

SEVA TIMES



P₂ Making India Penny Wise



P₃ Devrai Afforestation Program in Nashik

SEVA Snippets

Art of Living Launches Kumudvathi 2.0

After the successful completion of phase I of Kumudvathi River Rejuvenation project during which over 3000 recharge structures were constructed and trees were planted in the entire 460 sq.km of the Kumudvathi basin, The Art of Living has launched Kumudvathi 2.0. The key emphasis during the second phase will be on helping farmers become water literate, desilting water bodies and improving storage capacity, intensifying rain water harvesting on farmers' lands, and making farmers responsible for managing the recharge structures and handling water needs of the area as Watershed Managers. Farmers in the region will also be trained in natural farming techniques, helping them to not only enhance the value of their produce but also market their produce more efficiently by creating farmer communes.

Mauje Loni Canal Rejuvenation Project

The Art of Living (International Association for Human Values) in association with the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) has taken up de-silting, widening and deepening of a canal at Mauje Loni village in Yavatmal district, Maharashtra. The project is led by Mahesh Gayakwad. Canal deepening and widening will be done in 80-20 ratio as 80 meters of the canal will be excavated with 20 meters remaining as is. The work commenced on March 11, 2019 and is expected to be completed this month. This canal will be the primary source of water for the village. The work done will not only benefit Mauje Loni village but also the surrounding villages. 20,000 cu. m of de-silting has been done until now along 2.5 km of the canal.

Bengaluru Ashram Ranked #1 for Yoga

The Art of Living International Ashram, Bangalore, was ranked #1 among the top 5 yoga institutes in India that are famous worldwide by India Today, one of the country's leading magazines. According to them, The Art of Living Ashram is considered to be one of the finest ashrams not only in India but also in the world.

Millions World Over Roll Out Their Yoga Mats with The Art Of Living

 | Seva Times Network

Bengaluru, Karnataka: Millions of yoga enthusiasts the world over including Iran, Japan, Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Lebanon, US, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Nepal, New Zealand, and other nations attended yoga sessions conducted by yoga teachers from Art of Living on the 5th International Day of Yoga celebrated on June 21, 2019.

Yoga is proving to be a medium to break all barriers between national and international borders, religious beliefs, urban and rural areas, and between the rich and poor. People of all ages, sizes, shapes, and social backgrounds could be seen on 21st morning, yoga mats tucked under their arm, enthusiastically rushing to a venue of their choice to participate in the IDY celebrations.

People in the rural areas had no fancy yoga mats or uniforms, but their enthusiasm far surpassed that of their urban counterparts, with many of them participating in such a celebration for the first time, thanks to the Yuvacharyas and rural teachers of The Art of Living who have been making consistent efforts to take yoga to every nook and corner of India.

Yoga sessions were held in any venue imaginable, including schools, street corners, parks, stadiums, hospitals, prisons, etc. While ITBP personnel



Army Jawans, prison inmates, school children, corporate executives, homemakers; a mix of backgrounds, cultures and social strata gathered in millions across the globe for the 5th International Yoga Day Celebrations led by The Art of Living teachers

performed Yoga on International Yoga Day at an altitude of 19000 ft near OP Dorjila in Sikkim at minus 15 degrees Celsius early in the morning, another team of Art of Living was conducting a yoga session for about 1000 Navy officers aboard INS Viraat, the erstwhile Aircraft Carrier.

IDY was observed in all the 700 free schools of The Art of Living. NCC cadets joined hundreds of other participants at the celebrations in Bengaluru Ashram. A delegation of 40 International Media personnel joined hundreds of local yoga enthusiasts at the event organized by the Ministry of Tourism, in association

with The Art of Living, at Lalbagh Botanical Gardens in Bengaluru.

Apart from the Common Yoga Protocol, about 9000 Art of Living volunteers across 20 locations performed the Warrior I pose (yoga) simultaneously, holding it for 3 minutes.

Rejuvenating the Lifeline of Gadag – Tunga and Malaprabha

 | Lakshmi Murali

Gadag, Karnataka: The Art of Living's River Rejuvenation team has been approached by the district authorities in Gadag to take over water management in the area. Gadag district, which lies to the east of the Western Ghats, falls in the rain-shadow region and is generally drought prone. A major part of domestic and agricultural water needs in this district are met from groundwater and water management is an integral part for all round socio economic development of the region.

The River Rejuvenation team led by Nagaraj Gangolli comprises of geologists, hydrologists, and soil experts. It has a 360 degree approach that not only focuses on water management but also gives new direction and a renewed sense of well being amongst local people, reviving



agriculture and bringing hope for the future.

The multi-dimensional approach of the organization includes building artificial recharge structures, undertaking extensive afforestation focusing on native species, and training the local farmers on sustainable agriculture as part of the river-revival initiatives. Bringing a spiritual awakening in these communities to build youth and community leadership stands at the

core of these efforts and is the key to the success of the projects so far.

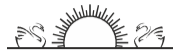
Right now, in the summer of 2019, work is in progress in 35 panchayats under which 300 structures are complete and 750 structures are to be built in the area.

To further make the rejuvenation work fruitful for the villagers and for long term gains the team has taken up the task of teaching the farmers natural farming methods. 1200 families from 122 panchayats have been identified to undergo training in natural farming techniques and growing crops that are suitable for the region and availability of resources. This will help them to improve their income and double their earnings. An app has been created with the data of every single family which will help the team monitor their progress over a period of six months.

Not only this, 10 families have been identified for the pilot project. These families have been helped with cows and trained to keep bees. The Banks and Local District authorities are supporting the project. The Forest department has provided one Lakh sapling. These will be distributed to the families- 100 saplings per family and once the rains begin plantation will be done in the catchment areas.

Legend has it that Lord Varaha sat on the hillock after a hard fought battle with the demons and the sweat that flowed from his left and right brow became Tunga and Bhadra. Armed with modern technology and a will to serve the society the team has taken upon itself to sweat it out to bring water back into the streams that once irrigated the fields of Gadag.

Drug Addiction In Rural Areas



| Padma Koty

On a global scale, the third largest business, after the petroleum and arms trade, is the illegal "business" of drug-trafficking, with an estimated turnover of \$500 billion. Socially, the drug-trafficking industry causes violence and crime and loss of human potential; the economic and community-health ramifications are numerous; in families, it causes incalculable distress, financial difficulties and dysfunction; and at the individual level, traps the addict in an unproductive, unhealthy existence, with loss of agency, direction and self-esteem.

Unfortunately, drug addiction has now severely affected rural India too, especially women, who are becoming addicts in increasing numbers. The actual number of female drug-addicts could actually be higher than officially projected, as given the stigma attached to being a female addict, not all women come forward to take treatment. To compound the human tragedy, sometimes whole families become addicts.

The reasons for this epidemic are many. Easy and cheap availability of drugs is one. Other causes are curiosity, stress, peer pressure, social values which encourage the habit, proximity to and location of a particular place on a drug route, networks, and so on. Addicts may themselves turn peddlers, or steal, to support their addiction. Selling jewelry - and even property - to fund their addiction is next. When the addicts' daily "fix" is given more priority than food, shelter and security of the little kids and elders in the family, the horror of the situation becomes clear.

To tackle this grave problem, The Art of Living has been offering de-addiction programs in substance abuse for over 15 years through its dedicated De-Addiction Centres at Bengaluru and Kolkata, and also in collaboration with institutes like PGIMER (Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research) and AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences). Its initiative PRAN (Program for Release from

Addictions Naturally) has also been effective.

The Art of Living's unique approach, combining pharmacotherapy with spiritual methods has been a differentiator in putting addicts onto the path of recovery with greater success than other comparable interventions. Sudarshan Kriya, Yoga and meditation, Ayurveda, Panchakarma (including Abhyanga and Virechana), and knowledge, are combined with conventional sports, clinical and psychological therapies, and so on. Youth Leadership Training Programs, with focus on de-addiction, have also been held to strengthen rural initiatives in this regard.

Dr. A Vedamurthachar, Director of the Art of Living's Bengaluru De-Addiction Centre, says that the dimensions of the problem are alarming considering that women are now taking to addiction in large numbers. The breaking down of taboos, mistaken value systems, the weakening of the family support network, and the easy availability of drugs are responsible for this. This can be tackled only through sustained campaigns and mass movements to increase public awareness. "Women must be educated about the centrality of their role in keeping family members, especially children, from getting initiated into addictions," he emphasises.

The success rate of rehabilitation at the Art of Living De-Addiction Centers is around 60 %, pointing to the advantage Sudarshan Kriya and spirituality offer in helping addicts overcome their cravings, manage abstinence outcomes, and prevent rehabilitation from getting disrupted by relapses.

Along with other methods outlined above, the De-Addiction Programs can help bring back India's "lost generations" to the mainstream.

(June 26 is designated as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking)

Surya Mitra Pulls Youth Out of the Doldrums



| Tuheena Sharma

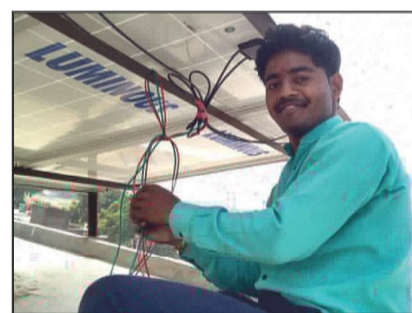
"When you have an interest in something and are passionate about it, anything is possible", says Nikhil Moha Munal, a young man from village Tirathpuri of district Jalna, Maharashtra. Nikhil comes from an agricultural background. From working in a small scale sugar factory to a successful rural entrepreneur at the present time, Nikhil has come a long, long way in a span of two years.

It was the summer of 2017. Nikhil was in the doldrums. He was not able to get through his Diploma in Polytechnic due to a lack of proficiency in language. He was stuck in a job for which he had little or no passion; not only did it keep him away from his village but it also paid him very little. His father was a farmer and younger sister nurtured dreams of pursuing a higher education. Around this time he was introduced by a friend to Sri Sri Rural Development Program (SSRDP) that offered Surya Mitra, a 3 month

training program in installation and repair of solar appliances, under PMKVY at the Art of Living International Center, Bengaluru. "That was my calling!" he exclaims with a chuckle.

Nikhil was fascinated by the idea. There was no solar shop within the circumference of around 40 kms of his village. He convinced his parents to let him attend the training program which was free and in a field that fascinated him since the tenth grade. He was happy that food and stay for the 3 months duration would be taken care of too. He shared happily how the training program is so complete and comprehensive and that it gave him an edge to start off his own business venture. On completion of training, he had two campus placement offers but he was very clear in what he wanted to do which was to go back to his village and electrify it.

Nikhil has started selling and servicing solar home systems, solar hybrid systems, solar



water pumps, solar on-grid systems and more, through his business venture, Nikhil Solar Agency. Today, he earns between 30 to 40 thousand rupees a month. He is confident that the taluka-level dealership he has just taken up will double his income within a month or so.

Nikhil is just one of the many success stories of SSRDP that is currently running 95 skill development centers with over 50 different job role specific programs (solar, computer training, tailoring, technical training, taxation software, etc) in association with central/state agencies, CSR partners, technical training institutes and community contributors.

Learning from the EXPERTS

Making India Penny Wise



Samir Baruah, formerly, Corporate General Manager, Indian Overseas Bank, and Director of Assam Power Generation Corporation, has also served as an advisor to Startup Assam and BRAIN (Brahmaputra River Angel Investor Network). He has worn many hats as the key mentor accredited by City & Guilds London, a core member of NEDFI (North East Development & Finance Institution) Mentors Forum and several other illustrious positions. He has also been associated with The Art of Living activities for the last 22 years and served as its APEX member. Now, at 66, he juggles between writing his PhD thesis, mentoring youth in banking, enterprises and leadership, driving The Art of Living initiatives and most importantly finding answers to the queries of a curious two and a half year old granddaughter.

Dr Hampi Chakrabarti in conversation with Shri Samir Baruah

■ How can the rural volunteers of AOL be groomed into becoming entrepreneurs?

With my years of working all across India, I have realised that here the fortune does really lie at the bottom of the pyramid. We must all understand that there is a huge opportunity in the villages. 75% of our population resides in the villages. A company does not look at an individual as an individual, rather as a consumer. Thus, the majority of our consumers are in the villages. Throughout the world, the trigger point for any enterprise is to tap into the needs and conveniences of an individual right from the morning he/she wakes up to the next morning when he/she wakes up. Keeping this in mind it is needed to carry out mapping exercises and SWOT analysis in the villages to identify such areas where enterprise can be set up. Once the area is identified, ideas can be developed upon.

■ How to create successful startups in rural India?

In rural India, be it cottage industries, handicrafts, agriculture activities, allied agriculture activities etc, I have observed that the scaling up is very less. Most of them remain only in the subsistence level and do not venture into commercial production. This is where startups in the rural sector will have a very significant role to play. Startups can identify these areas where they can bring in technology to serve the needs and conveniences of the last person standing and also support in reaching out to an unlimited market. Startup owners can make people tech savvy and then carry out such initiatives that will be very inclusive in nature where everybody can participate, thus increasing people's livelihood and also giving a push to the economy by generating a large reachout. India is a labour intensive country, hence, such startups are needed that engage technology to enable employment.

"A company does not look at an individual as an individual, rather as a consumer."

■ How can we, as The Art of Living, boost access to finance in rural India?

The Art of Living per se is a brand name today with a credible reputation in the market. Its volunteers work with awareness, devotion, commitment and belongingness towards the objective of creating a humanitarian society. Because of this credibility over the years, it has become easy for banks and other financial organisations to work closely with it. Thus, The Art of Living can play the role of a catalyst. It can provide the much needed confidence and trust quotient to the banking and financial centres so that its trained volunteers, teachers and others at the grassroots level, who want to engage in business enterprises, can leverage from it and have access to finance. Apart from that, in India, micro enterprises add up to about 99.5% of all business enterprises. But sadly, the majority of it lies in the unorganised sector, which makes them unable to access finance from banks, for want of proper registration or certification. Thanks to the incumbent government that has taken recognition of this fact and brought in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certification scheme to appreciate and recognise people like the cobbler on the street, so that he can get a certification and then move into the organised sector and is able to access the finance options available in the industry. The Art of Living is already doing great work in training people for RPL certification. While many organisations are working for skill development, The Art of Living most importantly, with its Sudarshan kriya, Yoga, meditation and Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's wisdom can pave the path for 'will development'.

■ Sri Sri Tattva provides a huge livelihood support to semi-skilled rural youth. How can micro-finance and this platform be brought together for best results?

Sri Sri Tattva can engage with the huge number of farmers trained by Sri Sri Institute of Agriculture Science and Technology (SSIAT) to set up organic farming for all the various agricultural products and medicinal plants that are used in their products. Then the entire produce can be taken by Sri Sri Tattva in whichever form they like it. They can create a huge bank of raw materials that are necessary for all their products. If Sri Sri Tattva has franchise with others, a supply chain can be created for them too. Recently, in Assam, I took the initiative to organise training for 35 farmers. But if you see it is only 35 farmers in a population of 3.5 crores. There is scope and a huge opportunity to do so much more.

■ What are the few guidelines that budding micro-entrepreneurs should keep in mind?

First of all, people will have to ideate and find out what they want to do, something that is close to their heart will sustain their interest. Second, meditation is very important. It helps one reach within and find out what is that which they like. If the enterprise is guided by one's liking, they will be self motivated to do better. Third, networking is required. Youngsters should not stay confined to themselves only. Jigyasa should be very alive like a small child and they should not miss an opportunity to learn from others and experts in the field. Fourth, a business plan is required that should encompass the cost of the project and the means of finance. One has to ensure that the plan is viable and can be implemented. You may first also look into low interest or angel funding options. Fifth, they should have a road map with definite milestones. Any attempt to get money by hook or by crook and taking short cuts should be ruled out of the mind. Go step by step, persistently, and thoroughly enjoy the process. Sixth, choosing the right business partner is also very important. Friends are friends and partners are partners. In friendship you do not maintain records, but in business you have to. Financial management and discipline is very important. Last and very important, have regular transactional relationship with the bank so that the bank knows your record and is confident of doing business with you.

SEVA Snippets

Skilling Inmates of Pulwama and Bhondsi Jails

The Art of Living's Sri Sri Rural Development Program (SSRDP) has opened a special skill training center in Pulwama Special Jail, J&K, offering skill training in plumbing and computers to the inmates. The skill center was inaugurated by Dilbagh Singh, DGP, J&K, on June 9, 2019. A Skill Development Center has also been set up in Bhondsi Central Jail, Gurugram, where inmates will be trained in plumbing and gardening in addition to life skills. On successful completion of the training participants will receive certificates issued by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

MoU with Ural Federal University

Gurudev received an honorary doctorate and signed an MoU between Sri Sri University, Orissa, and Ural Federal University, Russia, with Victor Koksharov, Rector of the university. The Ural Federal University, which acts as a research and innovation center of the Ural region, is one of the largest higher educational institutions in Russia.

Seva Highlights

Workshop on Rain Water Harvesting

The Art of Living in association with the Municipal Corporation had organized a one-day workshop on Rain Water Harvesting at the residence of Usha Mishra, Counselor, Ward 22, Azadnagar, on May 31, 2019. Decreasing water levels and acute shortage of water prompted the volunteers to organize this workshop. In-depth knowledge about rain water harvesting and a live demonstration was given at the workshop. 17 of the participants gave their immediate consent to install rain harvesting systems at their residence. Present on the occasion were Kishore Roy; Mayor of the Corporation, Shyam Sahu, MIC Member; Rajesh Mishra, Ward In-Charge, and Rupa Singh and Yash Mishra, Art of Living faculty.

Yet another workshop on rain water harvesting was organized on June 7, 2019, at Amdi, Dhamtari. Rohit Tome and Ipsit Banerjee, specialists from Ambuja Company, addressed the participants regarding the importance of rain water harvesting.

Colorful Environment Day Celebrations in Alipurduar

The Art of Living's YLTP wing, Alipurduar, in association with the Siliguri District authorities had organized Environment Day Celebrations on June 7, 2019. Celebrations were marked by an awareness rally, drawing competition, dance competition, tree plantation, and distribution of certificates and prizes. Gautam Kundu, Regional Officer, Pollution Control; Abhinavan Sharma, Social Worker; Bachan Rai, Lok Aarti; and Gopal Sharma, Secretary, Shree Shree Gaushala; were present on the occasion.

Volunteers Join Hands with Nashik Municipal Corporation in Devrai Afforestation Program

 | Chandni Agarwal



On February 16, 2019, Nashik Municipal Corporation launched the Devrai Project, an urban afforestation program under which trees would be planted in various areas of Nashik. The Art of Living was one of the NGOs which was handed the responsibility of planting and conserving trees in the Nashik Road Division, one of the six areas chosen for afforestation. Ashok Gawali, Art of Living faculty in Nashik, was put in charge of the project. He took up the task with great zeal and enthusiasm along with the help of other Art

of Living teachers and volunteers.

After holding discussions with the volunteers on the type of saplings to be planted, the Corporation supplied the saplings. Ashok Gawali mentions that although planting was a one-time simple task, managing and caretaking of the planted saplings was the real challenge. The team took up the task of planting and day-to-day caretaking of 150 saplings. Three months have elapsed since the project began and all the plants are being taken care of in a very efficient manner.

Initially, the project faced tough resistance from the local people as the land earmarked for planting was serving as a playground for their children. The herculean task of overcoming this obstacle was taken by The Art of Living volunteers. They visited every single home in the area

and explained to them about the need for the project. They were told about the importance of trees and its benefits for future generation, for animals and birds, and for environmental balance. Their untiring efforts convinced the local people who finally assented to the project. Not only did they give their approval for the project but they also actively participated in the same.

As mentioned by Ashok Gawali, the project will be of immense benefit to the inhabitants of Nashik. In the first instance, it will compensate for the number of trees cut down in Nashik during road construction. Secondly, it will provide shelter to a large number of birds and animals. Furthermore, inhabitants of the area will have more oxygen to breathe.

Barren Land Transformed Into a Green Paradise

 | Aditi Nalawade

The Art of Living's International Association for Human Values (IAHV) has been doing some incredible afforestation work at Tetvali, Navi Mumbai. Their efforts have converted a barren land to a green paradise! The tree plantation project started in 2017 and continues to date. In 2017, during one of their meet ups with the Maharashtra Government regarding one or their other projects, IAHV came across this stretch of land in Rabale which was under severe encroachment by the laborers in and around the industrial area. Heavy encroachment and industrial activities had caused the temperature to rise and the area was much hotter than the other areas in Mumbai. There was an urgent need to stop encroachment in this area and initiate afforestation, and project Tetvali came into existence.

After careful deliberation on the type of plants to be planted in order to restore the lost biodiversity of the region, a variety of indigenous plants were chosen through a scientific approach and over 18,000 saplings have been planted over the last 2 years



Before



After

in an area spread across 33 acres.

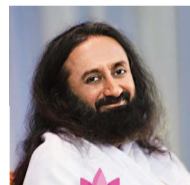
Mr. Nagesh Vankadari, who has been associated with IAHV for the last 4 years, gave us some updates about the ongoing urban afforestation in Rabale. Though IAHV has done some remarkable afforestation programs in the past, to ensure that no stone is left unturned and to speed up the process IAHV joined hands with Hariyali, an NGO that is specialized in the processes of reforestation, plantation and environmental protection. The most obvious challenge one could face during such projects is the maintenance and sustained development of the plantations which requires free flow of funds. Art of Living is one such partner in this project helping to maintain the greenery in the peak of

summer using special techniques. In addition to this they have also applied to Maharashtra Forest Department for taking the project to further heights through proper maintenance of the plantations. The department is also emphasizing on CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) to ensure that the project moves smoothly and there is steady, sustained growth and maintenance of the plantation.

Presently, this is one of the biggest urban afforestation projects in India. The plantation site is spread across 33 acres. Due to drip irrigation and other methods trees look green in the peak of summer too. The survival rate of plants is 85% to 90%. All the 18000 plants are tagged and a bio diversity and butterfly park have been created.

Construction of 3 check dams and 18 bandharas has resulted in increase in the water table levels.

As the saying goes, "Little drops of water make the mighty ocean." This has been the case in Tetvali. Steady and continuous efforts have turned a vacant land into a beautiful green environment. Scientific measurement of the impact could be studied on 1000 plants out of 3000 through Jeopardy. Jeopardy means the greenhouse effect over that area can be measured through satellite. The study reveals that the greenhouse effect has been reduced and in the next 10 years carbon emission would be contained. They are planning to plant 1000 more trees in the coming days.



Words of Wisdom
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

5 Secrets to Transform Your Equations with People

None of us are islands; we all need people to live meaningful lives. If you examine any aspect of your life, you will find that it involves relationships. So, it is immensely useful to understand how to deal with people.

1. Be the architect of your happiness

Do you allow yourself to be swayed and affected by other people's words and actions? Can your happy and jolly self flip into its sad and anxious

counterpart because of someone else? If you said yes, it is because you give more weight to other people's thoughts and feelings than your own. Instead, how about allowing these remarks to pass by without reaction?

When you stop reacting to other people's random remarks, they tend to stop saying them. On the contrary, you might find more positive comments coming your way when you stop expecting them. No one can make you happy or sad without your permission. When you realize this, you will discover joy in every nook and corner.

2. Give up obsession and feverishness

Being in love is the most sought-after emotion. In front of that one and only love, everything else fades away and becomes insignificant. The problem is that this sort of passion or obsession tends to become old and jaded sooner than you'd think. Once you run out of steam, it brings out your irritable and unattractive side – the one that repels even those towards whom the passion

was directed earlier.

Being centered can help you avoid these pitfalls in relationships. Healthy practices like meditation and pranayama encourage and enable this.

3. Communicate effectively

What does this mean? Since we interact with a diverse set of people – in terms of age and temperament, there cannot be one universally-applicable answer or method.

With children, you need to display patience and accept them as they are. Teenagers need a friend by their side almost all the time. The sick need a compassionate ear to hear their problems. The elderly need an attentive and caring one. If you can adjust your communication and behavior according to the kind of person you are dealing with, you will be more successful in your relationships with people.

4. Give... and take

It is true that we have been taught

to give freely without counting or expecting. While constantly giving must seem like a noble and selfless quality, you are in fact depriving the other person of experiencing the joy of giving.

For a relationship to thrive, both parties must GIVE and TAKE. This will ward off the bitterness that accompanies those who always give and also prevent those at the receiving end from feeling the weight of indebtedness.

5. Take time-outs

Only when you have the time to think, feel and experience, can you begin to think about others. So, at least once a year, take time out for yourself – go on a holiday, retreat into silence, and be with nature. Your mind will feel cleansed of the year-long obsessions, anger, jealousy, tensions, and anxieties. This will help you discover your true nature and help you connect with people at a deep and spiritual level.

Bringing Light for Me and Mine

 | Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti

It was the festival of Diwali, a barely eleven year old Anukriti had just stepped out to deposit the trash in the municipality trash can, when she found this rag-picker urchin, fallen and bruised all over. Wasting no time, she held him in her arms, cleaned his wound, and applied medicines. From the next day onwards every morning as she headed to school, the urchin would come singing and dancing to greet her on her way, without fail. It was young Anukriti's first brush with the immense power that service and love held in the world. It augmented what she witnessed her policeman grandfather and businessman father do day and night, toiling to answer people's call for help. This would go on to shape her understanding of life for the years to come.

As the years rolled by Anukriti aspired to become an academician. With aspiration gleaming in her eyes, she moved from her home in Barbigha, Bihar, to Ranchi, Jharkhand, where her maternal grandparents lived. While she pursued her Post Graduation in Economics, she would coach undergraduates simultaneously. One day, in one of her coaching classes, she was introduced to The Art of Living workshop. She debunked the idea in one go, after all who could possibly know the art of living! She thought it better to stay away from the possibility of a scam. But her peers dragged her into it and an unforeseen story unfolded.

"Nature too conspired, mysteriously", Anukriti adds with a beaming heart, "my uncle relaxed my curfew hours without a single word!"

That feeling of being purged and washed to every



Anukriti Kumari

"Never before in my life had I experienced a joy that felt so profound, so deep into my being"

single atom of your existence, is something that Anukriti has never been able to forget since her first experience of Sudarshan Kriya. This new exposure to The Art of Living brought her to a world where people were actively striving to make the world around them a better place. It rekindled that old seed of service, which she had always held in her bosom. But it was daunting in the beginning; this homely girl had never stepped out into the world on her own. Not in her wildest imagination had she seen herself as a crusader for transformation in people's lives. And of course the sceptic side of her was doubtful of what she would be made to do in the name of seva. She was still not sure of The Art of Living's intentions. But true to its ideal of sanghachhatvam, her friends and teachers encouraged her to come along. She started taking her baby steps with them. Before long she would look forward to her classes getting over so that she could run for her seva activities with other volunteers, and then reach home just before the curfew hour. Life had suddenly opened up a beautiful window of



possibilities; she saw a new person evolve from the Anukriti she knew. Her blossoming did not go unnoticed by her mentors.

It was the same time that The Art of Living had launched its Project Pavitra, an ambitious project to reach out to adolescent girls with education on menstrual health and hygiene. There were trainers and volunteers required for it. Anukriti was approached for the same. However, years of conditioning into silence about menstruation made her uncomfortable with the idea of speaking about it and she shied away. But she could not keep aside this great opportunity where she knew she could make a positive difference to the lives of so many girls. She was aware of the troubles young girls have to go through for the lack of menstrual education; so many even drop out of school! She knew that she will have to come out of the years of conditioning, and that is what she did. She was assigned to go to The Art of Living free school in Khunti, on the outskirts of Ranchi, that catered to many tribal girls.

On the said date, Anukriti set out for Khunti with a friend who was as new to this scene as her. Both of them a bundle of nerves; they kept revising the training manual all through the way. Little did she know of the experiences that lay ahead for her. There were 60 girls participating in the training and almost all of them were first generation learners from underprivileged backgrounds. "Never before in my life had I experienced a joy that felt so profound, so deep into my being", Anukriti's voice chokes as words escape her in trying to express that feeling. It was overwhelming for her to know that she too could guide people into meditation. Sitting and meditating in various Art of Living programs, so

many times she had dreamt of being able to do that. And then came the gratefulness in the eyes of the participants that was also expressed in multiple words. Anukriti knew at once that there was no turning back from there. She was meant to do this.

In a month's time she joined The Art of Living Social Projects office in Ranchi. Soon, she was heading out with her team of other volunteer trainers of Project Pavitra, dividing responsibilities among themselves to reach out to as many schools as possible. The project was being conducted in several districts of Jharkhand. Coordination among the team was required, logistics of daily operation had to be looked into, cooperation and permissions had to be sought from the District Administration, and above all a sharp presence of mind to deal with the hundreds of young girls sitting in front of you and also their teachers and guardians, who were not always on the supportive side. Learning each step of the way, Anukriti scaled high to become one of the best performing trainers across India and within a month and half was recommended to become a Master Trainer of the project.

The biggest achievement however, Anukriti says is the way in which it has been possible to bring light into the lives of these girls. "They ask so many questions. Their teachers and parents come and tell me that they never approach them with such intimate questions!" Seeing how many queries these young girls have and the lack of information they struggle with, Anukriti realised for herself how important menstrual education is. Now she is determined to reach as far as she can to impart menstrual education to needy girls. No girl should suffer ill health and lost opportunities because of lack of knowledge. She is grateful to Gurudev for guiding her in discovering herself.

Etching life with a difference

 | Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti

"After completion of B.Tech everyone went ahead to pursue higher education while I chose to remain a dedicated RSS Pracharak!" Chaitanya says with a chuckle. This pretty much defines him and his vision of life. Unlike his peers who were caught up in meeting the daily needs of a humdrum life after completing their education and settling down in a married life, Chaitanya had his eyes set on larger goals and had the conviction that he was at the right age where he had the willingness to take risks and the energy to execute them.

Chaitanya was the quintessential born leader. During his growing up years in Suryapet, Telangana, he was greatly influenced by his grandfather's service activities as a Sarpanch. As early as in school, the leader in him found a unique expression. He would teach his friends and classmates who weren't performing well and in the process complete his own studies. A leader in sports too, he donned the captain's hat in his school cricket team. He always had his eyes wide open to the multiple challenges that people



Chaitanya Kishore

"I wanted to do agriculture practically. But, it wasn't easy for me."

around him were facing. There were several students who, though brilliant, were unable to focus on their studies due to the financial constraints that forced them to engage their time and energy looking after the needs of their families. Whenever Chaitanya came across such a student, he would make it a point to raise funds to support them.

Soon after completing his M.Tech., Chaitanya became an Art of Living teacher and began travelling to several parts of the state to conduct programs and facilitate social development projects. Over the years he has travelled extensively in the districts of Khammam,

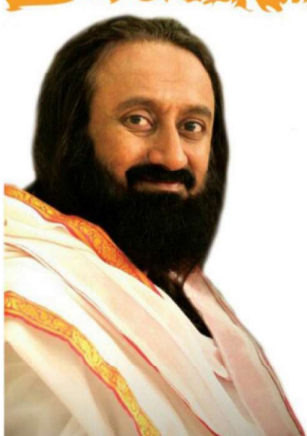
Suryapet, and Ranga Reddy, in Telangana. He now teaches a large bouquet of programs including the Happiness Program, YES+, Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP), Sri Sri Yoga, Know Your Child, and Know Your Teen. He is also a Sri Sri Natural Farming trainer.

Talking about agriculture, Chaitanya says that it has been a love-hate relationship for most part of his life. He grew up in a family where agriculture was the prime source of livelihood. Most years his family faced losses in agriculture and struggled to make ends meet and provide the children with a good education. These unpleasant memories had, for a long time, made him stay away from the prospects of being an agriculturist. It wasn't until he was introduced to Sri Sri Natural Farming, that he realized that agriculture done in the right way could actually bring prosperity to many. As a Natural Farming trainer, he created few clusters to work upon and very soon his folks and other farmers were looking towards him for inspiration. The tables had turned and agriculture no longer spelled doom for Chaitanya.

Chaitanya didn't stop at that. He worked day and night to help materialize several of The Art of Living's projects. He supported

in the construction of more than 500 toilets in Khammam rural mandal and is currently facilitating the 'Ambedkar Jeevan Padham', an ambitious initiative where youth are provided a Psychometric Analysis and guided towards making the right choices for training, employment, and entrepreneurship. So far the project is operational in 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh and has touched the lives of more than 3000 youths. The thought of bringing the youth together had played on Chaitanya's mind for a long time. After some deliberation he thought sports would be the best medium to achieve this. Thus, two years ago he started organizing a YLTP Sports Day in the village Kachiraju Gudam and players from the nearby 30 villages come and participate in about 10 different games. The idea turned out to be a huge success among the villagers and Chaitanya now has bigger plans for it.

Chaitanya's family too has eventually come to accept this leader's unique way of life. On his part, he feels his resolve on the path just got stronger with his newly wedded wife walking the path alongside him.



Benefits of being a Pratinidhi

- ① Opportunity to be part of the largest International NGO
- ② Platform to share and contribute towards the society
- ③ Strong framework for holistic Sustainable Development



PROJECT BHARAT

29 STATES, 7 UTS
5410+ SUB-DISTRICTS
7 LAKH+ VILLAGES+WARDS.
35 LAKH+ PRATINIDHIS



To Create wave of Sattva
and Re-establish
Dharma in Nation



DOWNLOAD
'VYAKTI VIKAS PRATINIDHI'
APP & NOMINATE
PRATINIDHIS



SEVA TIMES



Published by:

Commodore H. G. Harsha,
Chairman, Vyakti Vikas Kendra India

Concept:

Debjyoti Mohanty

Editorial Team:

Thoheja Gurukar
Ramashesh
Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti

Design layout:

Suresh

Contact:

Ph: 9035945982, 9838427209
Email: editor.sevatimes@yltp.vvki.org, seva-times@yltp.vvki.org