

# Echoes of Eco



March, 2012

Vivekananda Kendra- **nardep** Newsletter

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## How Shall We Survive?



Throughout biological evolution, starting from single-celled organisms right up to the complexity of rain forests, the process has been characterised by increasing diversity among species, lengthening of the food chains, and progressive enrichment of the environment.

For the first time in the history of the planet the actions of modern man appear to be putting this process into reverse. Whole species of fauna and flora are being eliminated, the food-chains are becoming shorter, and the environment progressively impoverished. It only takes a little imagination to picture what could happen if the trend continues.

What are we going to do about it? This is the real challenge .., and in my view it is one of education. ... It is now urgently necessary that a still wider aspect of ecology should also form part of the regular curriculum of all schools, starting at the primary stage. The trouble is we have first to teach the teachers, and here, I think, we must be agreed on what we want to teach.

There are two motivations behind an ecological approach -- one is based on self interest, however enlightened, i.e. when consideration for other species is taught solely because on that depends the survival of our own.

The other motivation springs from a sense that the biota is a whole, of which we are a part, and that the other species which compose it and helped to create it, are entitled to existence in their own right. This is the wholeness approach and it is my hope and belief that this is what we, as a federation, stand for.

If I am right, this means that we cannot escape from the ethical and spiritual values of life for they are part of wholeness. To ignore them and their implications would be to pursue another form of fragmentation.

Therefore, I hold that what we have to teach is the attitude defined by Aldo Leopold as 'A Land Ethic'. This requires that we extend the concept of Community to include all the species of life with which we share the planet. We must foster a reverence for all life, even that which we are forced to control

**This is an excerpt from the famous address given by the late Lady Eve Balfour, (author of the organics classic "The Living Soil and the Haughley Experiment"), to International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements conference in Switzerland in 1977.**

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## Inner Nature



***Rivers and mountains have a dual nature. A river is but a form of water, yet it has a distinct (subtle) body. Mountains appear as motionless mass, yet their true form is not so. We cannot know, when looking at a lifeless shell, that it contains a living being. Similarly, within the apparently inanimate rivers and mountains there dwells a hidden (feminine) energy (sakti).***

***-Kalika Purana, 22.10-13***



The human body is the universe in miniature. That which cannot be found in the body is not found in the universe. Hence the philosopher's formula, that the universe within reflects the universe without. It follows therefore that our knowledge of our body could be perfect we would know the universe.- Gandhiji



**This Month ...**



**This Month ...**



**This month...**



Water was tested from 14 wells in Kanyakumari Dist – programme of Central Ground Water Board, Chennai.

Green Health Home at Vivekanandapuram functioned for 5 days and treated 117 patients.

Workshop on “Rural water supply and water treatment” was held at Govt. Polytechnic College, Konnam, Nagercoil on 21<sup>st</sup> of this month. 78 students attended the programme. It was organized by Govt. Polytechnic, Konnam, Nagercoil. Shri.V.Ramakrishnan was the resource person



**Done with DST core support**



**Green Building Technologies...**

- **Workshop on “Vermi Compost Technology”** was conducted by Kuberanpa Public Service Society, Colachel at the Gomathy Town Hall, Colachel. It was held on 12<sup>th</sup> of this month. The resource persons were Sis. V .Saraswathi & Sri.S.Rajamony. 175 persons attended and benefitted.
- Dr.Kamalasannan Pillai attended a Workshop on “Carbon-di-oxide Sequestration by Microalgae: Processes for a Cleaner World” at VIT University, Vellore from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month. It was jointly sponsored by DST, New Delhi and Royal Society, United Kingdom. Dr.P.Kamalasannan Pillai presented a paper on “Azolla a potential bio-input for Sustainable farming and a promising BGA symbiont for Carbon sequestration”. 250 scientists participated in this seminar including a few from other countries.



**Networking Activities**

Southern Regional Workshop on “Rural Housing” organised by MoRD, Govt. of India was held at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of this month. 30 persons attended the workshop. Shri.V.Ramakrishnan presented the work of Vivekananda Kendra – NARDEP

On 4<sup>th</sup> of March, Maharashtra Govt. Delegation visited VK-Nardep and studied its works. The 10 member delegation was lead by Shri.Jayant Patil, Minister of Rural Development and Shri.SateJ Patil, Minister of State for Rural Development, Govt. of Maharashtra. A presentation on model eco-village was made to them.

Dr.Pillai’s talk on Azolla technology was relayed on Pasumai Oli – telephonic Kisan information facility provided by Pusumai Vikatan from 10<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of this month.

Training programme for “Construction Supervisors” was organized at TRC, Kalluvillai from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> and 46 persons, mostly supervisors, engineers and engineering students attended. This workshop was sponsored by BMTPC, New Delhi. The resource persons were Shri.Rahul Rawat, Dr.Parag Mankeekar from Pune and Shri.V.Ramakrishnan.

A second workshop also sponsored by BMTPC, New Delhi on “Construction Technologies” for Asst. Masons was held at TRC, Kalluvillai from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of this month. 54 persons, mostly masons, and Civil Engineering students attended this workshop. The resource persons were Shri.V.Ramakrishnan and his team.

**Training programme for “Construction Supervisors” (Right): Viewing different live models and also learnt about other technologies. Hands on session workshop on Azolla technology: preparing Azolla bed. (Below)**





*Your worst enemy cannot harm you As much as your own thoughts, unguarded.  
But once mastered, No one can help you as much,  
Not even your father or your mother. - Buddha*



## Happenings: This month



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All India Radio, Thirunelveli station, broadcasted

- on 8<sup>th</sup> a talk on Azolla Technology by Smt.S.Premalatha
- on 22<sup>nd</sup> a talk on Production of Vermi Compost by Shri.S.Rajamony
- on 27<sup>th</sup> a talk on Kitchen waste based Bio-Methanation plant by Shri.V.Ramakrishnan



**Dr.Ganapathi giving special lecture on Kaladaipu at the National seminar organized by Ayush at Puducherry.**

Dept of Ayush organized two days National Seminar on Kaladaippu on March 5 and 6 of this month at Indira Gandhi Paramedical College Auditorium. JIPMER Director inaugurated the event. More than 300 participants mostly medical professionals and researchers- attended the seminar. Dr. Ganapathi gave a special lecture on Kalladaippu and Siddha Pharmaco-Dynamical studies on selected Siddha drugs for Kaladaippu.



**Shakti Surabhi Bio-Methanation plant training participants studying a portable plant model.**

Two workshops on “Paramparia Bone Fracture Treatment” were conducted for two days at the Technology Resource Center of VK-nardep at Kalluvillai.

The first workshop was held on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 51 persons attended. The second workshop was conducted on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. 65 persons attended it.

The persons who attended were mostly students of Siddha system, traditional physicians and practicing Siddha and Ayurveda doctors. Participants found it very useful. Dr.V.Ganapathy and his team conducted the programme.



**Traditional bone-fracture treatment demonstration is conducted at the workshop and participants observe the techniques first hand.**



## Happenings: This month

**Workshop on “Kitchen Waste (Shakti Surabhi) Biogas Plant** was organized by CASA, Tirunelveli. It was conducted at the YMCA, Kanyakumari on 22<sup>nd</sup>. 50 persons attended the workshop and benefitted. Resource Person was Shri.V.Ramakrishnan

**Workshop on “Kitchen Waste (Shakti Surabhi) Biogas Plant”** was held at Technology Resource Center (TRC) Kalluvillai on 24<sup>th</sup> of this month. The resource Person was Shri.V.Ramakrishnan. 7 persons attended this programme.

**Construction of Biogas Plants:** 14 Shakti Surabhi – Portable model plants, 4 Shakti Surabhi – Fixed model plants and one Deenabhandu model plant have been constructed by VK-nardep.

*How long can men thrive between walls of brick, walking on asphalt pavements, breathing the fumes of coal and of oil, growing, working, dying, with hardly a thought of wind, and sky, and fields of grain, seeing only machine-made beauty, the mineral-like quality of life?*

*~Charles A. Lindbergh*



## This Month ...



Workshop on "Composting Technology" was conducted for the students of Arignar Anna College, Aralvoimozhi at the Gramodaya Park on 5<sup>th</sup> of this month. 31 students attended and Shri.S.Rajamony was the resource person.

Workshop on "Vermi Compost Technology" was conducted for the students of S.T.Hindu College, Nagercoil at the Gramodaya Park on 13<sup>th</sup> of this month. 6 students attended and Shri.S.Rajamony was the resource person.

Training programme on "Bio-formulations" was conducted for the students of Govt. Polytechnic, Konnam, Nagercoil, at the Gramodaya Park on 15<sup>th</sup> of this month. 57 students attended and Sis.V.Saraswathi was the resource person.

Workshop on "Sustainable Agriculture" was conducted for the members of CASA Self Help Federation, Vilaiveedu, Kanyakumari Dist, at the Gramodaya Park on 16<sup>th</sup> of this month. 15 members of SHG attended and Sis.V.Saraswathi & Sri.Rajamony were the resource persons.



**Anna college students studying various composing technologies at VK-nardep garden.**



**Kulachel: Women assembled to learn about vermi-composting technology.**



**Dr.Pillai explaining to the students about Grey-Water treatment through selected plants.**



**Shakti Surabhi portable Bio-methanation plants  
Range – 0.25 cum to 6 cum**



**Our primeval Mother Earth is an organism that no science in the world can rationalise. Everything on her that crawls and flies is dependent upon Her and all must hopelessly perish if that Earth dies that feeds us.**

**- Victor Schauburger**



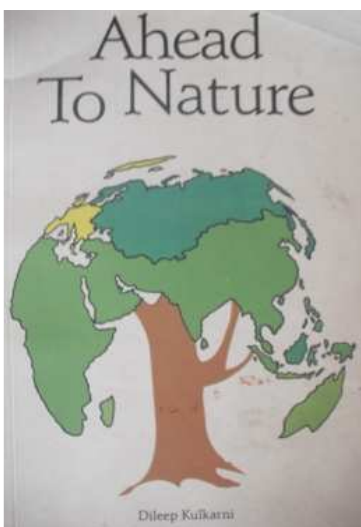
*God is Truth, but God is many other things also. That is why I say Truth is God... Only remember that Truth is not one of the many qualities that we name. It is the living embodiments of God, it is the only Life, and I identify Truth with the fullest life, and that is how it becomes a concrete thing, for God is His whole creation, the whole Existence, and service of all that exists--Truth--is service of God.- Gandhiji*



## From our Publications



### Ahead to Nature



This is one of the earlier publications of Vivekananda Kendra- Prakashan Trust, Chennai. It was published in 1998 that is some 14 years ago – and to have a relook at it and see how it relates to different ecological crises we face today is a good exercise for us – to evaluate us civilisationally.

First let us see a few things about the author. Sri. Dileep Kulkarni worked for Vivekananda Kendra for number of years and edited Marathi quarterly "Vivek Vichar". He was also the guest-editor of Kendra Patrika 'Living in Tune with Nature'. A prolific thinker on systems view of life and nature, he walks his talk by living in tune with nature in a remote village in Konkan. He writes about not only ecological problems but also the value-based roots of the crisis we face today in both Marathi and English.

The book starts with a chapter on the environment. It talks about cycles. It's not just the cycles in nature but also cycles within the organism. The book points out that the 'internal cycles of an organism are linked to mega cycles in nature.' (p.6) Then the author asks an important question. Why do these cycles exist? Is there a reason? The answer that he gives is simple and powerful. Mother Nature wants to distribute the resources in a very equitable way: to share. The author provides an insider view of an ecosystem. It's not dry and academic but empathetic to the processes that happen in nature.

The next chapter builds a cosmology that is based on both Indic wisdom and which is resonant with modern science. He explains how the Cartesian divide based notion of the universe with a Newtonian mechanistic worldview is slowly giving way to a more organic and dynamic cosmic vision in a quantum world. It's almost like the vision of cosmic form Arjuna had in the famous Kurukshetra battle field. Then we move on to the metaphor of the Bodhi tree – tree under which Buddha attained enlightenment. Here he speaks of three masters – Acharya J.C. Bose, Luther Burbank and George Washington Carver – each in their own way rejected reductionism as the only tool of understanding nature and each embraced the organism as a whole and emphasized the limitations of reductionist science in understanding nature.



Today we speak of Gross National Happiness – thanks to the Bhutan's king. But here is a book that speaks of that concept, provides a graph of inverse relation of happiness to consumption and derives the equation from a verse in Mahabharatha (pp.64-65). And this book precedes GNH by more than a decade!



The book has a chapter titled 'Devil's Workshops'. This wonderful chapter explores how technology is actually not mere 'technology' but has social and cultural values embedded in it. It gives statistics of how killer machines like hand guns are beloved possessions in American population. The chilling statistics of yester-years and almost the annual tragedies of school-campus shooting mass-murders in US we witness today make us think how the book is still relevant. The author has foretold the relation between technology of murder and psychological boost that killer psyche receives with the embedded values which come with the guns people buy. The book is a must for every thinker who cares about environment, society, its future and human values. This book like the book shared here last month, deserves an update and a qualitatively better colour reprint.

**Ahead to Nature: From problem-shifting to problem solving**  
**Author: Dileep Kulkarni**  
**VKPT Publication: 1998**  
**Pages: 245 Chapters: 15**

*For us the highest purpose of this world is not merely living in it, knowing it and making use of it, but realizing our own selves in it through expansion of sympathy; not alienating ourselves from it and dominating it, but comprehending and uniting it with ourselves in perfect union. - Tagore*



### **Education of the Spirit**

We have come to this world to accept it, not merely to know it. We may become powerful by knowledge, but we attain fullness by sympathy. The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. But we find that this education of sympathy is not only systematically ignored in schools, but it is severely repressed. From our very childhood habits are formed and knowledge is imparted in such a manner that our life is weaned away from nature and our mind and the world are set in opposition from the beginning of our days. Thus the greatest of education for which we came prepared is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead. We rob the child of his earth to teach him geography, of language to teach him grammar. His hunger is for the Epic, but he is supplied with chronicles of facts and dates...Child-nature protests against such calamity with all its power of suffering, subdued at last into silence by punishment. Children should be surrounded with the things of nature which have their own educational value. Their minds should be allowed to stumble upon and be surprised at everything that happens in today and in life;



*-Rabindranath  
Tagore*



### **Real Education**

The real difficulty is that people have no idea of what education truly is. We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated. The girls, we say, do not have to earn; so why should they be educated? As long as such ideas persist there is no hope of our ever knowing the true value of education....Pupils should know to discriminate between what should be received and what rejected. It is the duty of the teacher to teach his pupils discrimination. If we go on taking in indiscriminately we would be no better than machines. ... A teacher who teaches from textbooks does not impart originality to his pupils. ...A teacher who establishes rapport with the taught, becomes one with them, learns more from them than he teaches them. He who learns nothing from his disciples is, in my opinion, worthless. Whenever I talk with someone I learn from him. I take from him more than I give him. In this way, a true teacher regards himself as a student of his students. If you will teach your pupils with this attitude, you will benefit much from them.



*Mahatma Gandhi*



### **Education as Life-Knowledge**

It seems to me that education must be of such a quality that it will train students in intellectual self-reliance and make them independent thinkers. If this were to become the chief aim of learning, the whole process of learning would be transformed. The present school syllabus contains a multiplicity of languages and subjects, and the student feels that in every one of these he needs the teacher's help for years together. But a student should be so taught that he is capable of going forward and acquiring knowledge for himself. There is an infinite sum of knowledge in the world, and each one needs some finite portion of it for the conduct of his affairs. But it is a mistake to think that this life-knowledge can be had in any school. Life-knowledge can only be had from life. The task of the school is to awaken in its pupils the power to learn from life.

Most parents are anxious for their boys to complete the school course so that they can get a salaried job and lead an easy life. This however is a wrong way of looking at education. Learning has value in its own right. The purpose of learning is freedom—and freedom is another word for what we have called Self-reliance.



*- Acharya  
Vinoba Bhave*