

July - Sept 2015 - Yugaabd 514

Sangh Sandesh

संघ संदेश

Sanket

Guru Puja

Deepening Aspirations

Vishwa Samachar

www.hssuk.org

Shri-bhagavan uvacha
Urdhva-mulam adhah-
shakham ashvattham
prahur avyayam
chhandansi yasya parnani yas
tam veda sa
veda-vit

Chapter 15 Verse 1

The upside down tree,
with its roots above and
branches below, is said to be
imperishable. He who knows
this, is the knower of Veda.



Saprem Namaskar

“Shake off such petty weaknesses of the heart and arise!”

Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2 Verse 3

These are the poignant words of Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield, amidst the most intense psychological and existential struggle Arjuna was facing. Arjuna, appreciating Krishna's wise counsel, still could not let go of his grief, fear and anxiety. In this ultimate and decisive moment, he gave his whole self to Krishna and received divine wisdom.

Krishna goes on to explain that in this world of constant happenings, inaction is no choice. Nature forces us to act whether we like to or not. The decision then is with what spirit one must act. As the conversation continues, Arjuna is reminded that if through the spirit of sacrifice one should act, keeping one's ideal as the highest, that is considered skilful.

We all face despondency from time to time, and feel the need to hide away and escape action. In these situations, we often need someone or something to inspire us back on our purpose.

During this edition of Sangh Sandesh, you will see reminders of two things – people acting through a sense of higher purpose, and the spirit of sacrifice. We invite you to self-introspect and question, “Am I acting to the best of my ability?” and “How am I to become the strongest version of myself?”.

Editorial Team

My Vistaar Experience

Sangita Chabadiya | Woolwich Pannabai Shakha



During my vistaar in July 2015, my focus was exploring the history of Samiti in the UK. In order to be able to do this, my vistaar experience consisted of travelling up and down the country. In the north I visited Warrington, Ashton and Oldham, in the Midlands I visited Birmingham and Leicester and in London I visited South Harrow and Wembley.

I was fortunate enough to meet some of the very first sevikas that had started Samiti in the UK. They shared some of their experiences and stories with me and they were very interesting, funny and inspiring. Hearing stories about the very first Samiti Shikshika Varg back in 1996 and the first weekend shibhirs in 1987 were very uplifting. With the challenges that Hindu women faced in those days compared to now - it was definitely something to learn from and greatly appreciated.

One such compelling story was about Manjulaben Patel. Whilst travelling around Calcutta in India, Manjulaben Patel and her family went to the bank to take out some money for their travels. Unfortunately, there was a sudden strike and they could not obtain money from anywhere. They had enough for food, but not enough for an overnight stay at a hotel. The strike was happening for the next couple of days, they could not get money from anywhere during this time, surely they were stuck and there was nothing they could do about it? The unexpected situation led to panic and a moment of desperation. Manjulaben and her husband had visited Nagpur before and met Satyanarayanji whilst attending the Vijyadashmi utsav, whom they got to know very well. He had written a letter for them so that if they ever needed help whilst in Bharat, if they found any swayamsevak and showed them the letter they would help them. The family decided to go to the post office and have a look



is our unique quality. After her visit to India, Manjulaben was so inspired that she continued to work for Samiti in the UK for the rest of her life.

I heard many such stories from a host of veteran karyakartas. My favourite stories were the ones of the sevikas who were very mischievous when they were young. It was funny as a lot of them are now excellent role models and well disciplined shikshikas. I was surprised to learn that the first Samiti shakha outside of Bharat was in the UK - even before America and Kenya!

Overall my vistaar experience was very inspiring and a huge eye opener. I learnt about our history, collected recordings and photos and started dwelling on the future of our organisation and how to move forward. It is fair to say that the past 40 years of Samiti have been remarkable though challenging and hopefully in the next 40 years we can expand further and do even better.

For anyone interested in undertaking Vistaar, please do not hesitate to contact me.

at the local directory. Things started to look up as they found an address for a karyalaya that was nearby. Upon arrival, they showed the swayamsevaks at the karyalaya the letter from Satyanarayanji, explained their situation and feeling rather embarrassed asked for money. In those days a hundred rupees was a fortune! The swayamsevaks were very welcoming, treated them like family and gave them the money without any hesitation. They also informed the family of a local shakha nearby which they went to visit. At shakha, a poor swayamsevak who had only 2 plates at home, invited them to dinner and made sure they were fed well. This was an experience that Manjulaben would never forget. She realised the importance of sangh and its work, and it was more than just a youth club, it was more than just a place to develop ourselves and gain life skills. Coming to shakha builds you up to be a karyakarta for life and the network and connections we develop

Sangh and Samiti Shiksha Varg (SSV) is the annual youth leadership programme designed to provide value-based knowledge and skills to the young and promising generation.

DIVERSITY OF PARTICIPANTS

Leadership, teamwork and discipline are just three of many important qualities that 170 swayamsevak and 104 sevikas developed over the nine day leadership training course. The attendees came from 28 towns in the UK and represented 10 states of India and one from Pakistan, Mauritius and Ireland which shows the diverse reach HSS has across the community.

The varg was run by 37 full time shikshaks who facilitated all the physical and intellectual training. There were 50+ fulltime and part-time volunteers who took charge of all behind the scene logistics to make sure the facilities were kept clean, food was cooked and site was secure. Over the 9 days, the varg consumed 8,000 rotis, kindly donated by 140 local families across Leicestershire. Over 80 pints of milk and 22 loaves of bread were used every day as part of 5 meals and snacks served to the attendees from sunrise to sunset.

Here we share a few experiences from fellow participants.

Dr Sachin Nandha

Leicester – Praveen Varsh

It had been 20 years since I had attended an SSV of any kind. With the gentle and persistent encouragement of Chandrakant ji, I had been nudged into completing my Praveen Varsh (final year). As the weeks approached to SSV I had the constant mental itch of the looming 9-day challenge ahead. A day before, to my surprise, I was nervous.

I was nervous of being the oldest shiksharthi (participant) by a clear 15 years; I was nervous of not being fit enough; I was nervous about sharing my personal space for 9 continuous long days with 15 year olds; and I was nervous about the physical endurance of early starts and late finishes, where much of the activity would have seemed alien to me – such as 'Achar Paddhati' and constant 'geet'. But most of all I was nervous about my own ego coping with an environment I was no longer familiar with, and for most of my youth, was sceptical about.

So the day arrived and I got myself to my room, and the once 'typical' sit-down Shakha games were being played. To my surprise the games revealed the intelligence of my fellow shiksharthi. I was pleased. I could also quickly judge their level of commitment, their

SSV Experiences

enthusiasm, their confidence, and to a lesser degree their level of maturity. What did stand out however, was that they were young, very young, and they were a mixed bag of motivations, backgrounds, ability and personality. Our shikshaks made it very comfortable for us, and within an hour or so, I felt at ease.

The first day felt like a 'coming of age' but in reverse. I was dropped into a world of teenagers and I threw myself headlong into all the physical activities – we played kabaddi immediately and the first few take downs felt great, albeit my body immediately told me 'easy tiger, you have 9 days of this to go'. I did forward rolls, sprints, wheel barrow races across the rugby pitch, and various shakha khels, the memory of which had seeped completely out of mind over the years. It felt great. I was initiated as a teenager and a shikshartha on that first day.

The rest of the days become somewhat of a blur. One day rolled onto the next. My body was coping surprisingly well, and mentally I seemed to have as much energy as my fellow teenagers. I tried my utmost to immerse myself with my 'gana' (group). We spoke at night about philosophy, Sangh, religion, girls (this certainly made me feel my years), education, and all the other ridiculous things that only teenagers can talk about. Very quickly nick-names were made – 'grandma' being one that comes to mind. The personalities in our gana were truly an education for me – they

taught me many things, and I genuinely felt that they were training me, as much as I was educating them. I saw each of them, and myself included grow as each day passed. I witnessed 'grandma' who constantly moaned about being injured, and claimed to have a 'poor immune system' from the first day take greater and greater part in physical activities. I saw quieter shiksharthis grow in confidence, and made friendships that could last a lifetime. I could see the comradery develop amongst us, and even the petty arguments seemed to aid this phenomenon.

Overall, I felt educated, not in knowledge or information, but in experience. I felt calibrated with Sangh and its highest ideals. I saw and recognised all the elements of SSV that are romanticised, which I was sceptical about during my youth, fall into a context I could appreciate, and yet remain of the view that many such things need improvement. SSV is not about khels, or bauddhiks, but rather about building a mindset, a certain pattern of thinking all underpinned by an ethereal inspiration drawn from prahandhaks who took the week off to literally clean toilets; from older karyakartas; from younger shiksharthis; and most of all from the environment that is created throughout the room, the corridors, the bhojnalaya, and across the fields.

This was my SSV experience.



Anjani Valambhia

Birmingham – Prabandhikaa

From buttering hundreds of slices of bread to cleaning the showers, being a prabandhika (someone who is providing service) was by far the most challenging year I have experienced at SSV. Monday started with my team serving chai at 6am, then washing up, preparing for breakfast, and washing up again – this was repeated for lunch and dinner for another two days; until we swapped roles with the cleaning team for the remainder of the camp.

At the time, it only seemed tiresome; each day by dinner all that was on our minds was to sleep. But looking back, it had to be the best year by far and was definitely worth it. The satisfaction we felt after a day's hard-work was one which let us sleep with absolute content (as well as feeling knocked out from our daily routine). We soon realised that no task was considered big or small - whether it

was carrying jugs of chai at 6 am in the morning, or chopping what seemed like an endless amount of salad - Sewa has no size. To keep us energised through the days, we had the chance to take part in several sessions such as yoga and khel, as well as a personal favourite – Dand (a martial art using sticks).

After coming home from a tiring week of non-stop work with 13 other prabandhikas, it seemed a little too quiet and boring. The solution however wasn't to just start cleaning up, but also reflecting on what SSV this year had taught me. The lesson I took away from the week was not just how to chop onions and peppers, but in fact that sewa is not restricted to a time or place; it should be extended beyond the home and into the wider world but not just because it is the idea that one is doing sewa, but it should be a part of a person's nature to become more selfless than selfish.

Deepthi Mistry

Ashton-under-lyne, Mukhya Shikshika

Samiti shiksha varg (SSV) celebrated 40 years of samiti in the UK this year. We had a great sankhya of 112 with representatives from all of the 6 vibhags. This year SSV brought together older sevikas that may not have been attending shakha regularly and new sevikas who may have new to the concept of shakha, and so it became a platform where both generations could interact.

During the first Bauddhik of the varg we had the pleasure of watching a video of an interview on how samiti started in the UK. Sushilaben, along with many other committed and dedicated karyakartas, came together and started samiti in Leicester in 1975. The first shakha was named Laxhmi shakha after the founder of Samiti Van. Laxhmibai Kelkar, since then we have grown to have 39 samiti shakha in the UK.

I really felt the theme of togetherness and unity throughout the varg whether that be through the various khel (games) or though charcha (discussion) and the way we shared our ideas and understood each other from these interactions. There was a real buzz through out the whole seven days.

At the samarop (conclusion ceremony) both Sangh and Samiti preformed highly incredible pradarshans consisting of Niyuddha, Yogasana and Ghosh, a showcase of all that we had learnt during the varg. It really did have a wow factor! We also had the attendance of Dame Ashaji Khemka, a very inspiring modern day character. Dame Asha ji is the principle of west Nottinghamshire College. Her speech motivated everyone to aim high and to never give up on ones dreams and aspirations and so encouraged and inspired us to work hard.





Sangh and Samiti
Shiksha Varg 2015







One Tree Gathering

Aislinn Mae, Leicester

Learning, socialising and working within the National Hindu Student's Forum (NHSF) sphere builds a certain worldview, where many of the 'eastern faiths' or philosophies seem familiar and close to our idea of Hindu Dharma and within this sphere are well known.

They've grown from a common origin and although diverse in their form, they seem to have a universal thread running through them that allows me to connect with and understand them. On a different side, classical monotheistic religions that I may learn of, know of and talk about- these may have originated from the Middle East, but they are very much practised within the west- where you and I live.

Alongside the religious or value-based differences, there is an unspoken commonality amongst my fellow 'NHSF-ers', Sevikas and Swayamsevaks who are predominantly Indian and Hindu, whereas my friends that belong to an Abrahamic faith and are European in descent. We may like the same things, work similar jobs, contribute to society in similar ways, but our value systems and motivations for contribution may be totally different.

However, what if I were to tell you of different communities that originated from this land, who practised similar values to us, lived in harmony with nature, believed in rebirth and in the cyclical nature of existence? People who did not claim exclusivity to the truth or 'the right way'.

This year I attended the fourth annual One Tree Gathering (OTG) event at Whitlence Gardens, near Kidderminster, where I met individuals of these communities. In my opinion, the Druid, Shaman, Wiccan and Pagan communities, are some of Britain's best kept secrets. With many having Celtic roots, these communities share a similar historical narrative to us, with rituals centred around nature, and the belief in a spiritual energy that binds the universe.

Being the first to arrive on the day, it did feel strange walking into a room with no other brown-skinned person in sight, but within the first hour or so, I felt as comfortable as if I were in a Sangh household. Through the day, I learnt more of each community. For example, how the Druids were organised into groves, as Sangh and Samiti are organised into Shakhas, and how the concept of 'Arwen'

can be similar to Dharma in one of its many interpretations. I learnt about the similar views on reincarnation and rebirth that all the pagan communities held. I met the word 'Arwen' again at the end of a ceremony, where we stood in a circle and invoked the four directions of the earth. The word was chanted slowly three times at the end and stretched out as three syllables just as we would say Aum.

I found that each of these communities were intrigued to know more about Hindu history and were asking questions like, "what has allowed Hinduism to survive so long? How does it continue to thrive and flourish? And how may the Hindu community help them to also flourish?"

The OTG event is the founding initiative of ICCS UK (International Centre for Cultural Studies), a Sangh-inspired project, which hopes to extend its activities beyond the annual gathering into regular meetings and sampark as well as the publication of works exploring the similarities between both traditions. If you would like to know more or want to get involved with the project, contact Dhrishti: Aislinn.mae@hotmail.co.uk.

Sanket

Sanket is a series of articles representing the everyday observations of Sangh Pracharakas. They provide a useful, unbiased and detached method of studying our everyday interactions.

The following is an insightful conversation between Keshav, a young swayamsevak, and a Shikshak (instructor) at the annual Sangh youth leadership camp. Keshav is a swayamsevak from a fairly new shakha in the UK. He is in his Praveen Varsh (third and final year of training in the youth leadership series).

Shikshak: "Keshav! Would you like to be part of the Samarop (concluding programme) of SSV (Sangh Shiksha Varg)?"

Keshav: "Surely!", he replied with certainty. But, what am I supposed to do?"

Shikshak: "I think, you are very confident in public speaking. You may need to give a short speech for five minutes."

Keshav: "Yes, I'll try."

Keshav went on thinking about the speech and he was very happy to get this chance to speak in front of 700 people expected to attend the Samarop

programme. He is very enthusiastic about gaining knowledge and has good skills in putting his view across. He was expressing his wish to connect with people. His choice to give a speech was the good decision.

The next day however, Keshav's selection to give the speech was re-thought and another swayamsevak was given that opportunity. This decision was based on valid, well thought-out reasons. Upon the knowledge of this change in decision, Keshav became upset. He approached another Shikshak and expressed his feelings.

Shikshak: "I can understand how you are feeling. You must feel disheartened. But look at it from a different perspective. Imagine, what you were asked to do was clean the floor or toilets and then that task was re-allocated to another. Would you still complain about it? Would you be upset?"

Keshav understood the message.

As a swayamsevak, all responsibilities are equal. Some are asked to be in the forefront and others working in the background. However, the mindset is same. Being on stage, cooking food, cleaning the floors – they are all connected. The mindset of every swayamsevak and sevika is to serve the society as his or her Dharma. Sangh is the medium for it. It does not really matter which role you are fulfilling.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote beautifully:

For a tree, the branches are roots above the earth and roots are branches beneath the earth. Some responsibilities make us 'seen' in the public eye, whereas others may not. No responsibility is beneath us.

Swayamsevak-ness should remain as permanent.

Keshav is now a Mukhya shikshak (head-instructor) of his local shakha. He understood the importance of this Sampark (live communication)



Meritocracy

Sumit Joshi

Even in today's modern world, factors such as caste, race, religion, nepotism, inheritance, etc. continue to determine who is rewarded, thus limiting opportunity and power to fewer hands.

In the previous UK parliament, 57 MPs were related to current or former MPs. A Clinton or a Bush has been in the running in seven of the last nine US presidential elections. The Gandhis, the Bhuttos, the Kenyattas have been granted king-like status in India, Pakistan and Kenya. There are reservations for certain identities in India and a documented bias towards Oxbridge graduates for certain jobs in the UK. In businesses too, some very large companies such as News Corp and Volkswagen are still family owned and controlled.

Meritocracy, on the other hand, refers to a system in which individuals earn rewards based on their abilities and efforts. The benefits of meritocracy are intuitive. It is a fair system as individuals get what they deserve depending upon their contributions. It is also an efficient system as individuals who are good at achieving certain tasks are rewarded and encouraged to further complete such tasks. It can be applied to many institutions – businesses, families, charities, sports teams, etc. In Hindu Dharma, meritocracy concurs with the concept of punya-phalam and karma.

In verse 41 of Chapter 18, Shri Krishna states that an individual is distinguished as a Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Sudra based on his karma or actions and natural qualities (and not by birth):

brahmana-ksatriya-visam
sudranam ca parantapa
karmani pravibhaktani
svabhava-prabhavair gunaih

One witnesses signs of a meritocratic system when attending the Sangh's shakhas. Karyawaahas demonstrate inclusiveness and freely communicate and engage with all karyakartas, irrespective of their





background, age, length of time in Sangh and responsibilities. This openness encourages meritorious karyakartas to take on responsibility, builds their confidence and emboldens them to take on greater responsibilities and become deserving leaders.

After Dr B R Ambedkar, the Father of the Indian Constitution, visited a camp in Pune in 1930, he said, "This is the first time that I have visited a camp of Sangh volunteers. I am happy to find here absolute equality between the Savarniyas and Harijans, without any being aware of such a difference existing."

The Sangh has given the world many a leader, many from humble beginnings. A shining example of this is the current Prime Minister of India – Shri Narendra Modi. Accustomed to non-meritocratic ways, the world was amazed to see the rise of a tea stall owner's son to lead the largest democracy in the world. Modiji credits his success to the Sangh, its teachings and core values. He talks passionately about his guru and mentor at the RSS, Lakshmanrao Inamdar, and how he inculcated discipline and organisational skills in him and encouraged him to take more responsibility.

Imperfections exist in all organisations, however, if more organisations begin using meritocratic principles, the world will soon witness more able and deserving leaders.

Guru Puja is our most important utsav. This is the one time in the year that we get to focus on our relationship with our Guru. A swayamsevak who is unable to attend shakha regularly will make a special effort to attend if they hear about an utsav. And if there is one utsav they will not miss – then that is Guru Puja. This article explores some ideas related to Guru Puja, in an effort to deepen our understanding about Sangh.

Guru Puja

Yogish Joshi

The Guru is a widely known Hindu concept. The word has even entered the English dictionary, being used to denote a very knowledgeable person. The word in Sanskrit is constructed to mean the remover of darkness. The syllable 'gu' means darkness, the syllable 'ru', he who dispels it. But what is darkness? There is no entity that we can detect using any sophisticated instrument that is darkness. Darkness is simply the absence of light. Removing darkness is simply a matter of removing the obstruction to light, such as opening the curtains. So what does the Guru do?

We are all essentially divine beings, who have forgotten our divinity and think of ourselves as limited to a human form. This thinking limits our life to living for our pleasures and avoiding pain, much as the

animals live. The ignorance of our reality is our darkness, which the Guru can help to remove. The ego (wrong sense of my personal identity) is what is getting in the way of my progression. The ego is the one that is telling me that I know best.

When I accept a Guru, I accept that someone else knows better than me. With true faith in my Guru, my ego begins to diminish and relinquish the control it has over me. The darkness of my ignorance begins to fade, and the light of my spirit begins to shine through.

In our Utsav, we are reminded about our glorious past through our Bhagwa Dhvaj. We remember how our ancestors stood under this symbol and fought for righteousness and justice. We are humbled by their sacrifices, and inspired by their exemplary conduct. We remember the selflessness of the many Rishis who wore the Bhagwa robes as a symbol of their sacrifice of material pleasures.

We first of all bow down and fold our hands to our Bhagwa Dhvaj in our classic pranaam position. This is the most important part of our Puja - to reduce our ego. Paying our respects with flowers and submitting our dakshina comes next, but the most important act is what we begin and end each of our shakhas with – the pranaam to our Guru. In this way we submit our dakshina humbly, knowing that we gain much more than we are able to give.

When Param Poojaneya Doctorji first told the swayamsevaks that they would be celebrating Guru Puja, the assumption in their minds was that this was the opportunity to pay their respects to Doctorji. They would have been surprised to learn that their Puja was not to be towards the hugely inspirational person in front of them, but to the sacred symbol that would be at every Sanghsthan, and which had such an intimate link with our history and culture. In this way, an organisation led by ideals could be developed. Self-sufficient due to the selfless contributions of its members rather than donors, the organisation could grow without restriction.

Each facet of our Sangh Paddhiti – Sangh way of working – has been carefully thought out to be congruent with our traditions and for the benefit of all. It is important for us swayamsevaks to understand this thinking and follow in our actions and spirit





Rise of women in business

Diversity in the work place has brought many benefits to companies not least those which employ thousands of staff across the world. Increasingly, women are taking a leading role in many multinational companies. In 2014 the number of Fortune 500 women CEOs reached a historic high since records began in 1998.

In India Vanitha Narayanan was appointed as Managing Director (MD) of IBM India in 2013. Neelam Dhawan is the MD of HP India, and prior to taking on this position in 2008, she was MD of Microsoft India for three years. Kumud Srinivasan is President of Intel India, and Kirthiga Reddy MD of Facebook India.

It should come as no surprise then that women are increasingly being appointed as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in these companies too. In the US, Yahoo's Chief Executive Marissa Mayer, who is currently expecting twins, was previously an executive at Google. Indian born Indra Nooyi is CEO of the second largest food

and beverage business in the world, PepsiCo. Kalpana Morparia named as one of 'The 50 Most Powerful Women in International Business' by Fortune magazine in 2008 is Chief Executive Officer of JP Morgan India. Since 2011 Aruna Jayanthi has held the position of CEO at Capgemini India which has over 40,000 people across nine cities in India.

The most recent joiner to this illustrious list is Rekha Menon. On Aug 7th Accenture announced that Menon will be the new chairperson of its India subsidiary. She is the global consultancy's human resources managing director for growth markets. Her role will be to lead and manage the human resource strategy of a workforce of over 100 thousand staff in the Asia-Pacific, West Asia, Africa, Russia, Turkey and Latin America regions.

India makes donation to Nepal on Independence Day

The 69th Independence Day of India was celebrated in cities across the world including in the UK. Although many celebrations may have focused on India, India sought to cast its generosity farther than her own borders. In a message sent by the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, India stressed its support for peace, stability and development in its neighbouring countries. The Government of India donated 40 ambulances and eight buses to different welfare organizations and educational institutions in Nepal. The Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Ranjit Rae, handed over the vehicles to recipient organizations from thirty three districts on August 15th at a ceremony held at the Indian embassy at Launchaur, Kathmandu. Ambassador Rae also presented books to 45 libraries, educational and training institutions located in different regions of Nepal.

Collaboration in the stars

Space exploration has previously been a competitive affair between powerful countries. As science and technology have advanced worldwide, attitudes towards this rivalry have shifted, perhaps for financial or other more sinister motives, and has led to increased collaboration. This year will see Indian rockets propel US satellites into space. Antrix Corporation Ltd, the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), recently signed a deal with Google's Sky Box Imaging to launch nine micro satellites (each weighing around 100 kg) over a year. ISRO is familiar with launching satellites. Since 1995 it has put 77 satellites from 19 different countries into the skies. ISRO chairman, Kiran Kumar, told the media "the US will be the 20th country to sign up for a commercial launch by India." This news comes as ISRO and NASA engage in talks to set up a joint working group for Mars exploration in the near future.

States of Bharat



How many states are there are in Bharat?

Can you find which state in Bharat your family comes from? Put a star next to it on the map so you don't forget!

Find three facts about this state:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Bharat Facts



The number zero, chess and yoga were invented in India



There are over 1.2 billion people living in India

India is the seventh largest country in the world

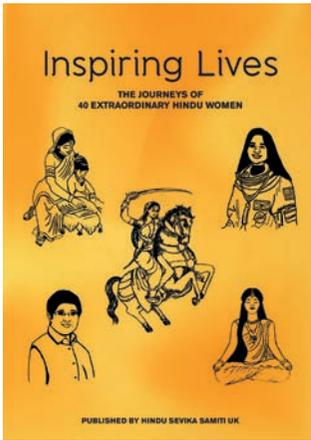
New Delhi is the capital of India

The national fruit is mango and the national sport is hockey



14% of the world population are Hindus





Book review: Inspiring Lives

retelling the stories of great Hindu women from the Vedic Times to the modern era. It shows the rich contributions made by Hindu women in all walks of life from a police woman like Kiran Bedi to philosophers like Gargi and Maitreyi and an astronaut like Kalpana Chawla.

The book brought together 25 professional and novice writers from all over the UK, many of whom are not part of our organisation. It was a great opportunity to encourage creative writing and give each person a reason to really explore the background and achievements of at least one person.

Our hope is that this authentic retelling in English, which is based on the writers research and historical data, will inspire the new generation with stories which they can both relate to as well as aspire to.

Savitribai Phule (one of the first female teachers in India) said:

More valuable than all the wealth together,
Knowledge is the supreme treasure.

One who owns it, will be respected forever

We hope this collection of knowledge will motivate readers to make a positive difference to the society we live in just like the inspirational women of this book - Ordinary Hindu Women, whose actions made them extraordinary.

To mark the 40th Anniversary of Hindu Sevika Samiti UK, we decided to publish a new book called “**Inspiring lives – the Journeys of 40 extraordinary Hindu Women**”

Women play an important and varied role in our society both within families and in the wider community, but it always surprises me how little publicity or acknowledgement women and in particular Hindu women get. This book seeks to start to fill in that gap by



Deepening aspirations

Project Chakra

The following is an extract from a unique initiative called Project Chakra, which aims at deepening the aspirations of the young generation of Indians in the UK.

Finish school, get into a good university to study a course with good job prospects, graduate then secure a role in a reputable company and soon enough purchase a property and then find a marriage partner, attend social events, go on regular holidays and generally live a good life. This process must be quite familiar and the aspirations not particularly different to any other young person growing up in the UK.

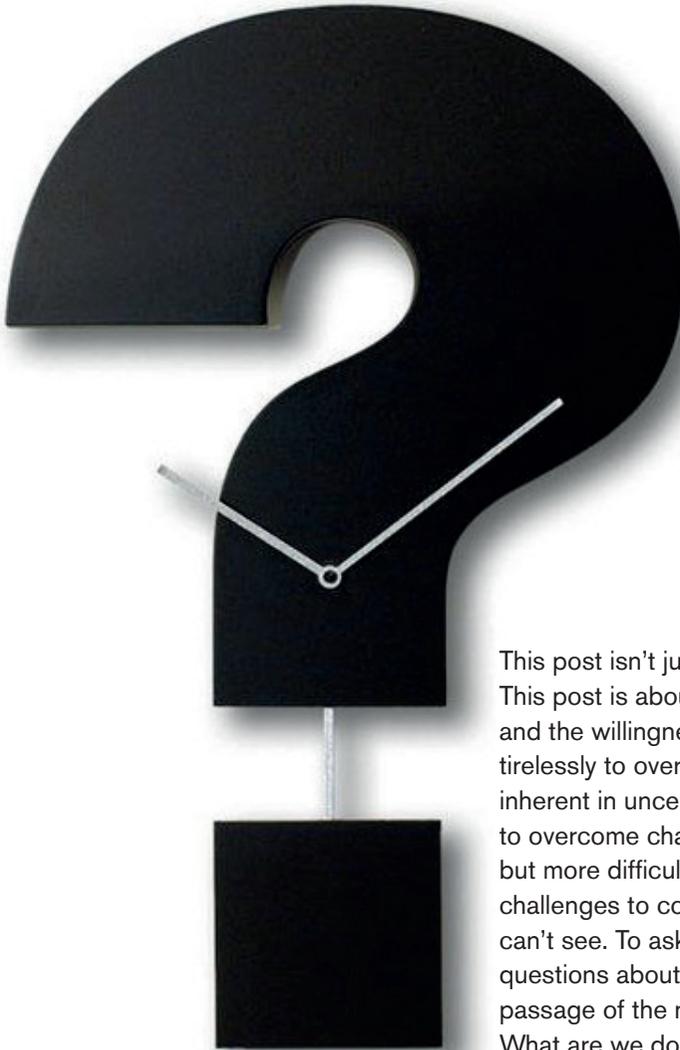
My challenge is that as a generation this appears to be the extent of our aspirations. Yes entrepreneurs step out, yes we progress to influential positions in large companies. But i'm calling out for trailblazers, for those that are willing to tread a new path that will raise the bar for our measures of progress and definition of success.

Lets look back just 1 generation, in August 1972 the entire Indian population of Uganda was expelled by the dictator Idi Amin. They were given 90 days to leave the country or face being put into concentration camps.

As with most migrants, their first challenge was to build a sense of security and stability. A steady job, a home to keep the family safe and to provide for the future of their children. In such difficult times, people come together out of necessity and find meaning in their collective struggle. Decisions were often made without the luxury of alternatives. Aspirations were defined by immediate needs and compromise was assumed.

As a 2nd generation, British born and educated person, I often look around to what's next for me. I've had the opportunity to work for large professional organisations. I've exercised my choice to leave work to go travel, volunteer and even remain idle. I was able to do all this with the firm knowledge that I always had a secure home to return to and the likelihood of ever going hungry was negligible.

The challenge for most people of my generation unlike just 1 generation back is not 'can I afford a car,' but 'which car do I buy and when do I upgrade it.' Yes job security is challenging, but we have a lot more in terms of qualifications and mobility to know that we can secure another job reasonably easily.



This post isn't just about job security. This post is about redefining aspiration and the willingness to take risk and work tirelessly to overcome the challenges inherent in uncertainty. This isn't simply to overcome challenges that we see, but more difficult is to overcome the challenges to come, those that we can't see. To ask ourselves the difficult questions about what the rites of passage of the next generation will be? What are we doing now, preparing and planting, that will give our children richer more wholesome lives – that have the balance of physical, material security and a deep sense and awareness of who they are. That awareness will give them the belief that they can make a difference in the world and they will do so rooted in their cultural and personal values. The aspiration is for a new breed of principled leadership.

Education

To all the students who recently received their exam results this August - well done!

This September a boarding school in Suffolk has announced it will offer two free places to orphaned Syrian refugees and is urging others to follow its example.

How highly do we consider our education in the UK?

Definition

MOOC : Massive Open Online Course

A free online interactive course that can have an unlimited number of participating students. Courses are being offered by many prestigious universities and institutions.

So, whether it's back to lectures or starting a new school, here's a few thoughts as we enter the next academic year.

Are you truly willing to learn?

Everything comes to us that belongs to us if we create the capacity to receive it.

Rabindranath Tagore

When you centre your thoughts, what can you achieve?

Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus.

Alexander Graham Bell

How far are you thinking outside the box?

Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the things you can think up if only you try!

Dr. Seuss

Have you set your targets for this term?

When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.

Confucius

Where will your education take you?

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.

Dr. Seuss

Have you started your project yet?

If you spend too much time thinking about a thing, you'll never get it done.

Bruce Lee

Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign
Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes
Like ours: the land our brothers walk upon
Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie.
They, too, aware of sun and air and water,
Are fed by peaceful harvests, by war's long winter starv'd.
Their hands are ours, and in their lines we read
A labour not different from our own.
Remember they have eyes like ours that wake
Or sleep, and strength that can be won
By love. In every land is common life
That all can recognise and understand.
Let us remember, whenever we are told
To hate our brothers, it is ourselves
That we shall dispossess, betray, condemn.
Remember, we who take arms against each other
It is the human earth that we defile.
Our hells of fire and dust outrage the innocence
Of air that is everywhere our own,
Remember, no men are foreign, and no countries strange.

By James Kirkup



Sanskriti

MAHASHIBIR 2016

SAVE THE DATE
Friday 29th - 31st July 2016

**Prakrtih pañca bhātāni
grahā lokā svarāstathā
disah kālasca sarvesām
sadā kurvantu mangalam**

May the nature composed of three qualities, i.e. Satwa, Rajas and Tamas guna; the five elements viz. earth, water, fire, air, space; the nine planets and fourteen worlds; the seven notes of music with all their variations; the ten directions and time past, present and future all these cause perpetual good to us.

Sangh Sandesh

संघ संदेश



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