

# TRANSFORMING LIVES



**Focus - Women Empowerment**

## Empowerment in Action: Women's Programmes by The Art of Living

The Art of Living, under the guidance of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, a world renowned spiritual leader and humanitarian, is spearheading transformative initiatives to tackle critical issues such as women empowerment in India. These efforts aim to address such issues through sustainable solutions and community engagement.

### Pooja's Transformation through The Art of Living's Skill Training Program

Pooja, a 20-year-old from Milak Nibbi Singh, Uttar Pradesh, exemplifies the impact of the organisation's programmes. Raised in a 400 sq. ft. home with her family and livestock, Pooja faced limited opportunities. After being rejected by a prospective groom's family for lacking skills, she enrolled in The Art of Living's beautician course. Despite daily challenges, she graduated at the top of her class and now runs a successful beauty parlour in her village, significantly improving her financial situation.



### Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Vision

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, a world-renowned humanitarian and spiritual leader, emphasises the crucial role of women in societal development. He states, "The role of women in the development of society is of utmost importance. In fact, it is the only thing that determines whether a society is strong and harmonious, or otherwise. Women are the backbone of society."

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- Gurudev

## Initiatives and Focus Areas

The Art of Living is committed to promoting gender equality and improving women's welfare across India. The organisation provides essential skills, opportunities, and resources to empower women.

### ■ Economic Independence

Programmes equip women with essential skills and support networks to build sustainable livelihoods.

### ■ Girl Child Education

Educational initiatives for girls break the cycle of poverty and ignorance.

### ■ Health and Hygiene Awareness

Project Pavitra challenges negative socio-cultural norms, focusing on raising awareness among adolescent girls about menstrual health and hygiene, helping them make informed choices about their well-being.

### ■ Leadership Skills

Training programmes foster resilience and self-esteem, enabling women to become community leaders and change-makers.

### ■ Social Empowerment

Platforms are provided for women to voice their concerns, advocate for their rights, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

### ■ Rural Skill-Based Training

Project Shakti is dedicated to empowering rural women through entrepreneurship - providing education, skill development, financial literacy and mental health support.

### ■ Women Youth Leadership Training Program (WYLTP)

Women receive specialised training in leadership and entrepreneurship, fostering equality and creating inclusive environments within their communities.

### ■ Prison Programmes

Women in correctional facilities are supported with rehabilitation programmes that facilitate their reintegration into society upon release. These programmes focus on life skills, trauma relief and developing abilities that improve employment prospects.



Programmes equip women with essential skills to build sustainable livelihoods.



## Testimonial

My name is Chaya Santosh Kharade. I live in Dharavi, Mumbai. Currently, I'm employed with Project Shakti, where I earn a monthly income of 3 to 4 thousand rupees. It's heartening to see many other women benefitting from this project as well. I'm truly thankful to The Art of Living for providing us with this valuable opportunity.

*Chaya Santosh Kharade, Dharavi, Project Shakti*

## Achievements and Impact

- 1,15,800+ girls educated in menstrual hygiene worldwide.
- 1,11,000+ rural women trained in livelihood initiatives across the country.
- 44,000+ women united to revive the Naganadhi river in Tamil Nadu, demonstrating the collective power of women.
- 1,50,000+ people sensitised against child marriage in Bihar.
- 1,10,000+ smokeless chulhas distributed in villages across India.
- 623 self-help groups formed in areas like food processing, bag making, tailoring, and embroidery.

Through these diverse initiatives, The Art of Living empowers women, amplifies their voices, and addresses shared challenges, contributing to a more equitable society.



Thousands of women united to revive the Naganadhi river in Tamil Nadu, demonstrating the collective power of women.

## Shakti Rising. From Goddess to Every Woman

As we welcome Navratri, a vibrant festival that celebrates the triumph of good over evil, strength over adversity and light over darkness, we take a moment to cherish the divine feminine energy that resides within each of us.

Each of the nine nights of Navratri honours a different form of Durga, highlighting the diverse qualities that women possess - nurturer, protector, scholar, leader, visionary and trailblazer. This festival is not just about worshipping the Divine Trinity - Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati - but also about recognising the courage, abundance and wisdom they represent. These qualities are mirrored in women everywhere, as they navigate multiple roles with love and determination.

This Navratri, may we cherish the unique contributions of women, empower one another, lift each other up and build a community that grows together. Together, let us celebrate the vibrant spirit of womanhood, drawing strength from the women in our lives, our shared experiences and the nurturing force that surrounds us.



This Navratri, may we cherish the unique contributions of women, empower one another, lift each other up and build a community that grows together

## Revolutionising Learning: Upgraded ITI Labs in the North East

In a dedicated effort to elevate the educational environment for government ITI students, The Art of Living has modernised the Electrical and Solar training laboratories at the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) located in Takyel and Phaknung. Representing the Government of Manipur, the official inauguration of these enhanced facilities was graced by Shri H. Dingo Singh, Minister for Social Welfare, Skills, Labour, Employment & Entrepreneurship. This initiative marks a crucial step towards equipping students with modern skills and knowledge in these critical sectors.





## Kumudvathi river

Kumudvathi watershed is located on the left bank of the river Cauvery. The catchment area of Kumudvathi is declared as overexploited. A thorough study was made to uncover the reasons for the degradation of the river. Work on the entire ecosystem began to restore the dried-up river, where different types of recharge structures were constructed along with extensive afforestation.



## Beekeeping

Bees play a vital role in agriculture as they are essential pollinators, contributing to the reproduction of many plants. Beekeeping is of critical importance as it enhances bee population, which will in turn improve the quantity and quality of pollination done by honey bees. Beekeeping not only produces honey but also beeswax and royal jelly which helps boost the beekeeper's income. Additionally, beekeeping can serve as a profitable venture for individuals or communities, promoting economic sustainability. It is a sustainable practice which supports biodiversity and enhances environmental conservation.

Participants in the beekeeping course are taught the life cycle of bees, functional hierarchy among the bees within the hive, collection and processing of honey and maintenance of live bee colonies.



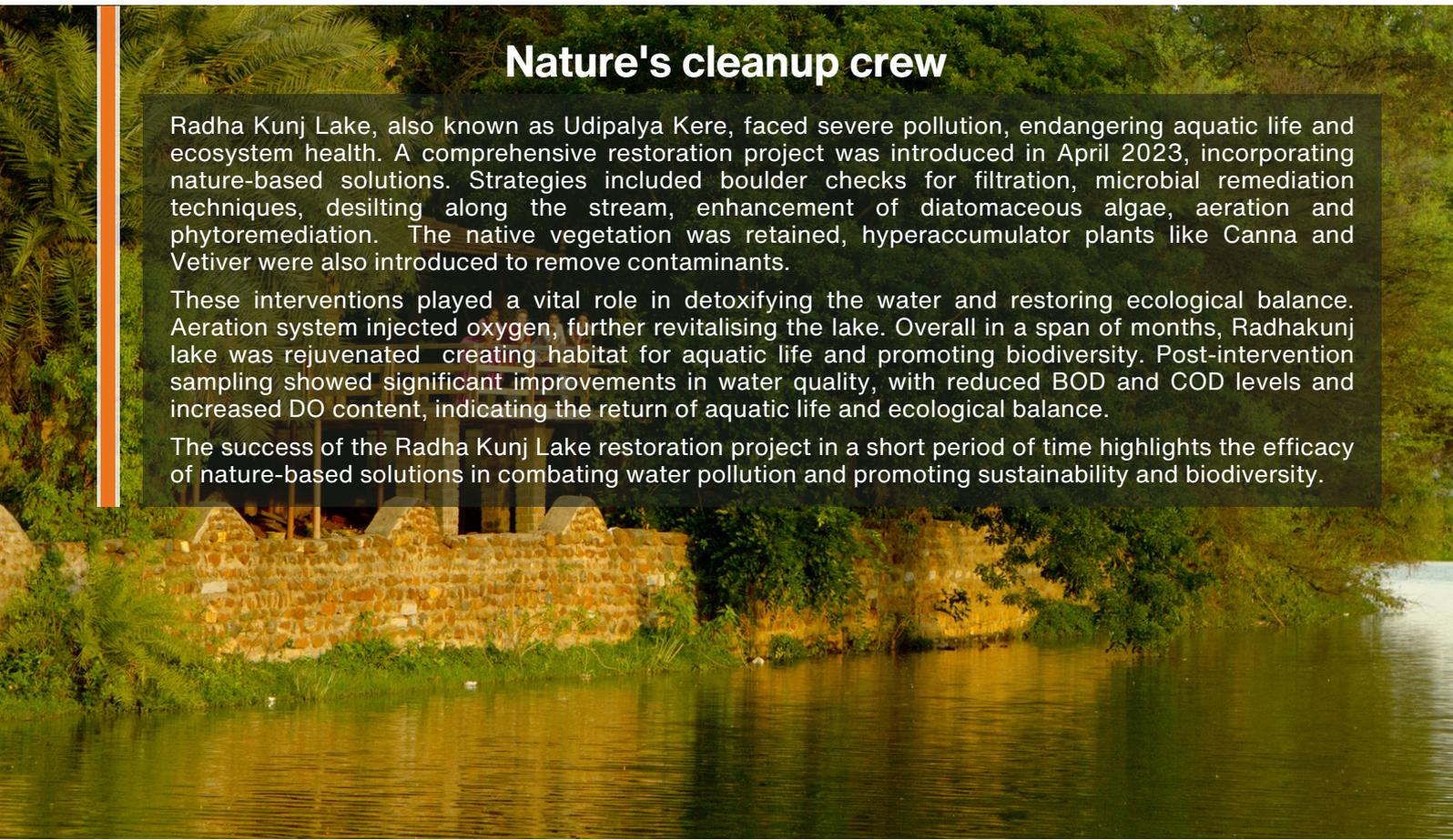
Beekeeping is a sustainable practice which supports biodiversity and enhances environmental conservation.

## Nature's cleanup crew

Radha Kunj Lake, also known as Udipalya Kere, faced severe pollution, endangering aquatic life and ecosystem health. A comprehensive restoration project was introduced in April 2023, incorporating nature-based solutions. Strategies included boulder checks for filtration, microbial remediation techniques, desilting along the stream, enhancement of diatomaceous algae, aeration and phytoremediation. The native vegetation was retained, hyperaccumulator plants like Canna and Vetiver were also introduced to remove contaminants.

These interventions played a vital role in detoxifying the water and restoring ecological balance. Aeration system injected oxygen, further revitalising the lake. Overall in a span of months, Radhakunj lake was rejuvenated creating habitat for aquatic life and promoting biodiversity. Post-intervention sampling showed significant improvements in water quality, with reduced BOD and COD levels and increased DO content, indicating the return of aquatic life and ecological balance.

The success of the Radha Kunj Lake restoration project in a short period of time highlights the efficacy of nature-based solutions in combating water pollution and promoting sustainability and biodiversity.

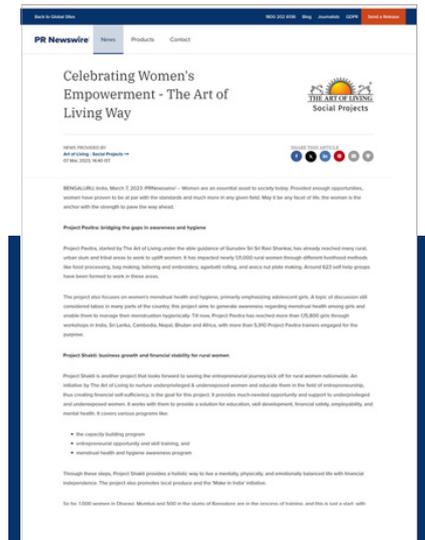




The Art of Living & the Ministry of Defence Team Up to Empower Ex-Servicemen



Fields of Promise: The Art of Living's Breakthrough Initiatives

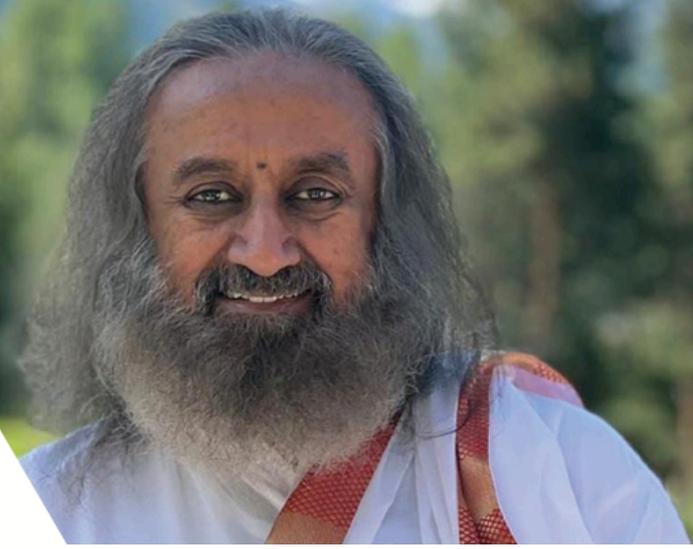


Celebrating Women's Empowerment - The Art of Living

In the presence of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, a significant Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed today at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi, between The Art of Living and the Director General Resettlement, Ex-Servicemen Department, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.



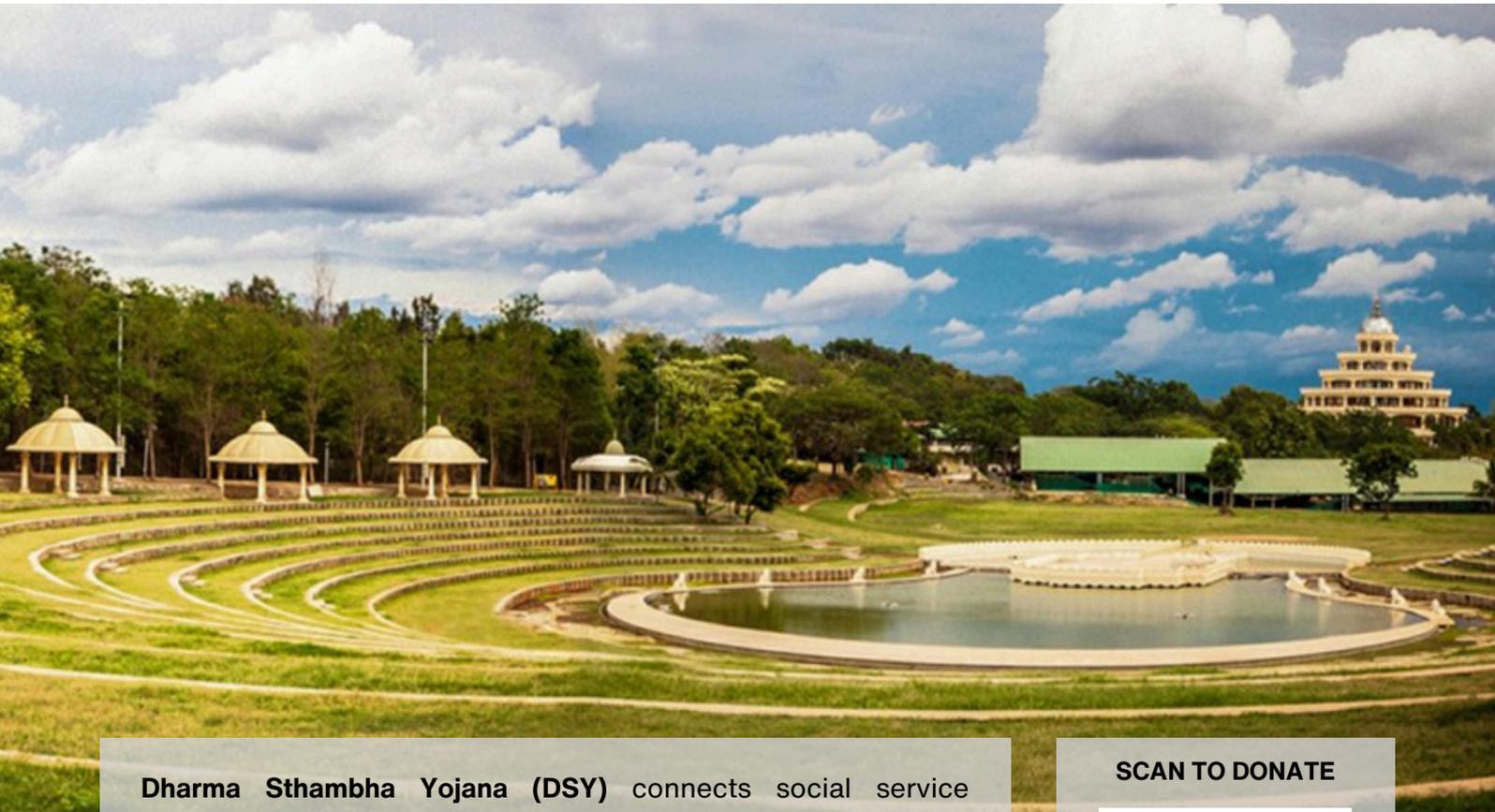
This collaboration marks an important step towards supporting the welfare and resettlement of ex-servicemen.



## Dharma Sthambha Yojana

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's vision of a stress-free society is the founding vision behind The Art of Living and its sister organisations.

**Gurudev's vision translates into action in two important ways:** powerful personal development courses at the individual level and various large-scale social transformation projects at the community level. These projects go a long way in empowering our people and country in a sustainable manner.



**Dharma Sthambha Yojana (DSY)** connects social service projects with socially conscious individuals to drive positive change. It transforms financial contributions into catalysts for uplifting individuals and society, supporting initiatives like Water Conservation, Education, Women Empowerment, Skill Training, and more to ensure national sustainability.

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