

Echoes of Eco

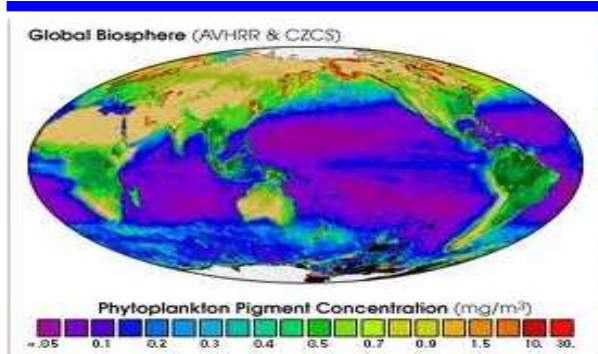


December, 2010

Vivekananda Kendra- **nardep** Newsletter

Vol:2 No:10

Biosphere - Vernadsky



Life presents an indivisible and indissoluble whole, in which all parts are interconnected both among themselves and with the inert medium of the biosphere. In the future, this picture will no doubt rest upon a precise and quantitative basis. At the moment, we are only able to follow certain general outlines, but the foundations of this approach seem solid.

The principal fact is that the biosphere has existed throughout all geological periods, from the most ancient indications of the Archean.... The land and the ocean have coexisted since the most remote geological times. This coexistence is basically linked with the geochemical history of the biosphere, and is a fundamental characteristic of its mechanism.

... Life remains unalterable in its essential traits throughout all geological times, and changes only in form. All the vital films (plankton, bottom, and soil) and all the vital concentrations (littoral, sargassic, and fresh water) have always existed.

Their mutual relationships, and the quantities of matter connected with them, have changed from time to time; but these modifications could not have been large, because the energy input from the sun has been constant, or nearly so, throughout geological time, and because the distribution of this energy in the vital films and concentrations can only have been determined by living matter - the fundamental part, and the only variable part, of the thermodynamic field of the biosphere.

But living matter is not an accidental creation. Solar energy is reflected in it, as in all its terrestrial concentrations. We could push this analysis further, and examine in greater depth the complex mechanism of the living films and concentrations, and the mutual chemical relationships which link them.

(Vladimir Ivanovitch Vernadsky was a Russian geologist who first realized that the planet functions as a single whole. He is considered the pioneer of the idea of 'Gaia' decades before James Lovelock)



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Welcoming the Dawn



Bringing all life-sustaining blessings with her, showing herself she sends forth brilliant lustre.

Last of the countless mornings that have vanished, first of bright morns to come hath Dawn arisen. Arise! the breath, the life, again hath reached us: darkness hath passed away and light approacheth.

-Rig Veda (I.CXIII. 15)



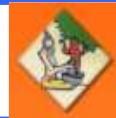
Service to humanity is the highest form of worship – Swami Vivekananda

Love, in principle, is indivisible as far as the connection between 'objects' and one's own self is concerned. Genuine love is an expression of productiveness and implies care, respect, responsibility, and knowledge.-Erich Fromm



A flash of Unity: from the writings of Arne Naess: Self-Realization an Ecological Approach to Being in the World

This month...



For about 2500 years humankind has struggled with basic questions about who we are, what we are heading for, and of what kind of reality we are part. Two thousand, five hundred years is a short period in the lifetime of a species, and still less in the lifetime of the Earth, to whose surface we belong as mobile parts. I am not capable of saying very new things, but I can look at things from a somewhat different angle, using somewhat different conceptual tools and images.

We underestimate ourself. I emphasize 'self'. We tend to confuse it with the narrow ego.... Traditionally the maturity of the self has been considered to develop through three stages, from ego to social self, comprising the ego, and from there to metaphysical self, comprising the social self. But nature is then largely left out in the conception of this process. Our home, our immediate environment, where we belong as children, and the identification with human living beings, are largely ignored. I therefore tentatively introduce, perhaps for the first time ever, a concept of ecological self. We may be said to be in, and for nature from our very beginning. Society and human relations are important, but our self is richer in its constitutive relations. These relations are not only relations we have to other humans and the human community. (I have introduced a term 'mixed community' for communities where we consciously and deliberately live closely together with certain animals.)

I shall continue for a while to concentrate on the ecology of the self, but shall first insert a word on identification.

What would be a paradigm situation of identification? It is a situation in which identification elicits intense empathy.

My standard example has to do with a non-human being I met 40 years ago. I looked through an old-fashioned microscope at the dramatic meeting of two drops of different chemicals. A flea jumped from a lemming strolling along the table and landed in the middle of the acid chemicals. To save it was impossible. It took many minutes for the flea to die. Its movements were dreadfully expressive. What I felt was, naturally, a painful compassion and empathy. But the empathy was not basic, it was the process of identification, that 'I see myself in the flea'.

If I was alienated from the flea, not seeing intuitively anything even resembling myself, the death struggle would have left me indifferent. So there must be identification in order for there to be compassion and, among humans, solidarity.... If the sanskrit word translated into English is atman, it is instructive to note that this term has the basic meaning of 'self, rather than 'mind' or 'spirit', as you see in translations. The superiority of the translation using the word 'self stems from the consideration that if your 'self in the wide sense embraces another being, you need no moral exhortation to show care.

Arne Dekke Eide Næss (27 January 1912 – 12 January 2009) was a Norwegian philosopher, the founder of deep ecology

Green Health Home at Vivekananda Puram functioned for 6 days and treated 172 patients.



Done with DST core support

Water and Sanitation ...



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



When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bounds. Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties and talents come alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamt yourself to be.

- Maharishi Patanjali (as quoted by Dr.APJ Abdul Kalam)



The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems. – Mahatma Gandhi

Motivation training camp **VK- nardep** for the Dept. Civil supplies and & Consumer Protection, Chennai at Technology Resource Center, Kalluvillai



Swami Vivekananda Yoga University, Bangalore honoured **Sri.G.Vasudeo** for life time contribution to sustainable development



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. It was held between 3rd to 5th. 38 persons attended it.
- In the International conference on rural development and Krishi Yoga, Sri.G.Vasudeo, secretary **VK-nardep** was honored for life-time contribution to sustainable development at Swami Vivekananda Yoga University, Bangalore.



Bio-Methanation plant Shakthi Surabhi was displayed at the stall of Kumari-Carnival 2010 organized by district administration.



Vivekananda Kendra –nardep Bio-methanation plant for producing energy from domestic waste was discussed at Farmers' meet organized by NABARD in the Siva-Gangai district.





There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew. ~Marshall McLuhan, 1964



Participants of Capacity building for Adoption of technology workshop are undergoing a hands on training session in Azolla technology.



Happenings: This month for Sustainable Agriculture

- Workshop on “Capacity building for Adoption of Technologies” was sponsored by NABARD, Chennai at Technology Resource Center, Kalluvillai in two batches from 9th to 11th with 24 participants and 16th to 18th with 57 participants. Dr. Kamalasanan Pillai and his team were the resource persons,



A section of audience at the capacity building for adaptation of technology programme

Renewable Energy This Month...



- Training programme on Shakti Surabhi Bio-methanation plant was held at TRC, Kalluvilai on 24th of December. 30 persons attended and the resource persons were Shri.V.Ramakrishnan and Sri.G.Vasudeo. Training programme was held under (RIF) NABARD, Chennai.
- Shri.G.Vasudeo had an interaction on RuTAG's activities at IIT, Chennai on 24th.

Sri.Ramakrishnan explains Bio-Methanation plant to participants from Forest Training college for motivation camp.



Tamil Nadu Forest Training College at Vaikai Dam, Madurai district sent 62 staff members for motivation training camp.



Happenings: This month for Sustainable Agriculture

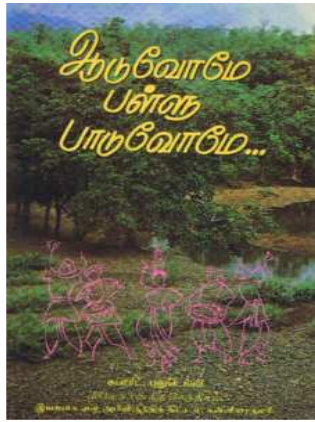
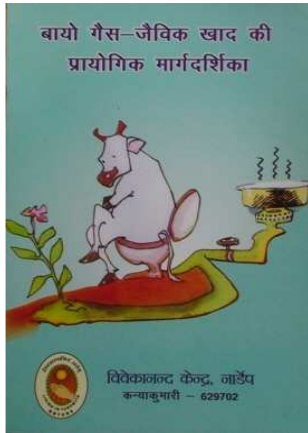
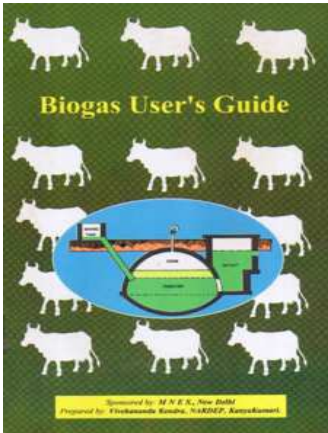
- Honey Bee – Seasonal Management Training Programme organized by KVIC, Chennai was held at Community Hall, Perum Selvavillai, Kanyakumari Dist. from 7th to 13th. 20 participants benefited. The resource person was Shri.Jasper, Honey bee Extension Centre, Kuzhithurai.

VK-nardep has adapted Perum Selvavillai village for village development programme under NABARD.

- People Science Congress programme sponsored by National Forum of the State Science Association, Kerala was held at Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Trichur on 29th this month. 500 persons attended the programme. Dr.P.Kamalasanan Pillai gave a presentation on “Bio-farm experience of Kozhikottupottai”

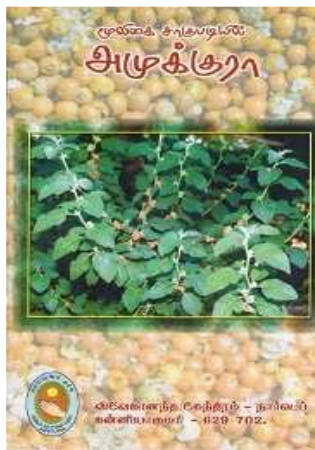
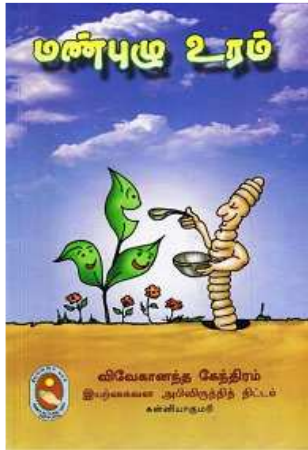
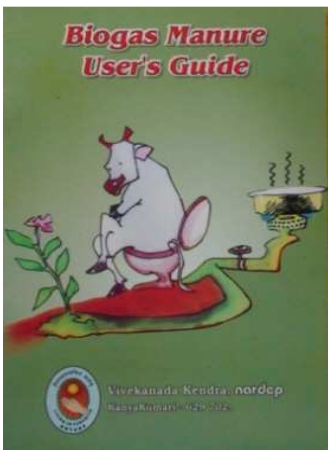


"Until you do what you believe in, you don't know whether you believe it or not." – Leo Tolstoy



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 maintain a Biogas plant? What are the types of Biogas plants? What are the common problems you may face and what are the simple solutions for them? You can find all the answers in this Tamil manual. Download it from www.vknardep.org



Commissioning of Shakti Surabhi this month

Four Bio-Methanation plants have been commissioned under NABARD-RIF project this month.



When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music. Which of you would be a reed, dumb and silent, when all else sings together in unison? – Khalil Gibran

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



The Scared Earth

We know of the sacred Earth. But the earth is getting progressively scarred and the scene is getting scary day by day. This book is about the emerging scary situation that is threatening us.

We have heard of many ecological threats that are endangering the survival of our species. There are no boundaries here. Race, religion, creed and language have no relevance here when disaster strikes. We are all related. And this 'we' includes both human and non-human communities. First this realization has to dawn on us.

The book aims to accomplish this creation of eco-awareness by first highlighting the inter-connectedness of all life on earth as single grand system called Gaia.

Actually this book is a collection of articles written in Yuva Bharathi – a youth magazine. However they are all so well connected that they fall into chapters of a book so correctly in place. In the first article itself the author sets the tone for the entire book:

To make her sacred again, an ecological revolution is necessary. But for that we must know the problems and their possible solutions.

Thus the entire book creates not only the awareness of each and every impending ecological doom but also in a very positive way provides a positive techno-ethical and social solution. Whether it is ozone layer depletion, smog, noise pollution or safe drinking water for all sections of the society – the book has broad outlines of concrete solutions.

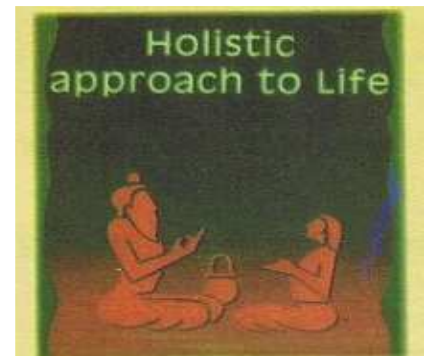
The book totally deals in 16 chapters important ecological issues and for each one of them it gives solutions. The last chapter is titled 'Towards Sacred Earth'. Here under the sub-title 'Remedy', the author states:

A new paradigm of 'change within rather than without' is the need of the hour. At every crisis there has to be a moral leap, an existential decision. If we move in this direction, it will be a tremendous revolution. **This revolution is to be from within.**

Perhaps that is the underlying philosophy of all ecological thinking. The book has good illustrations and a bibliography also.

The Scared Earth
Author: G.Vasudeo
Price: Rs 20/(subject to change)
Year: 1998 Pages:56

Ritam: the essence of Existence



One day a saint dispatched his disciple to bring a few leaves from a tree. When the disciple broke a whole branch and was taking it, the saint stopped him and said: "Don't you know, you fool that if any part of this is destroyed, you too will become less to that extent? When this tree stood before us, full and green, we too in a manner were also full and green. Today, its wound has caused a scar within us also. We are not apart from each other."

The saint said further: "If there is an attitude of friendship, of companionship amongst various parts of Existence, if there is a feeling of oneness with each other instead of overpowering each other, a wonderful music is created in life".

This very music is Religion-Spirituality and is *Rit*. (Cosmic harmony)

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For Right Living

Gramodaya
For Right Living

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एक सही जीवन शैली

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சரியான வாழ்க்கை முறை

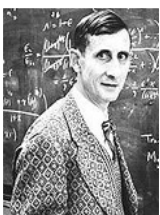
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Reality cannot be found except in One single source, because of the interconnection of all things with one another. (Leibniz, 1670)



The Biosphere

The biosphere is the most complicated of all the things we humans have to deal with. The science of planetary ecology is still young and undeveloped. It is not surprising that honest and well-informed experts can disagree about facts. But beyond the disagreement about facts, there is another deeper disagreement about values. The disagreement about values may be described in an over-simplified way as a disagreement between naturalists and humanists. Naturalists believe that nature knows best. For them the highest value is to respect the natural order of things. Any gross human disruption of the natural environment is evil. Excessive burning of fossil fuels is evil. Changing nature's desert, either the Sahara desert or the ocean desert, into a managed ecosystem where giraffes or tunafish may flourish, is likewise evil. Nature knows best, and anything we do to improve upon Nature will only bring trouble. The humanist ethic begins with the belief that humans are an essential part of nature. For humanists, the highest value is harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.



- **Freeman Dyson**
Theoretical Physicist



The Biodiversity

The bio-diversity of the nation can be a core competency which can be the basis of achieving a triangular growth mission of ecological conservation, societal empowerment and economic development....India occupies only 2.4% of the world land area, but its contribution to the world biodiversity is 8% of the total number of species. India has 10 distinct biodiversity zones covering varying terrains, rainfall patterns and climatic conditions. Biogeographically, India is situated at the tri junction of three realms namely; afro-tropical, indo-Malayan and paleo-arctic realms and hence, has characteristics from all of them. India is one of the 12 mega diversity in the world. India has about 12% of the world Pisces (fish) diversity and about 13.6% of world's bird species.... Dear friends, wherever you are, whatever you do, you can certainly make a difference to the environment and conserving bio-diversity. It may be home, may be school or college or it may be work centre or walking path on the road or walking in the garden. Environment and bio-diversity conservation will indeed be a collective mission of the 21st century for all humanity, across cities, across states, across nations and across continents.



- **Dr. Abdul Kalam**
Rocket scientist



The Biospirituality

Defending nature in our rich, industrial society, the argument of the opponent often is that we are doing it in order to secure beauty, recreation, sport, and other non-vital interests for us. It makes for strength if we, after honest reflection, find that we feel threatened in our innermost self. If so, we more convincingly defend a vital interest, not only something out there. Historically we have seen how nature conservation is non-violent as its very core. Gandhi says: *I believe in advaita (non-duality), I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spirituality, the whole world gains with him and, if one man fails, the whole world fails to that extent.* Gandhi recognized a basic, common right to live and blossom, to self-realization in a wide sense applicable to any being that can be said to have interests or needs. Gandhi made manifest the internal relation between self-realization, non-violence and what sometimes has been called biospherical egalitarianism.

The main point is that we do not hesitate today, being inspired by ecology and a revived intimate relation to nature, to recognize and accept wholeheartedly our ecological self.



- **Arne Naess**
Eco-Philosopher