Model Village in Telangana

104 toilets constructed, 25,000 trees planted, village pond revived

Presence and activities of The Art of Living brings villagers out of their despair

Seva Times Team

Sriramnagar is a small village in Rangareddy District of Telangana falling under Moosabad Mandal. In late 2015, The Art of Living team in Telangana conducted several padyatras and happiness surveys in almost 300 villages of Telangana, meeting the villagers, listening to their woes, and assessing the living conditions in the villages. Sriramnagar was one of the villages identified by the team to be developed under the 5th Model Village Project designed by Gurudev Sri Ravi Shankar. After the preliminary work was completed, the development work commenced in January 2016. The core team consisted of 10 Art of Living volunteers and a village team of 5 members led by the Sarpanch. The team worked under the guidance of Brahmachari Pushpranjan.

Pertinent Problems

Social disparity: People were divided on the lines of economic conditions, religion, and caste, making it difficult to carry out any developmental projects. The villagers were in need of exposure, guidance and counseling on various matters such as education, jobs, wealth management, litigation, state provisions etc.

Addiction: Addiction to alcohol was on the rise, with men, women, and the village youth coming under its clutches. This led to an increase in domestic violence.

Generation gap: Lack of understanding between the older generation and the youth was creating a lot of discord in the village.

Poor Health and Hygiene: Public health services were almost nil and villagers had to approach private clinics which were costly and far away from the village. Despite the provision of daily waste disposal by the village panchayat, the villagers were not very hygiene conscious. There were no proper dumping grounds. Many drains of the village were either clogged or open. About 450 houses did not have toilets.

Water Scarcity: Given the failure of rain for three consecutive years the ground level had fallen to a depth of 1500 feet. Villagers who mostly depended on cultivation were losing out on their livelihood and falling into poverty.

Providing Solutions

Bridging the social gap and fighting alcoholism: Navchetana Shivir, Balchitera Shivir, Happiness Program, Japa, Diksha, Happiness Surveys, Rudrabhishek, Durga Homa and cultural festivals were conducted which has helped in developing harmony, friendliness and community belongingness among the villagers. Inhabitants of the scheduled caste hamlets were brought into regular panchayat meetings and village events.

Reviving Water Bodies in Chennai

Jag Pavani Project to Clean and Rejuvenate 453 Ponds in Chennai

Seva Times Team

The Art of Living has taken on the mammoth task of cleaning and rejuvenating 423 water bodies under its Jag Pavani Project in Chennai. The pond revival program called “Namma Ooru! Namma Kulam!” includes treating the water with Jag Pavani to clean and rebirth the water bodies and remove algae, improve biodiversity and to help create new life in the pond. The pond has always been famous for its fish population with various types of fish seen swimming in the pond.

Inhabitants of the scheduled caste hamlets were brought into regular panchayat meetings and village events.

Many students are expressing a keen interest in the movement and come during the weekends to clear the ponds of non-degradable waste

In 2017, the pond was covered with grey algae which visibly disappeared after 45 days. All parameters of water improved: Dissolved Oxygen (DO) increased from 0.5 to 2.37 while COD dropped from 121 to 40 (50 standard) and BOD dropped from 15 to 16.

Providing Solutions

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Continued on Page 8
**YLTP for Tech Students in Himachal**

Art of Living conducting workshops in ITIs and polytechnic institutes

**Overview**
- **30** ITIs Covered in Himachal Pradesh
- **40** YLTP conducted across the state
- **03** Thousand Students Benefitted
- **40** Drug De-addiction Awareness Campaign
- **7K+** students participated in deaddiction workshops

**Testimonial**

“After attending YLTP I feel more confident... before the workshop I was hesitant to express myself. Now I am able to express myself freely. I have noticed amazing changes in my whole personality.”

Poopen Sharma student, ITI, Solan

“...I have noticed lots of behavioral changes in my staff and students in such a short period after YLTP Students’ communication skills have improved. Its has created a very positive environment.”

Principal ITI Hamirpur

**Pillars of YLTP**

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**Educating Slum Children in Mohali**

Art of Living teachers take education to the doorstep of slum dwellers

Seva Times Team

A large number of children living in the slums of India are deprived of basic education. Reasons include frequent relocation by the families in search of employment, extreme poverty, and being of age for the class they are seeking admission into. Many of these children are often forced into child labour. The only way to eradicate the social predicament of urban poverty is to educate the slum children.

In December 2016, the Himachal Pradesh Government decided to take education to the doorstep of the slum dwellers in Mohali. For their first “Shiksha to the doorstep of slum dwellers” initiative, the foundation members conducted 8-day nonresidential YLTP programs for 4-5 hours a day in the government institutes. Their target is to complete 116 ITIs, 15 Polytechnics, and all engineering and Pharmacy colleges by the end of this year. We wish them well.

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**Restoring Health and Hygiene in Gandhi Refugee Camp**

Gandhi refugee camp established at the heart of Batala City in Punjab has been in the limelight for all the wrong reasons. Gandhi Camp, that gets its name from the man who compared drugs to the devil, has been one of the several drug bazaars in Punjab where procuring alcohol and pharmaceutical drugs for abuse is a child’s play. It is a colony that was established as a refugee camp ever since the partition in 1947, that has slowly turned into a slum and a political hub with a population of over 17,000. The residents of this area have many problems, mainly pertaining to health and hygiene. Lack of policy and absence of government initiative to curb the menace, lack of political will, absence of proper educational and medical facilities, poor infrastructure and no employment opportunities have led to severe frustration among the youth, thereby finding solace in drugs. This kind of mindset among the residents has been hampering the social and economic growth of the residents of Gandhi Camp Colony since many years. To ensure social and economic growth of the people residing in this colony, they needed to be taught to become more responsible, self-reliant, and share each other’s responsibility. The Art of Living’s Pragati ki Oor project focuses on changing existing beliefs, mindsets and behaviors from outdated and harmful social practices by reviving human values of love, trust and compassion. Speeding Saurabh Kriya other breathing techniques, yoga and meditation were taught in a friendly and interactive manner to create dynamic youth leaders from within the community who in turn transform into agents for change for a better tomorrow. These Yuvacharyas have a strong sense of ownership of the project and their knowledge of local conditions is pivotal for a better tomorrow.

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**Students taking out a rally to create awareness against tobacco addiction (Top)**

Students participating in a workshop (Bottom)

The first YES!+ program is the first time that they are officially conducting the 8-day nonresidential YLTP programs for 4-5 hours a day in the government institutes. Their target is to complete 116 ITIs, 15 Polytechnics, and all engineering and Pharmacy colleges by the end of this year. We wish them well.

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Sri Sri Sends a Paigam-e-Mohabbat to Kashmir

M Rajaque Rahman

T o witness the widow of a martyred soldier come up on the stage and with tears in her eyes, “I have forgiven them and I could do that after a Kashmiri lady hugged me by truly trying very hard, not merely a heart-wrenching moment, it marked a historic step for conflict resolution in Kashmir. When families of those who have directly suffered in the unrest in Kashmir came face to face and connected heart-to-heart at the Paigam-e-Mohabbat hosted by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in Bengaluru last week, a new agenda for peace-making in Kashmir was set in motion. It was apparent that the feeling of being neglected runs very deep among the Kashmiris. The Indian interlocutors in the Valley, but he is talking only to a set of people determined by Delhi. The contact man never gets a voice, said Munir Choudary from Uri.

It’s in this context that what Gurudev accomplished with Paigam-e-Mohabbat is significant for Kashmir. For the records, representatives from over 200 affected families, including those of slain militants attended the program. Joining them from the other spectrum were the families of nearly 30 security personnel, soldiers, paramilitary who have lost their lives while serving in the Valley.

The way hatred and mistrust gave way to love and forgiveness on the big stage of Paigam-e-Mohabbat was a game changer. That the shift didn’t come easy was apparent from the very events unfolded that day. It was 9.30am. The families from Kashmir and that of martyrs were seated separately in different rooms as though they were being shielded from each other. There was excitement and hope as Gurudev interacted with both the groups separately yet the mood was very somber. Feelings of outrage, enmity and mistrust was palpable in both camps. On the other side of the fence, hatred for the security forces was simmering as though they accused them of slaughtering innocent lives in Kashmir and ruining the paradise that Kashmir once was. The emotions were running high on both sides and reconciliation seemed a far-fetched propaganda. The only silver lining on their horizon was the reassuring words of Sri Sri that they had heard a while ago. Despite the undercurrents, he seemed to have subtly prepared them to look at life with magnanimity and embrace the virtue of forgiveness.

At 11 a.m. a few of the Kashmiri women entered the room where the family members of the martyrs were sitting. Aggressively pointing an accusing finger to one of the sobbing ladies, one of them said, “because of your husbands and brothers, we are suffering so much. Don’t think you alone are the victim.” Accusations and counter-accusations ensued. Just when the gap seemed to have widened beyond redemption, something very emotional unfolded. ‘The lady came forward and hugged the sobbing lady. And what transpired after that was words were made of Hearts melted instantly; the feeling of hatred was replaced by that of love and forgiveness. As they shared their stories, the narrative suddenly changed to one of reconciliation and mutual understanding.

By 4.30 pm, representatives from both sides were in front of television cameras, sharing why they need to forgive each other. “We cannot afford to let our next generation go through what we have gone through,” was their chorus. And by 5.30 pm, they shared the big stage of love and reconciliation. In front of the national media, they were exchanging a Paigam-e-Mohabbat among themselves and with the world. “Let’s forget the past and join hands together to regain the paradise,” thundered Munir.

“I was hesitant to share the platform with people from Kashmir from whom I am responsible for killing my husband. Now, I have understood that it is part of Gurudev’s (Sri Sri) efforts for peace in Kashmir,” said Neha Tripathi, widow of CRPF officer Pramod Kumar who died on duty in the valley last year. “I lost my husband in Kashmir, but today I am sitting with Kashmiris so that this conflict ends and no more lives are lost,” reaffirmed Priya Sankalp, widow of Martyr Lt Col Sankalp Kumawat, who was martyred in Uri.

Just by letting them connect heart-to-heart, Sri Sri accomplished a reconciliation of the highest order. "When the families affected by violence in Kashmir meet in a spirit of forgiveness, a new vision for a non-violent society will emerge," said Sri. Sri Deep inside, there is compassion in every heart. Such events will enliven that aspect and make one realize that neither violence nor blame game lead anywhere," he explained.

Sri Sri admitted that bringing everyone together on one platform was not an easy task. “To make Kashmir paradise again, I am ready to walk the extra mile,” he assured. That his hard work is being appreciated by the people of Kashmir was visible when Farooq Ahmed Dad, a former militant from Sopore, said, “If Sri (Sri) comes forward, people will talk to him as he has worked for long in Kashmir.” “The Hurriyat has refused to talk to the government, but if Gurudev steps in, even S A Geelani (Hurriyat chairman) will talk to him,” he added.

(See story continues on Page 2)

Jobs for Delhi Slum Youth After YLTP

70% of the 341 YLTP participants are now employed

The YLTP is conducted with focus on life skills and soft skills training

Seva Times Team

In a bid to empower unemployed youth from the slum areas of Delhi a group of dedicated teachers and volunteers of YLTP Delhi have floated a project to help them find jobs. They have successfully conducted 15 Youth Leadership Training Programs so far in different locations for a total of 341 participants, 200 from Delhi. They YLTP is conducted with focus on life skills and soft skills training.

The project is funded by the Reliance Foundation under the CSR scheme. The participants in the program were picked from the slums of Delhi and surrounding states. Delhi police helped in the mobilization of participants who were mostly school dropouts and youngsters who were likely to pursue a criminal path. 70% of the participants have secured employment in Reliance Retail and other multinational outlets at different locations in Delhi and Noida.

The Reliance Foundation is very impressed with the impact of YLTP and place The Art of Living’s YLTP above all other programs offered by skill development centers.

Fresh Batch of Yuvacharyas from Delhi

Dr. Neeta Kumar conducted a Youth Leadership Training Program in AIIMS, New Delhi, on November 11, 2017. The 8-day workshop was attended mainly by youth from the rural and slum areas. As part of the program the youngsters undertook various projects including a cleanliness drive in the slums of Andrews Ganj and Arjun Nagar. They also organized an Art and craft workshop for children in Andrews Gang and Begumpuri. A counseling and health awareness workshop was also held in Rangpuri and Kalkaji resettlement colonies.

In Arjun Nagar and Yamuna Khadar colonies, the YLTP candidates conducted a yoga cleanliness drive in the slums of Andrews Ganj and Arjun Nagar. They also organized an Art and craft workshop for children in slum in Andrews Ganj

Pillars of YLTP

Samir Jolly

His life has taken various twists and turns - from a pampered child, to a rebellious teenager, to a popular college guy, to a corporate employee. He found a direction to his life when he did the first Art of Living course. A fearless seva warrior is perhaps the best way to describe him. Whether drawing harsh conditions to meet militants, or providing trauma relief in tsunami-hit areas, Samir Jolly is always to be found in the forefront. Several hundred militants have come back into the mainstream due to his efforts.
River Rejuvenation in Karnataka

Three years into the project rivers that had almost run dry are flowing again

Nagaraj Gangolli
Referred to as an “agent of change” Nagaraj Gangolli has propagated the true art of living in slums, jails and villages around Bangalore. He has helped thousands reclaim a life of self-esteem, dignity and honesty. He is currently working on the Kumudvathi river-revival project with help from environmentalists, watershed experts, villagers and Art of Living volunteers. He wound up his flourishing watchpating business to become a fulltime teacher responding to his inner call to serve others.

Korra Jhansilaxmi
Korra Jhansilaxmi is a spirited young tribal girl of Paderu. With the area live below the poverty line of the tribal population in this situated close to Araku Valley, Korra Jhansilaxmi has completed Intermediate. Both a B.Sc. Degree. Her friend, Bharathi, completed her graduation and holds a B.Sc. Degree. Bharathi, a young tribal girl from the hills, was brought many more of her friends to participate in the next YLTP that brought many more of her friends.

The girls speak good English as well, something very rare in tribal areas. These two girls attended The Art of Living carried out a massive plantation drive in the catchment areas. This has helped prevent soil erosion and retain ecological balance, and the little streams are gushing with water once more. People’s participation plays a pivotal role in the implementation of any action plan. The local communities need to be inspired, motivated, and brought together as a team working towards a common goal. Rural Happiness programs and Youth Leadership Training Programs were conducted in the villages surrounding the rejuvenation sites. YLTP trainers and Yuvacharyas conducted several Satsangs. They have offered free from LV Prasad Eye Institute. The surgery is being conducted by a team of five girls. The team is conducting Daily Yoga at the only Angarangi School in their region and organizing SatSangs. They have conducted two Swachh Bharat Programs in their village with the involvement of the villagers.

The medical camp held on November 18, 2017, was a huge success. Around 300 people from the surrounding villages came to get their eyes checked, some of them walking a few kilometers from the interior lulls to come down to this village. Around 35 people have been recommended to undergo eye surgery. The surgery is being offered free from LV Prasad Eye Hospital and they consented to conduct a free medical camp in S.Boddaputla Village on November 18, 2017. Once the date was fixed, Jhansi and Bharathi, went house to house in 26 villages to motivate tribals to come for a free eye checkup.

The main reason that many rain fed rivers dry up is not really due to a shortage of rainfall. This is evident by the fact that these rivers in Karnataka dried up despite the average amount of rainfall in the last 50 years being normal or even above normal at times. The rivers were drying because of disruption of natural groundwater recharge mechanisms which caused the rivers from replenishing themselves.

To increase ground water levels it is necessary to check soil erosion and slowed down the movement of water. This is achieved by installing or constructing three types of structures: boulder checks, recharge injection wells and water pools. Boulder checks across natural streams reduce the speed of water and increase the soil moisture around, and thereby reduce erosion and siltation further downstream.

Recharge/injection wells downstream of boulder checks enable the running water to percolate down and boost groundwater levels. Water pools are constructed at the junction of the water stream and tail end of the water spread area of irrigation tanks. These are designed to reduce evaporation rates due to sun and wind, so that more water percolates down.

Advanced tools like remote sensing and geographical information systems (GIS) are used to site these structures for maximum impact. Due to deforestation, little streams that emerge from the hills and feed the rivers run dry. Volunteers of The Art of Living attended a massive plantation drive in the catchment areas. This has helped prevent soil erosion and retain ecological balance, and the little streams are gushing with water once more. People’s participation plays a pivotal role in the implementation of any action plan. The local communities need to be inspired, motivated, and brought together as a team working towards a common goal. Rural Happiness programs and Youth Leadership Training Programs were conducted in the villages surrounding the rejuvenation sites. YLTP trainers and Yuvacharyas conducted several Satsangs.

Andhra Pradesh

Tribal Girls Take the Lead in Paderu

Girls turn into social activists after completing YLPM

Korra Jhansilaxmi
Korra Jhansilaxmi is a spirited young tribal girl of Paderu. With the strong support of her father, Jhansilaxmi completed her graduation and holds a B.Sc. Degree. Her friend, Bharathi, has completed Intermediate. Both the girls speak good English as well, something very rare in tribal areas. These two girls attended The Art of Living carried out a massive plantation drive in the catchment areas. This has helped prevent soil erosion and retain ecological balance, and the little streams are gushing with water once more. People’s participation plays a pivotal role in the implementation of any action plan. The local communities need to be inspired, motivated, and brought together as a team working towards a common goal. Rural Happiness programs and Youth Leadership Training Programs were conducted in the villages surrounding the rejuvenation sites. YLTP trainers and Yuvacharyas conducted several Satsangs.

Korra Jhansilaxmi receiving her manual from Art of Living YLTP trainer Sudhakar Veeravalli after completion of the Youth Leadership Training Program

Sudhakar Veeravalli
While touring his home state of Andhra Pradesh in 2009, US-based techie Sudhakar Veeravalli found ill-health, alcoholism, chemical agriculture, temples uncared for without a priest and so on. In 2011, he came back for good to dedicate himself to reviving Andhra and its culture and launched the “Back to the roots” project. He and his associates have taught YLTP to over 2,000 youths, reaching out to 1,300 villages. 18 yuvacharyas have since become village heads.

Pillars of YLPM

Andhra Pradesh

Paderu is a Tribal Agency Area in Visakhapatnam District situated close to Araku Valley, bordering Odisha. A majority of the tribal population in this area live below the poverty line and are plagued by problems like dereliction, malnutrition, and exploitation. A hundred small, undeveloped tribal villages lie scattered in the area with about 40-100 inhabitants in each village. The interior tribes still live in isolated area. The youth are now getting educated and many elders still continue with their age-old way of life. Paderu is a Tribal Agency Area in Visakhapatnam District situated close to Araku Valley, bordering Odisha. A majority of the tribal population in this area live below the poverty line and are plagued by problems like dereliction, malnutrition, and exploitation. A hundred small, undeveloped tribal villages lie scattered in the area with about 40-100 inhabitants in each village. The interior tribes still live in isolated area. The youth are now getting educated and many elders still continue with their age-old way of life.
Art of Living to Develop 60 Gram Panchayats

Income of farmers to be doubled in one year

Sri Sri Ramdas Bharat Women’s Association, a self-help group in Dahi, Ormanjhi, Ranchi. Jharkhand has organized a stitching and block printing workshop for women. Forty women participated in the workshop held from 14th September to 15th November, 2017. Among other things they made beautiful cushion covers and bags. These items were exhibited at ‘Samvaad’ – a 4-day conclave organized by Tata Steel to celebrate the tribal culture of the state.

A workshop was conducted for tailoring as well. There were 20 participants. The workshop was conducted by Roshma Jh under the guidance of Sashmita Jh and Prawin Kumar. It has been left to the discretion of The Art of Living to decide the measures to be taken to develop these villages and ensure that the income of the farmers in these villages is doubled within one year.

Many technical issues are anticipated. More than 60 villages have already made its presence. Since the locals and the Corporation officials are happy to see that effective results from eco enzyme treatment and reported negligible smell from the river after one week of treatment to assess the quality of water and the values showed dramatic improvement. The water resources of the villages. The water resources of the river Naganadhi is flowing once more after 50 years.

YLTP Activity Report January-September 2017

Within 3 days, the officials confirmed that the morality of the fishes came down. Dissolved oxygen, BOD and COD values were recorded before and after one week of treatment to assess the quality of water and the values showed dramatic improvement. The locals and officials were pleasantly surprised with the results from eco enzyme treatment and the workshop which was held from 14th September to 15th November, 2017. Among other things they made beautiful cushion covers and bags. These items were exhibited at ‘Samvaad’ – a 4-day conclave organized by Tata Steel to celebrate the tribal culture of the state.

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Creating Agents of Change

The Odisha Government has approved the development of 50 model gram panchayats (GPs). To sustain the progress and development of these villages, The Art of Living is creating Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs). Youngsters will undergo the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) which brings out good leadership qualities in them. The YLTP is creating Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNV). The Indian government has approved the development of 50 model gram panchayats (GPs). To sustain the progress and development of these villages, The Art of Living is creating Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs). Youngsters will undergo the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) which brings out good leadership qualities in them.

Bhola Nath Jena

He has been associated with The Art of Living since 2001. As a young man he was interested in serving society but had no platform to implement his ideas. He says, “After doing the YLTP my life was totally transformed. I got a new perception, a new understanding… the complaints and irritations vanished from my life and gave me a new motto in life which was to serve the people with Divine Grace."

He is now spearheading the development of 50 model gram panchayats in Odisha. He says, “After doing the YLTP my life was totally transformed. I got a new perception, a new understanding… the complaints and irritations vanished from my life and gave me a new motto in life which was to serve the people with Divine Grace."

He is now spearheading the development of 50 model gram panchayats in Odisha. As these youngsters belong to the community they are more readily accepted by the tribes and this will hasten the process of generating change in villages and community. Along with spiritual training like Yoga, Pranayama, Meditation, Satsang etc., the BNVs are also given information of different welfare schemes of the Central/State Government that the village and the community can benefit from. During the training period the representatives from the District and Block Level Administration come to give lectures on their respective department’s schemes and policies. Armed with the complete knowledge the BNVs become catalysts for change.

Over 400 BNVs have been trained so far. They have been given uniforms (T-Shirt / Apron, Cap, Badge, etc.) and issued identity cards. This gives them a distinct image of selfless service to the people and elected representatives while taking up issues and grievances of the village. The Odisha government has acknowledged the contribution and significance of the BNVs as being the last mile connectivity between the public programs and the target population. The youths who are now part of the BNV or YLTP volunteer team are very happy. They do their work with a sense of purpose and zeal and are keen to share their own transformation with the others in the village. Many of them are those who had gone wayward and were clueless on what to do with their lives. But with proper motivation and meditation programs they have become a productive unit for their village and for their family too. Few of the yuvacharyas are now contesting local body elections. They have realized that to bring about a new era to their community they have to pick up the reins of administration as they alone know what is best for them.

Associated with The Art of Living since 2005. Working as a full time YLTP trainer since 2009. Not being satisfied with just conducting courses, he started dreaming about reviving rivers in Tamil Nadu. With the blessings of Gurudev he started working with the river rejuvenation team. The work on the Naganadhi river rejuvenation began in Thiruvannamalai and Vellore with a group of volunteers in September 2014. Today the river Naganadhi is flowing once more after 50 years.

Chandrashekar Kuppan
Dhalewadi, a small tribal village situated along the Karnataka-Maharashtra border has been declared ODF thanks to the efforts of The Art of Living volunteers. Hunting is the main occupation of the 1,500 odd inhabitants of this village. A little aggressive by nature they are often seen engaging in fights. Even after 70 years of independence, there is no bus service to this remotely situated village. The Art of Living took on the responsibility of making this village cleaner and healthier. Volunteers have constructed 101 toilets in Dhalewadi, making it open defecation free.

Under its Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the government of India extends financial help for the construction of toilets but the finance released after the construction work is completed. It costs roughly 15,000 rupees to construct a toilet which is beyond the means of the poor Adivasis. The Art of Living family in Maharashtra led by Venkatesh Mangalram, Dr Udya Singh More, and Makarand Udal came up with a solution to this problem. Ashok Aggarwal approached the Lakshmi Urban Cooperative Bank in Umargaon, Latur, to give each family a loan of 12,000 rupees and the bank agreed.

Once the toilet is constructed and the beneficiary receives Rs. 12,000 from the government, this loan is paid off. For the remaining Rs. 3000 that goes towards constructing the toilet, Rs. 1000 is given by the Lakshmi Urban Cooperative Bank under its CSR project and Rs. 2000 is donated by The Art of Living. A 73-year-old woman from the village had this to say, “After construction of the toilets, many people from the Press have come to the village. I thank The Art of Living, Government of India, and Lakshmi Urban Cooperative Bank. It was through their intervention that we were able to construct the toilets. Earlier we had no choice and were forced to answer nature’s call out in the open.”

Pillars of YLTP

Jayachandran B S

Became an Art of Living teacher in 1998. When he first came to the organization he knew no other language other than Malayalam. With dedication and perseverance he became an international teacher. He has travelled to various parts of the world like Mauritius, Kenya, Uganda, Botswana, and has trained diverse teams of people which includes businessmen, political leaders, industrialists. He is passionate about helping people reach their highest potential and become leaders in their respective fields.

Sanjay Bihari

He has been associated with the Art of Living for more than two decades. He has spearheaded the organization’s activities in conflict-prone areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, North-East, and Nepal. Under his leadership, many militants and naxalites have surrendered their arms and taken a pledge to take the path of non-violence.

Seva Times Team

Desi Cow Conservation: Leading a Special team of Yuvacharyas and YLTP teachers for the last 8 years to develop a Kerala model self sustainable Desi Cow Conservation method. Studies in various Goushalas in different states and research with our own 20 Gauya Siddhas (BSS certified Master Diploma Panchagavya doctors) and cooperation with similar organizations, we are protecting more than 800 local breed of cows and bulls in the ‘cow eating Kerala’ itself. This Malayalam MD Panchagavya Training empowers our yuvacharyas to give the solid solutions for village’s economical, agricultural, spiritual and health problems. It is very proud to say that this is the one and only one YLTP Activity in Kerala recorded in VVKI CBM.

First Swastya Sibir TTP: 44 people from different districts including 24 Yuvacharyas and YLTP teachers participated in the ‘VSSD, DADC Thirssur: The Kerala YLTP team was requested by State Agri. Apex Body to take over the charge of agricultural activities in Thirssur district. Art of Living faculty, Syam Perumkal and YLTP teacher Binoshji became the President and Secretary of District Agricultural Development Committee (DADC) Thirssur respectively. Four Yuvacharyas became the Presidents of Taluk Agricultural Development Committee. A state level Agri Seminar was organized in Thirssur in the presence of MLA and Perumnam Balachetna Shivirs. Many youth participated in these Shivirs which were conducted in various locations. During the year, Yuvacharyas from Kerala: Maneesh, Subhamanian, Jayakrishnan and Binoshji have received several Awards including Art of Living Krishi Ratna, Best Organic Farmer Awards. They have been cultivating around 30 acres of land using natural farming techniques.

The First Agri.Prep-TTP : in Kerala happened at Thrivunanthapuram, from Thirssur 3 yuvacharyas and 15 YLTP volunteers successfully participated. Preserving Cultural Traditions: An Agri-Folk Art Programme was held in Thrissur.

Environment Friendly Bags: Workshops were held to train participants to make paper bags and cloth bags.

Tree Plantation: Total 646 saplings were planted and are being nurtured with the participation of Panchayat officials.

Seva Times Team

Helping Flood Victims Overcome Trauma

Bihar

Bihari volunteers had distributed food and relief material in over 38 villages of Muzaffarpur, East and West Champaran, Araria, and Purnia, reaching out to around 10,000 families. Saners, towels, and mosquito nets were also distributed in Forbesganj, Araria. Water purifying tablets and bleaching powder were distributed to combat the spread of infectious waterborne diseases post-flood.

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Mushroom Farming & Water Filters for Farmers in 24 South Paragana

Income of farmers expected to go up by at least 25% through mushroom farming

Seva Times Team

Shri Sri Rural Development Program and Indian Association for Human Values of The Art of Living are exploring avenues to improve the lot of the farmers in 24 South Paragana, West Bengal. Most of the villagers in this area have an annual income of less than 70,000 rupees. Belonging mostly to the scheduled caste and other backward classes, those not engaged in farming earn their livelihood through fishing, labor, or driving vehicles. The project is being coordinated by Subhra Ray, Director of Seva Times.

The project is being supported by Pallav Haladar of Art of Living, duly assisted by Ramesh Ramani from IAHV. The other team members are Anup Hazra, Gargi Ghosh, Gautam Jana, and Ruhul Sah. Apart from poor living conditions, another problem that needed immediate attention in this area was provision of clean drinking water. The water in Kakdwip has a high iron content and in regions close to the sea, the water is very salty and has a high residue of sand and other undissolvable solids. The Art of Living in association with Kent is in the process of installing 1000 water filters in the village homes to provide clean drinking water.

Subhra Ray, who is supervising the project, states that The Art of Living has picked up 50 farmers with very low incomes in Swami Vivekananda Gram Panchayat of Namkhana Block in Kakdwip subdivision of 24 South Paragana and are training them in mushroom farming. The Art of Living will also help with the marketing of mushrooms cultivated by these farmers. The income of these farmers is expected to go up by at least 25% through mushroom farming. 1300 Rural Happiness Programs and 1300 Rural Art Excel programs are planned and Pallav Haladars and his team have started conducting the programs in these villages thus ensuring an all-round improvement in the life of the farmers.

Compost From Temple Flowers

A plant to convert temple flowers into compost was inaugurated at Tara Mata Temple, Tarapith, Birbhum, on November 18, 2017. The plant will be converting 200 kgs of floral waste into compost every day. This project will not only keep the temple premises and river clean but will also enrich the soil through the organic compost that is produced.

SSRDP Eastern Zone has been a pioneer in bringing Solid Waste Management project with CSR funding under Art of Living’s banner in India. Dakshineswar Kali Temple of Kolkata was the flagship project, launched in October 2015. The year 2017 saw the launch of solid waste management plants at different temples in Varanasi and Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh as well.

Everyday thousands of pilgrims visit temples and offer flowers to the deity generating more than 200 kilos of waste every day. Earlier the flowers were dumped into the river. This may be good for the fish but dirtied the river.

Capacity Building on Sanitation and Hygiene

Art of Living Invited by Assam Government to Conduct the Workshops

Seva Times

Time and again the Government of India comes up with schemes and policies to make the country more prosperous. Sadly many of these schemes go unimplemented due to lack of awareness, especially in the rural area. Although there are people employed by the government to work in the field, they lack the zeal and dedication that is present among volunteers of NGOs like The Art of Living. The State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD) of Assam recently invited The Art of Living to join hands with them to conduct workshops on “Capacity Building on Sanitation and Hygiene.” The workshop will be conducted for five full days; during the first half of the day, the Happiness Program of The Art of Living will be conducted which includes yoga, pranayama, Sudarshan Kriya, and spiritual knowledge on the key principles one should adopt in order to be happy and successful in life. During the second half, the participants will be going to the surrounding villages to gain hands on experience in mapping, etc., and will participate in focused group discussions. The objective is to form teams that can go into the villages and spread awareness about sanitation, hygiene, health, and happiness. To spread awareness about sanitation is the need of the hour in Assam as awareness in this regard is sadly lacking in the rural areas and without sanitation it is impossible to prevent disease.

An orientation program was held by Rakesh Chaturvedi and Dr. Vishaka Chaturvedi in Guwahati on October 20, 2017, at the Guwahati Ashram for 30 Art of Living teachers who will be conducting the courses. The first two workshops were conducted in Kamrup and Nagoon on October 24, 2017. Five such workshops will be conducted in each of the 14 districts of Assam, totaling 70 in all. The Art of Living team in Assam is looking forward to working on more such projects with the Government of Assam under the Mera Gaon Meri Yogana scheme.

Assam

Pillars of YLTP

She is one of the senior teachers of The Art of Living. She hails from Tripura which is a communist bastion. She started her career as a fashion designer and ran her own business but dropped everything after she became a YLTP trainer. She has conducted courses in many Maoist areas and other challenging places. She is now conducting programs in the North East. Full of exuberance she faces challenges headlong, never losing her smile. She is now a member of the National Executive Board.

West Bengal

Pillars of YLTP

Susheel Kumar Singh

Associated with The Art of Living since 2000. After doing phase I of YLTP he started conducting Navchetana and Balchetana Shivs in the rural areas which gave him great joy and he started to feel he had found the purpose of his life. He met Gurudev for the first time after he completed Phase II of YLTP. At that very moment he decided to dedicate his life to The Art of Living. He became a YLTP trainer in 2004. He his team travelled to west Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Chhattisgarh conducting YLTP in those areas for the very first time.

Transformation... Anupam Bagdi, a young man of 30 years from Barha village of Birbhum, West Bengal, was habituated to all types of addictions since the age of 27. His life was transformed after doing YLTP in Bengal Ashram. After undergoing the training his youthful energy found expression in painting portraits. He is now ready to restart his life with new energy & hope.

5 workshops will be conducted in the 14 districts of Assam, totaling 70 in all.
Embracing the village Pond:
The Art of Living volunteers with the help of villagers ensured that the pond had been revived and was put to use by the villagers. With the help of The Art of Living a pond which had almost dried up was revived.

Empowering the Youth:

The activities and presence of The Art of Living has gradually led the villagers to practice a more healthy lifestyle. The volunteers have encouraged and created in the village an environment of happiness, enthusiasm and hope was constantly maintained and the village as a whole has become much easier to manage.

Bridging the Generation Gap:

An activity was conducted in the village for the senior citizens in which it was emphasized that the participation in the various programs of The Art of Living is a must for them as well. The enthusiasm and hope was constantly encouraged and created in the village.

Women’s Empowerment:

Vocational training centers have been set up in Bahraich and Balia districts of U.P. So far 406 girls spread over 17 batches have received training in stitching at the Balia center and 275 girls have undergone training at the Bahraich center.

Women’s Club:

The Art of Living Women’s Club of Surat. Teachers actively involved in this project are Bela Golwala and Neetu Arya, supported by volunteer Sabha Arya.

Gujarat

Sanitation:

The activities and presence of The Art of Living have gradually encouraged the villagers to practice a more healthy lifestyle, self aware, compassionate and stress free lifestyle.

In addition to the above there are Bela Golwala and Neetu Arya, who are associated with the Art of Living in Surat.

Deepa Dave

She has been associated with the Art of Living for almost two decades. She is well known within the organization for her commitment and strong will. She, along with other local teachers in Manipur, has been carrying the message of peace to various militant organizations and encouraged many of them to return to the mainstream. In August this year 68 militants from 11 dreaded outfits in Manipur laid down their arms.

Sanitation:"

So far 679 women from 17 districts of U.P. have benefited from the tailoring workshops conducted in Bahraich and Balia.

“Village-wide appeal for emergency financial assistance, hearing, individual counseling, and vocational training programs.

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B ttering all challenges, Sri Pearlet Toi, Sujit Chakraborty and Samita Chakraborty, dedicated teachers of The Art of Living in Meghalya, are taking the mission and vision of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar deep into the remote areas of this beautiful valley. YLTP is in full swing in villages along the Bangladesh border like Jaintia Hills, South East Khasi Hills, and Garo Hills. These villages lie deep in the jungle with no proper motorable roads, especially during the monsoon, which lasts about six months, driving to these villages is akin to maneuvering a jeep through quicksand. The YLTP programs are being conducted with Swachch Bharat Abhiyan, skill development and sanitation as the main focus. After completing the program, the native youth are plunging headlong into developing their respective villages. Most of these regions are inhabited by tribal people. Problems that plague these regions are lack of good educational facilities, addictions, and distance from main land as well as ethnic and terrorism issues. Yuvarachyas are conducting awareness campaigns regarding addictions, health and hygiene, and the importance of education. They are also conducting free tuitions for the village children. The villagers are being taught basket weaving. The villagers are also being made aware of the benefits of Ayurveda. Sri Sri Tattva products like Shakti drops and Sudanta toothpaste are in great demand. The team is now working on creating awareness among the villagers to take some action regarding the threat posed by the river Umngi. At first sight W (river)Umngi is just like any other non-polluted river of the region, beautiful and flowing harmlessly across the country side. Little would one suspect that this river is a terror during the rainy season and has swallowed large parts of the village Balat(Dist-South West Khasi Hills) situated on its banks. Football fields, houses, paddy fields, educational institutes, and religious structures have been ruthlessly swept away by the river in its force state. The team along with the villagers will be approaching the Governor and other officials to find a sustainable solution to the problem.

After consulting the Namma Ooru! Namma Kulam! Program. This proved to be a turning point in her life. She decided to do something about the pollution around herself. Beyond her family Filled with confidence that she too could be an instrument of social change, Thilaga decided to take up the revival of a pond in Chennai as her first assignment.

After few years back Thilaga Premkumar was a typical middle class homemaker taking care of her family busy with household chores. Then she did the Art of Living Happiness program and started doing yoga, pranayama, Sudarshan kriya, and meditation on a regular basis. A few weeks back Thilaga did the intensive 8-day Youth Leadership Training Program by the Art of Living and this proved to be a turning point in her life. A few days after completing the intensive 8-day YLTP program she decided to take up the revival of a pond in Chennai as her first assignment.

According to the Namma Ooru! Namma Kulam! Team, Thilaga and another volunteer Siva Ganesh, identified the Nalla Neer Kulum in Swamy Nagar, Madhavaram. “‘Nalla Neer’ literally translates to ‘good water’ and until about 20 years ago this pond was a drinking water point. Now it had become a dumping ground and was encroached on all sides. Trees, shrubs and solid waste almost filled the pond. Thilaga and Siva Ganesh sought the help of Madhavaram Zonal Officer who helped kick off the pond revival in Madhavaram by loaning a JCB for a few hours.

On day one, the trees and a portion of shrubs covering the pond were removed. Within a week, Thilaga raised enough funds from Art of Living volunteers to hire a JCB to desilt the entire pond. Three feet of soil was removed from the pond bed and used to heighten the bund. Several tons of solid waste cleared from the pond were removed from the pond and used to heighten the bund by 10 feet. Several tons of solid waste including alcohol bottles, plastic, clothes, paper, and thermocol were removed from the pond. It took an entire week to complete the cleaning work. On some days Thilaga and Siva Ganesh spent up to 10 hours at the site. Their presence drew the attention of the local people who were headlong into developing their respective villages. Most of these regions are inhabited by tribal people. Problems that plague these regions are lack of good educational facilities, addictions, and distance from main land as well as ethnic and terrorism issues. Yuvarachyas are conducting awareness campaigns regarding addictions, health and hygiene, and the importance of education. They are also conducting free tuitions for the village children.

Thilaga decided to take up the revival of a pond in Chennai as her first assignment.

In the same year he also did the Youth Leadership Training Program. This proved to be a turning point in his life. Inspired by his Art of Living teacher and mentor Jayachandran Menon, he made his humble beginning by starting a catering service and supplying food for YLTP programs. He is now the successful owner of a chain of ‘Women’s Food Court’ in Thrissur. He also runs a training institute for women. Under educated women, a majority of them from the rural areas of Kerala, receive training to cook and market traditional foods of Kerala. Nearly 8000 women have benefited from this training, a few of them are earning up to 1.5 lakh rupees now.

He is planning on starting other projects as well in association with the local government, including skill development centers. He is always full of gratitude for YLTP! “The spiritual practices of the program have helped me in many ways. It gives him inner strength and equanimity of mind to accept the ups and downs of life. He says with a smile, “YLTP gave me a vision. Had I not done the course I would not be in a position to help the community.”

After completing his degree, Ajay started working in the hotel industry. His life seemed like an obstacle course. He met Gurudev in 2002 and soon after did the basic course of The Art of Living. In the same year he also did the Youth Leadership Training Program. This proved to be a turning point in his life. Inspired by his Art of Living teacher and mentor Jayachandran Menon, he made his humble beginning by starting a catering service and supplying food for YLTP programs.

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We salute each and every one of our Yuvacharyas who are dedicatingly weaving the fabric of a progressive and prosperous Modern India.

BEST OF YUVACHARYAS 2017

Mousumi Chattopadhyay
West Bengal

Ajad Bhujel
West Bengal

Namita Jidung
Assam

Meenu Sarkar
Assam

Meena Sinha
Bihar

Nilam Kumari Sinha
Bihar

Pintu
Chhattisgarh

Balaram Mourya
Chhattisgarh

Hanshya Jayant Gamit
Gujarat

Ranjan Ganam Gavakwad
Gujarat

Sudhir
Himachal Pradesh

Nivedita
Karnataka

S.R. Patil
Karnataka

Shibu
Kerala

Maneesh
Kerala

Nanto Belwanshi
Madhya Pradesh

Jyoti Athnere
Madhya Pradesh

Gajanan Wayal
Maharashtra

Yashwant Salame
Maharashtra

Sarada P Panda
Odisha

Prema Cica Minz
Odisha

Dinabandhu Biswal
Odisha

Prabhasini Senapati
Odisha

Sujyotsna Jena
Odisha

Gurmeet Singh
Punjab

Ritu Rani
Punjab

Neelam Swami
Rajasthan

Abhishek Gupta
Rajasthan

Papas Datta
Tripura

Rinku Devnath
Tripura

Sandep Kumar Trivedi
U.P (East)

Dilip Kumar Maurya
U.P (East)

Nirankar Sharma
U.P (West)

Pratap Singh
U.P (West)

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“A portion of your earnings given in service, brings abundance.”

H.H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

**SEVA TIMES**

Inspired by

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

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Thoheja Gurukar
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- Ph: 080-67433600 | www.artofliving.org | Email: yltp@artofliving.org -