



Satsang Project Update

Satsang Skill Development Centre

On November 12th 2018, Sri M inaugurated the Satsang Skills Development Centre (SSDC) in Madanapalle. SSDC has been launched to train youth between the ages of 18-25 years in skills required to make them ready to join the workforce. The centre invites youth from all backgrounds, ranging from school dropouts to college graduates.

The SSDC aims to **address unemployment** in Madanapalle and its surrounding villages, making a local contribution towards one of India's major challenges in the 21st century. In India, **roughly half of all students who enroll into school never graduate**, and even those who pass this threshold, often enroll in colleges where little learning actually happens.

The goal of the Satsang Skills Development Centre is to instill these young minds with **critical skills required by employers**, such as problem solving, logical thinking, communication and basic computer skills. The participants are trained over a 90-day course in **Spoken English, Computers (MS Office), Accounting Software (Tally) and Life Skills**.

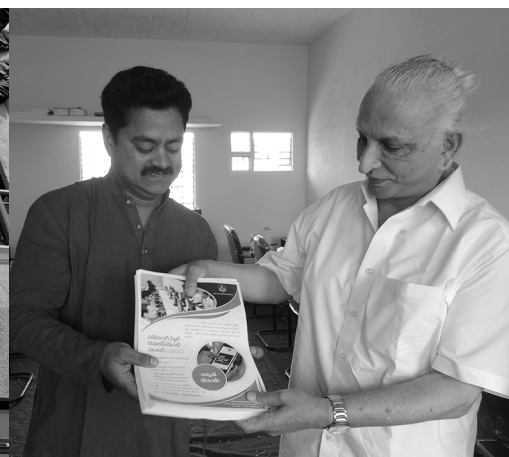
The first batch of **16 students, evenly divided between girls and boys**, are nearly through their course and are looking forward to good placements. The centre is functioning from a rented space, with a team of three trainers to facilitate the course. The Satsang Foundation has arrangements with ten companies to enable guaranteed placements for our participants. It is looking to-

wards including many more companies with your strong support.

During the inauguration of the centre in November, Sri M shared, "In the coming days, I see the Centre growing and we may have to move to a larger building." He spoke about the importance of skill development and urged the students to complete the course.

The ceremony highlight included Sri M cutting a ribbon and lighting the lamp. The Satsang Foundation expresses its **gratitude to all individuals** who have **come forward** to donate computers.

It looks forward to continued support in the areas of **training students in spoken English, computers as well as final placements!**



Chanda Satsang Vidyalaya, Lathira, Uttar Pradesh

The Chanda Satsang Vidyalaya (CSV) is a **free** Hindi medium school in Lathira, Uttar Pradesh.

It has **75 children** from nursery to class IV. There are also a few students who come to the centre of learning in the afternoon.

The school day is divided, with early morning dedicated to **exercises, prayer, Yoga and meditation**, followed by breakfast. During the day they pursue academic studies, with the curriculum designed to balance between **life skills and knowledge-based projects**. After lunch the children break into the **favourite part** of their day, with activities such as **sports, art, craft, music and dance**. The kids also have **30 mins in the library** every day to encourage reading habits. They love reading stories, and are now as comfortable picking up and

browsing books as they are with playing and dancing!

The school is also **committed to the children's health**. With closely supervised, **regular, nutritious meals** for breakfast and lunch, children have shown **tremendous improvement in their overall health**. They are at appropriate height and weight, as we hold regular medical camps that ensure that kids are treated for any health issues, as we provide **free medication and supplements**. Every morning the children are encouraged to **take care of their hygiene**, to cleanup and brush their teeth. These daily rituals are turning into a habit, which is gradually making its way into the rural community as well.

We conduct regular Parent Teachers Association meetings which are attended by the parents to see what the

children are doing. CSV has **folders for each child**; which they are extremely proud to share with their parents. We have also been further integrating parents into the school community through a variety of activities such as the **mothers** of the children **making Kachori for all the guests** at a recent school function. **Pleased parents help out willingly, as they become part of the happy school family!**

Other activities include **starting a kitchen garden, celebrating festivals** such as Diwali and Christmas, visiting the old people's home nearby to meet and serve the elderly, and **visits from special guests** such as Arvind Dhondapale, a senior teacher from Peepal Grove School, and Sunanda Ali, Principal of Peepal Grove School in Sadum.



The Satsang Vidyalaya, Madanapalle

The Satsang Vidyalaya has had a busy term since the last update. From Independence Day to Republic Day, here's a snapshot of what has transpired at The Satsang Vidyalaya, Madanapalle:

- Field Trip to Regional Science Centre at Tirupati: Class 9 visited the Regional Science Centre, as well as the zoo at Tirupati. For most students, it was their first time at a museum, planetarium or a zoo. From optical illusions to white tigers, the day left a lasting impression on our students.

- Field Trip to Somapalyem: Junior and Senior school spent a day exploring the ancient temple town of Somapalyem. The trip included a trek into surrounding hills, studying Chola dynasty stone architecture, art, picnics and play in the outdoors.

- Children's Day 2018: Chacha Nehru's birthday was celebrated with much fanfare this year. Felicitations to Pandit Nehru were followed by animated debates on burning student issues like school or no school, shoes or no shoes to school, to the utility of homework, and songs, dances and skits. Students went home happy with new stationery and treats.

- Annual Maths Fair 2018: Our first Annual Maths Fair on December 22 was a day of learning and sharing with students, teachers and our communities. Topics ranging from angles and distances to exchanging gold for money, and insurance premiums, were brought to life through games and models.

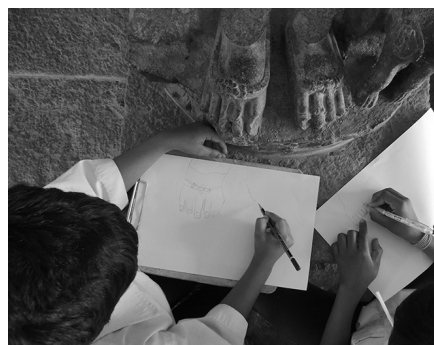
- Annual Sports Meet 2018: Our Annual Sports Meet was celebrated in December. Two days of full-throttled fun en-

compassed slow cycling, biscuit bite and lemon and spoon competitions, volleyball, tennikoit, and track and field events.

- Odissi Recital and Workshop: The entire school was treated to an Odissi performance by Ms. Jenna Teague who was visiting from California, USA. The usually rambunctious group of students was silent as they watched, riveted to the dance and quiet ambience. Ms. Jenna also conducted a 2-day workshop and students learnt *Chaukas*, *Tribhangis* and other insights into the Odissi tradition.

- Story-telling Workshop: Classes 1-3 were treated to the story of the 'Princess who wanted to become a Farmer' by Ms. Shalini Kalra Jacob of Suno Kahani.

Our students' enthusiasm to embrace new experiences made a joyful learning environment for all!



The Peepal Grove School

This term The Peepal Grove School was privileged to host Justice Jasti Chelameswar, recently retired judge of the Supreme Court. Accompanied by Sri M, Justice Chelameswar had an intense and engaging interaction with the students and teachers.

Students threw controversial questions

at Justice Chelameswar, one child asked if he was ever pressured to decide a case in favour of someone. Justice Chelameswar responded to the questions with humility and groundedness, not the least bit offended by such candid questions.

One profound thing he shared was: "It

is easy to be a successful lawyer, but it is difficult to be a good one!"

Justice Chelameswar demonstrated an important value that Sri M hopes to instill in students at PGS, regardless of whatever profession they choose to pursue.

Projects in the Pipeline - The Sacred Grove

Initially called the "Study Centre", in September 2017, 17 acres of land was acquired midway between Madanapalle and "The Peepal Grove School", Sadum, at Kondamarri village in Chowdepalli, AP. Sri M has now revealed its true intent through its title— **The Sacred Grove: Centre for Exploration of Consciousness (CEC)**.

In the ancient traditions, the Sacred Groves provided ambience for self-exploration in relation to the universal forces. The Aranya Sanskriti (forest Civilization) of Ancient India is the finest example of exploring higher recesses of Consciousness. In these sa-

cred groves, the teachers and the taught dialogued to share the essence of life.

In the same spirit, in the present context, Sri M has envisioned a Sacred Grove; a place for Satsangs, solitude, interaction with the Master and other co-travelers.

The work has already started on the picturesque piece of land, surrounded by paddy fields and mango groves. The first offering to this land was made by Sri M on 4th June, 2018, with the planting of trees. With this commenced a well thought out process of planting a variety of flowering trees, large shade trees, fruit orchards, medicinal trees, and fodder for the cattle.

The Sacred Grove will house a **library** that will offer teachings from across religions, traditions, ideologies and practices to inquire into the sacred. **An amphitheatre** that will accommodate a thousand Satsangis for occasions like Shivratri and Gurupurnima. **Cottages** in close proximity to Nature, to facilitate Sadhaks to retreat for an inner journey and an **organic farm & goshala** to encourage a down-to-earth lifestyle and financial self sufficiency.

Although only in its first phase, this Sacred Grove is sure to unravel many an uncharted path!



Contact

If you wish to contribute your time, energy, contacts or finances to any of the projects, we look forward to hearing from you.

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