

# SEVA TIMES



**P<sub>2</sub>** Growing Vegetables in Scarce Rain

**P<sub>3</sub>** Yoga for Health

## Freeing Tribals from the Clutches of Alcohol



Aditi. N.

**Maharashtra:** Melghat, which means “Meeting of the Ghats” in the south-western Satpura mountain ranges is a large tract of unending hills, lush green forests, and jagged cliffs lying along the extreme northern border of the Amravati district, Maharashtra. Most of the people residing in this region are from the Korku tribe. Males in this community have made liquor a part of their culture and it is enjoyed on every occasion, from marriages to naming ceremonies. Every other house in this region has a liquor manufacturing unit where liquor is brewed out of Moha flowers (Madhuca Indica).

MAHAN (Meditation, Addiction, Health, AIDS, Nutrition) Trust is an NGO in Melghat which provides preventive and curative medical facilities to the tribal people. Alarmed by the increasing number of patients with tuberculosis, heart attacks, liver cancer, mouth cancer, accidents, and suicides, MAHAN conducted a 2-month survey and it was observed that the root cause leading to the rise in these diseases was excessive consumption of alcohol, nicotine, tobacco, ganja, etc.

Mani, who works at MAHAN Trust as a Project manager for de-addiction, also happens to be an Art of Living volunteer. She consulted Art of Living faculty, Purnashottam, and organized a Program for



Release from Addictions Naturally (PRAN), a program that helps free addicts from the clutches of alcohol and drugs using simple yet profound techniques such as pranayama, yoga, meditation, and Sudarshan Kriya. Along with a few associates she conducted several awareness campaigns to make the villagers aware of the harmful effects of alcohol and other addictive substances and how PRAN could help them overcome their addictions. Initially, many were reluctant as it was a 15-day residential course and

they would have to stay away from their families. Finally, 19 candidates including students, liquor manufacturers, laborers, and students, enrolled for the program.

Upon completion of the program, a 100% recovery rate was achieved and all the 19 candidates were completely off their addictions. “This is a phenomenal success for us since it’s difficult for people to give up alcohol once they have become addicted to it,” says Mani.

One of the participants, Subhedar, who

» Almost every other house in Melghat has a liquor manufacturing unit and drinking alcohol has become a part of their culture

» Alcoholism has led to an alarming increase in the number of cases of tuberculosis, heart attacks, liver cancer, mouth cancer, accidents, and suicides

» Upon completion of The Art of Living’s PRAN, a 100% recovery rate was achieved and all the candidates were completely off their addictions

was a liquor manufacturer, willingly closed down his liquor manufacturing unit after completing the program and now works at the MAHAN trust. Another such participant was Subhash; after completing the course, he took up farming to earn his living.

Mani ensures that the participants continue to remain off drugs through weekly visits and interaction with their family members, relatives and neighbors. The feedback she has received so far has indeed been positive.

## De-Addiction Drive by Art of Living in Beed Brings a Wave of Positivity



**Maharashtra:** Takarwadi, is a small village in Beed district with a population of about 1100. The village today boasts of being completely free of alcohol and drugs, the villagers living in peace and harmony. Prior to March 2018, the village presented a completely different picture. Youth taking to drugs and alcohol was the most common problem. Conflicts in the village were an everyday scene. The winds of change began when seven youth from the village, all of them drug/alcohol addicts, participated in The Art of Living’s Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) conducted by Suresh Rathod and Vishwanath Puri. The program made such a deep impact on these youth that they overnight gave up their addic-

tions and joined hands with their teachers in their battle to free the youth of Beed district from the clutches of drugs and alcohol. The transformation in these lads was so phenomenal that the villagers requested that a YLTP be organized closer to the village. Volunteers organized several rallies and satsangs to create awareness amongst

» Youth in the villages give up addictions overnight after completing the Youth Leadership Training Program

» Transformed youth join hands with their teachers in their battle to free the youth of Beed district from the clutches of alcohol and drugs

the villagers against addictions. One by one, youth from the village who were grappling with addiction problems came forward and enrolled for the program.

Jeevan Kale (27 years) shares that earlier alcohol consumption had created a lot of

tension in the village and people would get into fights over trivial issues. After the intervention of The Art of Living, many had given up addictions and were now involved in several rural development projects. Villagers are also regularly attending the weekly satsang, one of the most effective remedies for addictions. Activities like tree

plantation and making the villages open defecation free have also brought the villagers together as one community.

YLTP has also saved many families in the village from breaking up. One among them

*Continued on Page 3...*



## Efficient Garbage Disposal Management in Akola

**Akola (Maharashtra):** The Art of Living has joined hands with the Municipal Corporation of Akola to ensure efficient garbage disposal management in Akola. Despite all their efforts in this direction, the Municipal Corporation had not been able to achieve satisfactory results mainly due to a lack of awareness among the people. A trash-free Akola would be possible only with the active participation of the citizens.

Volunteers of The Art of Living set out by organizing awareness campaigns in schools, colleges, and other government and non-government institutions of the city, educating the people on how they could contribute to create a clean and green Akola with efficient waste management. The awareness campaigns made a tremendous impact and results were visible within one-and-a-half months.

Kapil Thakkar, Kailash Agrawal, and Manoj Sharma, who are associated with this project, said that the way things were going, they were quite hopeful of achieving a trash-free Akola very soon. The people of Akola have been very cooperative and the waste was being managed efficiently with segregation of organic and nonorganic waste. Arrangements have also been made for the disposal of plastic and carbon waste.



## Growing Vegetables in Scarce Rain, Minimum Budget



**West Bengal:** Jhargram is a small tribal area in Jamtara District, Jharkhand. Guided by Chanchal Biswas who initiated natural farming in the area under the guidance of SSIASST Trust (The Sri Sri Institute of Agricultural Sciences & Technology), the villagers have set up a model farm where crops are grown using natural farming techniques with little or no water.

To arouse the interest of the villagers in natural farming, Chanchal Biswas set out by talking to the tribal people in the area, conducting workshops on agriculture, creating awareness on natural farming, and organizing satsangs. In time, he was able to gain their confidence and they agreed to set up a model farm.

A half-acre barren, infertile piece of land full of stones was chosen for the purpose. The ground was dug and prepared for growing. With a small investment of just Rs. 5700/- indigenous seeds of vegetables were obtained. Mixed cropped technology was employed. Only cow dung and cow urine were used as natural fertilizers. Buttermilk solution was used as a natural pesticide. To prevent animals from straying into the farm and destroying the crops, a pit that was 3 feet high and 2 feet wide was dug all round the farm. Rain was their only source of water but in case of scarce rain, Jivamrutha was used which helped to grow vegetables even in scarce water conditions.

The farmers were guided at every step regarding the right time to apply natural fertilizer, the expected time of harvesting, and taking care of agri produce etc. The results were very encouraging. Within 20 days of sowing, they were able to harvest 1.5 quintals of cluster beans and 45 kg of ladies finger; the total production market value was Rs. 10,520/-.

In natural farming fertility of soil remains intact. Because of intercropping and mix cropping concept in natural farming, farmers never face a loss. Failure in one crop can be offset by better output in another crop, thereby making the farmers self reliant.

SSIASST aims to bring more and more youth into the realm of natural farming. It is engaged in organizing workshops, awareness campaigns and training in different parts of India including rural and urban areas. Farmers are also being taught to preserve and multiply indigenous seeds. In time, SSIASST aims to set up a model farm in each village to showcase the bounteous output of natural farming.

## Learning with Earning: Tapi's Innovative Mission

Two Lakh Carry Bags Out of Newspapers

 | Padma Koty

In May 2015 on the occasion of Gurudev's birthday, an eco-conscious group of Art of Living volunteers and teachers in Anumala Township in Tapi District, Gujarat, decided to collect old newspapers and transform them into carry bags to eliminate polythene bags. One of the residents of Anumala taught them the simple but useful art of making bags from newspapers, and their mission rolled out.

Once the sankalpa was taken, the group convinced the residents of Anumala and 12 other villages nearby to regularly donate their old newspapers and magazines. Next came the process of making the bags. Even the lahi (adhesive) to make the bags was bio-friendly and inexpensive, being a mixture of wheat flour and water. A seal bearing the message "Plastic bag free TAPI dist, AOL Pariwar" was stamped on each completed

bag to encourage the people in the area to take ownership of the project and avoid polluting the environment. At the same time, income was being created through old newspapers, and people were enjoying learning a new craft.

The bag-making technique was taught in neighbouring villages. Information about the campaign was spread through Art of Living Programs, lectures, presentations, Satsangs, posters and door-to-door canvassing. Awareness was created through email and social media messages and during Navaratri and other big events.

To bring in official support, they met the local civic authorities. A crucial step was urging vendors to purchase the newspaper bags for use in their trade, and this part of the campaign too was a success.

This seva story proves that when it comes to saving the earth from plastic pollution, each and every segment of society is a stakeholder, and that everyone has to participate to turn a good idea into a profitable one.

So what are you doing with your newspapers? Take inspiration from this story and the picture!



## Art of Living to Develop 73 Panchayat Clusters in 13 districts of Jharkhand

**Ranchi, Jharkhand:** The Art of Living's Vyakti Vikas Kendra India in association with the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) will be developing 426 gram panchayats in 19 states into model villages. As another step in the implementation of the Action Research Project of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPD), NIRDPR had organized a two-day training program at CTI, Ranchi, on December 11-12, 2018. The Director General of NIRDPR, Dr. W. R. Reddy, and his team interacted with a 60 member Beacon Gram Panchayat Project Ground team, most of them from The Art of Living. Dr. Reddy learned about the ground realities from the team. He appreciated The Art of Living's approach to the development of Model Gram Panchayats and congratulated the team for obtaining successful results despite the challenges.

Appreciating the work done by The Art of

Living volunteers, Dr. Reddy said that their method of working was excellent. He said, "They do not work like employees. The Sadhana, meditation, and Sudarshan Kriya of The Art of Living not only brings peace of mind but also generates enthusiasm. I have made it compulsory for all the staff of NIRDPR in Hyderabad to do the basic program of The Art of Living." Dr. Reddy handed over the responsibility of 73 panchayat clusters of 20 blocks in 13 districts of Jharkhand to The Art of Living. During the 2-day training, participants learned how to implement self-governance in the villages and how to go about developing them into model villages.

On December 17th and 18th a meeting was held at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Jalna to discuss the development of 16 Gram Panchayats in 4 clusters of Maharashtra. Dr. Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor (Center for Panchayati Raj) said that there is more sense of belongingness among the faculty of NIRDPR after doing the Sudarshan Kriya and the communication between them has improved. "I request the Director General of NIRDPR to have The Art of Living's Happiness Program conducted once more at NIRDPR," he said.



## Sri Sri Kaushal Vikas Kendra Makes Women Financially Independent



**Ranchi, Jharkhand:** Sri Sri Kaushal Vikas Kendra in Ranchi has brought great joy into the lives of several unemployed women

by grooming them to find jobs. Of the 120 women trained so far, 75 have got placements.

Women from the surrounding villages have been selected to undergo training at this center. Apart from the urban areas of the capital, the women of Nagadi, Ratu, Kake, Mandar block have been provided employment after training. Trained women are being placed in many cooperative societies of Ranchi. The Art of Living Program has been effective in uniting and educating women.

Director Junaid Alam says that when selecting candidates for training, unemployed and economically backward women are given preference, especially those who have an inclination for being self-employed. After completing training, the women are encouraged to form self-help groups of 15-20 women in their villages and engage in gainful job work.

Handicrafts & Handlooms Skilled Artisans Industrial Cooperative Society Limited, Ranchi, provides the self-help groups with raw materials with which these women

weave cloth. Alam says women who have undergone training at the center are not full-fledged artisans as of yet. They are still practicing as trainees and are given small jobs. Once they have gained enough experience, they will be considered as Skilled Artisans and will be given appropriate job work. They will then be earning as much as any skilled artisan with 10-15 years of experience earns. More and more women in the villages are expressing interest in obtaining skills and becoming economically independent.

### Continued from Page 1

is Jyothi Shivarudra (28 years), mother of two, who had been living away from her husband, unable to cope with his alcoholism. After attending the program, Shivarudra is a changed man and his wife and children are back with him.

Suresh Rathod, YLTP trainer from Parbani District, says that he has taken a "sankalpa" along with his fellow trainer, Vishwanath Puri, to make 101 villages addiction free and conflict free. It was this sankalpa that had brought them to Takarwadi. They have so far reached out to 7 villages in Maharashtra. Takarwadi is their first success story. This success will soon be reverberated in the villages of Shimpetakli, Kesapuri, Phulepimpal, Kekar Jawala, Shindhewadi, and Takli Kumbhakarna, where reform work is already in progress.

Mandakini Deepak Borchate, Sarpanch of Takarwadi, says "Many young men died untimely deaths due to addiction and their entire families were in dire straits. Domestic violence was a common sight. The teachers of the Art of Living, with this initiative, have helped do away with such violent tendencies and saved the villagers from the clutches of alcohol, leaving our village free from conflict."

### Annandan in the Encephalitis Ward of Gorakhpur Medical College



**Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh):** On December 5, 2018, volunteers of the Art of Living's Rapti Nagar Center fed the needy patients and their relatives at the Encephalitis Ward in Gorakhpur Medical College. The food was donated by the ward in-charge, Dr. Ganesh Yadav; Medical in-charge, Dr. V.K. Srivastav; Art of Living faculty, Jayanti Yadav; and other volunteers.

### Blood Donation

**Himachal Pradesh:** The Art of Living Karma Yogis in Sundernagar in association with HDFC Bank had organized a blood donation camp on December 5, 2018. 24 volunteers donated blood at the camp including former Art of Living State Convener, Vicky Kharbanda, and YLTP State Council Member, Raj Mittal.

**Madhya Pradesh:** The Art of Living family in Khandwa in association with J.P.B. Club Blood Donation Group had organized a blood donation camp on December 9, 2018, the final day of The Art of Living's Happiness Program. 32 units of blood was collect-

## News Highlights

ed. In addition, over 15 people registered their names as prospective blood donors. Both the Art of Living teachers who conducted the program, Neena Bhatia and Jyothi Rathore; Suresh Saini, and Nandkishore Rathore, were among the donors. The team plans to organize a blood donation camp once every three months.

### Winter Warmth for the Underprivileged



Winter can be a harrowing time especially for the underprivileged, helpless, and homeless people in the northern regions of India who have little to protect themselves from the biting cold. Like every year, this year too, volunteers of The Art of Living have been busy distributing warm winter clothing and blankets to the needy in prisons, schools, and public places.

**Gorakhpur, Haryana:** Volunteers distributed blankets to 150 inmates of Gorakhpur jail. Jail Superintendent Dr. Ramdhani and Art of Living faculty Sanjay Pandey and Alok Gupta took charge of the project.

**Nathdwara, Rajasthan:** Volunteers distributed sweaters to 46 needy children in the Government Primary School,

Lal Bagh, on December 10. On December 17, 2018, sweaters were gifted to 62 children of the Government Primary School in Pavati Srirath colony. On December 20, 2018, sweaters were distributed to the students of the Higher Secondary School in Modava, Kothariya, Nathdwara.

**Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh:** On November 23, 2018, The Art of Living's Sri Sri Seva Samiti distributed warm winter clothing to the students of the Government High School in Badgaon, a remote village in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh.

### Hundreds Receive Free Treatment in Eye Camps



The Art of Living family in Srikulam District, Andhra Pradesh, under the leadership of Batchu Dhilleswara Rao, had organized a free eye camp on December 11, 2018, in Sarvakota Mandal. 108 patients were treated at the camp and 29 of them underwent eye surgery for cataract.

The YLTP wing of The Art of Living family in Nalbari, in association with Sri Sankardev Netralay, Belto-la, and Lions Club of Guwahati Anmol, had organized a free eye checkup and cataract detection camp on December 2, 2018, at Janakalyan Sangha in Kendukuchi. A total of 265 patients received treatment and 47 patients from among them will undergo free eye surgery on December 28, 2018. Amarendra Kalita played a key role in organizing this camp.

## Yoga for Health



### Yoga in Nature

If you observe a baby from the age of 3 months to 3 years, its lifestyle indicates all the asanas, all the pranayama; the baby sleeps in Chin Mudra, Chinmaya Mudra. A healthy child is a yogi - kicking with enthusiasm, joy, and presence of mind. The purpose of yoga is to become like a child again. Similarly every animal practices certain exercises everyday. We copy many of those like the cat stretch, the dog stretch in yoga. When you observe nature, yoga is there. It is fortunate that here in our country it has been systematized by our ancient seers and sages and then passed on.

### More than just a physical exercise

Yoga is not just some physical exercises. Yoga is the vibrancy of our being. Real health is when you are vibrant. When there is a smile which is contagious. When our vibration can create such a positive atmosphere around us, then we can say that we have mastered yoga. Yoga should make you feel at home with everybody. You are uniting with the Universal spirit, which means you are united with the whole world - Vasudaiva Kutumbhakam. The ancient ideology of this country has been that the whole world is one family. This can happen not just as a concept in the head, it should happen as a feeling in our hearts and that feeling can only come when we are free from stress, free from diseases.

### The anatomy of disease

Disease first comes to our vibration, then gets into our body. So, disease first dawns in the mind. Often people think mind is inside the body but the mind is all around the body, our physical body is inside the mind. Of the five sheaths of a human being, the biggest is Anandamaya Kosh. Second biggest is Vignanamaya Kosh. Third one is Manyomaya Kosh. Then comes the Pranamaya Kosh, and then the physical body (Annamaya Kosh.) Physical body is a small thing. If disease has to come, it has to come through all the other sheaths. First your bliss vanishes, then your awareness vanishes, then your mind is in a negative state, prana goes down, and then the body gets affected. So, we don't wait until the body gets affected to cure our diseases. The moment we feel somewhere our blissful state, our innocence, our happiness is reduced we should get back to yoga and get our health back. That is what is **Swastha**.

### The correct approach

Preserve our blissful body, preserve our awareness, our mindfulness or the Pragna Kosha, and then the Manomaya Kosha, save our mind from ill feelings, and then increase our Prana. Our Prana is a vibrant body, we are only treating the physical body. These Panchakoshas we forgot, so the health system has been incomplete and incompetent to handle the issues that mankind is facing today. We need to approach through mantra, aushadhi, abhyasa, and attitude - all of these are essential.

(Excerpts from Gurudev's talk at the International Conference on Yoga for Public Health held in Goa on November 12, 2018)



# HERO STORIES



## Venkatesh: On a Mission to Make Villages in Maharashtra ODF

**Santoshkumar Pandey, ABC:** Venkatesh Mangalram is a 42-year-old former businessman from Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, is on a mission to make villages in Maharashtra Open Defecation Free (ODF).

So far he has been instrumental in providing toilets for 19,300 families and is in the process of making 85 villages in Maharashtra Open Defecation free. What remarkable is that he has achieved these milestones in just over 2 years in addition to reducing the costs to almost one-third of the actual.

The story begins when he became a full-time travelling Art of Living teacher in 2007.

He became involved in many social projects like the Vidarbha Farm Project, river rejuvenation, and the likes. He also played an active role in the ODF project for 9 villages in Vidarbha region, taken up and completed by IAHV (sister organization of AOL) and Good Year, where he coordinated for 2 villages. During this time, he came face-to-face with issues that confront one when trying to make the villagers adapt to toilets and stop defecating in the open. The first was a lack of awareness or rather a lack of strong motive, and the second was a lack of finances.

"Normally for an individual constructing a basic toilet would cost close to Rs. 40,000 or more. This includes 4-5 days of labour work, higher individual material cost, and 5-6 days of watering- which in itself is an issue in the areas with water shortage," shares Venkatesh. "I started working on reducing these costs. Using FOC blocks, also known as lightweight bricks, cutting down on all of those things which were not absolutely essential like tiles, etc; and sourcing directly from the merchants, the costs were reduced to Rs. 12,500 – Rs.13,000."

When he initially started in 2015, he still needed the initial investment for the first set of toilets. He sold the jewellery at home to get that amount and constructed 25 toilets in Yavatmal with it. When the refund arrived from the Government, he used it to construct more and so on the work grew to what it is today.

Today, the work has reached 30-35 villages in Rajgurunagar near Pune where 6500 toilets were constructed, 25 villages in Latur where 9300 toilets were constructed and has even reached Yadgiri region in Karnataka. The most incredible achievement was in Ramegaon village in Avsa Taluka, Latur, where 340 toilets were constructed within just 20 days!



## Overcoming Addictions, Rajesh Goes on to Train 3000+ Youth in YLTP



**Himachal Pradesh:** Rajesh Kumar from Himachal Pradesh took to drugs and alcohol at a very young age. At a time when he should have been focusing on his studies and building his career, Rajesh was often found in a drunken stupor, engaging in meaningless brawls with his friends, neighbors, and family members.

It was in 2003 when he had hit rock bottom, that Rajesh enrolled in The Art of Living's Youth Leadership Training Program. The program proved to be a turning point in his life and gave him a new direction. Not only did he complete his education, he went on to become a savior of young men who were caught up in

the clutches of drugs and alcohol.

Rajesh became actively involved in The Art of Living's social projects. He soon became an Art of Living teacher and started travelling in the different districts of Himachal building awareness among the youth about overcoming addictions. His travels took him to Chamba, Paonta Sahib, Hamirpur, Kangra, Shimla, Solan, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Jammu among other places. Conducting programs in these areas was not an easy task but Rajesh continued his efforts, undeterred by the sometimes hostile attitude of the villagers. Through Nav Chetana and Bal Chetana Shivirs, he was able to bond with the people and in time he was able to bring down the walls and build a rapport with the people.

For almost a year Rajesh made his home with the villagers in Amboia. After doing YLTP, the rural youth there overcame their addictions and joined hands with him in the battle against drugs and alcohol. Rajesh has so far trained 3000+ youth in YLTP and over 10,000 villagers have done Nav Chetana and over 5000 have learnt Sudarshan Kriya. He has also conducted Prison SMART for 800+ prisoners. He has also taught Yoga free of cost to 8,000+ children in 30 schools of Himachal under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Samiti.

In 2011-2012 Rajesh became involved in the "Stand up and Speak out" project which aimed at freeing youth from addictions, building model villages, and empowering rural women. He was also actively involved in the "Stand up and Take Action," a project for green earth. Currently, Rajesh is a full time YLTP trainer and a member of the YLTP State Council.

## Commitment Turns Water Logged Area into Level Ground

| Devansh Bhasker

**Punjab:** To achieve great things one does not necessarily need money or power; what is needed is dedication and commitment towards the task. This was recently established by a dedicated volunteer of The Art of Living, Pratima Tripathy. At the age of 60, when most people her age are surrounded by grandchildren and choose to confine themselves to their own private affairs, Pratima took on the responsibility of turning a filthy, water logged, disease breeding area situated in Sector 9 of Gurugram into a leveled ground, thus solving a problem that had been prevalent in two housing societies of this area - CRPF Housing Society and Wings Society.

Talking to Seva times, she said, "Although people were disturbed by this long persisting problem, nobody bothered to take the initiative to address it. So in the month of October I took this initiative along another Art of Living volunteer, Saroj, and went door to door in the area, talking to the people, building their awareness, and motivating them to take some action. We approached the President of the Regional Welfare Association, Naresh Kataria, and Counselor, Danish Pradhan, who listened to our problem and assured us that they would work on it. We also wrote letters to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) office, HuDa Parishad, and also the CM Window (public grievance portal.)

All the joint efforts bore fruit and cleaning work began on November 15, 2018. Around 250 trucks of soil was added to level this area. Counselor Danish Pradhan himself spent



Rupees 2.5 lac on the project. The once sooty, water logged, breeding ground of mosquitoes was finally turned into leveled ground. In the next monsoon season we will plant trees and make this a green area." As another step toward environmental conservation, Pratima has also been conducting a door-to-door campaign to build awareness about the hazards of using polythene bags.

Words of appreciation have been pouring in from the neighborhood for Pratima Tripathy, thanking her for taking this initiative and solving the problem of dirty, stinking, stagnant, mosquito breeding water that had led to several cases of dengue in the neighborhood in the past.

**If you wish to support any of our projects, sponsor a YLTP Program, or adopt a village**

■ please contact us on 8067433616, 9620169697.

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■ Or Mail us at: Youth Leadership Training Program, The Art of Living International Center, Gate No. - 1, 21st KM Kanakapura Main Road, Udaypura, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560082

"A portion of your earnings given in service, brings abundance."  
-H Sri Sri Ravishankar

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