

Echoes of Eco



June, 2014

Vivekananda Kendra- nardap Newsletter

Vol:6 No:4

Green Rameshwaram: Takes off - 3



Last month we saw how the 'Green Rameshwaram' project has taken off and the way deliverables had been fixed for the core-groups. Now we shall see the deliverables fixed for the core-group on creating merchandise related to Rameshwaram culturally, geographically and based on local resources and other talents available. This core-group co-ordinated by Sri.Danasekaran, who was with TIIC, also explores alternate livelihood opportunities. District collector opined that this group can make a definitive difference to the people economically and hence very important. The following aspects were discussed:

- ❖ Apart from the manufacture of the merchandise the committee may also focus on creating alternative livelihood opportunities for the locals which would help fostering community participation in implementation of Green Rameshwaram.
- ❖ This group has the responsibility of making the people realize that the Green Rameshwaram project is in the direct economic interest of the local community.
- ❖ Palmyrah based products have to be identified which should have both utility value and modern appeal.

- Adventure water sports and cruise tourism may not be taken up now as they are capital intensive and already Govts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala are evolving a scheme for this.
- Already a Tie-up with Trifed is being worked out for them to open an outlet where the merchandise can be sold.
- Since tea cups were cited as a waste problem, why not consider mud pots (kulad) which will give potters some additional income (economics to be verified).

The deliverables fixed for this core group are as follows:

- Come out with at least two products and viable means of production and marketing.
- Traditional water carrying 'Kamandalam' has to be designed which should be cost-effective.

The next core-group is the one dealing with Solid waste management. District collector pointed out that this committee has important work which can make visible impact in the ground. The following discussions were made about this group which has been working with 'Hand in Hand' - NGO.

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Hidden in all beings...



It is He who, in proper time, becomes the custodian of the universe and the sovereign of all; who conceals Himself in all beings as their inner Witness; and in whom the sages and the deities are united.

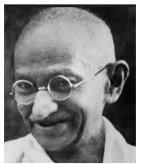
He who knows Brahman, who is all Bliss, extremely subtle, like the film that rises to the surface of clarified butter and is hidden in all beings-he who knows the radiant Deity, the sole Pervader of the universe, is released from all his fetters.

-Svetasvatara Upanishad





Why can't you see the beauty of colour in vegetables? And then, there is beauty in the speckless sky. But no, you want the colours of the rainbow, which is a mere optical illusion. We have been taught to believe that what is beautiful need not be useful and what is useful cannot be beautiful. I want to show that what is useful can also be beautiful... - Gandhii



[Above] Glimpses of the awareness programme on solid waste management launched as part of 'Green Rameshwaram' by VK-Nardep and Hand-in-Hand in which District Collector also participated earlier this year.

To know more about 'Green Rameshwaram Pilgrimage' Project contact:
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- The collection and segregation of wastes is now carried out in two wards by 'Hand in Hand'
- A meeting of hoteliers to be arranged in the island to discuss the means and their cooperation in dealing with solid waste management
- Land need to be allocated for the construction of a high volume bio-methanation plant for producing energy/ electricity.
- Compost manufacture is envisioned in two places.
- Suitable technologies to be explored for the reduction of 100 days of composting to 60 days.
- Green Marshals have to be appointed to monitor cleanliness. District collector appreciated the fact that the Municipality had already collected Rs 2 lakhs in fine.

The following deliverables were fixed for this group:

- The collection and segregation of wastes has to be extended to ten wards and a report has to be made on the effectiveness of the project.
- Small bins instead of big bins are to be installed which are essential for floating population.
- Strict implementation of no plastics policy in the island.
- 'No littering' Signages have to be implemented; the landscaping and design group and the municipal commissioner shall work together for a common Rameshwaram specific design.
- Sustained campaign by green marshals has to be implemented.

[The deliverables set for the remaining core-groups shall be continued in the concluding part of this series in the next month newsletter]



On June 7th the second Brain-Storming session of all the core-groups of Green Rameshwaram was held at the State Planning Commission Building. It was chaired by Smt.Santha Sheela Nair- the Vice chairperson of State Planning Commission.



The first idea, therefore, is that of a Whole, a Unit, composed of various minute particles, and each one of us is a part, as it were, of this Unit. As manifested beings we appear separate, but as a reality we are one. The more we think ourselves separate from this Whole, the more miserable we become. So, Advaita is the basis of ethics.

- Swami Vivekananda



Rameshwaram: Reviving the Sacred Water Teerthams

The Teerthams renovation work is progressing. This time a completely new challenge has been taken up. We are identifying and retrieving a *Teertham* - a traditional water body that has been totally lost. We have already renovated Nakula and Sahadeva Teerthams. Work is nearing completion in Bhima and Arjuna Teertham. This is 'Dharmar Teertham'.

Dharmar Teertham Renovation



Last year we have set on a search for the elusive 'Dharmar Teertham' the last of the Teerthams named after the eldest Pandava prince.

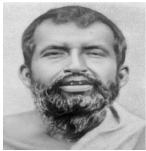
Enquiries with the locals and help from local administration helped us discover the place. Now we have started the work on the renovation of this Teertham which has almost been lost for decades.



(Clockwise from top-left: Removal of shrubs, Land-Puja with local participation, clearing of dense occupation by thorny shrubs, digging back the last teertham.)



To know more about 'Renovation of Rameshwaram Teerthams'
Project contact: Secretary, Vivekananda Kendra - Nardep,
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Why compassion? It means condescension. Who are you to be compassionate to the children of the Lord! Not compassion, but serving your fellow-beings in the spirit of serving God. It is the temple of the body where God actually shines.

- Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa



Happenings this month: **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**



Happenings this month: **NETWORKING**

VK-nardep activities done with
DST core support



Happenings this month: **Water Management**

Workshop on agriculture with DST core support was held on 21st of this month at Kalluvillai. Smt. Premalatha was the resource person.



Azolla beds being laid at Karur.

Two Workshops on "Azolla cultivation" was held as part of the "Pudhu Vaazhvu" Project, at the Vengakalpatty village at Karur: one from 20th to 21st of this month and the other on 27th. 85 farmers attended the programme. The Resource Person was Dr.P.Kamalasan Pillai.



Ethnic Medicine Workshop held at TRC of VK-nardep



Eco-Awareness Programmes: Unicef

On 25th the programme was held at the Municipality Meeting Hall, Rameshwaram on 26th it was held at Vivekananda Kendra, Rameshwaram. On 28th it was held at Municipality Meeting Hall, Rameshwaram. This is part of 'Green Rameshwaram' and totally 83 persons attended.



Eco-Awareness Programme: Green Rameshwaram.



Green Health Camp at Rameshwaram: part of Green Rameshwaram

- Tested water from 14 wells in Kanyakumari Dist. as a part of the programme of Central Ground Water Board, Chennai.
- Workshop on "Water Management" was held for 64 students of the Govt. Polytechnic College, Konnam, Nagercoil at their Extension Centre, Kuzhithurai on 22nd of this month. Resource Person was Shri.V Rama krishnan



Happenings this month: Green Health Camp @ Rameshwaram.

- Green Health Camp sponsored by UNICEF, Chennai was held at the Pamban Panchayat, Rameshwaram on 30th of this month. 140 persons benefitted from the camp. The resource persons were Dr.V.Ganapathy and his team.
- Workshop on "Traditional Siddha Visha Vaidya Practices" was held at the TRC of VK-nardep, Kalluvilai on 17th June with 96 persons attending it.
- Workshop on "Traditional Siddha Varma Bone Setting Practices" was held at the TRC of VK-nardep, Kalluvilai on 17th and 18th June with 43 persons attending the workshop.
- For both the workshops team of experts were the resource persons.

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**Green Health Home of VK-nardep
functioned for 7 days and treated
171 patients.**



The idea of unlimited growth has proven to be illusory because the resources of the earth are restricted, and they are running out. There are two ways of addressing the issue: making no mention of the truth and postpone unpopular decisions, or start telling people the truth and work together for change, while we are still in time. It is hard to even talk about ecology in the current, worrying scenario, but we must talk to people. - Mikhail Gorbachev



Bio-Methanation Plants installed

Shakthi-Surabhi Installed this month:

Portable 1 cum - 3
Fixed 1 cum -10

Awareness Programme on Bio-methanation plant was held at the following places. Er.Ramakrishnan was the resource person for all the camps:

Place	Date	No. Attended
Govt. High School, Variyoor post , Kanyaumari Dist.	3 rd	40
Govt. High School, Parakkai post , Kanyaumari Dist.	4 th	61
Arumani Village Kanyakumari dist	10 th	53
Vivekananda Polytechnic College Agasteeswaram.	14 th	41
The Institute of Road Transport Polytechnic College Konganthanparai Tirunelveli Dist.	18 th	70
Govt. High School, Kulasekarapuram, Kanyaumari Dist.	20 th	43
Govt. High School, Kanagappapuram. Kanyaumari Dist.	23 rd	27
Govt. High School, Mahathanapuram Kanyaumari Dist.	30 th	18

- Training Programme on "Waste to Energy" with DST, Core Support was held at TRC, Kalluvilai on 21st June. 11 persons attended and team of biogas unit conducted the programme.
- On 23rd of June Sri.G.Vasudeo attended the Ashden India Collective held at Kolkata.150 delegates attended this meet.



A separate report on Green Rameshwaram activities will be published online soon covering all the activities of the core-groups: Below 'Green Rameshwaram' Campaign by school students.



Exposure Visits: Villagers learning eco-technologies



Bio-Methanation Plant Training at VK-nardep TRC



Happenings this month: Networking

Study Tour and Exposure Visit

- Study Tours was conducted by Tamil Nadu Forest Training College, Vaigai Dam on 9th and 12th of June and a total of 110 rangers visited Gramodaya Park, Vivekanandapuram and learnt about herbal medicines, Rain water harvesting and Construction technologies.
- On 12th June exposure visit of 200 farmers was organized by District Watershed Devpt. Agency, Virudhu Nagar at the Gramodaya Park, Vivekananda puram. Participants learned Bio-methanation, Rain water harvesting and sustainable farming technologies.
- Dinamalar a leading popular daily in Tamil Nadu made an indepth coverage of Bio-methanation plant-Shakthi Surabhi of VK-nardep.(29th June Madurai edition.)





We know that mankind is using 125 percent of the planet's biological resources. Now the question is what would be the impact of climate change on resources is; and we know that if temperatures rise 0.1 degree in a decade, 15 percent of the species will be affected, so the news reports should point out that the speed of (climate) change is as important as its impact. - Martin Lees



From our Publications



Last month we presented the way of technology and how to proceed towards sustainable development. This month we explore through eco-toons the philosophical substratum on which suitable technologies can evolve which can lead to sustainable development. Though science and spirituality seek truth what is needed for the seeker of truth is humility. In terms of spirituality there are two terms which have highly influenced Indian culture and heritage. They have influenced Gandhi and other spiritual leaders. These terms are '*aparigraha*' meaning non-possession and *samattva* meaning equality which is not to hanker after fruits of action. Ultimately spiritual values based reduction of consumption along with alternative technologies that will win the future for sustainable development and ensure human survival. Read on...

The seeker of Truth should be humbler than the dust



Two words which influence our culture and heritage are

APARIGRAHA and SAMATTVA



WE ALL SEEM TO AGREE THAT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WE MUST REDUCE OUR CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AND CHANGE OUR LIFE STYLES, THE MORAL FORCE REQUIRED FOR SUCH A CHANGE IS MISSING...



dharma

All sayings of Dharma are with a view to supporting, sustaining, bringing together, upholding all living beings. Therefore, whatever has the characteristics of that is Dharma.

perhaps we will achieve sustainable development when we learn to build bridges between science and spirituality



SAMAGRA VIKAS

DEVELOPMENT WITH A HUMAN FACE



Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan



In our every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations ... When we walk upon Mother Earth we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them.- Iroquois Saying



Eco-Food

The reality is that we have a big problem and food is at the center of it. Food is what life starts with. Before a baby sees or hears, he or she looks for the mother's breast to look for food. That is not idealism, it is reality. Today we have less biodiversity, we waste a big percentage of the food we produce, and we have millions of people dying of hunger. Those are real problems that we choose to take on. ... The current pop culture is almost like food pornography. Everyone takes photos of their food, shows them off, talks about what they ate, shares recipes, and watches TV shows that make food and cooking look very glamorous. That pop food culture is narrow and it represents maybe 10% of what food means. The real food culture, one that everyone should be exposed to, is a holistic one. Food is the very essence of our lives and the culture around it includes food economics, plant genetics, animal biology, respect for the land, cultural differences...Every day we lose vegetables, fruits, animal breeds. That is the tragedy that people don't know about. And every day people die of hunger while we throw away a lot of the food we produce. Those two things need to stop for the world's food problems to become more manageable.

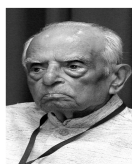


- Carlo Petrini
Food Activist



Eco-Cultures

The understanding of the perennial cultural streams, and nature-based tribal cultures; and myths; with their reverence towards nature or ecology becomes the bridge between science and spirituality, can possibly provide us deep insights into the ecological, social, and psychic tragedies which are becoming a part of the twenty-first century. Some cultures of the East, with deep-seated restraints (as against the excesses of the consumer society), and Confucian hierarchical orderliness can play a role and help to trigger new, sustainable and compassionate lifestyles and make a much wider contribution to the human future. But to this, there is a very big question mark as to whether the aggression and violence in the international system will let this transformation take place in peace. ...But an unplanned dismantling of the consumerist paradigm will not be possible without providing a humane and sustainable replacement. Millennia of human knowledge and experience within traditional cultures and religions need to be protected. There is thus a need for a new world view. ...A dialogue of cultures, presupposes plurality, and a desire to seek new and more harmonious and sustainable possibilities for the co-existence of diverse, material and metaphysical arrangements. So as to be able to absorb the emerging new knowledge, not only external, that of science, but also internal, that is spiritual.



-Jagdish Chandra
Kapur
Solar Scientist



Eco-Essence

Essence is not something we have to work toward, for it is what we truly are. ... Eventually, this presence revealed itself to be the inner nature of everything, and I began feeling more and more that this living conscious-ness, this pure essence of being, was God. I called it Truth, Reality, Being, or God. In my experience, as I open myself to seeing the truth of who and what I am, God is a truth that reveals itself on its own. It is independent from anyone's mind or preferences, and has always existed and always will exist inside each of us. God, for me, means experiencing the totality of all existence in its true nature and condition. This means perceiving the unity of all that can be perceived, all that can be seen, at all levels of reality, including all beings and everything that appears in experience. With God, nothing is separate from anything else. By this I don't mean a scientific interconnectedness, but rather only one and single presence. This unity has perfection and beauty to it. My experience is that we are all "one being." There is no separate individual experiencing God. This conception of God means that my experience of myself as a separate individual does not truly exist.



- A. Hameed Ali
Mystic