



SEVA TIMES



P₂ Decoding the Devi Worship



P₃ Pulling Farmers out of Their Doldrums in Maharashtra

SEVA Snippets

Farmers' Income Doubled in Jaigaon

Thanks to the watershed work done by The Art of Living's sister concern, International Association for Human Values, in partnership with Goodyear India Limited, Jaigaon and ten other villages downstream in Satara district now have abundant water. This has helped farmers in the region to double their income.

Trauma Relief Workshops for Flood Victims in Maharashtra

The Art of Living conducted over 35 trauma-relief workshops in Kolhapur and Sangli districts of Maharashtra. These workshops have helped over 25,000 people to overcome stress and trauma caused by floods in the region. Neelam Rope, a flood victim from Ambewadi, Maharashtra, says, "With the floods we lost our house. I was depressed. After the Art of Living program, there is a positive shift in my thinking."

Desilted Canal Solves Water Problem in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra

The Art of Living Ahmednagar team carried out de-silting of a 3 km nala in Trimbakpur, Rahuri Taluk, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, creating a water storage capacity of around 2.5 Crore Liters. This will benefit over 4900 villagers in the region. The Triveni Nala was gushing with water with just 4-5 days of rain. Water has already been released for irrigation.

Mission Green Earth Launched in WB

Volunteers of The Art of Living in West Bengal are planning to plant 1 lakh trees in West Bengal as part of their Mission Green Earth initiative. Sites for planting have been identified across several districts of Bengal. They have planted around 30,000 plants so far in government and privately owned properties, institutions, and along roadsides. It is a community driven initiative involving villagers, businessmen, and other stake holders.

In Hooghly, BDO of Pursura block has joined hands with The Art of Living to plant 20,000 saplings. Volunteers have formed teams in Siliguri, Medinipur, and Purulia, and East Bardhaman, and have planted around 8000 trees so far. Through talks and presentations they are making people aware of the need to save our environment by growing more trees.

YLTP Youth Brave Flooded River to Bring Cheer to Flood Victims on Onam

| Padma Koty

Malappuram, Kerala: While all of Kerala was celebrating Onam, a team of YLTP volunteers chose to leave their own homes on Uthrada, a day before Onam, to celebrate Onam with a hundred families in Kumbalpara Tribal Forest in Pothukkal Panchayat who had become totally isolated as the only connecting bridge collapsed during the recent floods in Kerala.

Ten tribal youth from the totally cut-off colony made makeshift rafts and took 15 YLTP volunteers, in three trips of five volunteers each with relief material, across the dangerously swollen Chaliyar River to the isolated tribal colonies on the opposite side. The strong, roaring currents of the river and the boulders in it presented extreme risks.

But first the volunteers had to trek to the rafts and the Chaliyar river through 8-Km of terrain inhabited by Maoists and wildlife, carrying the relief material on their backs.

When the volunteers finally reached with their relief material, the 17 tribal families there were overjoyed. They interacted with the Forester Telson and the tribal elder known as Muppan Chemban.

This team also went to other colonies like Iruttu Kuthi, Vaniyampara, etc, and, with the help of Dy. Forest Officer



Art of Living volunteers crossed the swollen Chaliyar River on makeshift rafts to reach out to over 100 families in Kumbalpara tribal forest that got cut off from the rest of Kerala in the recent floods

Pravin, they distributed 400 food kits and 600 dress kits to 170 families comprising 850 individuals. They cleaned temples, roads, houses and mosques in Malappuram District, and gave Onam Saadya (festival lunch) to 600 people. Our volunteers are trying to supply a few powerful torches in some colonies where wild animals, displaced

by the flood, were coming at night. Art of Living Teachers Subhash Bose and Sreejish Vandoor and the team led by Bhagyaraj, Satheesh Thuvvoor, Ratheesh Areekode, Sanil Parameshwar and Hemalatha Malappuram took charge of the relief work in the Kumbalpara colony. Now they plan to cover two more

colonies, Munderi and Thazhe Kunipala to continue the relief operations. Serving Onam Saadya and gifting new clothes as part of relief activities, while leaving behind their families, is a new chapter in commitment by YLTP sevaks.

(With inputs from Akshaya G and Syam Peenikkal)

Women's Club of Surat Gift Tribals a New Lease of Life

| Seva Times Network

Surat, Gujarat: The Art of Living Women's Club of Surat in association with Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, Bikaner Branch, had organized a 'Jaipur Foot Camp' from September 7-10, 2019, at the Disable Welfare Trust of India in Piplod, Surat. At a function held on September 11, 2019, at the Bhagwan Mahaveer International School Auditorium, 102 Jaipur foot, 94 calipers, 20 wheelchairs, 25 tricycles, 25 walking sticks for the blind, and 50 hearing aids were distributed free of cost to disabled people who had come from remote villages of Gujarat.

A team of Yuvacharyas led by Prakash Golwala and Bela Golwala, The Art of Living faculty, travelled to remote tribal villages to identify physically disabled people who needed prosthetics, wheelchairs, tricycles, or calipers. Arrangements were made for their travel to Surat to attend the camp. Their food and stay was also taken care of by the organizers.

For the hearing impaired, however, help arrived at their doorstep. An audiologist travelled to the villages to examine those who were hard of hearing and gave hearing aids to 118 people.

Eleven technicians, who had travelled



all the way from Jaipur, worked round the clock with utmost patience and an undying smile to customize the fittings. Touched by their sincerity, the club members put together gift hampers containing clothes, bed sheets, some basic necessities, and a cash prize of Rs. 1100 each.

The villagers who had come for treatment also received gift hampers containing clothes, umbrellas, bed sheets, towels, and toiletries. The smile on their faces as they travelled back home spoke volumes. Thanks to the Women's Club of Surat and Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, they had received a new lease of life.

Yuvacharyas Congregate for Yuva Samagam in Lucknow

| Seva Times Network

Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh: The Karmayog wing of The Art of Living had organized a "Yuva Samagam" in Lucknow on August 25, 2019. The program was inaugurated with the traditional lighting of the lamp by Debjyoti Mohanty, National Director of YLTP; Dr. Brahma Deo Ram Tiwari, IAS, Director of Panchayati Raj Department of Uttar Pradesh and Director of Mission Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural); and Chandra Prakash Mishra, former MLA. Yuvacharyas from different districts of U.P. participated in the event. Many senior administrative officers and social workers of U.P. were also present on the occasion.

Throwing light on "Yog se Udyog" which was the theme of the event, Dr. Vishaka Chaturvedi, State Council Member of YLTP, said that the youth are now being trained in such a way that they are able to balance their spiritual life with their material life.

Chief Guest, Dr. Brahma Deo Ram Tiwari, said in his address that successful implementation of government schemes is not possible through the sole efforts of the government but requires the support of organizations like The Art of Living.



He assured the Yuvacharyas that their cooperation would be sought in the implementation of rural development schemes in the state.

Debjyoti Mohanty, National Director of YLTP, spoke to the participants about Project Bharat launched by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Om Prakash, Special Secretary of Uttar Pradesh Government, also addressed the participants.

Sixty Yuvacharyas were awarded "Karmayog Samman" in recognition of their excellent performance in Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), Yoga, Sri Sri Bal Vidya Kendra, Panchakarma, Organic Farming etc. Free uniforms were distributed to 400 students of Sri Sri Bal Vidya Kendra. A souvenir titled "Yuva Samagam 2019" was also released on the occasion and free saplings were distributed for tree plantation.

Learning from the EXPERTS

Decoding the Devi Worship



Sivasri A. S. Sundaramurthy Sivacharyar is a Sivagama Visharada and currently serves as the Principal of Veda Agama Samskruta Maha Patashala at The Art of Living International

Centre, Bangalore. He hails from a traditional family of adisaiva priests and is the hereditary high priest of Avinashi Lingeswarar Temple, Avinashi. He has been bestowed with various titles including 'Saivagama Pravara' and 'Saivagama Siromani'. He has the distinction of having independently conducted more than 1005 *Kumbhabhisheka-s* and more than 2100 *Chandi yagnas* all over the world. He has conducted more than 100 government training programmes on Shaiva Agama and yearly refresher courses for temple priest all over south India. He was introduced to Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar by Sri Sivapuri Mahaswamigal from the Omkara Ashrama Mahasamstana, Bangalore. Then in 1994 Sri Sri Gurudev invited him to conduct the Navratri puja at the ashram. Since then, Sri Sundaramurthy Sivacharyar has been at the helm of Navratri and various other Vedic puja-s in the ashram, welcoming all with his warm smile.

Dr Hampi Chakrabarti and Sri M Venkataramanan in conversation with Sivasri A. S. Sundaramurthy Sivacharyar

■ **How does the Navratri celebration, the homa-s and puja benefit all the lakhs of people who come to participate in it from different parts of the world?**

During Navratri the positive vibrations are a lot more. The divine energy is very close to the human energy; one can actually feel and experience the divine energy. This is the connection of one soul to the divine soul. So many places around the world this puja happens, but here we are lucky to be in the presence of the Guru, they say *guru mandalam devi*, and we also have *mantra sanidhya*. We cannot see the divine, but being near Sri Sri Gurudev we can actually feel the presence of the divine during Navratri. There is a particular way of pronouncing the Mantra and from that we get a particular kind of feeling or experience and that is the experience of the soul. Like we do not plan and breathe it - happens automatically, here a soul connection too happens automatically. Like when we do pranayama and meditation there is a different kind of feeling to it. Navratri celebrations give that different special feeling. There is a rise in enthusiasm during Navratri. Because of all the mantra chanting happening in this place, there is a special vibration here. And these mantras are very ancient, they have come from the lineage of the rishis. That is why the moment you walk in, you feel a different energy.

■ **How many days prior to the festival do you begin the preparations? How many people participate in these preparations?**

The preparations begin three months ahead. On one hand we prepare for the materials that will go into the puja and on the other hand we prepare the students for it. They learn to chant and also undergo a test on *Devi Mahatmya* because they are required to do a reading of the *Devi Mahatmya*. And many of our students go to other states also to perform the Navratri puja and homa-s. They also learn the *anushtana vidhi*. Other people too who have learnt the *Devi Mahatmya* beforehand, they too come here. We have in total around 600 people putting their efforts together to make the navratri celebration a success. 300 students are already present here in our Gurukul and 300 more come from other

places for supporting all the programs and arrangements.

■ **How many pandits participate in the homa-s?**

Around 300 Veda pandits participate in the *homa-s*. There is a separate shastra for *Chandi homa* and it is called the *Srividya* and we follow the *Srividya* set of rituals for the Navratri puja. All of us pandits do not do the puja just for the sake of doing it. We get a lot of *atma santushti* out of it. Here there is a connection of the individual soul with the divine soul.

“ The 700 shlokas or *saptashati* is divided into 13 chapters with an *atidevata* each. Each *atidevata* is invoked and worshipped during the Homa ”

■ **What are the special preparations done for the puja?**

At our ashram intense preparations are done for the puja.

1. *Dravya sangrahana* - Collection of materials required for the puja. The right *dravya* in the right amount, as prescribed in the *sastras* is crucial and necessary component of the homa, giving rise to specific benefits.
2. *Yagnashala Nirmana* - Preparation of the area of the *yagnashala*, in accordance with the *yagnashala lakshana*. The *yagnashala* is also decorated with special mandala, such as Ganesha *navagraha*, *Vastu*, *Sudarshana*, etc.
3. *Panchasana Vedika* - The stage to place the main kalasha is created. This has several parts signifying the stages of consciousness. The base of the stage is *kurmasana* (tortoise), signifying stability. Above that is *anantasana* (serpent), signifying awareness. Above that is *simhasana* (lion), signifying strength. Above that is *yogasana* (8 siddhas) signifying the eight limbs of yoga. Above that is *padmasana* (lotus), which represents the full blossoming of consciousness. The Goddess is established in this consciousness, by the establishment of *kalasha*.
4. Preparation of *kalasha-s* - The *kalasha* is the seat of the deity. It has to be a fit representation, able to carry and absorb the energy of the deity. It has to be prepared according to the prescription of the *agama-s* in order to receive the spiritual energy.
5. Preparation of the *homa kunda* - The *homa kunda* is constructed in the eastern direction of the *yagnashala*, in the form of a *padma kunda* (lotus).
6. Special decorations - the *yagnashala* is first decorated with *ashta dvaja* and *pataka* (eight flags) with elephants on it. The *ashtamangala* are kept ready - *darpan* (mirror), *purnakumbha*, *vrishabha* (diagram of bull), *chamara* (a set of fly whisks), *srivatsa*, *swastika*, *shankha* (conch) and *dipa* (lamp) are installed in the inner section of *yagnashala*.

■ **What happens during the Chandi Homa?**

The 700 shlokas known as *Devi Mahatmya*, that form a part of the Markandeya Purana, is chanted during the Chandi Homa. A vaishya known as Samaadhi and a king known as Suratha were both lost in the forest after having lost everything in their lives. They were distraught with their respective failures and worried about the family and lives that they had left behind. They meet a sage named Sumedhas who consoles them and shows them the path of worshipping the Mother. When they ask him more about the Mother, the sage replies by describing the Mother, her attributes and wonderful deeds. He describes her conquering of the nine demons - Madhu,

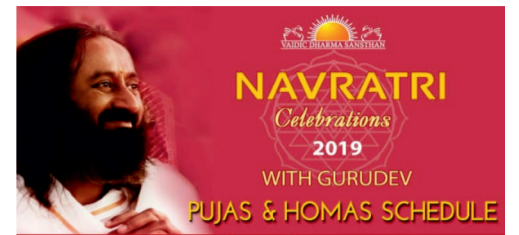
Kaitabha, Mahisasura, Dhumralochana, Chanda, Munda, Raktabija, Sumbha and Nishumbha. The 700 shlokas or *saptashati* is divided into 13 chapters with an *atidevata* each. Each *atidevata* is invoked and worshipped during the Homa. This is done with specific offerings as each chapter progresses.

■ **What is unique about the Rishi Homa at our ashram?**

I am not aware if Rishi Homa is held anywhere else, but to the best of my knowledge Rishi Homa is a unique tradition during Navratri celebration, held only here at this ashram. Not everyone knows the rishi mantras and how to chant them. Sri Sri Gurudev initiated this tradition here to honour the lineage of the rishis from whom we have received all these mantras that we chant during the entire festival. Like we do not know the exact source from where the Ganga or Yamuna originates, but we know that it is flowing. Similarly, we don't know where the mantras have come from; what is their source; where did it start from. But we have them from the rishis; they knew the importance of these mantras and which mantra was to be chanted for which benefit and on which occasion. We talk about *sapta rishis*, the seven important rishis and other rishis too like rishi Markandeya and others. We pay our tributes to these rishis through the rishi homa for giving us this wonderful knowledge.

■ **Why is it so important to preserve the Vedic traditions?**

When we talk of spirituality, we have to consider a lot of cultural aspects that are associated with it. We don't know where the first coconut tree came from, or who planted it, but if there were no trees, we could not have enjoyed the fruits. Likewise, we have to preserve the knowledge to enjoy its fruits. There are four vedas, Rigveda has the knowledge about space, Yajurveda talks about the *homa-s*, *yajna-s*, and the rituals; it talks about how to preserve a good lifestyle. Samaveda is all about music; music and vedas go together. When we listen to music it causes something within us to move. It talks about all the things we do with awareness and the melody of music. Atharvaveda talks about mantras; about which mantra should be chanted for which benefit. And there are many *Upa-Vedas* also like Ayurveda. There is also *vastu shastra* specifically for temple architecture. Then there is knowledge



S. NO.	DATE	TITHI	TIME	PUJA / HOMA
	28 SEP 2019	AMAVASYA	9:00 AM	RUDRABHISHEKAM
1 st DAY	29 SEP 2019	SUNDAY	7:00 PM	RUDRABHISHEKAM NAVRATRI PUJA STARTS
2 nd DAY	30 SEP 2019	MONDAY	7:00 PM	RUDRABHISHEKAM
3 rd DAY	1 OCT 2019	TUESDAY	7:00 PM	RUDRABHISHEKAM
4 th DAY	2 OCT 2019	WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	RUDRABHISHEKAM
5 th DAY	3 OCT 2019	THURSDAY	7:00 PM	RUDRABHISHEKAM
			7:00 AM	RUDRABHISHEKAM
6 th DAY	4 OCT 2019	FRIDAY	9:00 AM	SRI MAHA GANAPATHI HOMAM NAVAGRAHA HOMAM 4:30 PM CHANDI HOMA PRARAMBHAM
			7:00 AM	RUDRABHISHEKAM
7 th DAY	5 OCT 2019	SATURDAY	8:00 AM	SRI MAHA RUDRA HOMAM SRI MAHA SUDRESHAMA HOMAM 5:00 PM VISHNU SAHASRANAMA PARAYANAM
8 th DAY	6 OCT 2019	SUNDAY	7:00 AM	RUDRABHISHEKAM SHATHA CHANDI HOMAM
9 th DAY	7 OCT 2019	MONDAY	7:00 AM	RUDRABHISHEKAM RISHI HOMAM
			7:00 AM	RUDRABHISHEKAM
10 th DAY	8 OCT 2019	TUESDAY	8:00 AM	VIJAYADASHAMI PUJA VIDYARAMBHAM SAMCOHIK VAIDIC VIHANA SAMCOHIK UPANAYANAM

DURING THE NAVRATRI DAYS SRI SHATHA SAHASRANAMA PARAYANAM IS @ 8:00PM EVERY DAY EXCEPT 05.10.19
*ALL TIMINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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on grammar, astrology, astronomy, *kalpa sutra* that is about the proper timing of every ritual or mantra. There is profound knowledge about every aspect of life in the Vedas and thus it is very important to preserve it for posterity.

■ **Why should one do seva during Navratri?**

The river flows and the wind blow without expecting anything in return. they serve with total surrender. Surrender is an important concept through which we can easily attain the divine. This has nothing to do with money, it should come from within. So that is why Sri Sri Gurudev has given this call for sadhana, seva and satsang. Navratri presents an opportunity for us to do seva with a spirit of devotion, giving time and effort, for the betterment of the community and the society.

A2 Milk is in Demand. Are Domestic Mini-Gaushalas the Answer?



A2 milk or A1? Milk is a traditionally-accepted source of nutrition, and with consumers in India gradually waking up to the merits of the A2 milk of the *Bos indicus* or the desi cow, the demand for it is on the increase.

In recent times, several studies have linked the A1 beta casein (a type of protein) in A1 milk to several health problems. Chandu Surrani, who contributes to the Gaushala at The Art of Living International Ashram with his considerable experience, says A2 milk is preferable as it contains high levels of Omega 3, minerals and vitamins, boosts immunity and brain power, and is one of the best anti-oxidants.

A2 milk does not produce BCM-7 in the body, and the strontium in A2 milk also protects from harmful radiation, while the beta-casein in it makes it beneficial for digestive well-being. It also helps fight diseases and disorders like joint pain, asthma, and obesity.

Coming to the present-day, is establishing commercial Gaushalas with many Desi cows the only way to meet the growing demand for A2 milk? Not necessarily. From Kerala comes inspiring information about a community of YLTP enthusiasts who formed a project to promote "mini-gaushalas" in individual homes with one or two cows. For every cluster of 20 or so cows, one or two bulls are maintained by one of the members for breeding purposes.

In a 2009 Yuvacharya meet, Gurudev had said that every village should protect five entities: soil, water, desi seeds, desi cow, and importantly, women. The Yuvacharyas from Kerala avidly took up Gurudev's call regarding desi cows and began researching self-sustainable methods to

set up gaushalas. They underwent training in Gaushalas in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, learnt about preparation of Panchagavya and other value-added products. Some acquired a Master's Diploma in Panchagavya Therapy. 20 YLTP teachers and Yuvacharyas then trained 130 persons, after which around 1000 cows were housed in 650 homes. Supported by other organizations, this committed team conducted seminars, held Gopashtami celebrations, and published a book on Desi cow and Agnihotra. Huge challenges were overcome. Among them: availability of land and the popularity of beef in Kerala.

They have spread awareness about how, apart from milk and ghee, the other 3 *gayvas* - buttermilk, urine and dung - are very useful in organic farming. Further, having a cow at home is therapeutic and creates community feeling through interaction and sharing; Agnihotra gives spiritual energy; while *gobar-gas* plants provide non-conventional energy. Bulls, viewed as unproductive, can be used for oil-seed extraction.

About fifty Panchagavya medicines, Beejamrit and Jeevamrit, and cow dung cakes are being prepared. Desi cows being less profitable than hybrid ones, popularizing Panchagavya products has shifted the revenue-generation imperative from just milk and ghee to value-added cow products based on all the Panchagavyas.

When mini domestic gaushalas become a movement, these benefits will reach larger segments of the community and the country.

(With inputs from Syam Peenikkal)

Shilanyas of Ayurvedic Hospital in SSU



On September 21, 2019, Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, in the presence of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, laid the foundation stone of Sri Sri College of Ayurvedic Science and Research Hospital at Sri Sri University. This 300 bedded hospital will be attached to Sri Sri Ayurveda College of Research which will be set up very soon.

Karmayog Samagam in SSU

A 'Karmayog Samagam' was organized at Sri Sri University on September 21, 2019. Youth who attended the program received guidance on Project Bharat, Sri Sri Tattva, Skill Saathi, and creating employment opportunities for unemployed youth. Ever since the first YLTP (Youth Leadership Training Program) was conducted in Odisha in 2001 many developmental projects have been undertaken in rural Odisha. Many Yuvacharyas have made significant contributions in the last 18 years to develop rural areas in Odisha; 12 such Yuvacharyas were honoured at the meet for their remarkable service.

Seva Highlights

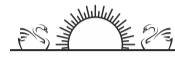
Kabaddi Competition in Kareli Badi, Chhattisgarh

The Art of Living family in Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh, in association with Bajrang Dal had organized a Kabaddi competition in Kareli Badi on September 9th and 10th. As many as 35 teams participated in the competition. It was the first time that the sport had been organized on such a large scale in this small village. Team Bilaspur won the championship trophy and received a cash prize of Rs. 10,000. Team Albaras stood second and Team Sonebara stood third. The two-day event drew large crowds with people coming in from the surrounding villages to cheer the teams.

Eat All You Take or Pay a Fine

On a visit to The Art of Living International Centre with his family, Ajay Chandrakant, proprietor of Hotel Vani and Restaurant in Durg, Chhattisgarh, was so impressed by the Ashram kitchen's motto, "Take all you want and eat all you take" that he came up with a unique idea to save wastage of food in his restaurant as well. Prominently seen on the walls of the restaurant are posters warning the customers that they would be charged a fine for leaving food on their plates. The money thus collected is donated to gaushalas. In a country where 15 crore people go to bed hungry every night, this is an idea worth emulating.

Pulling Farmers out of Their Doldrums in Maharashtra



Seva Times Network

Maharashtra: The Art of Living is working hand in hand with the Maharashtra Government in implementing PoCRA (Project on Climate Resilient Agriculture) – a scheme aimed at helping farmers in the Marathwada and Vidarbha regions. The project will cover 5,142 villages across 15 most climate vulnerable districts where farmer suicides are rampant. Over 7 million people will benefit from this project.

More than 100 teachers of The Art of Living and about a dozen Yuvacharyas recently attended the Krishi Mitra and Krishi Tai Trainer's Training in Amravati district. The Art of Living will be training 300 such Master Trainers who will then go out and train 5000 local men and women as

Krishi Mitras and Krishi Tais.

The trained participants will be travelling to the selected villages to conduct a 16-hours program, spread over 3 days, for the villagers. They will be teaching yoga, pranayama, and meditative techniques which will help farmers develop a more positive outlook. It is necessary to bring a shift in their mindset and drive home the message that suicide is not the answer to problems like scarce water resources and rising costs of agriculture. These problems can be overcome by adopting agricultural techniques that are suitable for the region and



More than 100 Art of Living teachers attended the Krishi Mitra and Krishi Tai Trainer's Training under Project PoCRA

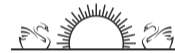
growing crops that are resilient to the climatic changes.

Farmers will also learn how to use scarce water resources more efficiently by adopting techniques like micro irrigation, expanding surface water storage, and

facilitating aquifer recharge.

Dr. Anil Bonde, Minister of State for Agriculture, states that the government had tied up with The Art of Living for this project as their methodology has been approved by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

Artificial Intelligence is Making Waves - in Wablewadi ZP School



Padma Koty

Wablewadi is a village 45 kilometers from Pune in Maharashtra. The astonishingly different Zilla Parishad School here is making waves for several reasons. It is the first zero-energy school in India as it runs on solar power and has advanced science and computer labs where students are grounded in artificial intelligence and have been inventing a range of devices and systems with their technology-based education.

A fraud-proof voting machine, drones, smart dustbins, and models that reduce water-usage by 90% are some of these fired-up children's inventions. Mathematics is taught in a practical way, and students have access to Wi-Fi, tablets and the latest systems.

Piloting this unbelievable transformation is Dattatray Ware, who took over as Headmaster in 2012. As only 30 students were attending school, he started calling on the parents to make them aware that infrastructure



The school boasts of an artificial turf where 15 types of games can be played

development would equip their wards for a competitive future. Convinced, 66 families raised 17 lakhs and contributed the required land and even labor for the project.

International Association for Human Values (IAHV), an NGO associated with The Art of Living, and BNY Mellon constructed eight zero-energy classrooms equipped with solar energy and a playground with artificial turf on which 15 different types of games can be conducted.

The School's Project 'Avishkar' has a team of teachers who select 10 models aimed to identify, explore and nurture each child's creative, analytical and critical skills in the particular field the child is interested in. Surpassing the routine basic computer education, they explore diverse subjects like 3D animation, sound engineering, robotics, music, photography, motion graphics, animation, solar energy applications, video-editing, languages, and so on.

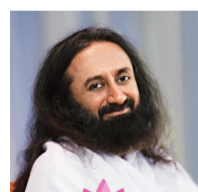
The system encourages them

to explore problems, generate multiple possible solutions and choose the solution they think will best solve the problem. Creating a team and collaborating as a group are emphasized.

Says Ware Sir as he is popularly known, "21st century skills, critical thinking, analytical thinking, communication skills, collaborative working, are all necessary for students."

There are now over 650 students with 3,500 on the waiting list. The School has won 4th rank worldwide in the "First Tech Challenge Robotics" competition, the "Design for Change" Award for its concepts, and several Best School Awards, among others.

A Zilla Parishad School, in a small obscure village, with 3,500 waiting to enroll is certainly a game-changer with few parallels!



Words of Wisdom

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Navratri – Time of Deep Rest and Rejuvenation

The word "Ratri" means that which gives you deep rest. Deep rest or relief is from three things - three tapas -three types of fire - three types of botheration - the physical, the subtle, and the causal. Navratri is a time of deep rest that can relieve you from all three types of botheration. It is a time of prayer and rejuvenation.

It takes nine months for a child to get formed and to be born. These nine days are like coming out of the mother's womb once again, having a new birth. Though our life is governed by the three gunas, we seldom recognize and reflect on them. The first three days of Navratri are attributed to tamo guna (inertia), the next three days to rajo guna (activity), and the last three days to sattva guna (tranquility). Our consciousness sails through the tamo and rajo gunas and blossoms in the sattva guna on the last three days.

The essence of this knowledge is honoured by celebrating the tenth day as Vijaydashmi. All these 9-10 days are virtually spent in meditation.

Best Way to Celebrate

Fast and pray. You can have feasting at the end. Fasting always goes with feasting. I won't recommend you all to fast without any food at all. You can have limited food. Eat less. Suppose you are eating one whole meal, you can cut down to half or quarter. Don't keep munching all day.

Don't indulge in any other sensory activities. Give deep rest to all the five senses. No touching, no watching movies, not going for fragrance and all that, not listening to your iPod all the time so the mind is constantly bombarded, by sound, by music. These are the days when you don't bombard your system with so much music. There will be chanting here for some

time. Last four days where there will be yagyas, you can of course bask in the chanting. It is called "mantra snana" - bathing in the mantras. The mantras are being chanted. You just sit in meditation and bathe in that vibration. That is good. Every day there will be an hour or so of mantra chanting.

Other than that, it is good to refrain from overeating, over listening to music, or watching television or any type of activity which stimulates your system. It is the time to calm your system down. On the last day of course you end up in celebrations - emotionally charged, spiritually charged, and intellectually uplifted.

The Monk who Aced the Checkered Match of Life

 | Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti

Losing a chess match and then losing the headache that he got over it, brought Santosh Kapadne face to face with spirituality. It so happened that one day Santosh, an ace chess player, was left drained with an excruciating headache after a grueling match in a tournament that continued for seven hours. If that wasn't bad enough, a fellow participant had been nagging the rest of them for the past couple of days to have a satsang in the evenings, post the matches! But unlike the last couple of days, today the rowdy Santosh could not muster the strength to silence him, so he ruefully gave in. To his own surprise, forty five minutes into the satsang, his head felt light! Never before in all his life had he felt his headache go away without popping at least 10 pills.

The friend was none other than Rashmin Pulekar. On his insistence, Santosh also learnt the Sudarshan Kriya and he loved it. But he was not yet convinced that holy men of the present times could have some good up their



Swami Pranavananda

"Neki kar dariya mein daal yahan nahi chalega"

sleeves. Curious to unearth the truth behind these Godmen, he went to participate in an Advanced Meditation Program at Rishikesh Ashram with Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. On one of those days, Santosh was peeling vegetables in the kitchen as a seva; there were more than 2000 people to whom meals would be served. Seva was something that always inspired him and thus he was doing it with all his heart. And then, all of a sudden, the thought occurred to him that how lucky these vegetables were. They could have been in a bar or a shady hotel being eaten by drunkards or criminals, but instead they got to be eaten by sadhaks and sevaks. His own stream of thought took Santosh by surprise. Knowing

himself, such a perspective was highly unlikely of him! And then, in satsang that very evening Gurudev talked at length explaining the importance of food. He said, "Who is it doing the satsang? It is all the vegetables and other things that you have eaten. They have become you!" Saying this, Gurudev looked straight at Santosh. There was absolutely no worldly way that Gurudev could have known about the thoughts in Santosh's mind! In the following days, a couple of other similar experiences came his way.

Thus having experienced the magical possibilities that seva, Sadhana, and satsang could take one to, there was no returning from here for Santosh. And he resolved to bring the same experience to everyone around him. Today, almost two decades later, with untiring seva towards uplifting every person he comes across, Santosh has embarked on the journey of a sanyasi as Swami Pranavananda. This comes with added responsibility towards the welfare of the entire world.

Currently, he is actively at the helm of not five, notten, but thirty-sevensocial project initiatives in the state of Maharashtra, that include river rejuvenation, tree plantation, de-addiction and rural development,

particularly working for farmers in the severe drought affected regions of the state. He has been a key resource for the implementation of a large scale project in Rajasthan where The Art of Living trained 1000 people from each district through its programs. In Uttar Pradesh too, Swamiji worked for voter's awareness in 400 villages. When enquired about the secret of his undying dynamism, Swami Pranavananda says, "Knowing that I am nothing, I give my 100%." He travels extensively to conduct Advanced Meditation Programs and other programs of The Art of Living and also conducts vedic pujas and homas to bring the community together, to bring up positivity and human values in the society through the wisdom of dharma. In the course of a day, Swamiji has to troubleshoot several field challenges. One of the biggest among them as he mentions is that field volunteers are exceptional when it comes to executing the task with all sincerity, but the paperwork like documentation and reports often become a challenge! He cautions, "Neki kar dariya mein daal yahan nahi chalega".

In this train, from training youth in his chess academy to training people to master their mind, Swami Pranavananda has had an intense ride as an instrument of his Guru's wisdom.

Sold Out on Pav Bhaji!

 | Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti

"Pav bhaji khaoge?" the teacher asked a very angry Sharad, who had hunted him down, resolved to beat him up. Reason – Sharad's mother had mentioned to him in a passing reference that she burnt completely from inside after attending The Art of Living program with this teacher! The barely-in-his-teens Sharad hadn't deciphered what his mother meant, but the offer of pav bhaji seemed to calm him and he decided that The Art of Living wasn't that bad after all. Since then he became a regular visitor and soon enough a regular volunteer with the organisation.

"All of it was like an adventure to me", Sharad says with a beaming smile. He would pack his bags and head off to wherever a project or event was happening and volunteers were required. He has actively served in campaigns like 'Volunteer for a Better India', tree plantations and several other social initiatives by The Art of Living. He never gave a second thought before embarking on another campaign trail, no matter what hardships he had to endure in its course of action. He remembers that during



Sharad Garg

"It's not just breaking your own barriers; it's also assisting 1000 other people to break their own barriers!"

the Brahm Naad event he had set out a month prior to volunteer for the arrangements. 1,200 sitarists were to perform together on one platform and a lot of preparations were required before the final event. Sharad was accommodated in a three-storey building, where he used to sleep alone. It was only a couple of days before the event, when more volunteers started coming in, did they find out that the infamous Nithari village was just behind that building! He still gets goose bumps recalling that.

The young Sharad worked hard to do all of this alongside his studies and other responsibilities. He hailed from Kaithal in Haryana where the prevalent custom was to join the family business as soon as you



have completed school. But Sharad had different plans for himself, entrepreneurship

was what excited him. All this while he had been successfully managing the Nadi Pariksha camps and Divine Shops during the courses. With that experience he initiated his startup wherein he opened a store where organic and ayurveda products of 18-19 companies were available under one roof. At that point of time, it was the sole enterprise of its kind in whole region. Along with this, he also looked into several of his family's businesses. He was also an Art of Living teacher by now, conducting its courses. And for some time, it went smooth. But before long, it began draining him. He would work from 6am to way past midnight, barely managing 4-5hrs of sleep on a daily basis. The only things on his mind were money and profits. It demotivated him.

In 2016, struggling within himself, Sharad reached The Art of Living International Center for Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's birthday celebrations. The night before the birthday, around 11pm, he was walking alone aimlessly, his mind bogged down with pressing concerns. Just then a car stopped near him. Seeing the organisation's flag on the car bonnet he

immediately recognised it to be Gurudev's car. And then Gurudev rolled down the window and called out to him. He instructed Sharad to stay back and work in the ashram for some time.

The decision was made and suddenly Sharad experienced all his worries evaporate into thin air. Today, he is leading the Micro Entrepreneurship Training Program where rural folk and yuvacharyas are hand held to become micro entrepreneurs and earn a dignified means of livelihood for themselves. In the last 1.5 years, he has facilitated more than 1000 people to join this program. This too has not been easy. Almost all of these people have no prior knowledge or experience of sales! To reach out to so many people, maintain a relationship with them, coordinate on a daily basis and to orient them with essential technology has been challenging. As Sharad says, "it's not just breaking your own barriers; it's also assisting 1000 other people to break their own barriers!"

Challenges will remain, but nevertheless, this unique space where seva and entrepreneurship come together, is where Sharad has found his happy space.



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A portion of your earnings given in service, brings abundance
 - Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



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