at Pimpalshet, Palghar



The Art of Living has initiated a water conservation project at Pimpalshet - Loharpada village, Palghar district. The villagers face water shortage during dry months in spite of enough rains during the monsoons. Construction of this water pond will provide water post monsoon, benefiting around 3000 - 4000 people in the village and surrounding area.

The Art of Living Partners with UC Berkeley



On February 21, 2020, on the auspicious occasion of Mahashivaratri, The Art of Living announced the launch of Sumeru Innovation X – a global innovation and entrepreneurship program – with a vision to create next generation entrepreneurs in the country and the world. This program has been launched in partnership with the University of California, Berkeley and Sumeru Ventures. Dr. Ikhlak Sidhu, Chief Scientist & Founding Director at the UC Berkeley Sutardja Center for Entrepreneurship & Technology, who visited the Bangalore Ashram during the Mahashivaratri Celebrations, is seen here in conversation with Gurudev on Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Afforestation Program in Ahmedabad



The Art of Living in collaboration with International Association for Human Values (IAHV) has taken up an afforestation program in urban Ahmedabad. Using the Miyawaki method, over 2740 saplings of 55-60 varieties of herbal and fruit trees have been planted on 800 sq Meters in STP land of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. This method of afforestation promotes growth of plants 10 times faster and results in a plantation that is 30 times denser than usual.

Krishi Mela-2020 Highlights Natural Farming



Startups by youth, while domain experts and scholars spoke on various topics of relevance to the theme of the Mela.

Among the attendees were delegates from Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), State Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, entrepreneurs, and private agencies involved in agriculture.

Sessions were also held on home, kitchen and terrace gardening; permaculture; aeroponics and hydroponics; and apiculture (bee-keeping). Techniques of zero-budget natural farming and pearl-farming (for economic stability), were highlighted, supplemented by demonstrations of Vedic Agriculture.

A multiplicity of well-organized stalls selling a wide variety of organic products, a variety of home-made food and beverages, bags, the famed Chennapatna toys, garments, and innovative domestic-use products drew enthusiastic buyers.

The Sri Sri Krishi Ratna Awards were presented to farmers and promoters championing natural farming, among them being: Shantaveeraiah for his immense 60-year contribution to the science of bee-keeping; Shrimati Pappamma, a seed-keeper and protector of Desi seeds; and Hanumantha Gurupada Halaki for natural farming.

The delegates visited the Ashram's Desi Gaushala, and the various model farms that showcased seedling techniques, Vedic Agriculture, intercropping techniques for desi varieties, micro irrigation, waste water utilization, animal husbandry, aeroponics and hydroponics. There were also theme pavilions, displays and live demonstrations. The model farm where 74 varieties of vegetables were grown on a plot less than half an acre drew much attention.

By Padma Koty

Bangalore, Karnataka: Sri Sri Savayava Krishi Mela 2020, (Organic Agriculture Mela), held between 22-23 February 2020 at the Art of Living International Centre, Bengaluru, showcased how the Indian farmer can adopt Natural Zero Budget Farming techniques and Climate Change Resilient Agriculture to safeguard and grow his/her livelihood in the face of economic crises and climate change threats.

The objective of the Mela was firstly, to educate and enroll farmers and stakeholders to focus on Natural Farming; secondly, to build collaborative platforms for all stakeholders to create integrated

solutions; and thirdly to build road maps and business models for Natural Farming.

The inaugural session on February 22 was presided over by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Dignitaries who graced the occasion were Dr. C. N. Ashwath Narayan (DCM & IT & BT Minister); B. C. Patil, Minister for Agriculture, Karnataka; S. T. Somashekhar, Minister of Co-operation, Karnataka; Tejasvi Surya, Member of Parliament, South Bangalore; and Ravi Subramanya, MLA, Basavanagudi.

Addressing the gathering, B. C. Patil, Minister for Agriculture, said that it is only now that the importance of organic farming has been understood.

Gurudev appealed to youth to give

importance to agriculture as it was now a profitable proposition with naturally-grown organic produce being in high demand and commanding high prices. He said The Art of Living is planning to train one youth in every village in organic farming and urged farmers to directly market their produce instead of going through middlemen.

At the Mela, SSIAT (Sri Sri Institute of Agriculture Sciences and Technology Trust) signed an MoU with the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore, for fostering inter-institutional co-operation in education, research, technology transfer, and sustainable development.

The distinguished speakers gave fresh perspectives during the sessions on Agri

Spirituality, Breaking Boundaries, and Coming Together to Save the Planet

The 9th International Women's Conference Came a Full Circle

By Ruchira Roy

Bangalore, Karnataka: From starting a movement to reverse the sex ratio in Punjab; to putting Latvian folk culture on the global cultural map, to changing the laws of Nepal to bring in more representation of women in parliament, inheritance, and social justice; to passionately serving the Delhi Police as the first Indian IPS officer, from dancing up a revolution to being vegan celeb chefs-the women speakers at the 9th International Women's Conference were a force to reckon with.

International Women's Conference 2020 which was held at The Art of Living International Center, Bangalore, from February 14-16th, was where over 400 global women leaders from various fields came together to celebrate womanhood by learning and building each other up, as they delved deeper into the theme of the conference 'The Circle of Life: Passion, Dispassion and Compassion' and its reflection in our social and personal pursuits.

Some of the speakers at the conference included Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union Cabinet Minister, Justice Gita Mittal, Hon. Judge of the High Court, J & K, Dr. Kiran

Bedi, Hon. Governor, Puducherry, Lauren Von Der Pool, Plant-based celebrity Chef and Cookbook author from USA, Luke Coutinho, renowned lifestyle expert, Ndileka Mandela, CEO & Founder, Thembekile Mandela Foundation, South Africa; Dace Melbarde, Member of European Parliament, Latvia, H.E Baby Rani Maurya, Governor of Uttarakhand; Justice Sapana Pradhan Malla, Supreme Court Judge, Nepal; and Nicolas Hulot, French Journalist and Environmentalist, Former Minister of Ecology; among others.

Bhanumathi Narasimhan, Chairperson, International Women's Conference and Director of The Art of Living, set the context of the conference in her opening remarks, "When we are passionate about something, it truly shows in the work we do. When we have a goal, and along



From L to R: Dr. Kiran Bedi, Justice Gita Mittal, Mridula Sinha, Baby Rani Maurya, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Justice Sapana Pradhan Malla, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Dace Melbarde, Nicolas Hulot, and Bhanumathi Narasimhan

with it faith in a higher power, we say that let this or anything better than this happen, we gain the power to let go, the power of dispassion. Compassion is about seeing the bigger picture...how we are interconnected."

Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal, spoke about the richness and equality in the relatively young Sikh faith, "Spirituality is there inside everybody," Kaur said, "You

just need somebody to ignite it in you...a spiritual life is where your passion is channeled in the right direction. When you have a Guru in your life, life is stress free." Dr. Kiran Bedi spoke about the first time she learnt she was passionate about justice, when at the age of 9, she held a man from beating his wife. She also shared how she learned to never complain about what she was passionate about.

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Agroforestry is Helping Farmers Stabilize Their Incomes

By Padma Koty

Agroforestry is an integrated system of land use combining agriculture with forestry and other land-based livelihood activities, including rearing of livestock. Briefly, it involves the growing of trees and shrubs around or among crops.

India was the first country to come up with the National Agroforestry Policy 2014, formulated to promote "the planting of indigenous plant varieties in any areas outside forests to support farmers as well as farming practices."

We asked Mahadev Gomare, Project Coordinator of The Art of Living Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM) Projects, to explain, and he says, "Agroforestry is any sustainable land-use system that maintains or increases total yield by combining food crops (annuals) with tree crops (perennials), using management practices that suit the social and cultural characteristics of the local people and the economic and ecological condition of the area."

What are its benefits? Agroforestry enhances soil fertility, increases productivity, demands less irrigation, and stabilizes farmers' incomes and cash flows by generating multiple income streams: even if the main crop fails or is affected by climate, the other components of the agro-farming system continue to give the farmer assured income. Moreover, the trees' deep root-systems help conserve soil-moisture, prevent erosion and support the ecosystem by maintaining healthy ground-water levels. Significantly, it helps in maintaining the nitrogen cycle and the carbon cycle.

Another important question: can agroforestry adversely affect traditional models of agriculture? No, it has been traditionally practiced in India, and actually supports existing farming models with indigenous

species of plants, shrubs and trees, while financially uplifting and supporting the whole eco system, and providing employment to youth.

Agroforestry forms an integral part of The Art of Living's agriculture-training programs as well and 200 farmers have implemented it on their land. It has also given appreciable dividends in the traditionally drought-prone Latur District of Maharashtra, where an agroforestry initiative was implemented three years back on a barren stretch of land, as an Integrated Natural Resource Management Project.

Here, first "plugging" – the process of turning up the hardened land and mixing natural compost with it, was done. Next, along with crops, 3 categories of trees were planted – short, medium and long-term. Species like sandalwood and neem, along with ten types of fruit trees have been planted, and flowering plants as well to attract pollinators like bees and butterflies. Today the once-barren land showcases the transformative power of agroforestry.

Given India's wide variation in topography and rainfall patterns, agroforestry confers flexibility. Avers Gomare, "It can be implemented on any land where grass grows, and ties in well with any type of agriculture."

Guruvayurappan S, Project Officer, Wildlife Protection Society of India, and YLTP Yuvacharya, explains that agroforestry uses permaculture principles, balancing the ecosystem and "hosts land, food and security for wildlife. Trees support nesting and provide halting for day and night birds which helps in control of pests, while their roots help maintain the water and food cycles." Also, it can provide tribals employment and better income.

Agroforestry helps recover even degraded land, while cushioning both the farmer's income and the ecology from climate-change vagaries. Extending its practice can only benefit our farmers and the nation.

Cycling for a Cause

"How will you savor bread made by their hands when you don't even allow your daughters to be born?"

By Ram Asheesh

Osmanabad, Maharashtra: Yuvacharya Ganesh Raju Kanwat has once again set off on his cycle from Tuljapur, a village in Osmanabad District, Maharashtra, on a mission to save the girl child. He set out barefoot on his bicycle on January 31, 2020, and has now reached Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, covering a distance of 850 kilometers with the message, "Beti Bachao." From Rewa he will be proceeding to Ayodhya via Kashi and from there cycle to Delhi via Mathura and then onward to Pune from where he plans to return home.

Ganesh says he cycles 55-70 kilometers every day, passing on his message to save the girl child in all the villages he passes through. On one side of his bicycle is a poster of our martyred soldiers and Gurudev and on the other side is a poster with messages to save our environment, save the girl child, and save water. Boldly written on this poster is the slogan, "How will you savour bread made by their hands if you don't even allow your daughters to be born?" So far, Ganesh has taken this message to about 235 schools. He receives wide media coverage wherever he goes which helps his cause.

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Talking about justice, Justice Gita Mittal, Chief Justice of the J&K High Court, said, "We need to rise over all our prejudices and dispassionately evaluate facts and then place a judgment. Ndileka Mandela spoke about the weight of being Nelson Mandela's granddaughter, the lack of ethical and moral leaders today and the need to elevate the girl children along with the boys in society. Prominent lifestyle coach, Luke Coutinho in an interesting address, spoke about the role of mind in healing terminal illnesses and the ideal spiritual approach to chemotherapies. He also spoke about how our relationship with food should be.

The conference witnessed an insightful conversation between Vishen Lakhiani, CEO, Mindvalley, and Gurudev on enlightenment, love, compassion, ways to make relationships work, and the art of effortless meditation.

The conference included sessions on themes from creative approaches to use social media tools for positive change; attitudes that shape achievers who are making positive contributions; insights on lifestyles that promote health, well-being and happiness while



Recounting the days before he set out on his mission Ganesh says that he was so shaken by a painful incident that befell a girl child that he went into depression. To recover from depression, he underwent The Art of Living's Youth Leadership Training Program. On completion of the program he was filled with a new enthusiasm and a desire to do something significant in his life, something that would have a positive impact on society. He decided to cycle across the country for the cause of the girl child. He set out on his first journey on his bicycle in 2017, cycling through several villages in Maharashtra with his "Beti Bachao" message.

Most people live an insignificant life, concerned only about themselves and their own families. A few like Ganesh step out of their comfort zone and become an inspiration to live a life with meaning, to be a soldier for their nation, to reach out and fight for the protection of people they do not even know.

protecting the environment; to deliberations on the various perspectives that cultures offer that celebrate harmony in diversity.

Recipients of the prestigious Vishalakshi Award instated for valuable and inclusive contribution to the field of arts and culture included Kannada Actor, Malashri Mangalji; Bharatnatyam exponent, Uma Thilak; Kuchupudi proponent, Vanaja Uday; notable choreographer and Indian classical dance expert; Saroja Vaidyanathan, Indian dance research scholar, performer, Methil Devika, and Sanjay Kumar, social activist and reformer.

The legacy of the paperless conference was Mission Green Earth 2020, where all the delegates took a pledge to plant and nurture 10 million trees in five years. The conference also supports The Art of Living's Gift a Smile Project that is giving a value based, holistic education to over 70,000 kids in 702 free schools in underserved areas. Some of the children shared the experience of the power of education in their own lives.

Learning from the EXPERTS

Empowering the Future, Skillfully



Air Cmde R N Merani

Air Cmde R N Merani has had an illustrious career with the Indian Air Force as a fighter pilot with 3000 hours of flying under his belt. He was the Chief of Operations at Chandigarh Air Force Base in 1999-2000, during the Kargil war. He has also served as a Base Commander at Baroda from 2004-2005. He was head of the IAF team, on a DRDO led project to develop AWACS. He has been the Vice President, Flight Safety, at Air Pegasus. A faculty with The Art of Living, fondly known to all as Merani Uncle, he has dedicated his life to bringing light into the lives of people. He is currently positioned as the Trustee of Sri Sri Rural Development Program of The Art of Living and extensively looks into making the youth of India employable by imparting skill training to them.

Dr Hampi Chakrabarti in conversation with Air Cmde R N Merani

■ What is unique about the skill training that is imparted by The Art of Living?

It is holistic training; it is not just about the skills. We start with capacity building or life skill training through our Art of Living programs, be it Happiness Program, YLTP or as in the case of college students – Medha Yoga. We have observed that with these, their absorption capacity is much more.

■ What kind of trade/domain in skilling is the organization focusing on?

We have different types of skilling – one is the skill with your hands, like working with clay, wood or metal, and the other is soft skill. We do both. We have skilled people in domains like motor driving, tailoring, plumbing, electrical, solar electricity, bamboo craft and others. There are more than 200 skill domains in which the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) allows us to conduct training.

■ Is there a mechanism by which you decide which skill is required where?

We go by what our resources are. We have a very large network but the resources available in each place locally and the demand there, helps us decide where we can go in. We ensure that whatever we are doing is useful to that region and that community. We take it up whenever we find people who are inspired and they want to do something. I came across the IAS officer who was in charge of the devasthanam at Tirupathi temple. They had spent a lot of the *hundi* money for education of the youth, also taking care of their lodging, food and other requirements. But even with degrees the students were not very employable. That is where we stepped in and added domains like English communication, computer skills like MS Office, interview skills, group discussion etc., along with The Art of Living programs in their curriculum. We are invested towards adding something to already educated youngsters to make them employable.

■ Are we also creating livelihood opportunities for the rural youth?

Of late we did find this little gap in the manner we were working. Employability is the watchword after skilling. We have begun to take measures in this direction. Like, we have committed to an MoU with Bosch, wherein they will train people in soft skills along with The Art of Living programs and then release those students in an industry for four weeks. They could be in retail, or as delivery persons, courier boys, BPO and several others. We have many industry partners to make this possible. Pointlessly giving them skills will not get them anything. This is the direction we are planning to take in future. This is called the Bridge Program and besides this they are going to have a Carpentry Program as well. Equipment would be installed in our upcoming new office and the students will get to practice and hone their skills there. Bosch will even give them a stipend!

■ How is the organization creating or encouraging the spirit of entrepreneurship amongst rural youth?

Entrepreneurship is exactly what we tell our solar and electrical training students to aim for. We say that you must aim to become job givers rather than job seekers. Now, telling them this is one thing, but how to make them job givers – we have a small program, Schneider Electric has devised this entrepreneurship program. We have visiting faculty like Dr. Anil Garg guiding our students on why, for a skilled and educated person, it's a good option to form small groups, get together, take on different chunks of work and start a company or any business initiative. We have some success stories. We also have our alumni to come back and inspire the current students with their journey.

■ Our skilling initiatives are implemented across several prisons in India? What kind of transformation has it brought about in the lives of the prison inmates?

We are working in 15 jails across India and have trained 1900 inmates already. 800 of them have completed the training and the rest are in the process of being trained. Some of them have now left the jail and are outside. Our volunteers are helping them get jobs; we are keeping track of them. I have seen their complete personality and perspective of life change from dejection to hope. Even the jail authorities feel that this is a good program and it helps them come out of any negativity.

■ What are the future plans of the organization with reference to Skilling and Entrepreneurship?

We have realised that just skilling is not enough. So, where we are giving skills we will observe how well they are getting placed. We are already working with NSDC. We will continue to be partners with the government. We have affiliation with a few state skilling corporations too like Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal and others. We will continue to have more and more skilling courses where people can get employed. In the next 10 years we should touch 10 million lives or more.

■ You spoke of Kashmir; what kind of work are you doing in Kashmir?

We have skill centers in Baramulla, Srinagar, Srinagar Jail, in Pulwama and few other places in South Kashmir where stone pelters are at work. There are a lot of people who feel that if these youth are skilled they will be occupied. There is a lot of scope in Kashmir. There are artisans who make carpets and other articles. We are working to keep these skills alive too.

■ Please tell us about some of the highlights of The Art of Living's skill training initiatives?

We conducted psychometric skills training for around 1.5 lakh school and college youth pan-India to enable them to identify what job role or trade would be best for them. We have conducted a lot of training through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). We have done one day RPL training for around 23,000 people to become Yoga trainers. And for 3-day yoga RPL, we have trained 4200, of which 3146 have passed as Yoga instructors. 5000 Art of Living teachers appeared for the test of yoga trainers of which 3906 completed it successfully. We also did an 8-day yoga RPL which was completed successfully by around 1916 people. We maintained a high pass percentage throughout. We have conducted one day RPL training in retail for 13,000 people. In 2018-19 we did a 3-day program with Barclays for 64,000 rural youth, training them on writing a proper resume, how to answer questions, and how to prepare for an interview. Apart from these we have conducted trainings for capacity building on climate resilient agriculture, organic farming, machine operator, food vendors and several other projects in partnership with governments and corporates.

"Employability is the watchword after skilling. We have begun to take measures in this direction."

Joy Abounds in Kalyana Karnataka

By Thoheja Gurukar



Kalaburagi, Karnataka: After a gap of 8 years, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar visited Kalaburagi, Raichur, and Yadgir in Kalyana-Karnataka, a region in the northern part of Karnataka. From February 2 to February 6, 2019, Gurudev met thousands of devotees and enriched their lives with his unsurpassable wisdom, giving extensive talks on preserving Indian cultural heritage, skilling our youth, advantages of pranayama and meditation, benefits of ayurveda, ways to build a violence-free and stress-free society, and creating a One World Community or Vasudaiva Kutumbakam.

Gurudev's tour of these cities was aptly titled "Kalyana Karnataka Mahotsava." Inauguration of a Temple of Knowledge in Kalaburagi on February 2 was the first of the many events to follow. Addressing the gathering Gurudev said that one of the unique features of Indian culture was the sense of belongingness that the people had, welcoming everyone as their own. "We should be proud of our cultural heritage. We should preserve that sense of belongingness in our nation. There is a sense of belongingness even today in our villages. What is spirituality? It is a sense of belongingness, *atmiyata*. One is a sense of belongingness with the people in our society. Another is a sense of belongingness with God – believing that God is mine. We need both of these."

Later that evening, Gurudev was the Chief Guest at the Founder's Day Celebrations and Award Ceremony 2020 of the Hyderabad-Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kalaburagi. Addressing the gathering, Gurudev said that there was a visible change in the region since his last visit. "I am happy to see such progress... Even though the environment and financial conditions have improved, the people still remain the same having retained their simplicity, faith, joy, and friendliness. Continue this." Addressing the problem of unemployed youth, Gurudev said there is a dire need to skill our youth and make them self-reliant, "You cannot depend on the government alone to provide jobs... Let us get the youth in the rural areas together and make them self-reliant. Let us all join together - the business community, the religious community, and find ways to remove poverty and sorrow from this region."

On February 4, Gurudev encouraged, guided, and motivated youngsters in 'Youth Connect' - an event organized at the PDA College of Engineering, Kalaburagi. "Spirituality is the essence of all religions. We enjoy music from every region in the world... We should accept wisdom also in the same manner. We should be broad minded, accept knowledge from all; then our vision will broaden," he said.

The next morning, it was time for 'Adhyatmika Chintana' (Spiritual Contemplation) at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur. Gurudev enlightened the students and faculty on deep spiritual matters and explained how they can be incorporated in our daily life. He spoke about Antaranga Chatushtaya - internal quadrant which consists of mind, wit, consciousness, egotism. He said if one gained knowledge on how these function, it would be possible to gain *Atmagnana* knowledge of the self.

During Gurudev's 4-day tour of the region, three Maha Satsangs were organized. In Kalaburagi on February 3, in Yadgir on February 4, and finally in Raichur on February 5. Massive crowds gathered to be in his presence, soak in his wisdom, and meditate under his guidance. At the satsangs Gurudev spoke about various topics, to benefit all age groups. For children, he advised parents to raise them on the verses of Basavanna and other great spiritual leaders and social reformers of the 12th Century; for the youth he advised them to develop skills and become self-sufficient; for the women he encouraged them to preserve their traditions and take pride in their ethnic cuisine; and urged all people to practice yoga, pranayama, and meditation. He urged farmers to adopt natural farming techniques and encouraged everybody to use ayurvedic products and save themselves from the harmful use of chemicals. In all, the crowds were treated to a lifetime of wisdom and they went back joyous with hope in their heart that the day when India would be restored to her ancient glory and prosperity was not too far away and Vasudaiva Kutumbakam would not remain just an ideology but would be achieved.

The Power of Women

Words of Wisdom

In Indian mythology, the female energy is depicted as Shakti - the embodiment of strength against injustice combined with beauty, love and compassion. Shakti is also represented in the trinity of Durga, goddess of valour and vitality; Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and well-being; and Saraswati, goddess of knowledge and art. Women just need a reminder that all these Goddesses are holding such important portfolios (Defence, Wealth and Education) and that they better start claiming their own portfolios too.

Women must be proactive. Somebody else has to empower us is itself a sign of weakness. Women are innately powerful and they only need to realize it. Every woman has within her the right blend of strength with grace, courage with compassion, affluence with values, and wisdom with vision. In her lies the seed for a profound social transformation. In many facets of life the world over, the modern woman has epitomized this ideal of Shakti, using her innate strength to create a more humane and just social order.

In public life, many women have worked to highlight issues that increase global peace, social welfare and international equity. In economic life, they have worked to make corporations more socially responsible and communities stronger. In literature, they have found new voices to raise social consciousness. Women always make an impact wherever they go. They can shape societies and countries. It is women who can inculcate values in the many people around them.

I see woman as a source of introducing values into children, the family and society. She is the glue who can keep everyone in the family intact. To keep them together, a woman brings celebration into the home. If the woman of the house is depressed, there can be no celebration. Neither can there be celebration where womenfolk are not participating. Women should be more celebratory, watch over and keep their family and society together. In fact, that is their responsibility.

The real strength of a woman is her emotion when she

channelizes it in the correct way. Women's freedom and empowerment should not take away from their motherhood and their maternal or feminine qualities. The fine female qualities like softness, gentleness, compassion, nurturing instincts should not be lost while becoming powerful. So, women have a challenge to maintain two aspects of their empowerment - being in a certain amount of dominance and retaining the submissiveness, which is a woman's beauty. It is indeed a challenge to bring about a balance between feminism and dominance in any field.

A truly empowered woman is one who is confident, creative and one who brings people together rather than create disharmony. Only her own sense of insecurity and her lack of confidence in herself can prevent a woman from being truly empowered. I want the women of India to bring back the glory to the country, the culture and its civilization. Our whole civilization is based on the woman-force *Stree Shakti*. That's why we call India *Bharat Matha*. We never say *Bharat Pita*. Our country is named and personified as a woman. Though *Bharat* is a male name, we associate it with the mother/woman. Strength of a woman is persuasive not aggressive. Strength of a woman is elastic not brittle. Strength of a woman is subtle not obvious.



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Seva Highlights



Drug Deaddiction Campaign Launched with the Message 'Fun for a Moment, Punishment for a Lifetime'

Sriganganagar, Rajasthan: As part of the Drug-Free India campaign, The Art of Living team in Sriganganagar had organized an awareness camp at the Government Girls' Senior Secondary School in Hindumalkot, Sriganganagar, on February 7, 2020. With 'Pal Bhar Ka Mazaa, Zindagi Bhar Ki Sazaa' (Fun for a Moment, Punishment for a Lifetime) as their central theme, students gave inspirational messages of de-addiction through various slogans, poems, and songs. Volunteers made the attendees aware of the social and economic consequences and physical side effects of consuming illicit drugs. Children conveyed the message of de-addiction through paintings and rangoli. A workshop on chemical-free gardening and a drug de-addiction awareness camp were also organized for the benefit of rural women at the Hindumalkot Panchayat Ghar. Hindumalkot which lies close to the India-Pakistan border is one of the worst affected areas of drug addiction with more than 70% of the men and women in this area having fallen prey to it.

Over 100 Sarpanches Gather for a Summit in Satara, Maharashtra

Satara, Maharashtra: The Art of Living had organized a Sarpanch Summit in Palashi village, Koregaon Block, on January 28, 2020. Over 100 sarpanches attended the summit including women sarpanches. Natural farming, women empowerment, preservation of local culture and traditions, literacy, youth empowerment, and conservation of the environment were among the topics discussed at the summit. The sarpanches were introduced to The Art of Living's model of developing ideal villages, a method that has been successfully implemented for over 20 years. The sarpanches were eager to apply what they had learned at the summit and resolved to work with their community in a systematic manner to put their villages on the path to progress. Shekhar Mundada, Trustee, The Art of Living; and Rishi Devarat were present at the summit along with Art of Living faculty Jayant Bhole, Amol Yewale, and Amol Bhujwal; Jitendra Bhesale, President of the Sarpanch Council; Ajit Mon, President of Koregaon Tehsil; Kranti Borate, BDO; and Sudhir Giri were among those who attended the summit.



Pictorial Exhibition of The Art of Living Projects in Hansi, Haryana

Hansi, Haryana: The Art of Living team in Hansi had organized a pictorial exhibition of its ongoing projects at SD Mahila Mahavidyalaya on February 2, 2020. Pictures of Project Pavitra, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Surya Namaskar Challenge, Honoring our Soldiers, Sanitation Soldiers, Propagation of Ancient Indian Knowledge, drug de-addiction, Project Bharat, Free Yoga Camps, Sri Sri Gopal Parivar, and natural farming were displayed. Several eminent people of the city visited the exhibition and appreciated the work done by The Art of Living. A unique feature of this chapter is the Sri Sri Gopal campaign. Under this campaign people have adopted desi cows. The Art of Living Hansi Chapter has awarded a Citation Certificate to all such people and given them the title of "Sri Sri Gopal Family." Families who have adopted desi cows also get a special discount on items of daily use. In addition, all those offering these discounts to them also receive the title of "Gau Bhakt."

Free Ear Checkup Camp Prior to World Hearing Day in Molela

Molela, Rajasthan: The Art of Living family in Molela teamed up with the JOSH Foundation, Mumbai, to organize a free ear checkup camp on February 24, 2020, at Shree Kardhar Government Senior Secondary School, a few days prior to the World Hearing Day on March 3. Over 600 school children from Molela and 54 other people from nearby villages had their ears examined at the camp. Over 200 children had earwax blockage. 10 people who were very hard of hearing received hearing aids.



Gurudev in February 2020



1 Feb 2020

Addressing an event at Ernst & Young in Sofia, Bulgaria



2 Feb 2020

With Pooja Sharanabasappa Appa and Dr. Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini at the Founders Day Celebrations of Hyderabad Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kalaburagi, Karnataka



3 Feb 2020

At the Mahasatsang in Kalaburagi, Karnataka, encouraging people to maintain the vachana tradition, which are poems of inspiring knowledge and practical wisdom by the 12th century saints of North Karnataka



12 Feb 2020

Addressing students at the SRCC Business Conclave in Delhi - one of the largest undergraduate management festivals in India



13 Feb 2020

At the Times Now Summit in Delhi where he spoke in depth about Unity in Diversity in India and how Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and other communities play a major role in India



14 Feb 2020

At the inauguration of International Women's Conference 2020 at the Art of Living International Center, Bengaluru



14 Feb 2020

In conversation with Vishen Lakhiani, co-founder and CEO of Mindvalley, at The Unknown Factor, an interactive session where they discussed various aspects of consciousness and its practical utility in day to day life



15 Feb 2020

Answering Rajat Sharma's sharp questions in his own inimical style in Aap ki Adalat



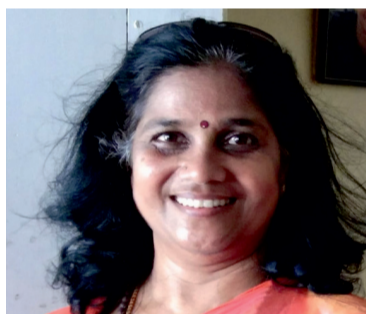
21 Feb 2020

Nearly 150,000 people celebrated Maha Shivaratri in the presence of Gurudev at the Bangalore Ashram on February 21, 2020. Celebrations were also held in 190 other locations in India.



22-23 Feb 2020

With some of the award winning farmers at the Sri Sri Savayava Krishi Mela 2020 at The Art of Living International Center which was attended by over 1000 farmers



Aruna Kumari Tumarada

An Unshakeable Journey of Service

By Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti

"This translation seva gave me the strength to stand the tragedy of losing my beloved child."

A happy childhood under the care and comfort of learned and devoted parents, had given Aruna a bright beginning to her life. But the joys were short lived. At 17 she lost her father had to take on the responsibilities of her family. She had to quit her studies and took up a government job to support her school going younger brother, aged grandfather, and mother. Selflessly she gave up on her dreams and let her life be dictated by her commitments. With time the wounds began to heal; marriage and two children once again brought back the joys in her life. With her husband's encouragement she completed her higher education. Then together with her younger brother she started a coaching institute and began teaching. On a friend's insistence she undertook The Art of Living program and had a wonderful experience with Sudarshan Kriya. Life was finally smiling back at her, all over again.

Only, this too was not for long. In June 2009, a brutal car accident left her in coma for four days with 13 fractures in her body. And the worst was — she lost her younger

son aged 12 years in the accident. During that time she had been helping with the translation of Gurudev's talks on topics like 'Death and Beyond,' Narad Bhakti Sutras' and a few others. The surviving members of the family would sit together and do the translations. Aruna says, "This translation seva gave me the strength to stand the tragedy of losing my beloved child." On 20th June when she came out of coma, the doctors predicted that it would take her at least six months to start walking. But with the might of her determination, within a month she had started practicing yoga! And in December of that year, much before the stated six months, Aruna had completed her teachers' training program and was blessed by Gurudev to conduct The Art of Living programs. Gurudev's words that why don't they make their home into an ashram inspired Aruna and her husband. They set apart a small hall in their home and made it available for regular group sadhana, satsang, courses and other activities of the organization.

Today Aruna conducts several courses for The Art of Living including-Utkarsh

Yoga, Medha Yoga, Sri Sri Yoga, Happiness Program, YLTP, DSN, Volunteer Training Program, Corporate Program and Wellness Program. She has conducted hundreds of courses and has spearheaded several social development projects. Under the Vishalakshi Women Empowerment Project, she organised training in tailoring for rural women. Through this, around 300 women have been empowered to earn a livelihood. Once, in Vijayawada, she had conducted a YLTP course for 45 really rowdy men and then those men went ahead and organised a Navchetna Shivir in one of the most notorious slums of Asia - Rajarajeswari Peta in Vijayawada. They even started a library in that slum. Even the police were surprised to witness this transformation! She has conducted courses for several senior government officials. During one such course, she met an IAS officer, M. M. Nayak, who having been hugely benefitted from the course, requested her to organize it for the children across all Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalayas in the region. These schools mostly host students from the lesser privileged sections of society. Aruna immediately gathered a team of 10 teachers

and conducted the Utkarsh Yoga course for 6,300 students within a span of three months. Once after she conducted classes for the police personnels of Vizianagaram district in Andhra Pradesh, they honoured her with a Sphoorthi Award. Currently she also leads the Andhra Pradesh state team for Project Bharat.

Challenges were strewn across her path. Aruna says that being a woman working among ill-mannered men many times posed grave challenges. But nothing dampened her spirits; she never looked back. She says with a twinkle in her eyes that the little girl from an orthodox Brahmin family with a conservative lifestyle, today travels all by herself, far and wide to take the wisdom of her Guru to as many people as possible. To her own surprise, she meets so many young girls who look up to her for inspiration. Aruna Kumari Tumarada has had one long and eventful journey. She smiles as she looks forward to the many miles yet to be covered, "What can I say? This is kripa."

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



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