



# Sanskār ▪ Sewā ▪ Sangathan

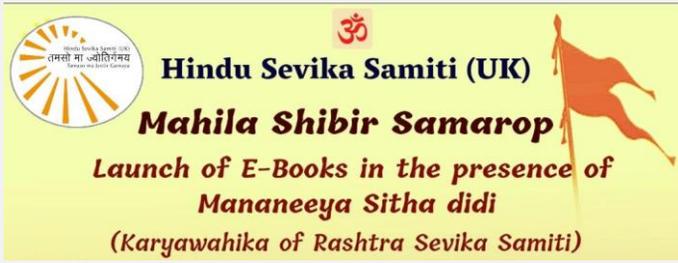
Sangh Mail is an internal organizational publication and for well-wishers to keep them informed on recent updates and news on a monthly basis. It is not for public distribution.

Please continue to send in your news and views related to your shakhas / Swayamsevaks/ Sevikas/ for wider sharing and inspiration at [sanghmail@hssuk.org](mailto:sanghmail@hssuk.org)

## Sangh Mail



MAHILA SHIBIR - 2020



This year, despite the COVID-19 lockdown, Hindu Sevika Samiti [UK] went ahead, undeterred with its Mahila Shibir – with one big difference – it being conducted across our several vibhags and entirely online! eMahila Shibir was organised for 2 hours, by 7 vibhags in which 500+ mahilas participated. The shibir included activities like skill session (public speaking or writing), games and a talk on Sevika Dharma. Having completed regional E-Mahila Shibirs, a Mahila Shibir Samarop was held on the 27 June. Sevikas from 7 Vibhags, 51 nagars have participated and displayed the sankhya of more than 500!



These ebooks will remind us all of the creativity during the Covid crisis in the year 2020:

Mananeeya Sitha didi [Karyawahika Rashtra Sevika Samiti] presided over the Mahila Shibir Samarop in which she gave us her Margdarshan. The samarop also featured the launch of e-books, consisting of 411 articles from 342 Sevikas, that have been collated into 7 ebooks. [The books are available to read on HSS UK website](https://hssuk.org/mahila-shibir-2020)

1. Uniqueness of Bharat – Vol I-3
2. Jaisa Aahaar Vaisa Vyavhaar and Vichaar
3. Ramayan
4. Hindu Contributions to the World
5. Scientific Reasons behind our Dharmic Rituals
6. The Hindu Way Of Life in a Pandemic
7. Contribution of Hindu Women

**Kalyani Hebalkar Peshav**

WEST MIDLANDS MAHILA E-SHIBIR

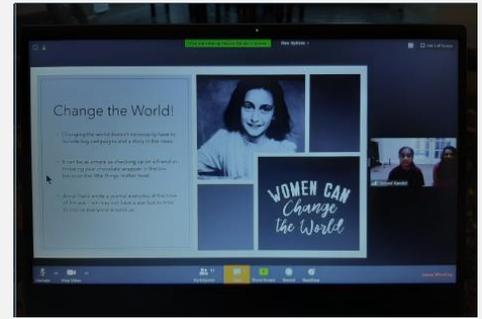
We had our very first West Midlands E-Mahila Shibir on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020 from 3.00pm – 5.00pm. Four towns took part in the Shibir, namely, Birmingham, Leamington Spa, Coventry and Telford. The total sankhya of the Shibir was 51 which involved two Adhikaris. The guest for the shibir was Manuji Khajuria who took a writing skill session. Other activities included khel, bauddhik given by Madhviji Haria on 24/7 Sevika, Dhvaj and prarthana. Very inspirational talks were given by both the speakers and enjoyable khel session where all mahilas got involved. The Shibir was led by many new Mahilas from different towns working together. Feedback was very positive afterwards from all the Mahilas as an enjoyable, productive and inspiring afternoon. The Shibir successfully achieved its goal as the Mahilas left with pride in their cultural heritage and a renewed enthusiasm to be more active in their respective Shakhas.

**Nisha Shah** - West Midlands Saha Karyawahika



**INSPIRING WOMEN AROUND US**

Inspiration is the motivation to do work and often we do not seize the opportunity to recognise the inspiration that surrounds us. Especially in this time of crisis, inspiration is much needed, to fulfil those time-consuming hobbies that we have, to go the extra mile at school/work, to finally invest more time for our work within Samiti and shakha and to make a change. For me, this type of inspiration comes from those who I believe to be the most resilient and strongest people in the world, the women that surround me, especially in Samiti.



In my opinion, this is because we are taught the concept of **Matrutva** (motherhood/ caring for the people around us), **Netrutva** (leadership) and **Kartrutva** (efficiency and social activism). This concept, for me, is what defines, not just women of this generation but women in society because if you put this in perspective, the perfect role models were born years ago, from Ahilyabai Holkar (1725) to Vandaniya Mausiji (1905). Women are the backbone of society, we juggle being a mother, sister, student, daughter and so much more while leading and balancing household and work. Yet, we fail to recognise the divinity that is not only within us but constantly around us, we forget that what we believe to be a daily routine would be so hard to accomplish for another person. The change that we make may seem small to us but, it is so much larger. So let's start taking the inspiration around us and let's make a change while we are in lockdown, even if it's as simple as checking up on a few friends or writing a COVID - 19 Diary because we don't know how big an impact a small change can make.

**Shivani Kandoi** - Sindhu Samiti –  
Baudhik Pramukh



All across England charchas are taking place. With the aid of Zoom, the lockdown cannot stop tarunis from coming together to discuss the challenges we face in a modern society. Beginning in the Midlands with the sharing of short and meaningful videos, these charchas have prevailed to other vibhaags. We are delighted with a multitude of perspectives when each fortnightly call is being led by a different taruni, as within this vast age group exists a mass of experiences to be learned from. Not only have these charchas seen the development within our knowledge, but have impacted our character. Tarunis seem to have become more engaged and confident in sharing information worthy of discussion.



**SAMITI INSPIRED**

**Topics covered so far:**

- The various impacts of social media,
- Is our future destined?
- A freezing child left in the cold,
- Teenage girls'- magazine portrayal.
- Exploring physiological, psychological, emotional, and social impacts; including how we as young Hindu women are affected by the challenges faced.

The videos and articles sparked a discussion where tarunis are sharing real life interactions with the topics at hand, and on top of this offering practical advice.

With more and more tarunis engaging each time, there is a sense of sangathan when fellow tarunis come together to support one another. New outlooks come about each time charchas take place. Importantly, there was a general consensus of shared thoughts and opinions, allowing people to recognise that they aren't alone with their thoughts, they merely need to connect with others.

Who knew that social media companies hired attention engineers to keep us engaged? Or that our perceptions of the homeless are ingrained within us from the moment our interactions begin? How can we make these supposed negatives into positives that will have benefits?

**Mayuri Mistry**, Leicester East Midlands Vibhaag Saha-Taruni Pramukh.

## BRADFORD MAHILA MILAN – INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL HEALTH



Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) Bradford Presents

## Introduction to Mental Health



June 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 Bradford Savitri Shakha hosted another session of 'Mahila Milan'. With a huge importance around us currently on our health and wellbeing, we chose to have an Introduction to Mental Health. The event was samilit with all Bradford Shakha(s) with the aim to bring awareness on this topic to our community in Bradford.

We had an external speaker, Mohammed Mahboob - highly experienced Mental Health Service Manager from a local organisation called Sharing Voices Bradford, which provides Mental Health services and support to NHS and Local Authorities, across all levels. Mohammed kindly devoted his time to us and gave us a detailed presentation including, treatment and support available. He also helped to identify initial signs and symptoms, including how largely Mental Health is a remaining stigma in the Asian community. The speaker also highlighted, how important it is important to firstly speak to a GP or specialist so they can be refereed accordingly. Looking after our Mental Health and wellbeing is SO important and how daily walks, practicing meditation/mindfulness, yoga, relaxation and healthy diet can impact on our Mental status. We managed to reach this important message to over 80 individuals. With thanks to innovative technology we were also able to reach out to nagars across England such as Leicester, Bedford, Warrington. **BRADFORD SAVITRI SAMITI - MAHILA TEAM**

### WORDS OF WISDOM FROM BHUPENDRAJI DAVE, PRATAP SHAKHA, FINCHLEY

"I am 94 years old and would like to share with you, like any other elderly person, my memories which may help develop our future... So let me make a start." "These events took place when I was 17 back in 1943. Sangh work in Saurashtra (Gujrat) was in early stages. Shakha in Limbdi (my town) was started by Shri Annaji Chitle (Pracharakji) few months ago by converting our very basic gym into Sangh Shakha. There was a sangh-shibir in Rajkot. My father and I decided to go there on the opening day because my brother and other swayamsevaks from our shakha were attending the Shibir. We left Limbdi for Rajkot by train. We had to change trains at Surendranagar station. So when we reached Surendranagar, we got down and waited for a train for Rajkot - a wait for almost an hour. My father rested on a bench on the platform and I walked round the platform. I saw a young gentleman sitting and reading a book few yards away. I went to him and started chatting. During our conversation I asked him how he spent his time in the evenings and week-ends. He waited for a while, looked at me and asked me why I was asking the question. I explained to him about Sangh and Shakha in Rajkot and asked him to join a shakha in his area. He nodded his head and said that he would consider my advice but was not sure. I insisted that he should visit a shakha and would benefit from a life changing, friendly environment. He just said ok and at this time, we saw our train arriving. So we went our separate ways. Suddenly I remembered that I had forgotten to ask the young man his name and address..

After an hour or so my father and I reached Rajkot and went straight to the Shibir. When the opening ceremony started, I was stunned to see the young gentleman whom I had just met at Surendranagar station sitting amongst the main Karyakartas on the stage. I could not believe it when he got up to give an opening-speech and was introduced as Shri Rajabhaoji Nene about whom we had heard a lot in our Shakha through Annaji, our Pracharakji.

After the ceremony, which probably lasted for couple of hours, we went to the bhojanalay for dinner. There were many guests and we were served food by swayamsevaks, while listening to sangh geet. I was sitting near my father. I just heard my father say something to a guest sitting next to him. He was asking him to sit little bit away from him unless he was a Brahmin like him. I explained to my father that there was nothing like caste discrimination in Sangh. The swayamsevak who was serving food heard our conversation and told my father ' Babaji, we are all Hindus. Look, I am a Dalit and serving food to you'. My father was shocked. Because Dalits were untouchables. After a little pause, the swayamsewak added that the food we were going to eat was also prepared by Dalits. You can imagine my father's reaction. He kept quiet. He realised that the curse of untouchability which divided our Hindu Society for hundreds of years and was a legacy left by the British and the Portuguese was non-existent in Sangh. We hardly had any conversation during our journey back to Limbdi. But overall he appeared happy.



# illuminate

## Past, Present & Future

An online summer programme delivered by HSS (UK) for swayamsevaks and sevikas in secondary school (KS3-KS4).

### The Programme

HSS (UK) presents "Illuminate", a unique online 5-day summer programme for our youth (those currently in year 7-11) to discover, engage, and be inspired. For more details about the programme contents, read the letter below. Otherwise, just register!

### Dates

27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> of July (Mon-Fri) from 8:30-12:30  
(plus an optional mini-project in the following week)

### Daily Schedule

**8:30 - 10:00** - daily eShakha, yogasana and physical activities  
**10:30 - 12:30** - interactive talks and online discussions

That's it! you'll be finished by the afternoon and you have free time for the rest of the day, although, there may be some optional sessions you can sign up for throughout the week.

### Registration Link

Register here: <https://hssuk.corsizio.com/>  
Register by the end of June!

### Questions & Queries

If you have any questions please contact: [ssv@hssuk.org](mailto:ssv@hssuk.org)



Who fought for me?



What really makes me Hindu?



How can I be a better leader?



Where did we begin?



How can I improve my strength & stamina?



How can I contribute?



What is our world view?



How can I analyse something critically?

**SEWA DAY – WOOLWICH**

**HOMEMADE WASHABLE MASKS**

Since the Covid-19 crisis began, Sewa Day – Woolwich, immediately brainstormed ways in which we could help our society during a pandemic. We asked ourselves, how do we help whilst staying at home? One thing we knew was we all needed masks. Our focus became on how to provide reusable masks to our local community. Given the uncertainty on how long this Pandemic would last, we needed to ensure the design was effective. We very easily found a YouTube link on how to sew a homemade washable mask.

Having picked the material and sourced a manufacturing team (our Mahilas!), we set up an email address and started to advertise. We produced, packaged and distributed as orders came in and now we have a successfully running project and have distributed over **3000 masks to our local community**. We are fortunate enough to now be able to expand our network even further to assist workplaces, local shops and pharmacies and any other requests that come in. We hope to keep going to support other boroughs and cities in need of masks



**FOOD BANK**

Alongside our washable masks project, we got in touch with our local food bank. Guidelines were given from the food bank to provide items that they urgently required. The aim was to encourage people to buy requested items for the food bank during their weekly shopping. We received a positive response from the public and were able to assist both Greenwich and Bexley Borough. Being a part of the Food Bank runs meant that we had to be safe and not to cause anyone inconvenience – extra effort from the team was required. The Sewa team ensured only allocated members of the Sewa team were picking up all donated items from each home with protective PPE to and from the food bank. This allowed families to remain indoors in the comfort of their homes. This project is still running and special thanks to all those that have donated during this difficult time



**Nisha Rabadia, Woolwich**

**SEWA DAY – READING**

Well done to our young volunteers in Reading who have cycled 22 miles on a Saturday afternoon delivering the puzzle books they created to care homes in Reading and Wokingham. A few mechanical problems did not stop them either. We definitely think they deserve a pizza tonight for their efforts.

**Tushar Shah, Reading**



**SEWA DAY – IT’S A DATE!**

Having received **over 20 tonnes of dates** from Sarah, Duchess of York – Sewa Day regions have set about the monumental effort of distributing this huge donation



SEWA DAY – WARWICK & LEAMINGTON SPA



Excerpt from Warwickshire Police Newsletter – June 2020, “Positive Action” SEWA Support Finally a huge **“thank you”** to Hema Yella Pragada for delivering a wonderful parcel of delicious dates to Warwickshire Police as part of SEWA Day (Selfless Efforts for Welfare of All). Sewa is a universal concept embedded in Indian traditions which involves ‘performing an act of kindness without expectation of reward’.



The officers and staff were delighted to receive such generosity and very touched by Hema’s response to our thank you message where she responded ... *“It is nothing in front of all the great service Warwickshire Police provides to all of us”*. We are very proud to be part of this meaningful tradition that encourages kindness within our community. We have all seen how essential it is for us to work together over the last few months and this further reiterates the supportive community spirit within Warwickshire.

SEWA DAY - BIRMINGHAM

Julian Knight MP for Solihull joined us to volunteer in dropping off dates and appreciation boxes for care homes and the Solihull hospital.



**WE LOVE HEARING FROM YOU!** To help in publication here are few points when submitting news items:

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW EMAIL ADDRESS – [sanghmail@hssuk.org](mailto:sanghmail@hssuk.org) – FOR ALL FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE\*\***

1. **Provide a summary** - try to keep articles down to 100 words or less, but if you can't, be sure to include a summary. That way we ensure we don't miss out on the best bits.
2. **A picture tells a thousand words** - it also provides that 'I wish you were here' moment!
3. **A thousand pictures on the other hand....** We have tremendous fun looking at your snaps, but if you can share the ones you'd suggest to include [from a google share for example], then we'll make sure that we get your best side
4. **Tell us who you are** - its an opportunity to get to know one another; so include your name, location and responsibility [where relevant]. If you don't object – we'd also like to include your email address so others can get in touch for more information.



**LEAMINGTON NAGAR – THEY’VE BEEN BUSY...!**

**YORKSHIRE 3 PEAKS**

24th May - Leamington Nagar started taking part in the Yorkshire 3 peaks since last year. Last year 5 of our Swayamsewaks and Sewikas took part. Inspired by them we were expecting a lot more to take part this year. Even though the event did not happen this year in the original format our Leamington pariwar took part in the local version. 5 families (18 members) did 5 miles+ walk in their local area. 1 swayamsewak did 8+ mile running. Another family (4 members) did 26 full rounds of climbing up and down the stairs. We raised £175 (£216.25 including gift aid) for Sewa UK CTA initiative from our Nagar this year.

**SURYA NAMASKAR YAGNA MAY 2020**

After taking part in the national Surya Namaskar Yagna in April seayamsewaks and Sewikas from Leamington Nagar did not want to stop and wanted to continue the yagna in the month of May as well. Everybody took part with great enthusiasm and altogether we did **4500+** Surya Namaskars in May.

**WORLD LAUGHTER DAY**

We celebrated world laughter day in Leamington nagar in our e Shakha on 17th of May (the day actually fell on 3<sup>rd</sup> May). We had a Baudhik delivered by our young and energetic Sewika Aparajita Gupta on the science behind laughter. We extended our meeting by half hour after finishing the Shakha to have big laughs. Everyone was encouraged to share some joke to make everyone else laugh. All members of the pariwar really liked it and had great fun.

**VEER SAWARKAR JAYANTI**

Leamington Nagar celebrated the Birth anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Sawarkar (aka Veer Sawarkar) as part our Shakha on 7th of June (the jayanti fell on 28th of May). Young and energetic sewika Priyanshi Agarwal delivered an energetic Baudhik on his life. She used an effective power point presentation for effectively highlighting the aspects of his life depicting his courage, his poetic qualities and the hardships he faced in the Kalapani prison sentence he was subjected to. The Baudhik ended with an interesting quiz on Sawarkar's life using Kahoot platform.



Sharing services and speakers from various faiths during the coronavirus crisis as part of the BBC's Make a Difference campaign.



**Prof Nawalkantji Prinja**  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08f7ijn>

**HemaYella Pragada**  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08gdwb7>

**Dr. Akshaya Rajanga**  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08f74rn>

On the evening of Friday 19th June at 18:30, approximately 200 people gathered at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi on Belgrave Road in Leicester to attend Pushpanjali Event and to show solidarity with the figurehead through a peaceful event of offering flowers at the feet of the statue. The event organised by Leicester branch of INSIGHT UK, a non-political grassroots organisation spread across the country, supporting and promoting the British Hindu & Indian voice, was in response to an online petition started, calling on Leicester City Council to have the statue removed. The statue of Mahatma Gandhiji was erected in Leicester in 2009 to celebrate the principles the iconic figurehead represented. The “Pushpanjali” meaning offering of flowers as a sign of love and respect was commenced by Shantilal Sodha, a resident of Leicester who came dressed as Gandhiji, with his signature stick.



INSIGHT LEICESTER spokesperson Darsheet Chauhan welcomed all the attendees including local and national politicians, local organisations, businesses and of course members of the public.

The role of INSIGHT UK was presented as a grassroots organisation raising the Hindu voice. The British Hindu & Indian community of Leicester and in the UK play a significant role whether it be paying tax, business, education or community work. There has however been a noticeable movement of anti-Hindu and anti-India sentiment being openly manifested whether it be party political motions, the media or petitions like the one to have Mahatma Gandhiji’s statue removed.

INSIGHT UK is raising the voice for British Hindu and Indian community to ask our country to value our contributions and recognise that we are an integral part of British Society and this negative and harmful behaviour must stop. Jitubhai Acharya, Secretary of Samanvaya Parivaar, who commissioned, funded and brought the statue to Leicester described the statue as a vision of HH Swami Satyamitranand Giriji Maharaj, to bring peace and harmony to Leicester. The statue was erected with the full support of Leicester City Council. Baroness Verma delivered a powerful message saying that we all need to stand together in the face of racism. She spoke passionately about the values Mahatmaji represents. A message from the City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby was read out as he was unable to attend the event. In the letter, which was addressed to Keith Vaz, Sir Peter Soulsby

confirmed Leicester City Council has no intention to remove the statue and that the statue is here to stay. This news was received with cheers from the crowd. Prabhudasji Shikotra from Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) delivered a poignant message about the need for unity and that Gandhiji took people on the journey of independence with him. Cllr Hemant Rae Bhatia (Labour Party) of the Beaumont Leys ward in Leicester mentioned how Mahatmaji stood as an inspiration for other global leaders including Nelson Mandela. Cllr Rashmikant Joshi, representing the Brahma Samaj delivered a message in Gujarati celebrating the life journey of Gandhi and invited people to come and learn more about the leader rather than issue slanderous messages



Bhupen Dave, ex-councillor (Conservative Party), spoke emotively about how the statue of Mahatma Gandhi is a valuable part of Leicester’s cultural and historical heritage and shows the value for the British Hindu & Indian heritage as part of the community of Leicester.

INSIGHT UK – LEICESTER STANDS WITH GANDHI – INFO@INSIGHTUK.ORG

Bhartiben Acharya, Secretary of Shree Sanatan Mandir Leicester explained how Gandhiji was not only a Hindu figurehead but he worked for the good of all humans and inspired many more across the globe. He has set a valuable legacy for us to follow. Harish Raja of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK) spoke animatedly of Bapu’s life and the values he stood for which are a valuable and unique part of modern-day global history. The penultimate speaker, Keith Vaz, ex-MP of Leicester East and the longest

served British Asian MP, celebrated Gandhiji’s statue as an important part of the identity of Leicester and welcomes Sir Peter’s message. Keith Vaz advocated for the area around the statue to be named Mahatma Gandhi square. The crowd applauded this message. Everyone echoed the sentiments of #IStandWithGandhiji #LeicesterStandsWithGandhiji & #UKStandsWithGandhiji. The event ended peacefully at 19:30 with a beautiful tapestry of flowers at the feet of the statue. The organisers

mentioned that since the Pushpanjali event has been organised they are overwhelmed with continuous inflow of supportive messages on social media and emails. The organisers expressed thanks to the attendees including all the speakers who represented so many of our key stakeholders, the police, the media and of course the people who were not able to attend due to Covid-19 but expressed their support through emails, messages and phone calls.



YOGA UNIVERSITY NAMED AFTER SWAMI VIVEKANANDA LAUNCHED IN U.S.

Excerpt from THE HINDU - June 24, 2020

This is the world’s first yoga varsity outside India. As part of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Yoga Day commemorations, the world’s first yoga university outside India has been launched in Los Angeles, offering programmes that combine scientific principles and modern research approaches to the ancient Indian practice of yoga. **The Vivekananda Yoga University (VaYU)** was jointly launched on Tuesday by Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan and Chairperson of the Standing Committee on External Affairs P P Chaudhary during a virtual event held at the Consulate General of India in New York.

Prominent Indian yoga guru Dr. H R Nagendra, Chancellor of Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (SVYASA) is the first Chairman of VaYU. Addressing the virtual launch, Mr. Muraleedharan said Swami Vivekananda gave the message of universal brotherhood from the US and through the first of its kind yoga university outside India, the message of yoga will be broadcast from America to the world. As the symbol of India’s culture and heritage, yoga has become the means for unity and brotherhood in the world. Through the medium of yoga, we can give the message of world peace, he said, adding that yoga provides mental balance and emotional stability. The event was jointly hosted by the Consulate General and Jaipur Foot USA Chairperson and founding director of VaYU Prem Bhandari.

