

Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

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From the Editor

Dear Friend,

Children's Day is a day dedicated to children and is observed as an event across the globe to celebrate childhood and promote awareness about children's welfare.

Endorsed by global organizations and governments, this celebration aims to promote the wellbeing of children and to uplift their social rights. In 1954, the United Nations with discretion has recognized November 20th as Universal Children's Day to create attentiveness on the commitment on the development of children and ensure a better future.

In India, Children's Day is celebrated on the 14th of November as it is the day the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was born. This celebration commemorates Nehru's affection towards children and faith that education of children could propel the country's progress.

It is every parent's obligation to give their child the richest childhood experience possible. There is a Thai saying: "Children are the future of the nation; if children are intelligent, the country will be prosperous."

As we celebrate this day, let us reiterate our role in nurturing children. Remember, we are accountable for what our children are, and what they may become.

Happy Children's Day!

Marie Banu

The Positive Energy Paradigm: Aiming for Mindfulness

"Begin your day with a mindfulness practice and experience your inner 'guru' --- "Waking up this morning, I smile. Twenty-four brand new hours are before me. I vow to live fully in each moment and to look at all beings with eyes of compassion." — Thích Nhất Hạnh

In our daily life, we all pursue a number of interests and endeavors, each of which tends to consume a great deal of our energy. In this pursuit, at times, we reach a point where we question ourselves about what are we aiming to achieve. If you are at this point or even moving towards it, then "The Positive Energy Paradigm" provides the necessary knowledge and awareness to guide you.

This Paradigm is a journey of discovering your 'self', with the aim of knowing and being with the 'guru' within. Getting in touch with the 'guru' within, offers us the insights and guidance to lead our day to day with the completeness we seek. This completeness also refers to the absence of a restless search for something because of which we are unmindful of what is there in the current, in the now.

Learning about inner energy, with the Positive Energy program, one takes a significant step towards inquiring about how one can renew energy and how one can make choices that conserve energy. This in turn helps us experience centeredness and mindfulness. This practice, we term as "Clearing the Space". As we regularly practice 'Clearing the Space', we realize that the outer manifestations become an overflow of the inner energy state. Therefore, when we work on the inner energies, the outer actions and interactions flow in a deliberate, purposeful and mindful manner.

The key to practicing 'clearing the space' is mindfulness – being in the current moment, completely – at any given moment. This brings laser-like focus and energy to each moment of existence. This in turn, helps align the inner with the outer, thus creating a balance in our living. Let us understand the concept of mindfulness in the context of our daily existence with this story.

Pratap was nicknamed as a 'forgetful' person by all in his family, friends, and even his colleagues. He was known to always search for things he seemed to believe he had carefully placed in its 'right' place. He was always asking his mother or sister where his things were – they had begun to turn a deaf ear to hear such questions from him, lately. This made his searches more frantic; he fumbled, grumbled, cursed, shouted – he did all the things that not only made him look bad with others and also made him feel bad about himself, leaving a bad aftertaste.



He started blaming his work stress, ill health, etc., for his forgetfulness. Some of his office colleagues had begun to sermonize and give tips to improve memory, use techniques such as, tagging, marking, or labeling items, and so on. And despite following many such tips and guidelines, Pratap continued to be forgetful. His mother often wondered, is this a genetic issue with Pratap or is he low on IQ or is there some other problem with him?

The real issue was that as Pratap went about his daily chores, eating, drinking, interacting with people, working, etc., his attention was divided – he was often thinking of the tasks to finish later, or imagining the feedback for his work, or dreaming of the approaching holiday with friends the next month, and so on. He was not completely present to the moment, on most occasions. Therefore, he was not aware of where he was placing things, landmarks around the route he was driving, the various dishes laid out at the office lunch buffet, and during many such actions. This led to his mind wavering to another place and time, while his action was in the current moment and space. This prevented the mental association of the space and time with the action, and also prevented the required focus and energy for the action. This led to his forgetfulness and consequent criticism and pain and his work and health took the blame for this forgetfulness. Could Pratap avoid this by being mindful in every moment – during every action or interaction? The simple answer to Pratap's forgetfulness was the need to be more mindful. Once Pratap started doing mindfulness practices for

'Clearing the Space', his 'memory' began to improve.

On the energy level, mindfulness practice benefits us with awareness in our lives that enable us:

1. Become aware of the inner purpose – distinguish that what we do on the outside is not everything in our lives
2. Prioritize Action over Activity -- Action originates from the power of being in the current moment and therefore it gives the doer a calm approach and has positive results associated with it. On the other hand, activity brings restlessness and frenzy without any gain within and without.
3. Experience conscious presence in every situation – be able to set aside thoughts of the past or future and be available with the inner purpose.

—Dr. Bhulakshmi V and Ms. Bhuvaneshwari Ravi

The authors are facilitators of the Positive Energy (PE) program for corporate professionals, leaders, and teacher leaders. With years of exposure to spiritual practices like yoga, reiki, and personal development interventions like coaching, the authors are working in the Organization Development and Leadership Development space. The Positive Energy Program intervention is offered by GapSkills Learning Solutions. You can contact them at info@gapskills.com to design a customized intervention for your organization or to join the PE open program - www.gapskills.com.

New face to the age old work

“I was encouraged and given opportunities by CSIM to know more people in the social work sector. I participated in structured fundraising programmes like Battle of the Buffet and this helped me to raise funds for my organisation.”

Here is the story of someone who has once again proved that nurturing individuals in an atmosphere of concern for the poor and excluded can empower the society. Ms. Vanitha Chinnasamy, Founder Trustee, Aanand Charitable Trust, Chennai recalled all her observations of her parents and grandparents who were into charity for a long time. “Being in medical profession, they were able to adjudge the need for extra care and help for those who cannot afford or comprehend all the treatment procedures remarks Vanitha, who felt that her family’s work was largely adhoc, unorganized and could make a greater impact if implemented in a systematic manner. Here lies the foundation of this trust.

Hailing from Andhra Pradesh, her academic credentials are spread across three disciplines – Public Administration, Social Work, and Law. She completed her Master’s Degree in Public Administration in Andhra Pradesh. Her relocation to Chennai after marriage did affect her social interests in terms of getting started with a formal set up. Nevertheless, she always kept her channels open for learning. She attended a number of Diploma courses, participated in various seminars and workshops, all of which sharpened her idea of starting her own non-profit organization. During the same time, her engagements in multiple initiatives earned her the membership with Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Red Cross, Human Rights groups, Lions Club, Helpage India and many others.

Interestingly, Vanitha completed her masters in Social Work and the degree in Law only a few years back, after her children joined college. She does not regret the big gap post her wedding. “It gave me quality time to prepare myself to do what I have always wanted to do she says. With the support of her husband and family, she began with her family’s forte – organizing medical camps in rural areas. This gave her the confidence to start her own social enterprise and led to the establishment of the Trust in 2007. “All things fell into place just after I returned from my holyland she smiles.

Vanitha came to know about CSIM through a friend and underwent the four-month Social Entrepreneurship Outlook Programme. “I was encouraged and given opportunities to know more people in the social work sector. I participated in structured fundraising programmes like



Battle of the Buffet and this helped me to raise funds for my organisation. The idea of her own trust was strongly backed by her observations of people being exploited in some circumstances, during the process of serving them, defeating the very purpose of such groups coming into existence. “Such intimidating scenes disturbed me and I decided to start something on my own to reach out to people who are in need,” she says.

Vanitha seems to be extremely wary about institutions that just come around to take the stories from people here and walk away. “There is a lot of work going on at multiple levels. Yet, the change we all dream of seems to be distant. This calls for effective monitoring at the grassroot level she emphasizes. Every time she went for the camps or other programmes, she had insisted the people to participate in different programmes and gift themselves a new opportunity.

Aanand Charitable Trust, located in Padi at Chennai, focuses on women, children

and the aged. Inspired by Vanitha’s work, many of her friends and onlookers have come forward to support the Trust. Children come to the centre for studying in the evening; they also attend the training programmes organized periodically – on personality development and other soft skills. Those found eligible for sponsorships are also helped with. The drop out students are counseled and encouraged to get back to school, with help if required.

Vanitha feels that the platform provided by CSIM is the main reason behind what Aanand Charitable Trust is today. “CSIM has given us that visibility which we ourselves might not have been able to create. Wherever we go, donors and other friends know about us and come forward to devise programmes for our beneficiaries. Presently, there are 60 children who are supported regularly by our centre. Their educational, medical and other expenses are maintained through contributions sourced from individuals. The Trust office maintains a record for every child, and updates details related to progress in education/vaccinations/medical treatment.

More than 400 women have benefitted from the medical camps organized by the trust. In the recent medical camp that reached out to 200 people, 13 cataract operations were administered free of cost

and 45 pairs of spectacles have been distributed. The camps organized in collaboration with Dental Foundation were also a success, distributing kits to more than 150 people. “Besides contribution from friends and other donors what is more encouraging for us is to see people like you and me coming forward to celebrate birthdays, wedding anniversaries and other family occasions with us remarks Vanitha who makes it a point to celebrate birthdays of women and children at the centre, with special invitees on board, eventually turning out to contribute for the Trust’s work.

Simple and consistent efforts from her side are only complemented by her belief that genuine work will always find its way out. “It just has to go through the grind and the system says Vanitha.

Vanitha has a dream very close to her heart – establishing a home for the aged in Hyderabad, where her parents were running a clinic several years ago. She is also convinced about introducing the co-existence of paid and unpaid services model in this home so that the maintenance charges are met through internal sourcing of funds.

Lets wish Vanitha all the very best!

—Shanmuga Priya.T

Milk Gandhi

Dr Reddy founded Akshayakalpa as a social enterprise in Tiptur, Karnataka, to promote rural agro based enterprises.

A Lecture session makes him a Gandhian

Reverse migration is the need of the hour to realize the Gandhian dream of Swaraj. Dr Reddy has moved from walk to talk. He has re-engineered the rural and urban bridge through a prosperous rural entrepreneurship model.

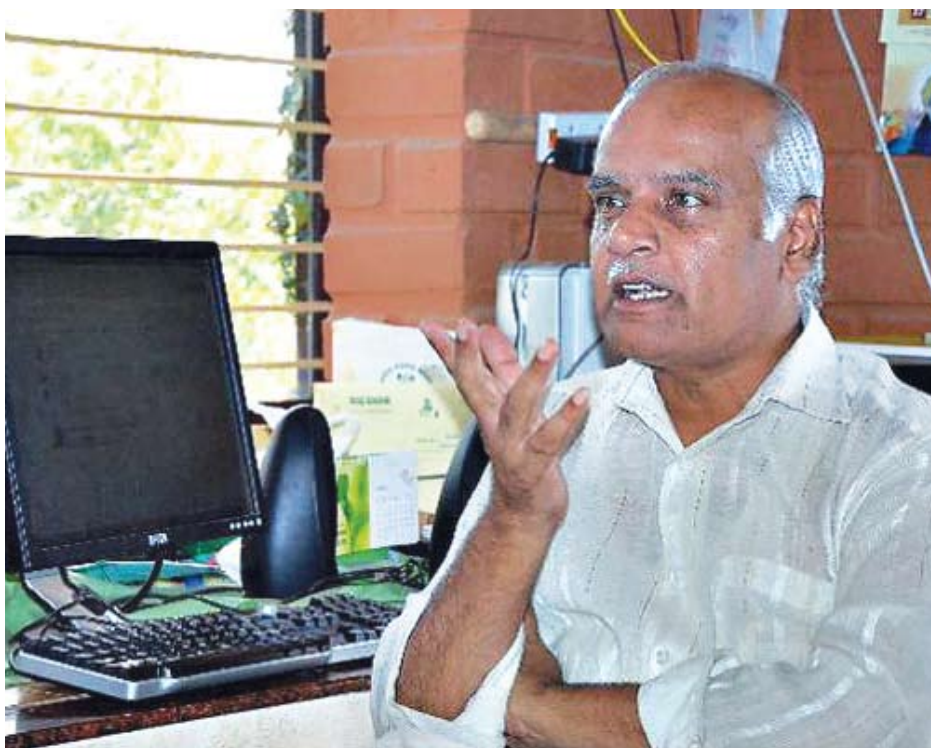
Farmers parting land and their children migrating to urban areas in elusive search of prosperous white collar jobs agitated DR G.NS Reddy, a veterinarian by qualification and spirit. As a student, his immersion into Gandhian in Spirits was triggered by one of the lectures of Dr. Manibai Desai.

Dr Manibai Desai joined Mahatma Gandhi during the Quit India Movement. In August 1945, on an invitation from Gandhiji, he went to Sevagram Ashram in Wardha where he was influenced by Gandhiji's views on Gram Swarajya. In 1946, Gandhiji established the Nature Cure Ashram at Urulikanchan and entrusted the responsibility to Manibai. During the next 47 years, Manibhaiji promoted nature cure as a reliable solution for community health and also established BAIF Development Research Foundation, an organization committed to sustainable development of Rural India.

It is not surprising that Dr Reddy joined BAIF. His baptism in BAIF and influence of Late Manibhaiji and the contextual necessity resulted in the birth of Akshayakalpa Farms and Foods Pvt. Ltd., probably the first dairy industry to produce organic milk involving farmers in the State of Karnataka.

Do we really know Milk?

Milk is a misunderstood product in our country today and it is shocking that we drink a white adulterated liquid in the name 'milk'. In the National Survey conducted by the Food Safety and Standards of Authority of India (FSSAI) to ascertain the quality of milk throughout the country, 68.4% samples were found to be non-conforming to Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Daman and Diu, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal and Mizoram returned 100% non-conforming samples while Goa and Puducherry returned nil adulterated samples. But, unconsciously



or consciously we are patronizing without even knowing the harmful effect of such milk. It is sickening that detergent is one of the ingredients that go into adulteration.

Unfortunately, in the urbanized world, the cow has become a machine producing a white fluid that looks like milk. The cowherd in cities milks the cows in the morning and allows the cows to graze on all kinds of filth on the streets, only to milk them again in the evening. Further, the cows are administered hormones to improve its productivity and is fed with cattle feed that is actually harmful to its health. The cow is also the recipient of indiscriminate dispensation of antibiotics. To make matters worse, the milk itself is highly prone to serious contamination in our country. Anything that can dissolve in water—soda, soaps, detergents, urea, are added to milk to make it thicker!

What is Organic Milk?

We need to applaud Dr G.N.S Reddy, as he relentlessly speaks about milk and defines organic milk as Amrita to differentiate our understanding of milk. The audience size does not deter him, and

the magnitude of milk adulteration bothers him. It is important why organic milk is wholesome, different from our regular milk. The merits of raw organic milk which enhances our immune systems and keeps doctors away needs to be understood by us. Most urbanity will come out of ignorance and consciously reduce the damage they are unconsciously doing to our environment. With Dr Reddy's wake up call, we can also do something to reverse it as there will be multiple benefits. Our children will carry on a positive attitude towards environment; and will support cow milk and cow spiritually.

Organic milk will not have traces of pesticides, antibiotics, administered hormones or adulterants. In organic dairy farms, cows are not subjected to any stress. They are not tied, and have free access to food and water. They are provided with rubber mattresses to avoid hard surfaces and are fed with only green based diets.

Antibiotic traces in milk make children resistant to treatment by doctors and hormone traces will make young children grow disproportionate to their age, creating a lot of health and social

problems. But, organic milk will have a beneficial effect on growing children.

Milk Gandhi

Dr Reddy founded Akshayakalpa as a social enterprise in Tiptur, Karnataka, to promote rural agro based enterprises.

If farming becomes an enterprise, it is sustainable and that calls for shaping each farmer as an independent entrepreneur and enterprise on par with his city based counterpart. The goal is to improve the quality of life in villages making it attractive for the young educated youth to choose agriculture as a way of life.

This is possible only by creating adequate cash flow in the hands of the farmers, who otherwise would be deprived of basic income to meet their daily needs. Consequence of not doing this could result in extremism.

Dr Reddy's thought process got support from IT professionals, well-meaning experts from all walks of life who wanted to make a difference. They expressed that agri-produce should not be sold as raw material for processing at a different location as this will take away jobs and capital from rural areas.

"Many villages will become either old-age homes or deserted places if there is no early intervention technology and captive investment in the agriculture sector," says Shashi Kumar.

Shashi is not a traditional farmer, but a postgraduate from Illinois University, United States of America. He was Lead Architect with Wipro Technologies and left his lucrative job a year ago in order to be part of an initiative to set up organic dairy farms in rural areas of Hassan and Tumkur districts.

"Organic milk is produced in exclusively designed automated dairy farms. The capital investment is 21 lakh rupees per farm. We are in the process of setting up several of these farms. Farmers are paid a price higher than the regular milk. At present, the quantity of milk is also less, leading to very high overhead costs," says Shashi.

"More importantly, organic milk cannot be compared to regular milk. They are two different products with different values as food items. We maintain cold chain to preserve the milk at 4 degrees from the

point of production to the consumer's door. Each and every farm is provided with chillers so that the milk is not exposed to higher temperatures at any time in the product cycle. This makes it the safest milk in the market. Organic raw chilled milk has a higher nutritional value than the regular pasteurized milk," he adds.

In Akshayakalpa's organic raw chilled milk there will be neither bacterial nor heat degeneration of protein. The bio-protectants rich in raw milk remain intact and there is a higher availability of vitamins and minerals. Organic milk is rich in omega 3 fatty acids.

Bridging the Urban-rural divide through "Go Dhan"

We in urban areas can drink organic milk, but we should partner in scaling up its production. We cannot buy land but we can partner as an investor and we need to do it for the sake of our children and for our nation's prosperity. It is simple—partner with Akshayakalpa! It makes both business and health sense.

Traditionally, our parents and grandparents worshipped the *Gomatha* or the "Sacred Cow" for centuries. It is sad our children have neither association with cow, nor the value or emotional connect with *Kamadhenu*, the "Celestial Cow". Western science is now doing research on the value of cow worship and cow urine. The patented input would probably enhance our belief system.

Akshayakalpa Farms and Foods Pvt. Ltd., attempts to transform life in villages by creating wealth, reducing drudgery using high levels of automation and mechanization, implementing hygienic methods of production of very high quality organic milk and milk products, and ensuring that customers are supplied highly nutritive milk in a cold chain. Akshayakalpa has come up with an



innovative instrument to involve the urban populace in this movement. In the olden days, a herd of cows was always an important asset class that a Grihastha was expected to own. In fact, ownership of cows was considered a sign of prosperity. The cow has been at the centre of any auspicious family function or a village fair.

'You' as an Innoventurer

Here is an opportunity for individuals—"Go Dhan"—to own cows and enjoy its

milk in its purest form with the help of Akshayakalpa's managed services for years!

You need not be agriculturist to hold land or do cultivation, but be a business partner with a farmer and get tax free return.

If you are spiritual, be part of Sanathana Dharma and even otherwise you will make farming a more profitable and honorable profession.

Farmers have challenge in raising bank finance. Like the Noble Laureate Mohamed Yunus who brought a change to Bangladesh, Akshayakalpa becomes the new Grameen bank with your partnering as an investor.

The process is as follows:

- The Go Dhan bank model collects a trade deposit of one Lakh rupees for Akshayakalpa
- Akshayakalpa will use this money to fund one cow equivalent part of an organic farm.

- Investors gets one liter of highly nutritive organic milk every day for 10 years.
- The return is approximately 18% per annum and the price is fixed for the next ten years.
- Akshayakalpa will be legally bound with the responsibility of ensuring that the money is invested well and organic milk is delivered at your doorstep every day for the ten years.
- The deposit is renewable.

Emotive connect and societal revolution Can we partner in this social revolution in the selfish interest of our health and our children's health and also as altruism of farmer prosperity and reduce the divide between rural and urban India?

By being a member of Akshayakalpa, you get to visit the cow farm, emotively connect with your cow.

Spread a word about this program in your community, company, clubs, etc. Let us be stress free by drinking stress free milk and patronizing the other value adds!

—S.Deenadayalan and Chitra Avinandan

Editorial

Latha Suresh
Marie Banu

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INITIATIVE AND MANAGEMENT



Centre for Social Initiative and Management (CSIM) is a unit of Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani. It is a learning centre that promotes the concept of social entrepreneurship. **CSIM offers training and consultancy to social enterprises – for-profits and**

non-profits – to facilitate them to apply successful business practices and yet retain their social mission. It also offers training and hand holding support to prospective social entrepreneurs and enable them to launch their social initiatives. CSIM operates in Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

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CSIM also facilitates Social Audit for social enterprises through Social Audit Network, UK and SAN, India.

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Minding the Mind



When The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health (BALM) was established by Banyan in 2007, the objective of establishing this “strategic initiative” lay in the desire to take on a more academic approach towards mental health. In doing so, what the NGO also planned to achieve was a three-pronged approach (dissemination of The Banyan’s work, increase human resource and train future personnel) to furthering its cause. “The plan was to keep the focus on mental health and social action towards the same,” says Mirjam Dijkxhoorn, Deputy Director of BALM. With a specific focus on mental health and conducting extensive research on the same, the initiative has today, come a long way.

“Working at BALM since 2008 has been a whole new experience for me,” says Mirjam who is the Deputy Director of the initiative since 2010. “The fact that we get a chance to research, publish articles, and utilize forums like seminars to express our findings goes on to give the work we do that extra fillip,” she says. What an initiative like BALM has also managed to do, is provide an academic platform for the kind of work that we do, and thus allow

“The one area that makes BALM’s work in mental health truly special is its non-clinical approach towards researching the same.”

education to takeoff in a big way.

BALM has initiated the Institute of Mental Health, Social Sciences and Transdisciplinary Research (IMHST) in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and VU University Amsterdam, which offers an MA programme in Social Work (Mental Health) and is preparing to start another MA programme in Social Work and Counselling which is expected to commence in the coming year. But the academic prowess of the organization aside, it’s the major contributions to government schemes

that have won it many a laurel. The most noteworthy of these is the feasibility study that it conducted last year, on the central government’s MNREGA scheme. “Our study focused on inclusion of differently abled people under this scheme, including working on suggesting what would be suitable working hours for such personnel,” says Mirjam. The results of the feasibility study were then handed over to the government, which is now actively looking at its implementation. However, the bigger indication of its great rapport with the government – undoubtedly an

endorsement of its work – has been the manner in which The Banyan’s clients are not necessarily relocating to government run health centers, but are co-locating mental health clinics in government run centres, which are accessible to anyone in the community.

The one area that makes BALM’s work in mental health truly special is its non-clinical approach towards researching the same. “We study the social factors involved in mental wellbeing,” says Mirjam. She continues: “Our studies focus on what kind of role society plays in shaping the mental makeup of the individual, and how his or her mental framework changes based on the society he lives in. Many studies at BALM are action research studies, by implementing programmes on the ground and studying it’s implications during implementation.” In the process of this non-clinical-yet-academic approach towards researching and understanding mental health better, BALM has also managed to enhance The Banyan’s understanding of mental health. Proof of this lies in the many training programmes for The Banyan that it has organized; even going on to help implement these programmes. The

seminars that it has conducted have thrown light on various burning topics like Social Entitlements and Mental Health Issues, Perspectives of Mental Illness in India, The Role of Faith Healing in Mental Healthcare, Human Rights and Mental Health Institutions and Media and Mental Illness.

A well-thought-out structure with customized steps to ensure the right approach towards mental healthcare includes the following strategies: Contextual Analysis, Strategy formulation, Partner visits and exchange of ideas, Creation of a Training, Capacity-building and Implementation plan, Monitoring and Evaluation of impact and fine tuning of practices, and Hand Holding and Phase off. BALM has also partnered with the Chennai chapter of the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) until 2012, and is also in the process of integrating Mental Health Services into FPAI’s urban community level clinic (Chennai Corporation’s Health post). The target group of such an initiative includes people with mental illness, their caregivers, the community, community-level workers, general practitioners and government health facilities. Other partnerships with

Catholic Relief Services and Missionaries of Charity have also helped further the cause of BALM, allowing it to care for inmates of the Missionaries of Charity Home in Kolkata, also engaging in their rehabilitation – work that will continue even after BALM’s role ends.

Through its efforts, two goals continue to remain atop its list of priorities: to expand access to mental healthcare and increase active participation the mental health sector. However, Mirjam herself believes that the drive to research some more, is no doubt, the biggest goal at hand. “There’s no doubt that continuing to engage in research is a priority,” she says, “international research grants are being given for it, and there’s a whole lot of encourage to conduct extensive research in mental healthcare, today.” Needless to say, with research, strong emphasis is also laid on publishing articles and information dissemination. However, another area that Mirjam hopes BALM will focus on is the introduction of diploma courses, in addition to the already-existing MA courses at the IMHST academy. “They will really go on to make a difference towards education in mental healthcare,” she adds.

19-year old eco-innovator Param Jaggi's vision to save the world through his company EcoViate

When Param Jaggi was little, he had a passion to break things to figure out what was on the inside. He started with his toys. At five he broke a computer. His parents were not too pleased. He's 19 now, and still walks around with a screwdriver in his pocket, and the joy of breaking things to reveal its guts remains undimmed. While Jaggi continued to break stuff most of his childhood, there's been one small change. Somewhere in middle school he moved from just breaking stuff to building things. Most of them were some crazy projects that he cooked up in his makeshift kitchen laboratory. For his first project he tried his hand at making bio-fuels. He did this by first making ethanol from materials that he had borrowed from his school laboratory, and then mixing the ethanol with diesel.

Soon, there were more such experiments, and once bitten by the possibilities, he was unable to quit. "Facebook and Twitter are great, but they don't solve real world problems like that of the energy crisis or the ozone problem. Being self-driven and using that great resource which is Google, I went online and figured out most of what I wanted to learn," says Jaggi.

His parents thought all the experiments were a boyhood fancy and he would tire of it. And even though his father was an engineer, the dream was for him to become a doctor. Jaggi, already very passionate about environment related problems, was adamant about becoming an engineer. Luckily his parents came around and the result of Jaggi's short journey has been nothing short of amazing. Jaggi wanted to go beyond his school projects and make a real dent in the world by commercializing all the work that he was doing. By now he had sold his innovative bio-fuel preparation method to a Fortune 500 company. At age 17, he launched Ecoviate along with Jonny Cohen, an research and development company that uses technology to solve everyday energy and environmental problems. He has already raised \$20,000 from angel investors, and plans to change the perception that going green is an expensive proposition, by making available a series of affordable products that are easy to use.

Jaggi is fascinated with carbon dioxide and how it can be reduced through carbon capture. "When you look at carbon capture, there haven't been big breakthroughs and there remain many challenges. The solutions will be a combination of many technologies. I love environment tech and want to do many things but I'm particularly interested in how energy can be captured from carbon emissions," adds Jaggi. Initially, interested



in both consumer and industrial sectors, through Ecoviate Jaggi focuses on designing consumer products. They already have a few prototypes in the works, which they hope to test, commercialize and launch by January 2014.

One of them is a patented contraption, called "CO2ube" that can be fitted to the tailpipe of any motor vehicle, which seeks to reduce carbon emissions by as much as 50 per cent. Here's how it works. Exhaust fumes from the car are passed through a live colony of algae, where photosynthesis occurs, thereby converting the carbon dioxide to oxygen and sugar, which is then released through the exit port. For this invention Jaggi was recognized by Forbes in their 30 under 30 (energy) 2012 list of young achievers when he was just 17 years old. He also figures in the same Forbes list in 2013 as well.

CO2ube is in the process of being of independently tested and verified by the environmental protection agency (EPA) in the US. Jaggi's second invention, a smart watch cashes in on the current trend of wearable technologies. It traps body heat

and converts it into energy, which can be used to power up the watch, and is also used to charge mobile phones through a USB. There are more such products in the pipeline.

Young Jaggi, who is in his third year of college studying engineering and economics at Vanderbilt University at Nashville, Tennessee, has a wise head on his shoulder. Now that he has become a famous eco-innovator and his company has picked up good momentum, I ask him whether he plans on dropping out of college. "I'm undecided. The option was available earlier when we were close to raising \$250,000 round in funding. We opted out of raising the round as I did not have structured plan that was executable. But after going through the incubation program at Auto Xlerator I learned more about entrepreneurship and things like a P&L (profit and loss account) and such," explains Jaggi. Now that he's ready, EcoViate is in the process of raising another round of funding that will be anything between \$500,000 to a \$1 million. It will allow them to open an

independent laboratory, set up a manufacturing facility and hire full-time engineers and designers. Currently they are getting by with the help of six young college graduates who work part-time.

Jaggi's vision to save the environment goes beyond creating products. EcoViate will soon launch an online platform that will encourage young students interested in science and technology to get actively involved in innovation and invention. Like submitting stories on Reddit, students can submit a science project online, and talk about the help that they need to make the project a reality. It is collaborative environment where somebody with an idea can find others who want to help with the execution. Jaggi and his team will also cherry-pick some of the biggest projects and help the submitter build the projects.

Follow his journey here as he goes from teenager to young adult.

—Nelson Vinod Moses
Editor, SocialStory.

The story was first published on www.social.yourstory.in

Finding families for the abandoned

“Karna Prayag Trust valued the gift of family to each child, and so began working on an adoption process.”

As we all can see, children in India are denied even the very basic right to family under various circumstances. Whether it is child labour or broken families or abusive conditions of life, children have been forced to compromise their childhood and their right to a loving and caring family. Karna Prayag Trust strives to change this situation in its own way, focusing specifically on children who are abandoned.

A small child was found abandoned at a hospital, soon after her birth. Her parents disappeared, making it impossible to trace as they left behind a fictitious address. The child was then brought to Karna Prayag Trust, where she was named Sita and given in adoption for a childless couple of Indian origin from Germany. Seven years later, when Sita came back to the Trust to see where she had come from, another girl called Meena was befriended by the family. Eventually, Meena was also adopted by the couple as Sita insisted in having a sister. Today, Sita is a web designer, married, and has a daughter named Tara. Recently, Sita and her husband came to the Trust to gift Tara with a brother. This is just one of the stories that Karna Prayag has made in the lives of people across generations.

Formally registered in 2003, Karna Prayag Trust in Chennai has been serving as a reception home for children who are abandoned under different circumstances—at hospitals soon after birth, at railway stations, shopping malls, bus stands, etc. “The Police, Government hospitals and even individuals bring to us these tiny helpless little babies, who have been abandoned by their parents for one reason or another,” says Sheela Jayanthi, Director of Karna Prayag Trust.

“It all started in 1980 as a unit to receive and care for infants who were brought for admission to the Chatnath Homes SOS Children’s Village orphanage in Tambaram. Unexpectedly, we soon had couples knocking at our doors requesting to take a child in adoption. Why restrict a child to institutional care when there was a family waiting to accept the child as their own?” adds Sheela.

Karna Prayag Trust valued the gift of family to each child, and so began working on an adoption process. The Trust was declared as a fit institution by the Juvenile Welfare Board in 1992, and was authorized to carry out in-country and inter-country adoptions. Upon reception of infants, they are taken care of until they are ready for adoption, by a committed team that consists of a Neonatal Pediatrician, Nutritionist and Occupational Physiotherapists.

On receiving an infant, the Trust simultaneously handles the task of

personal care for the child and processing papers to establish Indian identity of the child, followed by formal papers like relevant court orders, registered birth affidavit, passport and other documentation through the relevant legal and Government systems. The child’s medical problems are also dealt with extreme care and expertise. Every child has a medical record that is updated periodically, covering the time from reception to adoption.

With couples wishing to adopt, the Trust registers them and processes their adoption papers through home study, counseling, personal interviews and identification of the right child. These processes are managed by a team of social workers, counselors and an adoption committee. The children are first placed on foster care with the family until all the requisite clearances are obtained, and then the process is completed with legalization.

Every child’s story here moves your heart. How they find their way to Karna Prayag is another sobriest rendition. For instance, Bina was a child rescued from a shopping bag that was checked in safe keeping. The security had contacted the police after waiting an entire day to see if

someone came up to claim the child. The police finally brought Bina to the Trust. Today, this child means everything for a joint family in Chennai.

Karna Prayag Trust embarked on new responsibilities as the needs emerged. They reached out to more people who needed care - pregnant women who had nowhere to go and young women who sought training in infant care. “We started educational programs for young mothers on affordable nutrition, simple hygiene and immunization routines. We publicized the adoption option and legal procedures that were involved, and also on the importance of girl children.”

In 2007, the Trust started a day care centre to focus on integral development of



pre-school and after-school children of working mothers from the neighbourhood. Functioning on all working days, the centre has a programme worked out to meet the physical, cognitive and social development of the children through play way method. In addition to all these ongoing activities, the trust makes it a point to bring annually prospective parents

and parents with adopted children together, giving an opportunity for the audience to discuss out stereotypes and taboos pertaining to adoption.

Having learnt this holistic approach devised by the trust’s team and the difference it has been making in the last few decades, it is no surprise that they are a recipient of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister’s Award for Social Service in the field of Child Welfare. Their services continue to add smiles in the lives of abandoned children and childless couples alike.

An intake of more than 1000 infants, mostly girls who are placed in adoption, with a few taken back by the biological families is a record that any onlooker might recollect with awe!

—Shanmuga Priya.T

Conversations with Shri Ramana Maharishi

A Swami belonging to Sri Ramakrishna Mission had a very interesting conversation with Sri Bhagavan in the course of which Sri Bhagavan observed:

M.: Avidya (ignorance) is the obstacle for knowing your true nature even at the present moment.

D.: How is one to get over Avidya?

M.: *Ya na vidyate sa avidya* (What is not, is avidya). So it is itself a myth. If it really be, how can it perish? Its being is false and so it disappears.

D.: Although I understand it intellectually, I cannot realise the Self.

M.: Why should this thought disturb your present state of realisation.

D.: The Self is One, but yet I do not find myself free from the present trouble.

M.: Who says this? Is it the Self which is only one? The question contradicts itself.

D.: Grace is necessary for realisation.

M.: Inasmuch as you, being a man, now understand that there is a higher power guiding you, it is due to Grace. Grace is within you. *Isvaro gururatmeti* (Isvara, Guru and the Self are synonymous).

D.: I pray for that Grace.

M.: Yes, yes.

—Excerpted from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*



Three words as default that have connected to people playing HR role in any organization has been motivation – inspiration – passion. These three are also the words that have been most mixed-up and used mistakenly for organization development. We need to clearly articulate the meaning as well as understand to what extent these words are relevant to the world in the next decade and their relevance in social organization.

Apart from the dictionary meaning of motivation – inspiration and passion, it also means that motivation and inspiration are being externally anchored while passion is more internally anchored. Motivation is more transient and requires a frequent dose every now and then to keep the person interested in what one is doing. For this is to be more long lasting and deeper both the motivator and the motivated have to be powerful. Inspiration is much deeper and has higher level of involvement of the person. Yet, the stimulant object or person or event is outside. Most of the times the power and depth of the motivation and inspiration is directly proportional to the power and depth of the motivating object, person or event. Therefore, sustenance is a

Belongingness Dimensions – kindling and sustaining passion

“Ignore what a man desires and you ignore the very source of his power.” - W. Lippmann

question since many factors are not in one’s control.

On the other hand, Passion is triggered from within and the source remains connected to something that is anchored within. Therefore, the sustenance is also within one’s control. Organizations of today have stepped into the era of consciousness (Kalpana Sampath, 2006). The employees of next decade are GenY and Z. They are in a totally different league when compared GenX of yester years. The word motivation is largely influenced by Maslow’s hierarchy of needs since 1940’s in the management arena. Many have got stuck and not moved from there much. Even Herzberg’s hygiene theory has failed to answer the situations of current organization scenario. Since last five decades we have been talking of motivating people forgetting that the people today seek higher order needs. When that happens what was considered as a bonus factor earlier has become the minimum expectation (Kalpana Sampath, 2005).

In a study conducted by The Ken Blanchard Companies, the findings revealed that organizations wanting to create an environment where people have job commitment need to ensure that their creative, talented people see their work as meaningful. Second, organizations will want to create an environment where people have autonomy and feel able to make the decisions that influence the quality of their work instead of having leaders making most of the choices for them. Finally, and importantly, organizations will want to ensure that opportunities for

Task Variety are present, meaning that an individual’s work should not be so repetitive that it does not stimulate thought and require attentiveness. There is an intrinsic quality bringing about a need for perspective change in the way we see motivation, inspiration and passion. Organizations like Google have understood that unless their people are not given space to pursue their passion, they are not intrinsically inspired and motivated. The efforts of HR, therefore, to ensure sustenance of the high spirit of the members has to go into identifying, understanding and kindling their passion. The alignment of the personal vision and organizational vision is an inevitable factor. For this to happen they have to ensure the employees are aware and have good enough clarity on their personal vision. They have the feeling of ownership and belongingness to organizational vision.

Motivation and Inspiration are more challenging in a social organization. There is no dearth for passion amongst the founders and people who have joined voluntarily and have clarity that they are working for a cause. But many a time for the other staff it has to be accepted that work may be just a job that enables them to take care of their family and life. They may have no great empathy or connection to the cause that the social organization may be working for. This causes value conflicts, affects the decision making process and speed of the organizational functioning. The onus of understanding these staff, helping them identify their passion and vision in life and supporting them to connect to organizational vision, vests on HR and

team leaders. In a social organization due to sheer size and resource availability there may not be exclusive HR function and people. Then, the team leaders have to play the HR role and become the conscious keepers of the vision and values of the organization. If their focus is motivation, they have to continually keep pumping in the stimulants to motivate and inspire them. But if they spend time in knowing their people and providing space for kindling their passion they will have intrinsically happy and contributing employees who connect to the vision of the organization in their own ways.

A chicken and a pig were having a discussion. The chicken said, “I am committed to giving one egg every day.”

“That’s not commitment,” the pig said. “That’s just participation. Giving bacon, now, THAT’s commitment!”

Commitment is sustained by passion. The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is the extra and that comes for the passion.

Reflections:

1. What are the mechanisms that exist in my organization that taps people’s passion?
2. What are the spaces available in the organizational processes for one to pursue their passion?
3. To what extent do learning and development processes in my organization kindle and deepen the passion of the employees towards their vision?
4. How much do I keep fueling my passion for my vision in my life?

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath, PhD.

Coffee to go?

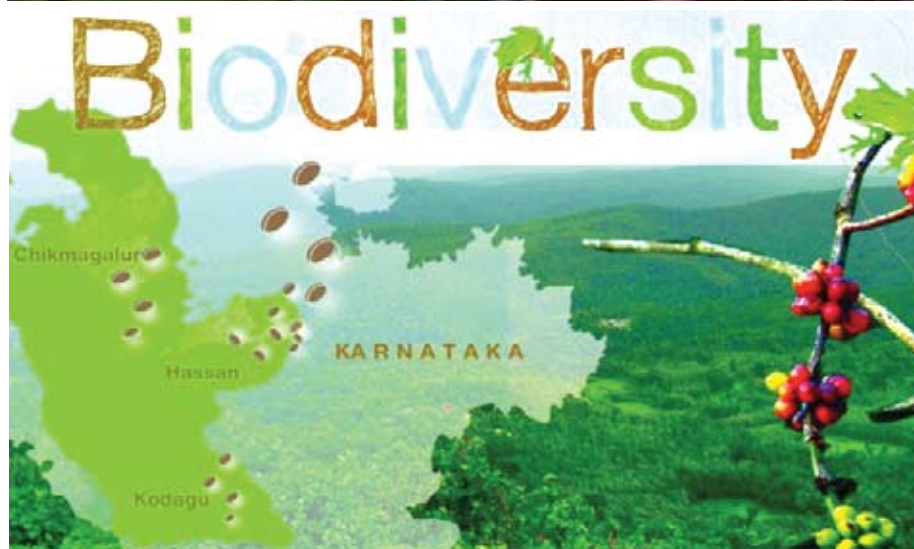
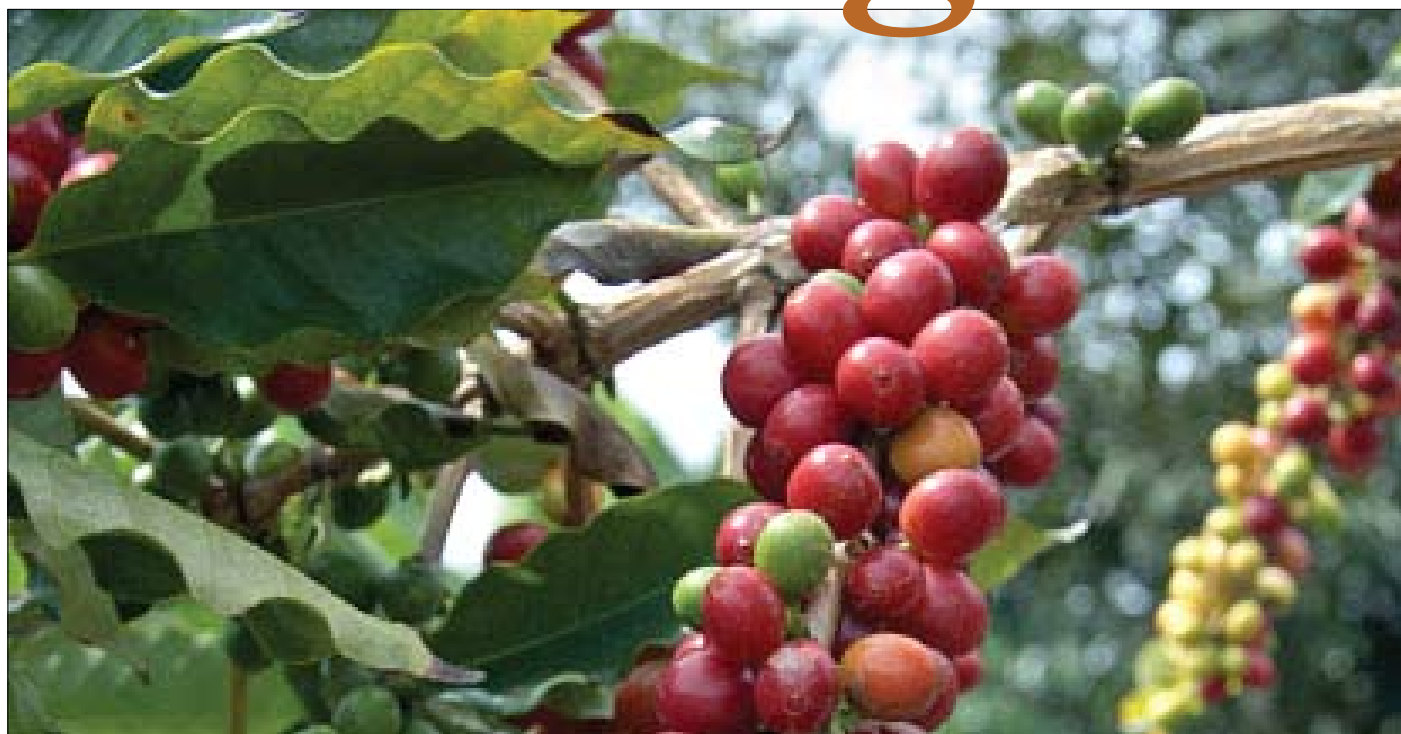
A historic and unprecedented event at the COP 11 (CBD) Conference in October 2012 was the release of a landmark report, “Coffee to go? The vital role of coffee towards ecosystem services and livelihoods” by Pavan Sukhdev, the lead author of the TEEB report and UNEP’S goodwill ambassador. The fact is that the report was undertaken at the request of the Karnataka’s largest growers federation-KGF-in partnership with Centre for Social Markets (a non-profit organization with a solid track record for over a decade in addressing the triple bottom line - of planet, people and prosperity). The study captures the role of Indian Coffee towards ecosystem services from all the three districts of Karnataka and has been prepared with support from the Coffee Board and the leading coffee business that has been initiated and led by farmers.

A snapshot of the report and its implication

The ubiquitous cup of coffee is characterized by massive economies of global production, consumption and trade. The economic value and the significant contribution of coffee to the State of Karnataka are formidable. Coffee is the largest agricultural export for the State which ranks Number one in coffee production in India. However, a dark cloud has been negatively impacting the very survival of coffee because of the climatic change that is unleashing havoc on the coffee and the economy of the State of Karnataka.

The shade grown coffee in Karnataka is not only a significant contributor to the revenue and livelihood of the State, but the Agro Forest practice of shade Coffee (Coffee agro system is second only to forests in maintaining the flow of bio diversity and ecosystem services) is simultaneously a critical contributor to the Western Ghat ecology, because of its symbiotic relationship with the fragile ecosystem that is a one of the bio-diversity hot spots of the world. These play a critical role as the guardian of the monsoon in Peninsular India provides life sustenance to more than 245 million people through its river system that originates and flows Eastward draining into the Bay of Bengal (Cauvery, and Ganges). The Ghat is also home to hundreds of mammals, birds and amphibians, some being rare and threatened to extinction.

Shade Coffee, by its very practice, is a natural mitigate from a climate threat perspective and some of the century old practices of the coffee growers are classic practices of climatic adaptation. However, a combination of factors, namely the Transformation of the market and production system of Coffee, is battering the Coffee producers, majority being small



producers. Another factor of climatic variance is that it brings unprecedented diseases, unpredictable and erratic weather that causes very low or excessive rains including powerful gales that wipes out precious trees and devastates the Coffee farmers profoundly.

Squeezed and scissored between market and changing patterns in the monsoon, in which the small grower has least power, the grower has started to feel no incentive at all to continue the struggle in growing coffee. The grower who has always played the role of a positive guardian of the Coffee agro system is feeling alienated, frustrated and wiped out. The vulnerability of the grower and the larger vulnerability of the Coffee economy are intertwined with ecological vulnerability of the Western Ghats only further accentuated by climate change. The dark clouds of

Climate change which can unleash havoc comprehensively for now and the very near future across economy, ecology, sacred culture and society are all at cross roads and need not be a story of doom. This crisis’s can show us a way that is opportunistic, creative, and solution driven.

The short study on and about Coffee economy and ecology has given us more than a sneak preview of the vulnerability of Coffee economy and its surrounding environment, but it also identifies the benefits that can be harvested and accrued with smart interventions along with enlisting range of stake holders. If the sector should flourish forward strategies must be put into action without any delay.

First step - The way forward and an action plan

- Undertake an in-depth vulnerability

assessment along with the suite of the economics of ecosystem services and biodiversity in coffee growing districts. Include clear suggestions and recommendations for more guided investment in conservation with multiple benefits, practical as well as policy actions for the State and Central Government, and those involved in coffee business.

- Capitalise on the new wave of awareness and willingness among global consumers who are willing to pay more price in order to conserve coffee.
- Use the story Coffee agro forest as a battering ram against climate change and weapons of mitigation and adaptive practices
- Take steps that intrinsically include grower’s needs. To offer incentive schemes for conserving native habitat within agricultural matrix, which generates financial rewards. If urgent action is not taken, it would lead to monetary loss to the economy of the State and Centre and colossal loss to employment and livelihood.
- Develop an action-oriented advocacy plan that will increase the voice, ability, capacity of the growers at the grassroots and also build sustainable institutional change for the key stake holders.

In the end, we seek to inform more progressive climate change adaptation policies and strategies in India in the interest of the small producer.

—Pushpanath Krishnamurthy

“Unless the nation regains its cultural identity, it has no identity.”

Shri V. Shankar
tells **Marie Banu**
the need for our
children to
imbibe culture.

Shri. V. Shankar is an iconoclastic business leader and entrepreneur. He has made his mark in the field of education and fine arts too. A visionary in his own right and a silent philanthropist, Shri. Shankar has embarked on his dream project through the Shri Kanchi Mahaswami Vidya Mandir wherein he has introduced a dual education system.

Shri. V Shankar is the President of Shri. Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha Mumbai, a premier cultural institution in India. He is also the President of the South Indian Education Society (SIES), one of the foremost educational institutions in Mumbai.

In an interview Shri V. Shankar tells Marie Banu the need for our children to imbibe culture.

What inspired you to launch Shri Kanchi Mahaswami Vidya Mandir?

Kanchi Paramacharya once lamented: “My devotees will do anything for me. The biggest of the rich are eager to spend a few seconds with me and they would put the world at my feet, if I so choose. But, if I ask a person to send his child to learn Veda, he vanishes the next moment! When they have so much confidence in me as their spiritual messiah, why do they run away from me when I touch this subject?”

“The system of education, which the British foisted in our country 200 years ago, has carefully ensured that it is ‘employment centric’. Ultimately, the process of education is linked to employability of people. The moment you have ensured that the education system caters to the long span of your livelihood, then anything exterior does not find its place. I was absolutely naïve to believe that anyone would give me their child without assuring employability.”

“What would Vedic education have done? Made them Priests? Why would anyone choose to educate his child to become a priest? It is true that Priests are respected because they are learned and know the scriptures. But, does this suffice?”

“Probably, if I would have asked a parent to send his child to pursue a dual system of education, where he can become an engineer/doctor and also be conversant



Photo: Marie Banu

in Vedas, they would have agreed. If only this wisdom had dawned on me earlier, I could have possibly seen how this model works during my lifetime.”

It was this thought of Maha Swami that led me to start this school.

How did you strategize the launch of the school?

After Maha Swami’s lifetime, I pondered over his idea of dual education system and realized the truth behind it. Every morning, from a beggar living in the street to the President of our country—they all complain that the culture of our country has become debased and we have lost our identity. But, nobody seems to be thinking about what could be done. This implies that there is something seriously wrong in all of us!

We believe that we should knock out the system. If we were conscious and considered our system to be more valuable, then we should have preserved it. After losing it and believing that we can survive and maintain our identity is fool hardy. The world has shown us that people who believed in their culture and identity survive. For example: Japanese and Chinese.

Anything compulsive loses its value; anything voluntary arising out of conviction of love and affection adds value. I thought that the dual education model, if made voluntary, will surely succeed.

Take a SWOT analysis of the Vedic

school, and you will find that the threats are more than strengths. A parent would choose to educate his son in a Vedic school as his child would be assured of two square meals a day. Vedic system is not based on documented evidence, but on oral rendition. There are no standards for evaluation, or progressive and continuous assessment of children. The characteristic of a Vedic school is a dingy dark place. It would be the house of a teacher, and the teacher would make the child do more of household work.

I conceived that the dual concept of Paramacharya was subject to several conditions. If we were to set up an English school inside a dingy house, people will surely not send their children to study here. This is the mindset! But, if you give a fabulous school environment and teach Vedas as well, there is a fair chance that people will send their children here.

The first thought that I laid down was: A dual education system should be one where there is no reminiscence of the Vedic school system. It should be run by the school and not by a teacher who is part of the Vedic system—*Guru-Shishya Parampara*. There should be a structured syllabus, scheduled classes, and annual assessments for the student to qualify for the next grade. Therefore, standardization of Vedic education is essential to gain acceptance in the dual education system.

Secondly, Vedic school should be run like any other school. There would be full-time teachers and it would be a residential

school. I believe that the children should not be sent out to absorb the vices of the world.

Are the students differentiated based on the education system they follow?

No. The school does not categorize the students based on whether they are pursuing dual education or not. Those who have enrolled for dual education system attend the CBSE School during the day and learn Vedas before and after school hours. They wear a school uniform when they go to the CBSE School and a *dhoti* when they study at the Vedic School. There is no physical separation, but only a mental separation which divides the schools for these children.

The difference among the children will arise when the children who are part of the dual education showcase their skills by reciting *slokas* or *vedas* during a school event. This will make the other children yearn to learn a whole range of Indian traditions like Yoga, or Bharatanatyam, or Veena. It will have a multiplier effect and be profound.

When children pursuing dual education grow up to become doctors or engineers, they will be identified for their values, humility, and attitude. Wisdom will be built on and others will want to follow this model. The sweep of influence will be far higher. The country will have a wave for this type of education when this model branches out and gets replicated. The Government will then realize the value of this system.

Do you think this model can be replicated in other states?

Each one should customize based on the need. In Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, theatre is dominant. They should therefore combine theatre arts and education. Children can be taught to stage plays. I believe that any art form should be preserved. For example, the tribal lore has a lot of value ingrained in it. We never understood it to appreciate it.

Culture is wrongly connoted to religion. If Vedas is religion, how Sufi Sangeet or Bharatnatyam be accepted as culture? We have our own norms to define culture.

What is your message to our readers?

My message is: “Unless the nation regains its cultural identity, it has no identity.” Today, after so many years of freedom, we have started wondering about what freedom has done to us. A misused freedom or a disused freedom—is no freedom. We are suffering a choice of an elective system that is destroying freedom. So, the solution is not to remove the freedom, but to cure the system, and the system can be cured only when culture is regained.

I have just made the beginning!