

October 2014

Getting high on life

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



The most basic trait of human nature is to seek happiness. It is amazing to see what all man does to find happiness; the list goes on and on endlessly. In reality, happiness comes from within but most seek it outside. The senses can give pleasure but the soul craves for something more. When sense pleasures are not enough, one seeks an ethereal experience. This impulse of seeking is present in everybody and is the beginning of one's spiritual journey. Unfortunately, many people are tempted to take shortcuts in this quest for joy and end up with drugs. Drugs seem to give a high and people do say they take one to an altered state of consciousness. However, the after effects leave the system totally shattered eventually. One's aspiration to find freedom, love and happiness leaves them with bondage, despondency and misery. Having something is not joyful but not having it is painful – this is the state of addiction.

Spirituality has a big role to play in dealing with such a situation. Meditation, breathing techniques, pranayam and satsang have helped millions around the world to overcome addiction over substances and alcohol. Many people have shared that they feel the same high after doing Sudarshan Kriya that they used to feel after taking drugs but without their damaging consequences. Scientists say that psychoactive drugs are addictive because they cause a surge in dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with happiness and contentment. Research has shown that meditation increases dopamine levels naturally by an average of 65%. A session of group singing or satsang also leaves one exhilarated and energised for many hours. These practices build strength in the mind so that one doesn't feel the need to rely on external substances to feel an inner high.

Another thing that is important in rehabilitation is developing an attitude of service. A 'what more can I get' mindset leads to obsession and depression while a 'how can I serve' attitude leads to joy and freedom. This shift in attitude brings a sense of purpose to anybody's life, but more so for someone on the path to recovery. With a firm resolve and the right effort in the right direction, the old patterns of addiction begin to loosen their grip and true freedom begins to dawn.

Apart from its remedial effect in drug rehabilitation, spirituality is very effective in prevention of this malaise as well. Youth who have a spiritual bent of mind do not take to drugs easily. Spirituality builds a value-based character in a person which acts as a shield against unhealthy peer pressure.

Invariably, short term joy ends up as long term misery and it is spiritual education alone that gives the wisdom to choose a little discomfort in the short term that finally leads to long lasting happiness.

Alcoholics turn into social reformers in Maharashtra

More than 7,000 left their addictions in Maharashtra

Sanjivani Warkade 09822184791

Akola, Maharashtra: Art of Living teacher Gouram Bidave (9890012009) has transformed the lives of more than 7000 people with his natural herbs, and motivational talks. Villages like Taandalwadi, Jalgaon district, have turned 80 percent addiction-free, and Parbhani village of Selu district recently became 100 percent addiction-free, thanks to his services in the past five years.

Gouram found that addiction was the biggest social threat in tribal societies, especially during festive seasons. People spent their hard earned money on alcohol and led miserable life. Belonging to one such area, he decided to eradicate this evil and enrolled himself in the YLTP programme in 2004. He got the inspiration to bring about a change in the society and his passion soon became his profession.

Whatever Gouram learnt about herbal medicine from his grandfather came in handy when he started teaching and implementing Art of Living's free programmes. He soon became adept at giving talks on alcoholism and addictions. He acquired professional skills in the subject, learnt



Motivational Talks: Gouram Bidse creating awareness among school children and villagers in a villages of akole Maharashtra

Panchkarma treatment and naadi-pariksha, and cured related diseases and illnesses for free. Though Gouram had to face financial crises and opposition from his family, he was undeterred in his mission.

In 2010, when he came up with the idea of opening a de-addiction centre, a carpenter discouraged him by saying that he would not earn anything from it. Initially, no one turned up, but after a week it became popular. With an enrolment of more than 7000 people, it has shown excellent results in the past four years.

Every Monday, addicts from all

over the country come to the centre and share their experiences for 1-2 hours. Most of them are from Mumbai, Pune, Jalgaon, Nashik, Aurangabad and Rajasthan. As an Art of Living teacher, Gouram offers counselling services to the patients. He develops personal relationships with them and personally wishes them on their birthdays and other important festivals. Some of his patients have become volunteers.

Gouram's first patient was a poor and homeless person who went on to become the sarpanch of his panchayat. After complete de-addiction,

he is now the proud owner an ice cream factory as well. Another addict, who was a cycle rickshaw puller, has overcome his habit now and owns six rickshaws apart from a wholesale vegetable market. Gouram's intention is to reach out to more addicts and help them transform as this kind of service gives him immense satisfaction.

Yogeswar Koli from Taandalwadi village, who was an alcoholic for over 10 years said, "I had lost respect in the society and had to face severe financial crunch. I was part of a batch of 30 people, and now all of us are leading healthy lives. Gouram came like an angel and saved us. Otherwise, we would have lost our lives to alcohol."

Patient Dharendra Sagbhor, a farmer from Waki village said, "I was an addict for 11 years. I had a very bad relationship with my parents because of this habit though I was their only son. Five years back, I met Gouram, who encouraged me to overcome this addiction. Under his guidance, I've become an active social worker and I'm the sarpanch of my village. I visit him every week and help people in need of help, I have connected many people with Gauram to be freed from the clutches of addictions."

12 couples benefit from YLTP's group marriage project



Together we are better: Second group marriage ceremony completed on 17th May, 2014

Gauri Shitole 07030759157

Satara, Maharashtra: Marriage is a memorable event in the life of an individual, so everyone tries to make it big with the available resources. Anil Nakure (21) from Malshiras village of Solapur dreamt of an eventful wedding but due to limited finances he was not able to afford a marriage hall. He was also not able to arrange for sumptuous food for his relatives and friends. He was planning a comfortable life and a better future with Ashwini (19), his would-be.

The couple's aspirations got fulfilled with the help of Art of Living's initiative. With limited finances and available resources, Art of Living performed group marriages in Pawarwadi, Satara district. Anil and Ashwini got married with minimal rituals amid grand celebrations. Pan-

dit's chanted the mantras perfectly, and the food was satisfactory. "If we were to make these arrangements on our own it would cost us Rs. 70,000-80,000 but the expenses were limited to only Rs. 9,000. The savings from this will go towards planning a secure future for both of us," they said.

Six more couples tied the knot the same day, along with Anil and Ashwini. A grand and satisfactory marriage celebration is easily affordable within one's budget, thanks to the initiative started by Art of Living volunteers in 2013. Five couples got married that year for the first time. On 17th May this year, seven couples got married.

Swami Santosh Naik, who was present on the day of the marriage, blessed the newly-wed couples. Dr. Gyanishwar Tukaram, organiser of the event, said the intention behind

organising group marriages is to help the couples of poor families. "With a small amount we provide them with clothes, vessels and other essentials apart from arranging for the marriage hall. This is a nominal cost and the villagers like it."

Students of Tuljaram Chaturvedi Mahavidyalya from district Baramati staged a play, 'Ladki Bachao' (Save the girl child) on the occasion. Art of Living Yuvacharyas Netaji Jagathe, Nitin Ghadke, Gyaneshwar Jaghav, Sachin Ghodke, Amit Gavde, Dhananjay Panwar, Atul Jaghav and Mayur Jaghav helped make the event a big success.

Those interested in participating in this group marriage can get in touch with Jayapratak Mangalkarya's office.

Project Coordinator Dhyaneswar Pawar can be reached at 0982292348

Organic farming solutions on FM Radio

Ram Asheesh 09044445094

Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh: Organic farming is not new to the farmers of Beridariyaw, Akbarpur Tehsil. FM (91.2) presents a special programme on organic farming on community radio. Through 'Waqt ki Aawaz,' farmers of 286 villages get information on organic farming.

Art of Living teacher and organic farming expert Balkrishan Yadav interacts with radio jockey Neetu to give suggestions that are in accordance with the changes in the local weather.

Nearly two lakh farmers of Uttar Pradesh are being inspired to shift to organic farming, says Radha, programme director. She started this programme after drawing inspiration from Sri Sri Ravishankar, founder of Art of Living.

A 15-minute programme called 'Hamara Anna Daata' with Radio Jockey Neetu Singh is aired every Thursday at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., wherefrom farmers get expert opinion on the right methods of cultivation, for various crops. Answers are provided to queries like how to prepare organic fertilizers, pesticides, and how to grow seasonal vegetables and fruits with the help of desi cow and how to save the crops from infestations and pests.

Even if someone misses the programme on Thursdays, they can catch up on the updates by listening to it on the toll free no: 01166032880

Flood relief in Jammu & Kashmir



Relief: Flood victims receiving blankets and tents

Meenakshi Chauhan 09418483822

Reasi, Jammu & Kashmir: Privileged ones share with those in need or the less privileged says Sri Sri, and his devotees act accordingly. The flood victims of Jammu & Kashmir were provided with tents, clothes, blankets and ration, and nearly 100 families of Reasi district, one of the worst affected areas, benefited from this.

Relief material was distributed in two phases in Satoi, Kotli, Sirla, Bhaga, Karayane, Chau-rakot nestled between Smakh, Gaintha and Dingakot villages of the district. These are situated at a high altitude and are not easily scalable, said Swami Ashok who distributed the material among

the villagers. In the affected villages, about 35 houses were almost razed to the ground and many others were damaged. A group of Art of Living volunteers from Delhi provided the relief material.

The help we received from Art of Living is unforgettable and 'shukriya' (thank you) is a small word, said Rahamat Ali who received blankets and tents. Sarvana Devi and Mukund Lal lost everything in the calamity and were now left with nothing. "Nobody can bring our loved ones back and we have to live without them. These things will help us to survive as we didn't get much help from the government."

Ashok Swami, Project coordinator: 09622097343

Coimbatore goes organic

Gurucharan Ambreshwar
09566328604

Coimbatore, Tamilnadu: Tamil Nadu's Yuvacharyas are gearing up for a healthy promotion in Coimbatore – they are encouraging the sales of organic products and endorsing Ayurveda. From November, home delivery facilities will be in place to distribute healthy organic produce and grocery items. This will in turn help

organic farmers in the surrounding villages to grow more crops. The farmers will get a better price for their yield as the demand goes up and they cater to their customers.

Yuvacharyas have already collected a few orders from the city's consumers, who wish to switch over to a healthier option for their daily needs.

Spiritual energy boosts teens in juvenile home in Kerala

Ninety youngsters benefitted

Unnikrishnan Vijayan pillai
09745925116

Calicut, Kerala: Girls of Velimadukunnu Government Juvenile Home are now able to experience spiritual knowledge and benefit from yoga. Nearly 90 inmates, coming from different parts of the district and various backgrounds, welcomed the programme.

Just five days of exposure to the Nav Chetna Shibir made



Navchetna Shibir

them more energetic and dynamic. Yuvacharya Surendran managed to capture their hearts through interactive classes. "It is hard to make an impact on

them because the past has made them very tough. But after the course, there is a change in their attitude, which is visible on their face," he said.

The Social Welfare Department of the State Government manages the orphanage. Girls below 17 years of age are offered basic amenities and education, after adoption. Helping them to forget the past is the biggest challenge. Surendran finds these orphans amongst the weakest

in the society and helps them through yoga and meditation.

"We are blessed with facilities and comforts but we are wasting it. People who really need them are still in darkness. We have to change this. Even if we can bring about this change in one child's life that's enough," added Surendran.

Volunteers plan to visit the home again in future. Project coordinator Surendran can be reached at 09388469914.

Women win war against alcohol

Villagers spent Rs2.5 lakh every day on liquor

Santoshi Nimbalkar 08817630709

Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh: The women and youth of Kareli village proved that a strong will cannot stop anyone from achieving positive results. They got together against alcoholism and decided to close the wine shop where villagers spent nearly Rs. 2,50,000 per day. This shop was a menace to 12 other neighbouring villages as well, where it supplied alcohol.

Women of the village were having a tough time as men became addicts, said Amrit Bai. Her husband was a full-time addict, and consumed alcohol throughout the day. "Most of the income we earned by working in the fields of the landlord was spent on alcohol. My husband's health was also getting affected badly," she said.

"My 11-year-old boy started drinking, and his interest in studies gradually declined," said



Anty alcohol : Women of kareli village on strike

Anusuiya Bai, mother of an addict. The villagers and their families were badly affected both socially and economically.

To create awareness among the villagers about the side-effects of alcohol and its impact on the health of the individual, various videos and films were screened. To inculcate moral values in the people and to bring about a so-

cial change, a signature campaign was started demanding closure of the shop. Women came together in large numbers and signed the letter, which was later sent to the District Collector. Soon, political leaders joined hands, and the local media gave the required boost to the campaign.

However, there were no signs of shutters coming down on the

shop. New tenders were invited instead, for opening another shop. This annoyed the villagers and volunteers even more. Volunteers decided to go on strike, which went on for 47 days. On the last day, the wine shop was demolished and the construction of a temple was started in its place. Parshuram Nirmalkar, Art of Living teacher, played a major role in this movement.

Even as the strike was on, several supporters of the wine shop intervened and tried to disrupt the movement. However, Jiten Nishad kept the volunteers motivated by creating groups on various social networking sites as well.

Art of Living volunteers and yuvacharyas who played a very important role in making this movement a success are Nishad, Nagesh Verma, Vyasnarayan Sahu, Yadram Sahu, Parmanand Sahu, Kishore Sahu, K. Umadevi, Project coordinator Parshuram Nirmalkar: 09617897063

Educon 2014 inspires Indian youth to lead by example

Rajesh Kundu 07762827109

Ranchi, Jharkhand: India has the highest percentage of youth in its total population, which is 66 percent. Nearly 40 percent of them are aged between 30 to 35, and it is a mirror to the country's strength and capability. However, a big challenge is that the percentage of drug addicts is also increasing day by day, which has reached menacing levels in Punjab, said Pro Raziuddin, VC of Ranchi University. He was the Chief Guest at EDUCON 2014, a conference organised by the Art of Living with the theme, 'Accelerating Human Values through Education' at Capitol Hill on 27 September, 2014 in the state capital.

The average literacy rate among India's youth population is 74 percent, so it cannot be termed as a backward country, he said. Besides, he urged the youth to take stress in their stride and draw inspiration from it, to overcome it. Speaking about brain drain, he said many Indians settled abroad wanted to return, but acceptance was a problem.

The conference hall was jam-packed, and the audience came from variegated milieu namely, universi-



From Left: Dr. Prasanna David, Dr. Tapas Ghoshal, Dr. Raziuddin, Dr. Anjani Shrivastava and Mr. B.K Sinha

ties, colleges, schools, the corporate sector and medical institutions, and also included housewives.

K.K. Srivastava, Former Director, Department of Higher Education, Govt. of Jharkhand appreciated the role of Art of Living, especially Sudarshan Kriya, which helped him to keep calm during stress. He said the recent Mars mission was not a flash in the pan; India has been a leading light ever since Varahmihir and Aryabhata. "Inculcation of moral values

in the future generation is essential, which will help find solutions to several problems of today. The big question is whether today's children are learning human values."

Dr. Tapas Ghoshal, Dean of Central University, was the guest of honour. "Our education system is overloading our children with information but not imparting value-based learning. We need to give the present system a holistic orientation," he said. "We have to desist from dilut-

ing human values and lead by example. Each one of us is a student; the day we feel we have learnt enough is the day of our downfall."

Ramesh Pandey, Dean of Ranchi University, paid rich tributes to Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji for bringing a positive vibe in the society. Dr. (Mrs.) Manju Bhagat, a Prof. from BIT Mesra, thanked AoL for making a substantial impact in her life. She said colleges should put an end to ragging, and Moral Science classes must be introduced in schools.

Retd. DSP and an AOL faculty Shri P.N. Singh recollected how hardcore naxals were brought back to the fold of normal citizens with Art of Living programmes in Bokaro jail. Shri Vibhu presented his own case study which evinced how he conquered suicidal tendencies and attained bliss. Now he shares his experiences nationwide by conducting AOL Programs.

Among the organizers, Dr. P.K. David, Sabita Singh (State teachers coordinator) STC of Art of Living, Jharkhand (09955120863), and Shri. P.N. Singh (Retd. DySP and an AOL faculty) thanked everyone for their participation.

Cleaning campaign in Dhule

Dhule, Maharashtra: Volunteers of Art of Living spent four hours of their valuable time to impart a clean look to their city on 2nd October, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. Nearly 60 people got together and cleaned the city from Agra Road to Jail Road, including the slums on the way, says Art of Living teacher Santosh Ji Mahale (9420891978). He was the inspiration behind the volunteers to perform the task. Vrundaji Rao organized the campaign. Yogesh Pingale 08087734766

Books distributed to needy students



Khattarmal, Jharkhand: Fifty needy students of Khattarmal, Ultrakhand, were provided with books, pencils, sharpeners and erasers. On the same day, 25 saplings were planted and 100 other saplings of trees yielding fruits were distributed among the villagers, to be planted in their fields. Programme coordinator and AOL teacher Sumit Bohra (09412910094)

Sanjivani Warkade 09822184791

Cleanliness campaign In Ranchi

Rajesh Kundu 07762827109

Ranchi, Jharkhand: A cleaning campaign was organised by The Art of Living in Ranchi on 18 October. Exuberant volunteers from different parts of the city gathered at the Jail Road entrance of Nagartoli in Ward -21 on Saturday and were determined to make it a model ward, at the beckoning of our Prime Minister's 'Swachhta Abhiyan'.

Former Ranchi DSP and Art of Living faculty P.N Singh said, "A member from our organisation will regularly take up cleanliness drives across the ward." Adding that most people in India keep their homes and kitchen sparkling clean but treat public places like a dustbin, he said, "Besides the actual cleaning, we also need to educate people to change their mindset, and not litter everywhere," he said.

Mayor of Ranchi Municipal (RMC) Corporation Asha Lakra, her deputy Sanjeev Vijayvargiya, RMC CEO Manoj Kumar, ward councillor Roshni Khalko, YLTP state coordinator Ujjwal BHaskar, former STC of Jharkhand Smt. Sabita Singh, Swami Omkarananda, Jharkhand Apex Chairman Sri. B.K Sinha, Ashim Kundu and Usha Budhia also took part in this campaign.

Volunteers cleaned their village in Assam



Dibrugarh, Assam: Yuvacharya Mamoni Dutta organised a rural happiness programme at Khoclu Pathar Tingkhong, Dibrugarh district, from 21-26 October. Art of Living teacher Subha Karan Gohai helped in making it a success and 17 people benefited from the course. She organised a cleaning seva under the government's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan the next day and concluded the course on 27 October.

The programme was held at Tinkhong Adharko Vidhyalay, a government school. Nearly 150 students, teachers and guardians of the students participated. According to Mamoni Dutta, everyone took part in the event with great enthusiasm and to offer selfless services. Another free programme for children of the village is on the cards.

Kumlin Engtipi 08761823371

Educational kits gifted on Diwali

Rajesh Kundu 07762827109

Ranchi, Jharkhand: The Art of Living, Ranchi, surprised 840 poor children by gifting them educational kits for Diwali, on 17th October. It was a Happy Diwali for the students of Birs Niketan High School, Jagannathpur. The kit comprised a pen, pencil, chalk, slate, notebook, folder, eraser, cutter and other stationery items. Sri Saurav Agrawal, who organised the event said, "Spending time with them has helped us to develop a sense of affinity for them".

Overall, the event made them feel special. Besides this, Swami Omkarananda spread happiness and encouraged them to work hard towards their betterment. Devotees Smt. Sabita Singh, Rita Singh, Sunita Singh, Uttam Kumar, Nutan Sinha, Rashi, Beena also participated in the event.

Liquid Grace: Plant delivers pure water to villagers in Karnataka

12 surrounding villages will get water at reasonable rates

Malappa D. Belamge 09900941479

Chickmangalur, Karnataka: The ground water of Sindigere village situated between Lakhya Hoobali and Chickmangalur had high iron content in it, which was not suitable for consumption. Art of Living's water purification plant is now providing pure drinking water to the residents.

It was found during a survey of Vedavati River in Sindigere that the ground water was not good for drinking. The villagers often fell sick, and women and children complained of viral infections, fever, cough and joint pain. But Tottappa, a villager, observed that for past five months the members of his family were healthy, and the number of illnesses had come down.

Dr. Ismail, a doctor at the village's Primary Health Centre, said diseases caused by the consumption of impure water had decreased by 10-20 percent. However, there is more to be achieved by changing the lifestyle of the villagers and educating them on hygiene.

Consumption of impure water was actually a liability to the villagers' health. Before Shudh Ganga was established, Nagaraj, project coordinator (09611808086) initiated a water purification project to make available pure drinking water to the villagers. The construction of the plant started



Clockwise from top left: (i) Commodore Sarvotham Rao, VVKI (Vyakti Vikas Kendra India) Chairman addressing the villagers after the inauguration of the waterplant on 28 May 2014 at Sindigere village. (ii) 200 Litres of water can be purified in one hour through these machines (iii) Volunteers giving the pure water to the villagers. Around 350 families of the village will be supplied pure water. Soon 15 surrounding villages will be getting the pure water supplies (iv) Water tank built in to get water purified. Ground water of the village had high iron content.

on March 2014, the day it was inaugurated. All the expenditure towards the setting up of the plant and the machinery was borne by Art of Living.

Pure and potable water is now available to the villagers at very cheap rates. In the coming years, this purification plant will be able to provide

water for 15 more villages in the neighbourhood. This year, due to low rainfall, the water supply is restricted to this village.

Healing touch revives leprosy patients

Eatables were distributed among patients

Sanjivani Warkade 09822184791

Amaravati, Maharashtra: Leprosy patients are generally looked down upon, and no one wants to even get close to them. The management and staff of the hospital of Almora faced a bigger problem when the church funding their leprosy patients reduced its funds by 40%. The administrators of the hospital were in a fix till 35 Art of Living volunteers visited the hospital on 15th June this year. The volunteers conducted a free workshop on meditation and sang songs for them.

who brought something for them, and some of them had tears in their eyes. "Nobody visits them. They experience only rejection. A common belief is that a person suffers from the disease as a result of bad actions in the past. So people ignore them." Some of them were in tears when volunteers hugged them.

Anand Singh, working in the hospital for the past 25 years shared the thought that people have misconceptions about leprosy patients. "The disease will not spread by mere touching," he said.

This was the second visit by Art of



"We belong to you.": Volunteers singing with the leprosy patients of almora

Volunteers distributed clothes and food items among the patients, and also collected some donations to fund the hospital, said Art of Living volunteer Rajendra Bisht, one of the organizers of the programme. All the 29 patients of the hospital were happy to see visitors

Living Almora's volunteers. They had visited the place earlier on 13th May. They will continue to visit and help the patients by all means, said Kamal Kapoor, another volunteer. Along with Santosh Pant, Ramn Bohra and Lusi Jagooma helped organise the visit.

NGOs unite for a noble cause



Coimbatore: Volunteers greeting Rotary club members

Gurucharan Ambreshvar
09566328604

Coimbatore, Tamilnadu: YLTP Tamil Nadu has teamed up with Rotary Club and another NGO in the Joy of Giving programme, which initiates joint efforts for service projects and fundraising campaigns. Hosted by Rotary club Coimbatore, Joy of giving has crossed a new milestone by uniting NGOs.

The remarkable work done in rural areas and the systematic execution of YLTP in Tamil Nadu prompted Rotary club to approach YLTP for a joint

action. On 4th and 5th October, they opened a stall to the public with the details of their successfully completed project at Ramakrishna Hall, Coimbatore. Perfectly crafted pamphlets and effective demonstrations attracted visitors to their stall.

The Ayurvedic products on display and the information given about organic farming were the crowd pullers at the event. Most of the visitors wanted to know more about desi cows and solar products. Three Yuvacharyas and two volunteers were present at the counter to give the demonstration.

Cleaning drive on Dussehra

Kumlin Engtipi 08761823371

Dibrugarh, Assam: On 3rd September, the day Dussehra was celebrated throughout India, Mamoni Datta Yuvacharya found a unique way to mark the festival. He initiated a cleaning drive by the villagers and Art of Living volunteers. As most of the villagers were participants of Art of Living programmes in the past, they took part in

the programme with great enthusiasm.

Nearly 100 participants took part in the campaign and cleaned Kareli village for almost three hours. "This campaign will create a sense of hygiene among the villagers and a culture of working together, which will result in harmony, said village sarpanch Bhupen Dekha, organiser of the programme.

Sri Sri Vidya Mandir in Jharkhand giving new hopes to tribal children

Seventeen schools in the state are educating around 2800 first generation students

Rajesh Kundu 07762827109

Jharkhand: In Jharkhand, one of the Naxal-affected states of India, a huge population resides in tribal areas. As the place is isolated from the neighbouring areas, the tribes living here have no exposure to the modern world and the latest technology. Very few are able to get proper education, and this is adversely affecting the next generation.

This was a major concern for B.B. Chawla, who quit his job 15 years back. He resigned from the post of general manager in Bhartiya Cutler Hammer to work towards bringing 90 million naxal-affected tribes into the mainstream.

Today, Chawla has formed a team to work for the tribal children in naxal-manifested areas. The team's initiative, 'Small Step on Long Journey' has been a big leap towards development in Jharkhand State. Two high schools, one middle school and 14 primary schools have come up across the state, imparting free education to 2800 children of first generation learners. This is testimony to the team's resolve that the Tribal Child will get modern facilities coupled with Value Education as effective aid to their mission of Holistic Education along with all round development – a hallmark of Sri Sri Vidya Mandir.

The children start studying their native languages of Mundari, Oraon along with the script Akiki. Mastery over linguistics, semantics, vocabulary and grammar in one language opens the door of effective communications for the young mind. Grasping other languages like Hindi and English becomes comparatively easier.

Mobile Dispensary



Medicare facilities are virtually non-existent in these areas. A qualified doctor visits the villages in a mobile dispensary and conducts regular check-ups for school children and other villagers. About 60 patients are given free treatment during every visit.

Zero Budget Natural Farming



This project aims at restoring the ancient techniques of chemical-free farming, and several local villagers have joined the movement. They are convinced that only 'chemical-free farming' can save their land, which has so far been treated extensively with chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Plantation



About 2,000 trees (fruits and herbs) are planted annually in the school premises as well as in the nearby areas, with the active participation of children and other villagers. The locals are nature loving and like to be surrounded by thick vegetation. So the school organises tree plantation.

Women's Vocational Centre



In rural areas, parents usually want their children to work in fields or do domestic work, which will generate some income for the family. But with the introduction of skills development training, school girls have started learning stitching. This is helping them earn additional income.

effective ways of saving the environment is to educate the tribes.

Basic education

The first step was to impart basic education to first-generation learners without replicating a typical urban school model. The aim was to educate the children and help them become mature individuals who will care for their fellow beings as well as respect the environment. The curriculum is well-balanced, combining the practical aspects of education of languages, arithmetic, moral education, agriculture, yoga, meditation and games. It includes all the regular subjects taught at school and aims at developing an individual who really cares and shares.

Imparting education to first generation learners was started in Sri Sri Vidya Mandir in 1999. The schools have also become hubs of rural development such as Zero Budget Natural Farming, Technical Training Center, free medical camps and extensive tree plantation.

The school teachers are chosen from the villages, and each school is equipped with a multimedia room run by solar power. The teachers are continuously groomed to recognise the need of uninhibited child development with a focus on value-based education, which lays emphasis on hygiene, culture preservation, and non-violence, technology and environment friendliness. Native games like archery, hockey, kabaddi and soccer also find a place in the curriculum. A state of the all computer lab setup with the help of juniper networks makes every student full of pride.

Jharkhand Project Coordinator B. B. Chowla: 09836581929



First generation students: Students of Sri Sri Vidyamandir studying in the class rooms (2nd) Free school buses for the students coming from farther areas. (3rd) Students in one of the tribal school called Gharsheela. 4th Annual celebrations of the school. (5-6th) students learning by doing practically .

Unique blend of subjects

For Science and Mathematics, the team has worked out a unique blend in consonance with the day-to-day life of the peo-

ple. For example, environment protection, ecological balance, greenhouse gases, ozone layers depletion are explained via the Sarhul festivities (worship of nature and the flora). This is

a unique and innovative way of imparting education. The lives of tribal icons like Birsu Munda and Sidhu Kanhu are highlighted in the classes, to inculcate a sense of self-esteem as well as respect for

the tribal culture.

Vyakti Vikas Kendra initiated the Tribal Project to protect and equip the locals to adapt to the changing world in tune with globalization. One of the most

Women of Assam enhancing their skills

Mukesh Chapagai 08724872045

Tinsukia, Assam: Art of Living has established a new Sri Sri Skill Development Centre for Women Empowerment in Natungaon, Tinsukia district, with Rs. 3 lakh aid it received from the local legislator, Shri Raju Sahu. It was inaugurated by Chabua MLA and Parliamentary Secretary Shri Raju Sahu.

The professional training centre will train women in cutting of cloth and sewing, as well as weaving. Tinsukia District Deputy Commissioner, Swami Purnachaitanya, SSRDP Trustee Deepak Sharma, Assam State Media co-ordinator Ashok K Third, Assam coordinator Mausami Sharma Barpujari and other devotees were present during the inauguration.

MLA Shri Raju Sahu said,



Rs 3 Lakh sanctioned: (L) Training center established in Tinsukia. (R) Raju Sahu, MLA of the area with Swami Purnachaitanya and volunteers from The Art of Living

"Some organisations had approached me with similar ideas of starting a sewing and weaving centre but they had no future plans. Your SSRDP (Sri Sri Rural Development Programme), Assam Branch co-ordinator Mausami Sharma Barpujari was keen on starting the centre with great dedication to serve for a long term. Therefore, I agreed to

this." He also said that he would provide two sewing machines for the centre and assured of all possible help in future. At present, the centre has four sewing machines and one tat-shawl (hath-kargha).

Deputy Commissioner Puru Gupta, who supported the efforts of this Art of Living project, said it was unique and encour-

aged women empowerment in rural areas. He suggested that Art of Living should also start a programme that offers training for his employees as well. This will help them to discharge their duties efficiently amid the tense atmosphere prevailing there, he said.

Shriyut Tishwar Barpujari Gokhai gifted a piece of land for

the establishment of this centre. His son Nihar Ranjan Barpujari Gokhai is in now charge of this centre. Though he had worked in many local organisations earlier, working in this organisation was worthy because one gets immense mental peace due to Gurudev's grace, he said.

According to SSRDP Trustee Shri Deepak Sharma, this is second such professional training centre in Assam. Before this, a centre was established in Tinsukia district jail, but due to lack of facilities it had to be closed down. Ms. Mausami Sharma Barpujari said the centre plans to introduce the making of plates from supari leaves in future, as this is the only such training center in Assam.

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Seva Times

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