



EMPOWERING INDIA BY IMPARTING VETHATHIRI MAHARISHI'S SKY YOGA THROUGH WCSC - VILLAGE SERVICE PROJECT

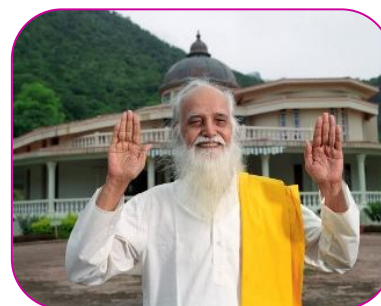
Ramadhevi R.¹ and Dr. V. Ramadas²

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar, WCSC- Vision Sky Research Center, Temple of Consciousness, Aliyar, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu.

²Assistant Professor, P.G. and Research Department of Zoology, Raja Doraisingam Govt. Arts College, Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu.

ABSTRACT

About 70% of Indians live in villages. Village people are mostly illiterate and in low economic status. They struggle to lead their daily life. Their lack of awareness results in anxiety, addiction, extra marital relationship, sleeplessness, suicidal temptation, antisocial behaviours, excessive anger, depression, disease, psychiatric disorders etc. This devastating melody is eroding the roots of social, economic and cultural fibre of Indian society. It gives rise to criminality and criminal behaviour which eventually leads to social disorganisation. Having understood this, WCSC organises Village Service Project to help the village improve their economic status through value based spiritual education, good health and personal development. The VSP scheme got initiated in March 2012 and by December 2018, it is anticipated that more than 150 villages would be covered.



KEY WORDS: SKY Yoga, Vethathiri Maharishi, Village Service Project (VSP), World Community Service Centre (WCSC).

INTRODUCTION

Yogiraj Shri Vethathiri Maharishi (1911-2006) - He was a spiritual leader and founder-trustee of the World Community Service Center in 1958 in Chennai. He had founded over 300 yoga centers around the world. Through sustained research in philosophies of Tamil Siddha Saints and self realization by Deep Meditations; he formulated a complete science of living for the betterment of the society. He evolved the SKY YOGA for Holistic Health (Physical, Mental, Spiritual and Social Health) and offered it to the humanity as a spiritual education. His teachings are lucid and a holistic blend of science and philosophy, which would build brotherhood, harmony and understanding leading to world peace and happiness. Government of India released a commemorative stamp during the centenary celebration of Vethathiri Maharishi on 14th August 2010 in honour of the yeoman service rendered by him.

Swami Yogiraj Thathuvagani Vethathiri Maharishi is the Founder-President of World Community Service Centre (WCSC) which has its headquarters in Aliyar near Pollachi situated in Tamil nadu. The aim of the organization is to promote the spiritual awareness and development of mankind for the furtherance of human brotherhood and world peace. He had delivered a speech on world peace plan in the UNO meet at New York.

Simplified Kundalini Yoga (SKY YOGA)

Through sustained research in philosophies of Tamil Siddha Saints and self-realization by Deep Meditations, Vethathiri Maharishi formulated a complete science of living for the betterment of the society.

He evolved the **SKY YOGA** for Holistic Health (Physical Health, Mental Health, Spiritual Health, and Social Health) and offered it to the humanity as a spiritual education.

World Community Service Centre (WCSC)

Powered by the vision of guiding light, **Vethathiri Maharishi**, a sage who in his own lifetime rendered yeoman service to bring about positive change at the personal level through his teachings, WCSC carries on his inspiring legacy to bring about world peace. Today there are around 400 trusts and about 2023 sub centres registered and affiliated to WCSC. WCSC is a non religious, non-political and non profitable spiritual organisation spread across India and other foreign countries like Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and USA.

INTRODUCTION

‘The future of India lives in the villages. India is not Calcutta or Bombay. India lives in her seven hundred thousand villages’ - Mahatma Gandhi.

According to the 2011 census of India, 68.84% of Indians (around 833.1 million people) live in 640,867 different villages. The sizes of these villages vary considerably. 236,004 villages have a population of fewer than 500, while 3976 villages have a population of more than 10000. While we shift our perspective from global competitions to national ethics and re-organize our priorities to provide the basic needs of our own people, mere paper agreements, MOU are likely to bring us no nearer to our goals. This is the message of Gandhi, the Mahatma. Unless villages are not seen in the right perspective, we shall not be able to live in peace with ourselves or bring about peace in the world.

True to the words of the Father of our nation, the development of our country has to be assessed by the state of the villages. Keeping villages the main focus, the World Community Service Centre strives for a better world through its Village Service Project. WCSC initiated **Village Service Project** (referred as **VSP**) to teach Vethathiri Maharishi's **Simplified Kundalini Yoga** (referred as **SKY**) free of cost across all the villages in the name of WCSC-VSP in March 2012.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to know in detail about the facts of the Village Service Project and the impact of SKY practices on the lives of the rural people.

NEED OF THE VILLAGE SERVICE PROJECT

The back bone of the country lies in its villages. The villages are economically backward and the villagers do not lead a normal life. Poverty, disease, mental illness, crime, illiteracy, unclean environment, improper sanitary system, lack of infrastructure, lack of motivation, laziness, alcohol addiction, unemployment and the list goes on which bother a villager. All these or most of these problems make the village a problematic dwelling unit.

Rural development by promoting spiritual education through SKY yoga, promoting preventive health care, promoting rural sanitation, empowering women, enhancing vocational skills for rural children, conducting counselling sessions for rural people, enabling value based education, good health, stable mental health and personal development is the aim of the Village Service Project.

HYPOTHESIS

- It is hypothesized that such village service project if adopted in all the villages of the country and the villagers are trained in SKY practices, the whole country will have peaceful villages leading to harmony and happiness everywhere.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The related reviews of literature were collected from books and journals in the area of study besides internet browsing on topics such as aspects of rural India and the effect of Yoga particularly SKY yoga on the life of the villagers.

Statistical Information

- 365 million people below poverty line BPL
- 5000+ administrative blocks
- 250000 panchayats
- 3 million panchayat workers
- 100000 Anganwadis
- 1.4 million schools
- 785000 public and community health centres
- More than 640000 villages
- 68.84% of Indians (around 833.1 million people) live in villages

Methodology - Village Service Project

Vethathiri Maharishi's **SKY Yoga** (Simplified Kundalini Yoga) is taught by well trained and dedicated SKY yoga teachers (a male and a female) who stay in the village and mingle with the people. In addition to the yoga teachings, various other programmes like health camp, children skill development programs, counselling sessions, women empowerment programs, de-addiction camp, AIDS awareness, Cancer awareness, Environment awareness, etc are also conducted by professionals bringing value addition to the project.

Timelines of the Village Service Project

WCSC through VSP project adopt a village and organize a six/ten month capsuled program.

- (1) Village Service Project - 6 months
- (2) Corporate Social Responsibility Project - 10 months

SKY Yoga Training methods imparted in the VSP are as follows:

1. Simplified Physical Exercises for the body
2. Meditation for the mind
3. Kaya kalpa for the soul
4. Self-introspection for the personality development
5. Karma yoga for social harmony

Special Camps

1. Health Camps
2. Skill Development programs for students
3. Environment awareness
4. Tree planting
5. Women Empowerment Programs
6. Deaddiction Camp
7. Eye Camp

Discussion on the Village Service Project

Village Service Project scheme was initiated in March 2012 at Vallipuram in Erode district of Tamilnadu. The project is the brain child of A/N Padmashri S.K.M. Mayeilanandam, President and follower of

Vethathiri Maharishi. The Pilot Project at Jarugu village set a benchmark in its own standard. By the end of five years since inception, more than 100 villages have benefitted from this scheme. By December 2018, 150 villages would have come into the fold of Village Service Project.

Donation/Sponsorship received are exempted from IT Act and also covers Companies under Section 135 of the companies Act, 2013 under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Policy.

Stages of Village Service Project

Once a village is finalised for adoption under the WCSC-VSP scheme, the building is made ready for preparing the floor and cleaning the premises which is subsequently used as Arivu Thiru Koil (temple of Consciousness) Yoga Centre.

Door to door campaign and by distributing handbills, the importance of village service project and about the inaugural function will be spread by WCSC-SKY teachers and the WCSC volunteers in advance.

Census is taken about the residents of the village. A brief one page outline is prepared with basic details of the village, number of families, number of men, women, children below 14 years and above 14 years. A **development committee** is formed with the two counsellors / SKY professors who are exclusively nominated for the village, one from the VSP directorate, one from the local SKY office, village panchayat official, the Head of the village or the head master of the local government school and a SHG leader. The two SKY professors spend all their time mingling with the villagers day in and day out. They mostly stay in the village and are always available to impart SKY yoga training to the villagers at their convenient time.

A brief **inaugural function** is conducted in the village initiating the VSP. Various cultural programs are conducted with the local flavor through dance-drama attracting crowd to highlight the importance of SKY Yoga training to the villagers.

Pre medical Health Camp is conducted immediately on the same day or the next day. A medical professional team from SKY Research Centre, WCSC, Aliyar come to the village and conduct various **medical pre tests** (height, weight, BP, sugar and cholesterol) free of cost for the villagers and the results are stored for studying the effects of SKY yoga training later.

SKY yoga training is given to the villagers through out the period. Normally VSP is for five months. However, it is conducted for 10 months if it is sponsorship is obtained from a company through CSR (Corporate social Responsibility) initiative.

Special Camps are conducted periodically by professionals from different fields. Counsellors, medical practitioners, educationists and philanthropists are engaged for this noble cause. The problems of students, children, women, old age people and alcohol / drug addicts are addressed in an unique way so as to enable a transformation come from within and there is an overall wellness in the village.

Post medical Health Camp is conducted prior to the conclusion of the program and post **medical tests** are conducted free of cost for the villagers and the results are stored and used for comparative analysis for studying the effects of SKY yoga on the villagers.

Valedictory function is celebrated at the end of the program and the village is declared a **Peaceful village**. Feedback from the villagers are recorded at the function in front of the dignitaries followed by a cultural programme. A local Temple of Consciousness is set to function in the locality so that the spirit that is ignited continue to provide light to the village for the days to come.

CONCLUSION

Lots of success stories are in the air whenever any village is concluded as a 'Peaceful village'. Interactions with the villagers time and again during the VSP programme has revealed that the villagers are able to feel the change within and are able to get immense benefit out of it in their day to day life. It may be concluded that introduction of VSP by WCSC has made a positive impact to the beneficiaries of the scheme. The smile and happiness in their face speak volumes of the success of VSP and the success stories are never ending.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Such Village Service Project may be recommended to other villages of Tamilnadu and other states of the country and also in the locations of WCSC branches which is spread across various locations of the globe. This will bring about the desired rural development through individual peace leading to national harmony in the lines of India Vision 2020 by generating quality human resource backed with value systems derived from our cultural heritage.

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