

Echoes of Eco

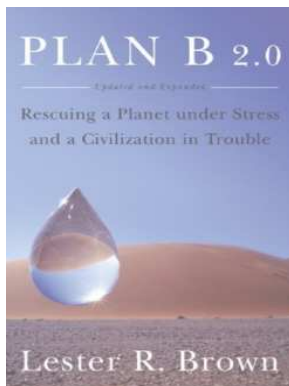


May, 2010

Vivekananda Kendra- nardap Newsletter

Vol:2 No:3

Capra on Lester Brown's Plan B



Once we become ecologically literate, once we understand the processes and patterns of relationships that enable ecosystems to sustain life, we will also understand the many ways in which our human civilization, especially since the Industrial Revolution, has ignored these ecological patterns and processes and has interfered with them. And we will realize that these interferences are the fundamental causes of many of our current world problems.

It is now becoming more and more evident that the major problems of our time cannot be understood in isolation. They are systemic problems, which means that they are all interconnected and interdependent. One of the most detailed and masterful documentations of the fundamental interconnectedness of world problems is the new book by Lester Brown, Plan B (Norton, 2008).

The main message of Lester Brown's Plan B, is that there are solutions to the major problems of our time; some of them even simple.

But they require a radical shift in our perceptions, our thinking, our values. And, indeed, we are now at the beginning of such a fundamental change of worldview, a change of paradigms as radical as the Copernican Revolution. Systems thinking and ecological literacy are two key elements of the new paradigm, and very helpful for understanding the interconnections between food, health, and the environment, but also for understanding the profound transformation that is needed globally for humanity to survive.

[Fritjof Capra: Author and Physicist]



In this issue:

- Capra on Plan B
- A seer's advice for food security
- The Happenings-I
- The Happenings - II
- Our Publication
- Visions of Wisdom

Sustainable lifespan



***So long as this land,
Will have mountains, forests
and pastures
That long will the Earth
survive,
Sustaining you and the coming
generations.
- Devi Stotra***



Whoever undertakes to set himself up as a judge of Truth and Knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods. – Albert Einstein



The ecological crisis is doing what no other crisis in history has ever done -- challenging us to a realization of a new humanity. - Jean Houston

A Seer's Advice on Food security

Sage Kashyapa has repeatedly stressed the need for a genuine support to farm activities by the king or ruler concerned. In the modern context, this would mean support from the central and state governments. The ruler's support is required in identifying land for agriculture, building water reservoirs, planting trees on the banks of water reservoirs, constructing canals and wells, water harvesting, making seed available, ensuring sustenance to people giving donation of land and subsidies to weaker people, arranging markets, standardizing weights and measures, afforestation, excavating mines producing metals such as iron, copper, and zinc (brass?) gold, and silver and collecting taxes.



Kashyapa has thus strongly suggested a very major role for the ruler (governments today) in fully supporting various agricultural activities. He has emphasized that happiness all around can be felt only if there was food security. The king should appoint officers to search and acquire the best land who knows the way to scrutinize (quality of the land).



Land selection is based on scientific examination of the soil. It is stated to be the king's duty to get the entire land examined by experts and identify land that is good for agriculture, is suitable for horticulture, should be of constructing permanent water reservoirs etc.



The location could be villages, or parts of the towns or cities, mountains or the premises of forts and palaces. So long as good soil and supply of water were assured any location was considered good. Especially in the rainy season, keeping a vigil on hundreds of canals (or trenches), wells, and lakes will be beneficial. King should take care on prevention of diseases and alleviation of danger from fire, guarantees best welfare, all round nourishment, and protection for both the bipeds and the quadrupeds.

[From: Agricultural Heritage of India, Dr.S.Jeyaraman, Dr.A.Arokiaraj and Dr.M.L.Manoharan, Department of Crop Management, Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Tiruchirapalli - 620 009, Tamil Nadu]

Holistic Medicine... This month



- 179 patients were treated at Vivekananda Kendra Green Health Home, Vivekanandapuram
- A Varma Interaction workshop was held at Vivekananda Kendra – NARDEP, Vivekanandapuram on 18th and 19th of this month. 140 Physicians attended it. The resource person was Dr. Ganapathi



Varma Interaction Workshop: Participants

- ❖ Workshop on "Documentation of Ethno Herbal Medicines" organized by Tamilnadu Parampariya Siddha Vaidyara Maha Sangam, Vellur was held at Vivekanandapuram on 4th May. 71 Vaidhyas and apprentices attended the program and the Resource Persons were Dr.V.Ganapathy, Vai.Arjunan etc.
- ❖ Dr.V.Ganapathy gave a guest Lecture on "Siddha Herbal Medicines" at KSK College of Arts and Science, Vellore on 11th May. 78 students attended the lecture.





*If the misery of the poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin.
Charles Darwin*

This month... Renewable Energy



- On 25th of May training programme on Shakthi Surabhi Bio-methanation plant was held at Technology Resource Center of VK-NARDEP for 25 participants. The programme was sponsored by NABARD (RIF), Chennai. The resource person was Er.V.Ramakrishnan
- 15 Shakthi-Surabhi bio-methanation plants were commissioned in Kanyakumari district under NABARD – RIF programme.



Shakthi Surabhi: Field explanation of the plant to participants.



Journey Towards a Greener Dawn: Shakthi Surabhi Bio-methanation plants going to other districts of Tamilnadu.

This month... Networking and inner sustainability



- Workshop for Students on “Developing Scientific Temper” sponsored by Dept. of Science and Technology, New Delhi, was held at TRC, Kalluvillai from 17th to 21st of May. 54 students participated and benefited from it. The resource persons included Shri.Ninad Sonawane, Kum.Apoorva and others.



Simple Experiments to develop scientific temper.

This month... Towards Water Democracy



- ❖ Training programme - “Towards Water Democracy” for students was held at TRC, Kalluvilai from 4th to 7th of May. The programme was sponsored by Comune di Pistoia and Water Right Foundation. 79 students participated. The resource persons included Shri.N.Krishnamoorti, Sri.V.Ramakrishnan and Sis.V.Saraswahti etc.

Whatever is feeling, whatever is perception, whatever are habitual tendencies, whatever is consciousness, past, future, present, subjective or objective, gross or subtle, mean or excellent, whether it is far or near — all should be seen by perfect intuitive wisdom as it really is: "This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self." - Buddha





Agriculture this Month

Interaction on "Livestock Management" sponsored by NABARD(FTTF), Chennai

- ❖ On 6th May the Follow-up training on "Livestock Management" (FTTF) sponsored by NABARD, Chennai was held at Kozhikottupottai Kanyakumari Dist. 16 Farmers benefited from the training and the resource person was Smt.S.Premalatha.
- ❖ Workshop on "Azolla Cultivation" was held at TRC of Vivekananda Kendra –NARDEP, Kalluvilai on 25th of May. 8 persons attended the training and the resource person was Smt.S.Premalatha.
- ❖ State level TOT on Organic farming organized by Directorate of Agriculture, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram was held at Gramodaya Park on 27th. 30 officers attended the session and the resource person was Dr.P.Kamalasanan Pillai.



Water and Hygiene

- ❖ Training programme -"Towards Water Democracy" for social workers and teachers was held at TRC, Kalluvilai from 24th to 27th of May sponsored by Comune di Pistoia and Water Right Foundation. 25 teachers and social workers attended the programme. The resource persons included Dr.Umaiyurbhagan, Sri.V.Ramakrishnan, Sis.V.Saraswahti and Shri.Aravindan Neelakandan.
- ❖ VK-NARDEP monitored water levels of 14 wells in Kanyakumari Dist – programme of Central Ground Water Board, Chennai.



An attitude to life which seeks fulfillment in the single-minded pursuit of wealth / in short, materialism / does not fit into this world, because it contains within itself no limiting principle, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited.



Glimpses from Water Democracy workshops for kids and teachers.



From Our Publications



Can Humanity survive modern times? is a detailed dialogue between world famous environmentalist Edward Goldsmith and Indian philosopher Krishna Chaitanya. The book is in Tamil. The central thesis of this dialogue shared by the two thinkers, Edward Goldsmith and Krishna Chaitanya, is that the industrial way of life is no longer sustainable. It must end, one way or another, within the foreseeable future. Mankind, feel both thinkers, could meet the logical end only in two ways: either by an act of will to alter the course of progress fundamentally, or by allowing consequences to overtake it. This dialogue, on the malaise of our times, would therefore be of interest to readers.

The conversation brings in beautiful insights and a variety of new, refreshing perspectives. The translation gives the spirit of the original while remaining readable.

In the course of the dialogue Goldsmith states: "People may trade in the superfluities of life; they may sell spices to each other for instance, but not fundamental things. The 'great transformation' - the change that did more than anything else to create the modern world, with all its horrors, and trigger off the destruction of our planet - was the development of the market system in which people traded not only in spices, but in the basic constituents of the living world, such as man himself and more important still, NATURE."

What we need is an understanding that goes beyond mere knowing -. Krishna Chaitanya states: Knowledge is not a motivating factor. It has to mix with the blood which courses through the veins before it can become a motivation. The enormous task ahead is a sacrificial endeavour; as I said, people may have to be satisfied with one meal every alternate day for a long while, if they want to change over to a new kind of order. We still grope for the answer. But one definite conclusion that we, in our small way, seem to have arrived at, is that the world is a continuum, a system in a profound sense, not in the materialistic sense or in the sense of the physicist.

Elegant and meaningful Eco-Cartoons add beauty to the book.

On the whole this book is a must read for anyone who wants to understand how to survive in the future and live a useful and ecologically meaningful life.

Can Humanity survive modern times? (Tamil: pages:55)
Vivekananda Kendra - NARDEP
Price: Rs 25/-



Earth Vision



Those who
contemplate the
beauty of earth
find resources of
strength that will
endure as long as
life lasts.

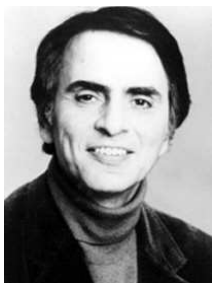
Rachel Carson

Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius -- and a lot of courage -- to move in the opposite direction. – Albert Einstein



Earth Values

The choice is with us still, but the civilization now in jeopardy is all humanity. As the ancient myth makers knew, we are children equally of the earth and the sky. In our tenure of this planet we've accumulated dangerous evolutionary baggage — propensities for aggression and ritual, submission to leaders, hostility to outsiders — all of which puts our survival in some doubt. But we've also acquired compassion for others, love for our children and desire to learn from history and experience, and a great soaring passionate intelligence — the clear tools for our continued survival and prosperity. Which aspects of our nature will prevail is uncertain, particularly when our visions and prospects are bound to one small part of the small planet Earth..... National boundaries are not evident when we view the Earth from space. Fanatical ethnic or religious or national chauvinisms are a little difficult to maintain when we see our planet as a fragile blue crescent fading to become an inconspicuous point of light against the bastion and citadel of the stars.



– *Carl Sagan*
Astro-Physicist



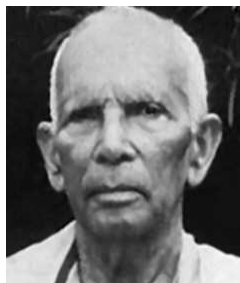
Human Values

In the light of the spiritual, no work is high or low in itself; it is the attitude of the worker that makes a work high or low. The discipline and control of this attitude is the contribution of spiritual philosophy to human life and work. The small man, in the light of this philosophy, is not the man who does what is, in the secular estimate of society, small work, but who does any work in a small way. Even small work becomes big when done by a great man; and conversely, big work becomes small when done by a small man. Kabir weaving cloth on a loom or Gandhi spinning thread on a charka helped to raise the status of the humble loom and charka. On the other hand, a greedy priest or a corrupt politician lowers the status of the high calling of priesthood or politics. How much the inner man counts in all fields of outer work is evident from these and other instances. Life without quality is life lived in vain; and quality is a value concept; and values are not mechanical, but spiritual.

– *Swami*

Ranganathananda

Vedantic Monk



Animal Values

Washoe the Chimpanzee has taught me that we are both a part of the natural world we share with all our fellow animals. She has taught me that personhood is something we share, and that personhood goes beyond species classifications.

She has taught me that human arrogance is very lethal to our fellow beings on this planet, especially when it is combined with human ignorance. She has taught me that the most profound scientific discoveries are often based on the most humble approach. She has taught me that compassion is one of our dearest traits, and that we should value it above all others, including intelligence. She helped me to realize that if we humans do not embrace and respect our fellow species on this planet, then we stand a good chance of destroying the whole thing.

– *Roger Fouts*

Animal Psychologist

