

Echoes of Eco



November, 2010

Vivekananda Kendra- nardep Newsletter

Vol:2 No:9

Gross National Happiness (GNH)



At the core of GNH is collective happiness, which has several characteristics. Over the centuries, happiness has been relegated to the private realm, while provisions of many other goods and services of public nature were brought to the fore of the public realm. These goods and services have even begun to substitute collective happiness as ends in themselves.

Like the concept of justice, happiness is a public good, and although it is experienced subjectively, happiness is influenced by a frame of reference. In that sense it is partly relative to a person's experiences with respect to others – and with respect to the past.

However, and more importantly, it is relational in character. Happiness is more relational than relative because the quality and depth of relationships with others influences our happiness far more than a comparative possession of a commodity. It reaches beyond the pleasure-threshold of commodity possession.

If happiness is more relational than relative, having resilient and deep relationships and designing the appropriate type and range of organisations that breed such positive relationships, is a crucial issue.

Within the last century, the world has become more urban than ever before, with almost 50% of the global population living in urban settings. As our social networks transform from small, rural settlements into a more urban lifestyle, there is an obvious dislocation and breakdown of community and social life – and the values that underpin community vitality.

Through GNH, we have to regenerate the social heartbeat of the community – one of the essential foundations of happiness – and reconnect individuals back with the community. This has huge implications on urban settlement planning vs. rural rejuvenation, with more emphasis on the latter.

(Karma Ura :
Director of the
Centre for
Bhutan Studies.)



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Happiness : the basis and its dimensions



...Nothing can be done unless it is propelled by happiness. Everywhere you will find happiness is the object of every kind of aspiration, activity, desire or enterprise. ... You must know what happiness is. It is this that is the propelling force behind everything in creation...Happiness is plenum, happiness is completeness, happiness is the totality, happiness is in the Absolute.

-Chhandogya Upanishad



Service to humanity is the highest form of worship – Swami Vivekananda

The Wise Man believes profoundly in silence - the sign of a perfect equilibrium. Silence is the absolute poise or balance of body, mind and spirit. – Wahpeton Santee Sioux (Native American Chief)



NABARD-Rural Innovation Fund triggering Energy Revolution: Wealth from Waste

This month...



This was followed by invitation of the participants to Technology Resource Centre for hands-on-demonstration and training. This in turn is followed by installation of the bio-methanation plants for the willing participants.

Shakti Surabhi, the Bio-methanation plant works on similar principles of traditional KVIC type biogas plant with a few modifications and comes in two designs: both portable and fixed. The portable unit is entirely made of fiber glass material. These plants have a user-friendly design and suited for both urban and rural environment.

Once installed in various households different feedbacks started pouring in which helped the technical personnel to design the maintenance guidelines.

Further the hands-on-maintenance experiences demonstrated by the VK- **nardep** personnel to users also become part of their learning experience.

The advantages of Shakti Surabhi is not only that it economizes cooking fuel but that it turns waste to energy and through slurry as input to backyard horticulture, it converts it into wealth. Thus it disposes waste and domestic pollution problem. With continuous interaction with technical resource persons and camps, the users particularly house wives find it simple and easy to handle.

This is an ideal backyard Bio-Methanation plant which makes the environment pollution free and gives rural household biogas from kitchen waste. NABARD thus has in Shakti Surabhi a very successful and holistic RIF programme

Green Health Home at Vivekananda Puram functioned for 9 days and treated 180 patients.



Done with DST core support

Water and Sanitation ...



- Tested water from 14 wells in Kanyakumari Dist – programme of Central Ground Water Board, Chennai

Rural Innovation Fund (RIF) of NABARD is a fund designed to support innovative, risk friendly, unconventional experiments in Farm, Non-Farm and micro-Finance sectors that would have the potential to promote livelihood opportunities and employment in rural areas.

In 2009 Vivekananda Kendra – **nardep** took up the RIF in order to bring Shakti-Surabhi bio-methanation plant to the farming community. It is a technology developed by VK- **nardep** to cater to the energy needs of rural women community in a sustainable way using kitchen wastes. The RIF project aimed at field-testing 100 units of 1 cu.m. "Shakti Surabhi" model biogas plants in different geographical locations, climatic conditions and by using different input materials that would provide alternative fuel for cooking gas from kitchen waste.

The proposal seeks to disseminate the bio-methanation plant that is better suited to individual households. Since then several awareness programmes have been conducted from village to village at women gatherings, Self-Help Groups and collages



A human being is part of the whole called by us universe ... We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

- Dr. Einstein

We cannot hope to either understand or to manage the carbon in the atmosphere unless we understand and manage the trees and the soil too. – Freeman Dayson



Training Programme on Azolla in progress at TRC of VK- nardep



Azolla Camp Participants sharing their joyful camp experiences

Sri. Gopalji distributing certificates to the participants of the Motivation Training camp for Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies and consumer protection Department



This month... Networking



- Motivation Training was conducted by the VK- **nardep** team for the Dept. Civil supplies and & Consumer Protection, Chennai at Technology Resource Center, Kalluvillai. Two batches attended it. The first was from 19th to 21st where 25 persons attended. The second was from 26th to 28th of November and 18 participants benefited.
- Shri.M.Malik Feroze Khan, I.A.S., Commissioner of Animal Husbandary & Veterinary Services, Chennai visited our Technology Resource Center on 16th for seeing the Azolla cultivation technology

Different wastes as Feed material

- Cooked waste (Rice, Chapathi, Dhal etc)
- Non-vegetable waste (Fish, meat etc)
- Vegetable waste (Wastage from vegetable market)
- Flour mill waste (Wheat, rice etc.)
- Starchy material (Tapioca, Maize etc.)

A Panel of Shakti Surabhi – Displayed at IITF New Delhi exhibition on “Clean and Energy Efficient Technology Products and Services

One way to open your eyes is to ask yourself, 'What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?' – Rachel Carson



VK- nardep Panels and live model of Shakti Surabhi at IITF Delhi exhibition.



Happenings: This month for Sustainable Agriculture

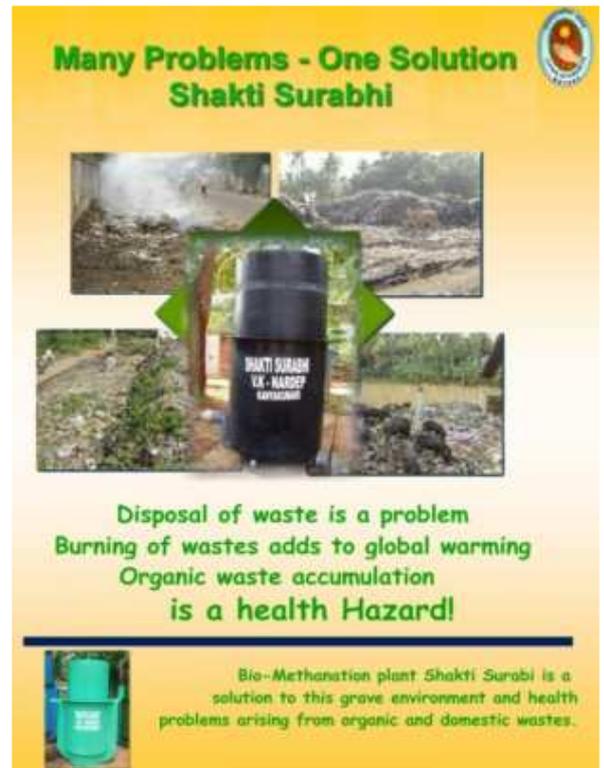
- Workshop on “Azolla Technology” was conducted by Animal Husbandary Dept., Govt. of Tamilnadu, Chennai at TRC Technology Resource Center, Kalluvillai from 11th to 13th of this month with 32 participants. The resource person was Dr.P.Kamalasanan Pillai and his team.

Renewable Energy This Month...



- Training programme on Shakti Surabhi Bio-methanation plant was held at TRC, Kalluvilai on 22nd of November. 13 persons attended and the resource persons were Shri.V.Ramakrishnan and Sri.G.Vasudeo. Training programme was held under (RIF) NABARD, Chennai.
- VK-NARDEP team participated and exhibited panels and model of the bio-methanation plant at IITF Delhi with the help of CAPART. The theme was “Clean and Energy Efficient Technology Products and Services” The exhibition was held from 14th to 27th Nov.30,000 visitors visited our stall.

At the VK- nardep panel at Delhi CAPART exhibition on “Clean and Energy Efficient Technology Products and Services

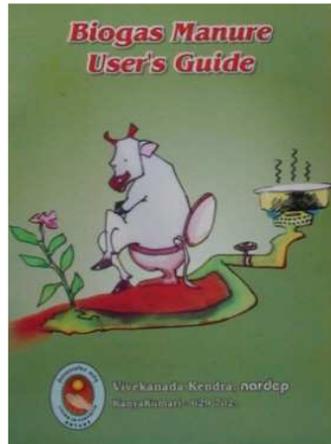
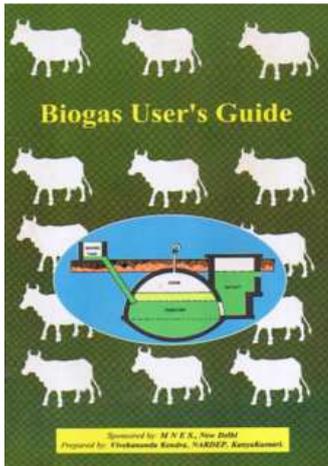


A Panel on Shakti Surabhi – Displayed at IITF Delhi exhibition on “Clean and Energy Efficient Technology Products and Services” The stall was sponsored by CAPART, New Delhi.





"Until you do what you believe in, you don't know whether you believe it or not." – Leo Tolstoy



How Shakthi Surabhi© tackles the waste-disposal problem in a multi-faceted way:

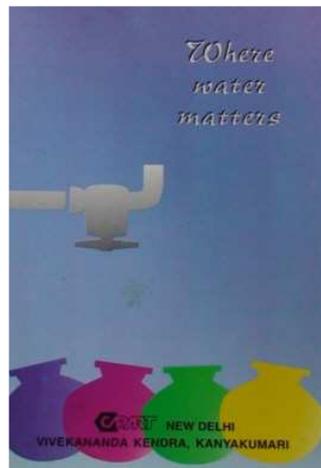
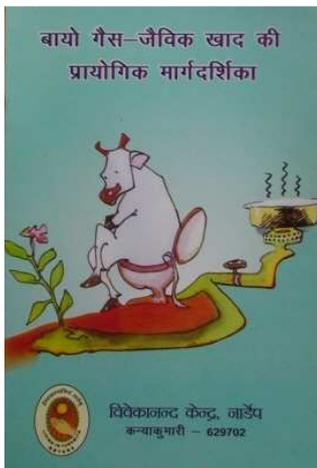
Alternative fuel for cooking gas

Waste disposal - very good for bio degradable waste management system

Hygienic - no odor and flies

Arrests green house gas

Digested outlet slurry is good as organic manure



To Install a Shakthi Surabhi © Contact us



How to feed the future humanity?
How to make development sustainable?
Some of the best publications on the subject for layman and professionals alike are from VK - nardep.
Contact: The Secretary, Vivekananda Kendra - nardep.
Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari-629702
Tamil Nadu
Phone: 04652-246296 Email: vknardep@gmail.com



This month... Shakthi Surabhi

6 Shakti Surabhi plants were commissioned this month under RIF scheme of NABARD, Chennai



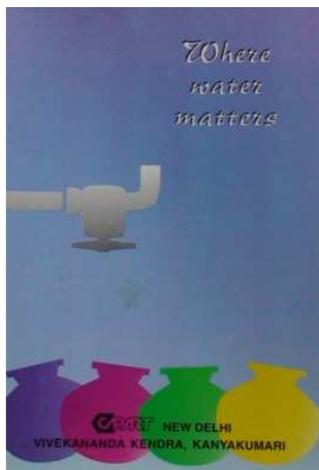
People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child -- our own two eyes. All is a miracle.
- Thich Nhat Hanh

All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is law of life, just as you breathe to live.
– Swami Vivekananda

If you go off into a far, far forest and get very quiet, you'll come to understand that you're connected with everything. – Alan Watts



From Our Publications



Where Water Matters

Water is the most basic resource on which all life on this planet is dependent. However with increasing human population and unsustainable ways of water usage, water is fast becoming a scarce resource.

With water becoming scarce resource human conflicts are increasingly getting centred around this precious resource which we have been taken for granted.

However one organization took notice of this and started efforts to rectify the situation and also rejuvenate an age old system through community effort. Towards this end a village in the arid district of Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu was chosen.

This small book details the work done by Vivekananda Kendra in the Muthukulathur block of Ramanathapuram district (Tamil Nadu).

Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts of Tamil Nadu had the maximum number of traditional water harvesting tanks in the state. Yet Ramanathapuram district became popular as the worst draught hit district of the state.

After close study of the different factors regarding the water problem, among the various alternatives, Vivekananda Kendra decided to tap traditional sources of roof water harvesting and remodelling of the Oorani for solving the drinking water problem.

The book describes graphically how Vivekananda Kendra achieved this; how Kendra tapped into community voluntary services to revive the Oorani and through community's physical labor to maintain it so that during the summer also the people can have quality drinking water.

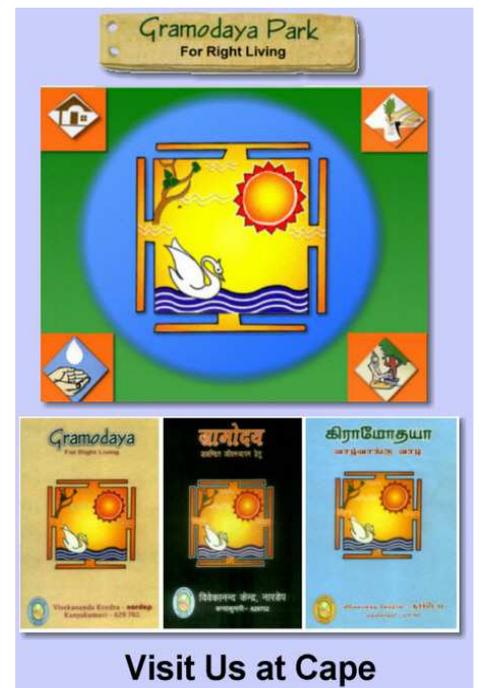
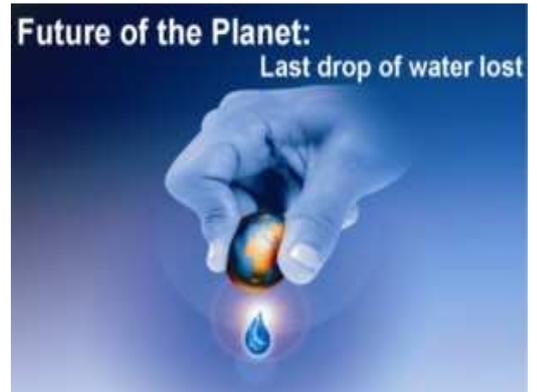
Every year the Oorani is maintained by removing of the accumulated silt, cleaning the sand of the filter bed and minor repairing of side wall if necessary. The book also explains how this approach also worked wonders for the social harmony of the village. For example, the book documents, how in two villages warring groups came together and participated in the revival and maintenance of Oorani.

The book has good illustrations and a bibliography also.

Where Water Matters
Price: Rs 10/-(subject to change)

Secretary VK- **nardep**
Kanyakumari -629 702
Year: 1996

Two Scenarios: Red Future of a Blue Planet



Visit Us at Cape

Modern man no longer regards Nature as being in any sense divine and feels perfectly free to behave towards her as an overwhelming conqueror and tyrant. – Aldous Huxley



The Problem

Life on this planet has existed now for almost four billion years. During that time, of course, there have been a number of extinction crises, when large numbers of species have suddenly disappeared from the planet. We're going through a period that looks like a major extinction crisis, but it's different from any other situation that has ever existed in that it is being driven by a single species. We're in an absolutely unprecedented situation.

All over the planet, our species has become so demanding that we are destroying habitat of other species. It's not just the tropical rain forests, it's the temperate rain forests, wetlands, coral reefs, grasslands. ... A very conservative estimate at the present time is that at least fifty thousand species of plants and animals are going extinct every year. That's over six species an hour vanishing forever. Our grandchildren certainly are going to live in a world that may see up to fifty percent of mammalian species gone, certainly a quarter of all bird species gone. This is, from a biological standpoint, absolutely catastrophic.



– *David Suzuki*
Environmentalist



The Thinking

We will never harm or exploit or damage or denigrate someone who is our friend. We will receive the gifts given to us by our friends with thanks and gratitude. We will return our own gifts to our friends. Everything we receive from nature is a gift; whether it is food, water, sunshine or anything else; everything is a gift. This is the symbiotic relationship which equips us with humility, wonder and reverence. Nature is not there to be plundered or exploited rather it is there to be cherished and celebrated. I call it "Reverential Ecology".

The moment we accept that all life has intrinsic value, we begin to experience a profound feeling of reverence towards all life and begin to experience the beauty, the integrity, the exuberance, the generosity and the economy which holds the entire web of life together. In place of controlling, owning or possessing we begin to participate in the process of the intricately woven web of life. We are no longer masters or stewards of the earth rather we are participants and co-creators of the earth.



– *Satish Kumar*
Environmentalist



The Living

Maybe we have enough technology to save the planet but it is not enough because the people are not ready. This is why we need to focus on the other side of the problem, the pollution of the environment not in terms of carbon dioxide but the toxic atmosphere in which we live; so many people getting sick, many children facing violence and despair and committing suicide.

We should speak more of spiritual pollution....With the collective energy of fear, anger and despair. We create an atmosphere and environment that is destructive to all of us. We don't think enough about that, we only think about the physical environment.

... it is possible to live simply and happily, having the time to love and help other people. we will demonstrate to the people and bring about an awakening so that people will abandon their course of comforts. If we can produce a collective awakening, we can solve the problem of global warming. Together we have to provoke that type of awakening. One Buddha is not enough, we need to have many Buddhas."



– *Thich Nhat Hahn*
Buddhist