

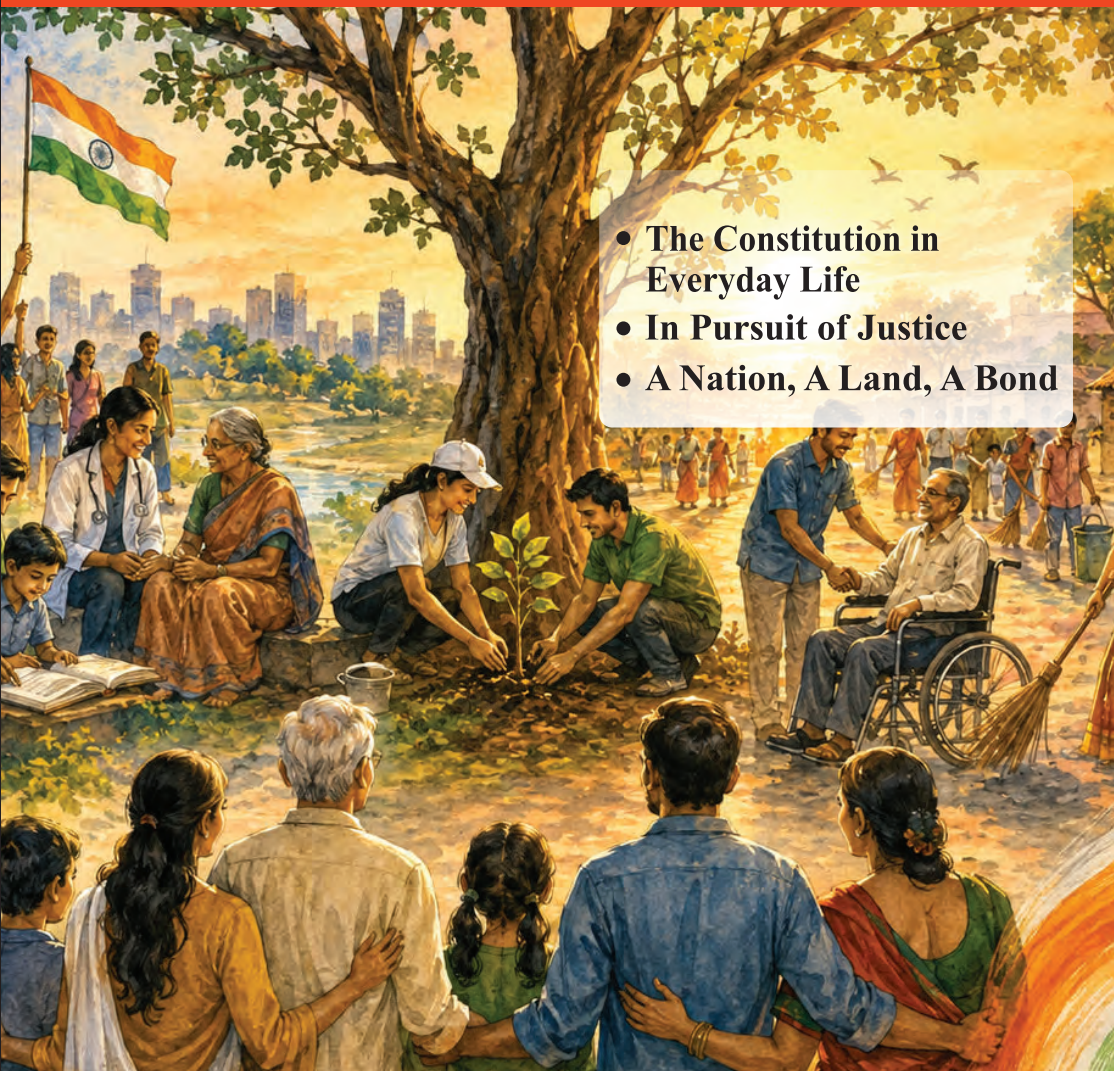
Value Insight

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Bi-Monthly



- The Constitution in Everyday Life
- In Pursuit of Justice
- A Nation, A Land, A Bond



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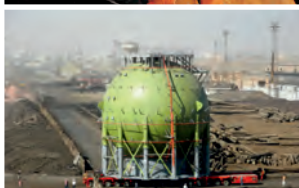
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Secretariat: Chamber No.10, o/o CPM-5, DMRC, Airport Express Metro Station, Dhaula Kuan, New Delhi 110021

Phone: 95996 97643 **Email:** frnv@valuefoundation.in, frnvindia@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.valuefoundation.in>

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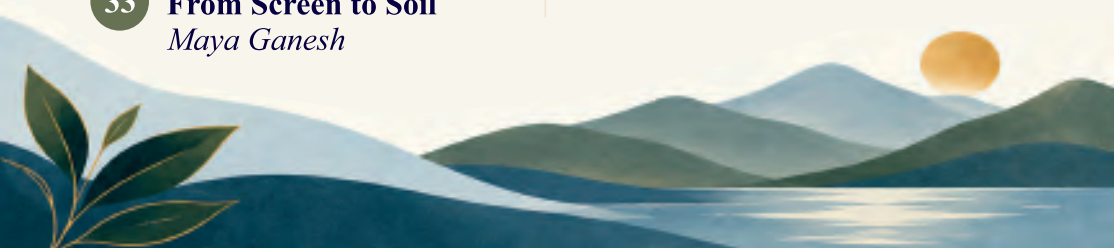
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CONTRIBUTORS



Neharika Srivastava is a corporate lawyer with substantial in-house legal compliance and data privacy experience in the ITES sector (information technology enabled services).



Sujatha Padmanabhan has twin passions: theater and teaching. She has three decades of teaching experience besides being a theater artiste. She has also written and directed short plays.



Prema Raghavan is a writer, teacher, counsellor. She did her B.Ed at SNDT, MSW at Nirmala Niketan and studied Methodology at TISS and Nature Cure under Lakshman Sarma which she has been practicing for the last 4 decades using herbal remedies. She also learnt yoga at the Bihar School of Yoga and has authored 2 books, 'Living in Rhythm with Nature' and 'A journey with a Special Traveler'.



Maya Ganesh transitioned from the private sector to the socio-environmental sector as a regenerative agriculture practitioner, to design, create and implement climate change resilient food forests. She is also a nature-education practitioner focused on Education for Sustainability (EFS), and divergent multidisciplinary learning and thinking, using the school garden as a platform. She runs a nursery and seedbank in Kodaikanal called the Pumpkin Patch Garden Centre. She has co-authored academic research papers on socio-environmental justice, the commons, co-production and rural-urban linkages.



Manju Singh is a homemaker based in Greater Noida. She is an avid reader and has recently started freelancing.



Roopa Devadassan is a public health specialist by training. She completed her M.B.B.S from Christian Medical College, Vellore. Thereafter she worked for 10 years with Adivasis in Gudalur in the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu. She spent 15 years teaching in schools working with J. Krishnamurthi's teachings



Devika Raghav has been an educator, based in Bhopal. She is a published poet and content writer as well as story teller for various e-magazines. She is also a budding photographer and water color artist.

VALUE INSIGHT TOPICS FOR THE YEAR 2026

Main Theme

Spiritual Theme

Deadline

**Spiritual Heritage of
Modern India**

Solitude

October 1, 2026

- Contributors are requested ONLY for the MAIN theme given below and NOT for the spiritual theme.
- Please adhere to the deadline.
- Please tailor the length of your contribution to not more than 1000 words.
- We request you to give us your opinions and refrain from sending AI written pieces.
- Confirmation may be sent to frnvindia@gmail.com well in advance. The decision of FRNV Editorial Board shall be final and binding.

Disciplines to Divinize Every Moment

Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha



Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru. Jai Guru!

Most seekers lack the awareness of being a seeker. The emphasis that oneself is a seeker is not there.

One must have a very clear evaluation of what is meant by spiritual life and seeking. What is it that you are seeking? What is meant by spiritual pursuit? What are its merits, and to where is it expected to lead you? All these thoughts and inquiries must engage your mind and intelligence to give you a proper evaluation and understanding of your pursuit.

In religion, the emphasis is on external God. But in spirituality, the whole focus must shift from outside to inside. You have to purify and integrate your body, mind and intelligence to realise that everything is God or Brahman. The fulfillment

of your pursuit lies in that realization, in perceiving the One Presence and Reality in the apparently plural world.

All the austerities undertaken have this as the primary goal. That is why we give so much of importance to disciplines – the disciplines to be undergone by the body, mind and intelligence.

Our personality is to be disciplined in two respects – in receiving as well as in expressing, in 'taking in' as well as in 'giving out'.

Whatever you see with the eyes, hear with the ears, whatever you touch, smell, taste, eat or drink, is all a process of reception. In all this, one has to become sublime and disciplined. That is why we ask you to wear sãttvika dress, eat sãttvika food, hear good words. The

discipline is to be attentive and selective about whatever inputs are received by your system from the external world.

Similarly, in the matter of expressing yourself through words, thoughts, acts and interactions too, you have to become progressively more and more disciplined, sublime and spiritual.

In our after-dinner satsang, Ma often reads out anecdotes and illustrations from the biographies of Saints. I think, reading or listening to these revelations has great influence on your sādhanā. In the biographical accounts you will find spirituality personified. Through these revelations, the truths presented in the scriptural texts acquire real life significance and many of the intricacies of sādhanā become graspable in the light of Saintly behaviour.

The scriptures do not tell us about how the seekers who read those texts went on pursuing the message in their life. So, this kind of session where we read or listen to the lives of Saints can be very good inputs for the seekers. Regular reading and listening of this kind is a great discipline for a sādhanika who wants to purify himself.

Taking food is an essential and common activity for all. To discipline this intake, we first of all select the materials and the way of cooking in order to have a sāttvika influence on our body and mind. Moreover, to sublimate and divinize this intake, we chant the 15th chapter of Bhagavadgītā and some other mantras before taking food. By this discipline, we tune our mind and body to receive only that which will be conducive to our spiritual growth.

I always wonder why people use pickles. The cooking should be such that the natural flavour of the vegetables is preserved, and the very sight of food should make the salivary glands secrete without the aid of pickles and other ingredients.

Now, the manner in which you express yourself has also to be thoroughly spiritualized. Your words and actions – the way you speak, sit and get up, the way you walk and prostrate – indicate the mental make-up and purity. That is why we ask you to maintain cleanliness in all daily habits. I always say that your bathroom should be as clean as your pūjā room. Is God present only in the pūjā room?

The other day Ma and Nutan Swamiji were discussing that we

must make a small cloth (kara-vastra) which the Retreat participants may use for placing their books on during the satsangs or discourses. In many orthodox centres, they do not keep the books on bare ground. They always place them devotionally on a piece of cloth. We should imbibe such good practices to make our life as much spiritualized as possible.

The more you spiritualize your behaviour and you are attentive to disciplining every facet of your life and activities, the more sublimity you will feel. All of you practise dhyāna. What is this dhyāna for?

Don't think that dhyāna is always for samādhi or Self-absorption. Absorption may be one aspect of it. What about the life before and after absorption? Dhyāna is an inward focussing of the mind to understand the defects and deficiencies of our system and thereby to bring about purity.

When you sit closing your eyes, looking into the mind, you will come to know the thought pattern in you. You will understand your mind – discover its various hidden tendencies. The thoughts will come and stand before you like your own reflection in a mirror. If you do not

like them, if they are not favourable, then the very discovery of their nature will begin the process of eliminating or sublimating them. But one has to be earnest and straightforward in this regard.

As you progress in your sādhanā, the disciplines become more and more inward and subtle, until at last the mind becomes one with purity. When the ego is dissolved, when the karṭṛ-bhokṭṛ-bhāva (doership and enjoyership) is lost, everything proceeding from the mind will become pure:

सुवर्णज्जायमानस्य सुवर्णत्वं च शाश्वतम् |
ब्रह्मणो जायमानस्य ब्रह्मत्वं च तथा भवेत् ||

*suvarṇāj-jāyamānasya
suvarṇatvaṁ ca śāśvatam |
brahmaṇo jāyamānasya
brahmatvaṁ ca tathā bhavet ||*

(Aparokṣānubhūtiḥ – 51)

As anything made of gold has the nature of gold alone, so also anything proceeding from Brahman must be of the nature of Brahman alone.

The ultimate discipline of the Seer is to see everything as rooted in Brahman. His buddhi constantly dwells on the fundamental oneness

underlying all plurality. How can anything non-spiritual come from him?

When I talk to villagers, I cannot talk to them at my level. They come here for their purpose. Should I become inaccessible to them? Whatever be their purpose, it is for me to spiritualize the whole interaction. I will not do anything which is not spiritual. It is not possible for me.

Such wholesome spiritualization can be accomplished by living in the proximity of Saints or Guru. In Gurusannidhi, the whole atmosphere is spiritual. Whatever is done in the Ashram is an extension of spirituality.

Don't think that Guruseva means doing only some personal service to the Guru. Any work related to the Ashram is Guruseva, a service primarily meant to purify the seeker. It may be cleaning vessels, fixing stamps, going to the town for bringing the required items, or any other activity you are asked to do either by me or by Ma or Nutan Swamiji.

As you do the allotted work, think, “Am I doing it cheerfully? Is this

being offered by me as a worship to my Gurudev?”

If you introspect in this manner, very soon you will find a fondness growing in your mind – a fondness and love for your Guru as well as the other Ashramites. That fondness will steadily make you more and more pure and sublime. Everything you do will become spiritual and sublime.

Finally, the very idea that something is “non-spiritual” will drop off from the mind. That is the last and the final discipline.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru!

Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha

Narayanashrama Tapovanam

Venginissery, Paralam,

Thrissur

Kerala 680563

Phone: +91 487 2278302

E-Mail:

ashram@bhoomananda.org

Website: www.bhoomananda.org

SUBHASHITAM

परकार्येषु युक्तात्मा स्वकार्ये क्षिप्रसाधनम् ।
सुहृत्कार्येषु निर्वृत्तिः राजकार्येषु विक्रमः ॥

The ideal citizen is one who is attentive and devoted to the work of others, accomplishes one's own work promptly, successfully completes the work of one's friends, and displays courage and vigour in carrying out the duties of the State.

आदर्श नागरिक वह है जो दूसरों के कार्यों में सजग और तत्पर रहता है, अपने कार्यों को शीघ्रता से पूरा करता है, अपने मित्रों के कार्यों को सफलतापूर्वक सम्पन्न करता है और राज्य के कर्तव्यों का पालन करते हुए साहस एवं उत्साह का परिचय देता है।

From the President's Desk



The recently concluded BRICS summit has made it clear that India has emerged as a leading political power of the world. We are also emerging as an economic power. But if we have to be a Vishva guru, these two powers alone would not be sufficient. Our core strength lies in our spiritual and cultural heritage. This is far deeper than consumeristic shopping for festivals or posting pictures of delicious sweets and festivities on Instagram or other social media.

While I was writing on Vivekananda for this issue, I have mentioned Vivekananda's agony in the fact that our countrymen were not recognizing our own core strength. He lambasts our intelligentsia for aping western countries without pausing to acquaint themselves with our own heritage. He agonized then. Today we are continuing to do so.

Many spiritual leaders like our spiritual mentor, Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha ji are trying to rekindle our spirituality. Just as yoga has become a passion across the world, just as the movie Hanuman ka ansh has broken all expectations in the box office, we have many more nuggets hidden in our kitty. Let us look into them and pick out the relevant ones to enrich our lives. If, however, we discuss, oppose and resist without making an attempt to understand what we are opposing, we are causing more harm than good. We are calling for an open mind when we say

*Om Bhur-Bhuvah Svah Tat-Savitur-Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat ||*

*We meditate on the supreme, adorable radiance of the Divine Creator.
May that divine light illuminate and guide our intellect.*

Unless we all unite to realize our true spiritual potential, it will be difficult for the country to become a Vishva guru. Oct 31st is going to be celebrated as the National Unity Day. That should not just be a political show but that day should bring all of us truly united in reaching our core strength.

S. Regunathan
President (FRNV)

A Beginning...

This issue began with hearing a story. And then we took that story as we would a crystal, looking into it from different angles. Many scenes from the future presented themselves before our eyes and all of them pointed to one single value we had to learn and inculcate.

The story goes like this: Long time ago in a forest in Nagaland, a great fight was going on. Birds and animals were fighting against each other. The reason? Well, they had found a pond of clean water. They all wanted to drink that water. But a controversy arose...who discovered the pond? Who owned the waters?

The animals said that they had discovered it, while the birds claimed they had. The pond would belong to the one who had discovered it. And only members of that group could drink that water. So, both the parties were keen to prove ownership.

As the fight went on for days, the continuous cheering and booing had made the animals and birds even more thirsty. The only one who was not thirsty was Kanghar, the bat. He told the animals he was one since he had four legs. He told the birds he

was one because he could fly. It took some days for the animals and the birds to realize that they were being fooled by the bat. They all ran after him, but Kanghar the bat, hid in a very dark corner and they could not find him thereafter.

One day a deer and a hen happened to meet and both of them lamented over the ongoing fight. "Let us get the two sides to come to an agreement," they decided. "If the idea is not acceptable to the members of our respective groups, they will kill us, but we are anyway dying of thirst," said the deer and the hen agreed.

Surprise of surprises, both the animals and birds were willing to arrive at some kind of agreement. They all met by the river the next morning, but they had forgotten that they needed a judge to help them come to an agreement. A beautiful colourful bird called Zaimuk fluttered her eyelids and said she could be the judge. No one had any objection. Zaimuk declared that since birds moved faster than animals, the pond belonged to the birds.

There was such an uproar and with great difficulty the deer calmed the gathering and called for a more

unbiased judge. A little sparrow spoke meekly, asking if she could say something. Everyone encouraged her to speak. “If an animal is thirsty the water belongs to the animal, if a bird is thirsty the water belongs to the bird. The water belongs to the one who is thirsty.”

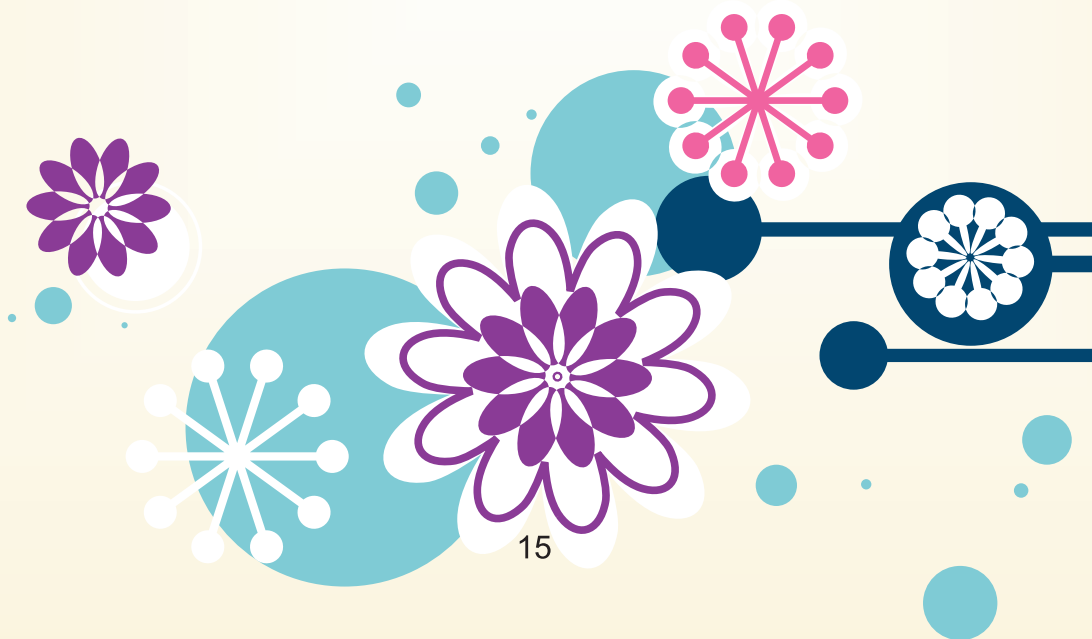
All the birds and animals shouted with joy. That was right. They all praised the sparrow and thanked her. In one stroke she had taught the forest dwellers responsibility to fellow beings. Responsible behaviour means drawing limits to one's greed, laziness, anger and so on. Most of our present-day havoc is born out of the inability to control pour negative traits of self-aggrandizement.

So, looking at this folk tale from Nagaland in the larger contexts, we

saw bridges collapsing, residential buildings crumbling, pilots leading planes to near disaster, teachers knitting during school hours, primary school pass outs not knowing how to spell their names, adulterated food killing people, fake medicines creating havoc...the list is endless. Is this the life we seek to live and bequeath?

This issue is devoting itself to ignite a better understanding of responsibility, individual and social. To address questions like, can we harness comfort at the expense of other's? How can we be responsible for our actions? None of them are without consequences.

So stop. Think. Mould the future as you would want to ideally by just learning to be responsible.



The Constitution in Everyday Life

The Constitution is not confined to courts, laws and institutions. It comes alive in the choices we make every day as parents, neighbors, professionals and citizens writes Neharika Srivastava.

Citizenship Begins with Everyday Choices

"Mum, why are we stopping to pick up rubbish that isn't ours?"

My son asked me this question during a morning walk some time ago. I remember smiling and telling him, "Because this neighborhood is ours too." That conversation stayed with me. Not because it was profound, but because it reminded me that citizenship is rarely about grand gestures. It is built in small moments. Moments when we choose to do something simply because it is the right thing to do.

What I did not realize then was how seriously he had taken it. When he was around five or six years old, every time we went to the market, he would spot a piece of litter and immediately pick it up and put it in the dustbin. At first, I felt proud. Then, as market visits became longer and longer because of his new-found civic mission, I gently told him that he had done a very good job and that perhaps we should also continue finishing our errands. It was funny,



sweet, and deeply revealing. Children absorb values not from lectures, but from what they see us do.

When we think about the Constitution of India, we often think about rights, courts, elections, and government institutions. We do not always think about our own daily lives. But tucked away in Article 51A is a list of Fundamental Duties that asks a very simple question: *What kind of citizen do I want to be?* Over

the years, I have come to see these duties not as constitutional provisions to be memorized, but as a personal compass. Not a standard I always meet, but one I try to move towards.

Citizenship Beyond Compliance

As a lawyer by profession, I spend a great deal of time thinking about rules, governance, and accountability. Yet some of the most meaningful expressions of citizenship happen outside boardrooms, policies, and legal documents. For me, citizenship has often looked like spending a Saturday morning participating in a plantation drive.

It has looked like volunteering at schools, speaking to young students about financial literacy, confidence, and the opportunities that education can unlock. Every time I interact with young people, I am reminded that knowledge is one of the few things that grows when it is shared.

It has also looked like supporting animal welfare efforts.

During one of his summer vacations, my son interned with a wellness organization where psychologists worked with children with special needs. Watching him engage with experiences so different from his everyday life taught me an important lesson: *Empathy grows when we step*

outside our own worlds and spend time understanding someone else's.

Citizenship is often a Team Sport

Over time, I have also come to appreciate that some of the most meaningful acts of citizenship happen when communities come



together around a shared purpose.

A few years ago, our neighborhood residents' association organized a series of collection drives for books, notebooks, paper scraps, clothes and

household textiles. What began as a simple appeal quickly turned into a collective effort. Residents donated hundreds of books that eventually found their way into NGO and government school libraries, while paper waste was repurposed into sustainable stationery.

Experiences like these have reinforced my belief that citizenship is not merely an individual responsibility. It is something we practice together.

The same lesson has stayed with me in my professional life. Through CSR initiatives, I have had the privilege of working with colleagues, community organizations and volunteers on projects that support education, sustainability and social inclusion. One initiative that remains particularly meaningful involved partnering with Literacy India to deliver financial literacy workshops for students from underserved communities. Watching young people engage with concepts such as budgeting, saving, investing and financial independence reminded me that empowerment often begins with knowledge.

I have also seen the power of collective action through local park beautification efforts, plantation drives, community clean-up projects and volunteer-led initiatives that

bring together employees, residents and even neighborhood children. None of these efforts change the world overnight. Yet every tree planted, every book donated, every park restored and every student encouraged contributes to a larger culture of responsible citizenship.

What has surprised me most is how often these experiences come full circle. A child who participates in a plantation drive starts caring about public spaces.

A student who learns about financial literacy begins thinking differently about their future. A colleague who volunteers for the first time returns with a deeper sense of purpose. Impact has a way of multiplying when people experience it for themselves.





Using Whatever Platform We Have

Over the years, I have been fortunate to hold leadership roles where people listen when I speak. That comes with responsibility. I have learned that influence is not valuable because it gives us a voice. It is

valuable because it gives us an opportunity to create space for other voices.

Sometimes that means supporting initiatives that empower women in the workplace and in the community.

Sometimes it means mentoring younger professionals who may not yet see their own potential.

Sometimes it means actively participating in Pride events and inclusion initiatives because acceptance should not exist only in policies and presentations. It should be visible in our actions, our conversations, and the environments we help create.



The Constitution speaks about fraternity and respect for the dignity of individuals. Those words become meaningful only when we translate them into action. For me, that often means asking a simple question:

Can I use my role, my network, or my position to create a positive impact wherever I can? Not because I have to. Because I can.

The Duty We Teach Without Realizing

As parents, we perform one of the most important acts of citizenship every day: We model behavior. My son probably learns less from what I tell him and more from what he sees me do.

He watches whether I treat support staff respectfully.

He notices whether I litter.

He sees whether I follow traffic rules when nobody is watching.

He listens when I speak about people who are different from me.

He watches whether I show up for community initiatives or find excuses not to.

Children absorb values long before they understand constitutional principles. In many ways, raising responsible citizens may be one of the most meaningful ways we discharge our own duties.

Building Communities, Not Just Careers

The Constitution's call to strive for excellence is often interpreted as a professional aspiration. To me, excellence also means using whatever influence we have to improve the communities around us.

Sometimes that means encouraging colleagues and friends to volunteer their time and skills.

Sometimes it means supporting social impact initiatives through my organization.

Sometimes it means bringing together people who care about a cause and helping turn good intentions into meaningful action.

The causes may vary. The principle remains the same: If we are fortunate enough to have a platform, we should try to use it well.



Respecting What Belongs to All of Us

Another duty I find myself reflecting on frequently is safeguarding public property. We often speak about patriotism in dramatic terms. Yet patriotism can be surprisingly ordinary.

It is not damaging a public park.

It is not throwing rubbish out of a car window.

It is respecting schools, roads, public transport, community spaces, and shared resources.

It is understanding that public spaces belong to all of us and therefore deserve our care.

An Imperfect Journey

I do not think good citizenship is about achieving perfection. I do not participate in every cause that I care about. There are days when work and life leave little room for community involvement. But perhaps citizenship is not measured by perfection. *Perhaps it is measured by intent. By whether we keep trying.*

Whether we continue planting trees even though we cannot solve climate change alone.

Whether we continue supporting initiatives that empower women and create opportunities for others.

Whether we continue standing up for



inclusion and dignity, even when progress feels slow.

Whether we continue encouraging our children, colleagues, neighbors, and communities to care a little more.

To me, that is the spirit of Article 51A. It is not about standing on a pedestal and declaring oneself a good citizen. It is about quietly asking, again and again, "*What more can I do with what I have?*"

A Personal Definition of Citizenship

When I think about the Fundamental Duties today, I do not think primarily about constitutional text.

I think about a little boy stopping at every piece of litter he could find because he genuinely believed it was his responsibility to keep his surroundings clean.

I think about students discovering possibilities through education, communities coming together around donation drives, colleagues

volunteering their time for a social cause, neighbors turning waste into resources, and people choosing inclusion, dignity, and respect in their everyday interactions.

The Constitution gives us a framework, but citizenship is ultimately lived through daily choices. It is about contributing where I can, encouraging others to do the same, and using whatever skills, influence, or resources I have to leave things a little better than I found them. And perhaps that is the simplest way to understand our Fundamental Duties: Not as obligations imposed upon us, but as opportunities to participate in the ongoing project of building a better India.

"Did I leave my community, however slightly, better than I found it today?"

That is the question I try to ask myself every day.

**"Niyataṁ kuru karma tvaṁ karma jyāyo hy
akarmaṇaḥśarīra-yātrāpi ca te na prasiddhyed
akarmaṇaḥ"**

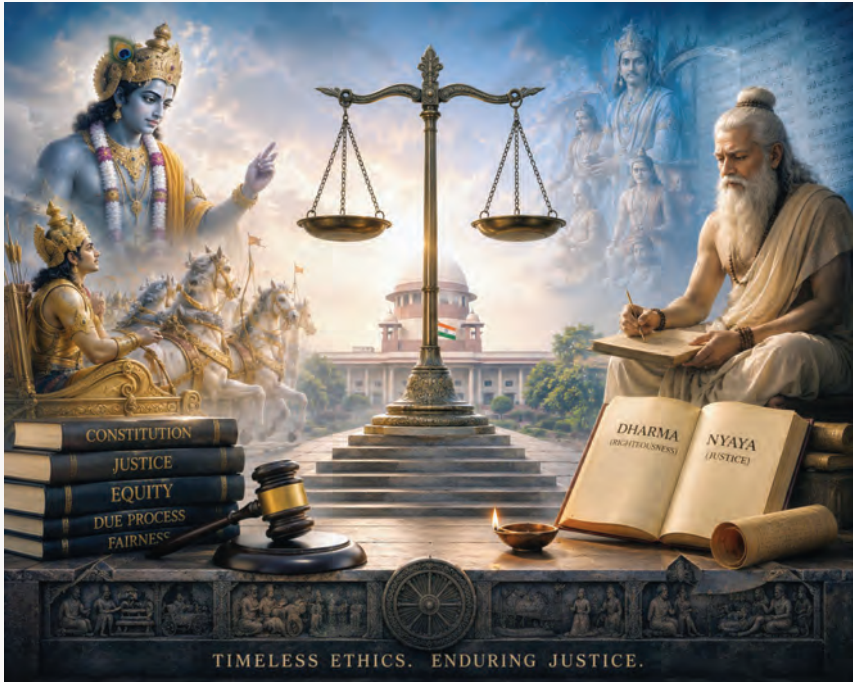
Perform your prescribed duty, for action is better than inaction. Even the maintenance of your body would not be possible without action."

-Bhagvad Gita 3.8

In Pursuit of Justice

Mythological Ethics The Bedrock of Modern Judicial System

*Every action has an equal and opposite reaction writes
Sujatha Padmanabhan.*



Interesting, how I was taught early on in my life, the concept of 'Consequences'. 'Remember', Grandma would say,

'If you are fair in whatever you do, chances are that you are ninety percent right!'

A lay person's idea of right and wrong generally develops from what

he or she has heard as a child by way of stories either from a parent or an elder! Everyone had their own equivalent of moral lessons in the guise of stories or folklore. How else do we account for our knowledge of the innumerable myths and mythical characters that populate our consciousness!

Who doesn't recall the Panchatantra tales when it comes to indirect morals that were inculcated in us!

What comes to my mind instantly though is the legend of Manu Needhi Cholan, who is revered for placing the law above his own flesh and blood - the ultimate ancient Tamil story of absolute and unbiased justice! Well for those who do not know, Manu Needhi Cholan was a righteous king who ruled the Chola kingdom from his capital in Thiruvavur. To ensure every citizen had direct access to justice, he hung a massive 'bell of justice' outside his palace gates. Anyone who suffered an injustice could ring the bell and the king would personally hear the grievance.

For years, the bell remained silent because his rule was so fair.

The king had an only son, Prince Veedhividagagan, whom he loved dearly. One day this young prince was riding his chariot through the city streets, and accidentally ran over a calf that suddenly shot across his path. Grief stricken, the mother of the dead calf rung the bell of justice! The king hastened to the palace gates and was shocked to see the cow, tears streaming from her eyes! A minister told the king the sad tale of the unfortunate accident. His grief knew no bounds when he learnt his own

son caused the death of the calf. Legend has it that he crushed his own son under the wheels of his chariot to provide justice to the cow. Hence the honorific epithet 'Manu Needhi Chola'!

Manu the Righteous ruled over Anuradhapura, which was part of the Chola kingdom in Tamilnadu and present day Srilanka, from 205 BCE to 161 BCE. Interestingly, ancient narratives encourage courts to account for restorative justice, fairness, and the protection of the vulnerable! The King's name derives from Manusmriti, also known as the Manava Dharma Sastra or the laws of Manu, which is one of the many legal texts and constitutions among the many dharma shastras of Hinduism. The metrical text in Sanskrit is dated to 2nd century B.C. and presents itself as a discourse given by Manu and Brighu on dharma topics such as duties, rights, laws, conduct and virtues. Of the numerous jurisprudence related commentaries and Smriti texts, Yajnavalkya Smriti has attracted the attention of many scholars. Evidence suggests that the latter was more referred to than Manusmriti in matters of governance and practice.

What defines a civilization isn't how it treats the powerful, but how it protects those that are vulnerable! An

analysis of the evolution of contemporary legal systems leads us to examine the relationship of ancient myths and exposes tensions between abstract moral justice and the rigid, often secular proceduralism that defines contemporary law. Studying the same remains a vital tool in modern legal education and reform! Interestingly, ancient narratives encourage courts to account for restorative justice, fairness and the protection of the vulnerable. Myths are the very matrix of culture! Little wonder then, cultural historians and critics frequently revert to our mythopoeic roots!

Exploring the intersection of mythology and modern jurisprudence provides profound insights into why our legal frameworks operate the way they do. We realise that mythological ethics indeed form the bedrock of human civilization and define our moral frameworks and judicial systems.

Another excellent instance is that of King Sibi, a descendant of King Bharata of the Lunar Dynasty famous for his truthfulness and justice. Once, when the king was alone on the terrace of his palace, he saw a dove coming towards him at great speed. A hawk was after him, and to escape its clutches, the

frightened dove came and landed on his lap! Feeling obliged to protect the bird that sought refuge, he readied himself to face the hawk who confronted him, 'Oh king, you have hidden my prey. Please release him so that I can appease my hunger.'

The Righteous King was faced with the peculiar dilemma of protecting the dove, and at the same time, not depriving the hawk of his rightful prey. When the hawk agreed to let the dove go if the king offered an equal pound of flesh from his body as food, he was more than happy that he was saved from the sin of inability to protect the weak. He called for a balance and a knife. He placed the dove on one pan and a large chunk of flesh from his right thigh on the other pan to balance. Strangely, the weight could not be equaled even after all of the right half of the king's body is cut. So he offered himself. Pleased with this act of ultimate sacrifice, the birds revealed their true identity - The king of righteousness, Dharma Raj and the King of heavens, Devendra. King Sibi had passed the ultimate test to uphold dharma, the true duty of every king. The gods praised the noble king and granted him many boons and what followed was a golden era, for the people of this glorious kingdom.

'Let justice roll on like a river,

righteousness like a never- failing stream' -Amos 5:24

Just behavior accords with what is morally right and fair - this is what humanity believes in. Divine justice is perfectly tempered with mercy! The scales , the blindfold and the sword - the three main symbols of justice embodied by Lady Justice, represent impartiality and objectivity while the sword indicates that justice can be enforced representing the authority and power of law! One of the most recognizable symbols in the legal system, Lady Justice demonstrates an aura of fairness, opportunity and righteousness.

Now, Lady Justice can be traced all the way back to the Egyptian Goddess Maat and the ancient Greek goddesses Themis and Dike! Any wonder why Maat symbolising the Egyptian ideologies of balance, harmony, justice, law and order and Themis and Dike embodying fair judgment and moral order are characterised by the female of the species in the divine pantheon? Shared across cultures in multiple countries around the world, the concept of a deity of justice originates or is believed to have evolved from Justitia, the Roman Goddess personifying truth and cosmic order.



Mythology has always served as our ethical guide by not only presenting and perpetuating principles of impartiality and natural justice but also as a text that is still relevant and at some level determinative of legal philosophies that govern the society, be it modern India or elsewhere. The significance of these myths and folklore cannot be underrated as they contain the wisdom of centuries concerning justice, ethics and governance. Supernatural beings or deities tasked with enforcing justice often act as moral compasses. For instance, Yama ensures that all beings face their karmic destiny fairly. Similarly, the Vetāl from the Baital Pachchisi exposes the flaws of earthly hierarchical justice and emphasises duty towards vulnerable ecology in interconnected worlds. Tales often feature wise, humble kings, such as the character of king Nyayadhar, or clever animals using riddles and public wisdom to outsmart, corrupt ministers and restore what is right. Our epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana teach that no one is above natural justice. Characters who abuse their power like Duryodhana or Ravana, ultimately, face divine retribution to restore moral balance.

The concept of crime and punishment is well established in

Indian mythology. At the same time, it also highlights the importance of forgiveness and rehabilitation- a principle that resonates with democratic ideals in modern governance. Still, surprisingly, it presents contrasting views on women's rights. While some stories reflect patriarchal norms, others highlight women's strength, autonomy and quest for justice. Draupadi's humiliation in the court of Kauravas, and her demand for justice, is one of the most powerful moments in the Mahabharata. Her unwavering stance against injustice aligns with modern struggles for women's rights and legal protection against gender-based violence.

Indian courts often emphasise principles of fairness and morality, echoing mythological precedents where justice transcends technicalities. While modern laws are codified and based on constitutional framework, the underlying philosophy of justice and morality remains deeply rooted in our mythology that presents a dynamic and context-sensitive legal framework centered around ancient concepts of dharma. The flexibility of dharma mirrors the modern legal principle of equity and justice that is based on fairness rather than strict rigid rules.

Are we to believe then that everything is alright with our world? Ironically, the common man's faith in the system is not unshaken. The fact that innumerable cases remain pending in the courts and endless adjournments drag the cases for years on end, paints a terribly gloomy picture, where victims have often either not seen justice prevail in their lifetime or have at times suffered more when the guilty rich have gone scotfree. Appeals to higher courts invariably are out of reach of the poor and it becomes extremely difficult to retain faith in an impartial and fair judicial system.

Though the reality is far different from the ideal conditions that may boost our confidence in 'happy endings' and 'a faith restored', often enough, the vulnerable have had to console themselves with the idea that even if justice has not been meted out to them in the courtrooms of humans, surely divine justice will not be denied to them.

Our biggest challenge in these trying times then is to restore one's faith by making the law accountable. In a world where money governs and where increasingly wealth shapes personal relationships, how does one

ensure that the system is effective? Every adjournment, every delay, every prolonged trial sends messages not just to the victims but also emboldens the offenders further! We cannot afford to be silent, helpless witnesses to the increasingly disturbing pattern of violations. Our streets, neighbourhoods and even homes have become unsafe for those who need to be protected the most. We must ask tough questions about deterrence, punishment and accountability. Is the crime rate against women and children lower in societies where the punishment is swift and certain? Until we are able to create a system that makes the offenders fear the 'consequences' more than they desire their crimes, we should not rest easy!

To evolve as a humanitarian society that fiercely safeguards the interests of its most vulnerable, we need to strive relentlessly. When the right minds put their heads together, we should be able to build a foolproof system that takes care of the interests of one and all. Hope still springs eternal that eventually Justice Will Prevail!

A Nation, A Land, A Bond

We are not just residents, but trustees. Not just consumers, but co-creators writes **Prema Raghavan**.



The crisis of our time is not only political or economic. It is relational. We have forgotten that a nation is not built by GDP alone. It is built by the quality of relationships between people and people, people and land, people and the unseen.

From 'I' to 'We'. Healing the relationship with each other

The Illness: We live in apartments stacked like honeycombs, yet we don't know our neighbor's name. We

share a constitution, but not a conversation. Social media connects us to the world and isolates us from the street. The result: loneliness, suspicion, and a democracy that feels like a crowd of strangers.

The Spiritual Root: Vedanta says *Tat Tvam Asi* - Thou Art That. The person in front of you is not separate. Their dignity is your dignity. Their wound is your wound. A nation where citizens see each other as “vote banks,” “competitors,” or

“others” will fracture, no matter how strong its army.

The Citizen's Practice:

- Disagree without dehumanizing: India's gift to the world is *shastrartha* fierce debate without hatred. In elections, in family WhatsApp groups, argue the idea, not the person's worth.
- Celebrate one festival that isn't yours: Attend an *Iftar*, a Christmas mass, a *Gurpurab langar*. Shared joy builds shared trust faster than any law.

Objective: A citizen's first duty is to widen the circle of “mine.” My family → My street → My city → My country → My world. Spirituality that ends at your prayer room is incomplete. The real temple is the relationship you repair.

Healing the relationship with the land

The Illness: We treat the river as a drain, the air as a dump yard, and soil as dirt. We inherited a land where rivers were mothers and trees were gods. Now our cities flood because we paved the wetlands, and our villages dry because we poisoned the groundwater.

The Spiritual Root: The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says *Annam Brahma* - Food is Divine. Prithvi Mata Earth is Mother. You cannot bow to Bharat

Mata on August 15th and dump plastic in her rivers on August 16th. A culture that calls the country “Mother” cannot treat her like a resource to be mined.

The Citizen's Practice

- Observe one eco-*vrat*: One day a week, no plastic. One month a year, no food waste. *Vrat* is not punishment; it is remembrance.
- Vote with your rupee: Buy from a local farmer once a week. Every millet you eat saves 2000 litres of water compared to rice. Your plate is your ballot.
- Restore one thing: Adopt a tree. Clean a corner. Citizen is not a title; it is a verb.

Objective: A citizen's second duty is to move from owner to trustee. The land is not ours. We borrowed it from our grandchildren. Leave it more alive than you found it.

The Relationship with the Self

The Illness: We are drowning in information but starved of wisdom. Outrage is easier than reflection. We forward messages we haven't read, vote for leaders we haven't studied, and outsource our conscience to TV anchors. A democracy without self-aware citizens becomes a mob with EVMs.

The Spiritual Root: The Bhagavad Gita's central teaching is *Swadharma*

your own true duty, understood through self-knowledge. Krishna does not tell Arjuna what to do. He helps Arjuna see clearly, so Arjuna can choose.

The Citizen's Practice

- Before you consume news, consume silence. Ask: “Is this true? Is this kind? Is this necessary?” The Buddha's three gates.
- Read the Constitution like scripture: It is not a legal document. It is a spiritual promise between 1.4 billion people. Know your Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties. Article 51A asks you to develop scientific temper, protect the environment, and renounce violence.
- Study one hard problem: Pick one issue water, education, jobs. Read beyond headlines. A democracy needs citizens who can hold complexity, not just slogans.

Objective: A citizen's third duty is inner freedom. An awakened citizen cannot be bought, cannot be scared, and cannot be fooled. Nations don't rise because leaders are great. Nations rise because ordinary people are awake.

Healing the Relationship with Time

The Illness: We are severed from our past and anxious about our future. Children don't know their grandparents' stories. We build smart cities but forget the wisdom of old stepwells. We chase quarterly profits and 5-year terms, while climate change, education, and culture need 100 year thinking.

The Spiritual Root: *Sanatana Dharma* means the eternal order. It asks us to see beyond our lifespan. The rishis planted mango trees they would never sit under. The Chola kings built temple tanks that still water fields today. Citizenship is an act of ancestor-hood. You are someone's future ancestor. How will they remember you?

The Citizen's Practice:

- Think in 7 generations: Before you support a policy or buy a product, ask: “What will this do to my great-grandchildren's water, air, and mind?” The Iroquois called this the Seventh Generation Principle.
- Mentor one young person: Courage without maturity is reckless. Maturity without courage is stagnant. Youth needs your stories. You need their fire. This is how civilizations avoid becoming old and bitter, or young and lost.
- Create, don't just consume

culture: Sing one folk song. Cook one grandma recipe. Repair one old object. A nation without a living culture is just an economy.

Objective: A citizen's fourth duty is to be a good ancestor. Plant trees, build institutions, transmit values. Freedom is not what we inherited. Freedom is what we ensure for those not yet born.

The Spiritual Thread: All Relationships Are One

Politics without spirituality becomes brutal. Spirituality without politics becomes escapist. The bridge is relationships.

- With people = Democracy. If I don't see you as myself, I will vote against you.
- With land = Ecology. If I don't see the river as mother, I will poison her.
- With self = Ethics. If I don't know myself, I will follow the loudest voice.
- With time = Legacy. If I don't honor past and future, I will live only for now.

The Upanishads call this *Yajna* sacred reciprocity. The citizen offers care, attention, and duty. The nation offers belonging, safety, and

meaning. When this cycle breaks, we get corruption, violence, and emptiness.

The Country Is Your Monastery

You don't need to go to the Himalayas to be spiritual. Your polling booth is a temple. Your tax payment is an offering. Your RTI application is a prayer for truth. Your kindness to a stranger of another faith is meditation in action. The objectives of a conscious citizen, then, are simple but vast:

- Widen your We: See no stranger.
- Touch the Earth: Live as trustee, not owner.
- Know Thyself: Let your vote come from clarity, not fear.
- Become an Ancestor: Build for those you will never meet.

A nation is not its borders. A nation is the quality of relationships between its people. So the next time you sing the National Anthem, don't just stand at attention. Ask: "How am I loving this land and her people today?"

Because citizenship is not a status you hold. It is a relationship you tend. And relationships, like lamps, go out if no one tends the flame.

From Screens to Soil

Where Children and Nature Grow Together

Maya Ganesh writes on how Regenerative School Gardens can reconnect children with Nature



Students making seed balls

What happens when children grow up knowing more about screens than soil, more about virtual worlds than the living one outside their doors?

Some of the obvious consequences of a widening rift between children and nature is that if they lose contact with nature, they won't fight for it. With much of their time spent around electronic screens, these children will not be skilled to find solutions to combat pressing socio-environmental issues from climate change and displacement, to soil and water erosion and scarcity, extinction of some species, food

insecurity, deforestation and poverty, and more.

One of the many ways to reintroduce nature into children's lives,



Assorted Greens harvest with students

particularly in the urban and peri urban, is through regenerative school gardens. Regenerative school allows children to experience nature as a teacher, classroom and living ecosystem. They are a hands-on, outdoor learning space that can impart education for sustainability (EFS). Students are taught how to naturally restore soil health, conserve water, and close the loop through robust waste management systems, deter climate change and increase local biodiversity. In other words, they can move beyond merely 'greening' a school campus for aesthetics and instead create a living system that actively regenerates the environment.

A regenerative school garden functions as a living, real world laboratory where children learn through keen observation, using nature as their teacher. A facilitator can draw on patterns and relationships in nature to explore not only ecological principles but also what they might teach us about being better human beings.

In a natural ecosystem, for example, relationships are based on collaboration and interdependence rather than the competition often associated with human-designed systems. Nitrogen-fixing legumes take nitrogen from the atmosphere and make it available in the soil for

other plants. Perennial herbs can contribute to natural checks and balances in insect populations. Biodiversity and the extensive root systems of perennial plants help prevent soil erosion and improve their water retention.

These are powerful lessons in interconnectedness and mutual dependence – ideas that challenge the extractive mindset of a system



Working on the soil and sowing at the Herbal Spiral

that views nature as a resource to be exploited.

“Is the exploration of the natural world just a pleasant way to pass the golden hours of childhood,” asked Rachel Carson, American marine biologist, writer and conservationist, in her book, 'The Sense of Wonder' (1965), *“or is there something deeper?”*

There certainly is something deeper. Spiritual ecology is about interconnectedness where all life forms are a part of a single living web of existence. Our planet is not an



Blue Butterfly Pea flower

object to be used, abused and exploited but is a living, divine being imbued with spirit. It is a living system of which we are an inseparable part. Our relationship with nature therefore needs to shift from one of dominance to one of symbiosis, mutual care and respect.

A regenerative school garden pedagogy can also extend naturally into the local community and, from there, contribute to a broader goal conservation. It can strengthen community cohesion; collaboration and an understanding of how local actions are connected to global challenges.

A research paper titled *School Gardens: Situating Students within a Global Context*, by Thomas Devere Wolsey of the University of Central Florida and Diane Lapp of San Diego State University, explores this potential through interviews with proponents of school gardens. The paper offers educators a practical

introduction to understanding how local actions can contribute to global community building.

My tryst with school gardens began in 2017 at APL Global School in Chennai. Students across grades worked with me to design, create, and nurture, a school garden with multiple objectives using the entire school campus as our canvas.

We began on barren land spaces, starting with soil rejuvenation and eventually closed the loop with our own robust composting system where all waste became a resource. After facilitating this project for 8 years, it continues to exist, and is managed independently by the school, cutting across grades. It has evolved over time with several new layers added on.

In 2024, special sensory garden spaces were designed for children with special needs. An open-pollinated and heirloom seed bank and nursery established in 2019 continues to thrive. Seed-saving is a



Brinjal Harvest Art with students

therapeutic activity not just for children with special needs but for the entire school community. The organic produce gets sold locally within the school community and is entirely student run where the students learn to do Math with transactions, learn customer service skills and even explain in detail about some forgotten produce like air potatoes and purple yam, and more. They have also collaborated with the Business Studies students to explore how a local supply chain such as ours can drastically bring



Maya with students

down costs and prices - a real-world experience of a sustainable business model, that is not exploitative and is anthropocentric, eco-centric and socially just, while placing interconnectedness and relationships at its centre.

My work with school gardens has since extended beyond mainstream schools. I have also worked with *Anganwadis* - Indian government-run day-care centres for young children from disadvantaged backgrounds - to create nutrition gardens to supplement their noon meal scheme with fresh organic greens.

My current school garden projects include Mountain View School, an English medium primary school serving children from rural farming communities across approximately 12 villages around Usalampatti district in Tamil Nadu and K C High International School in Chennai.

These experiences have reinforced my belief that a school garden is far more than a patch of cultivated land. It can be a classroom without walls, a laboratory for ecological learning, a sensory and therapeutic place. When children sow a seed, nurture a plant, save its seeds, observe insects, restore soil, harvest food and return organic waste to the earth, they are not simply learning about sustainability. They are learning that they are part of it.

Pictures: Courtesy Maya Ganesh

Relationships

Then, Now and Tomorrow

Relationships have travelled a long way writes Manju Singh.



Relationships! It is just a word, but what a world of meaning it holds!

Relationships are like those plastic building blocks which we played with as kids. Those blocks not only taught us to make our own toys, boats, railway tracks or cars, but also taught us to build strong structures as we grew older. Some taught us to build abstract, non-pictorial things which existed in our thoughts.

And what is a relationship? Something which obviously cannot be seen, but is experienced between two persons - husband and wife, friends, siblings, neighbours, colleagues.

First came the relationship between man and woman, when the world was still in its early stages. Each person was simply concerned about hunger, shelter and security. Gradually, as these basic needs were met, the need for companionship, protection and living in groups grew. And this, in turn, shaped the concept of family.

As times changed and humans became more advanced, educated and aware, they became more closely bonded with their siblings, offspring, parents and grandparents. The concept of relationships became deeply rooted in our lives.

Till a few generations ago, these

bonds were, in many ways, almost unbreakable. Not just family, but friends, acquaintances, colleagues and neighbours were all close to each other. Even a casual “*Dua salaam*” was often the beginning of a bond. People stood by one another in trying times - not just family, but friends and neighbours too.

Festivals were an important part of our society. Relationships were nurtured through meetings, conversations, celebrations, laughter and sharing.

But times have changed!

As the quest for a better and more comfortable life grew, our priorities too began to change. We became busier, more independent and perhaps a little more focused on ourselves. The old ways of maintaining relationships slowly began to change. The idea of family itself started evolving.

The first major change was the joint family system. This system had many strengths. It was protective, reliable and secure. It gave children grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins to grow up with. It gave elders a place and a role within the family. Yet, like everything else, it also had its challenges.

The relationships between women in

the family, at times, became strained. Daily disagreements about household chores, children, responsibilities and earnings could create tensions. At the same time, the beautiful tradition of elders passing on family values to the younger generation was an important part of growing up. Elders shared lessons about life and youngsters often taught the elders something new in return.

Of course, this too had its drawbacks. At times, people felt hurt or let down by relatives. Some relationships made us feel wanted, while others perhaps made us feel neglected. Relationships are never perfect. They are made of people, and people themselves are not perfect.

Times have changed drastically. Materialism and the search for a comfortable life have certainly



influenced relationships. But perhaps it is not materialism alone. Education, mobility, careers, personal choices and changing aspirations have all transformed the way families live.

Parents and children! This perhaps remains one of the most precious relationships of all. Yet, over the years, the way this relationship is expressed has changed. Parents may sometimes feel that they have become a responsibility for their children, while children may feel the pressure of balancing their own lives with their responsibilities towards ageing parents.

India is changing rapidly. Joint families are increasingly making way for nuclear families. And these smaller families, with fewer members, sometimes find it difficult to provide the space and care needed by ageing parents. Hence, we see the



growing need for old-age homes and senior citizen care homes.

But does a single child growing up without siblings necessarily mean that he or she will not understand caring, sharing or loving? Perhaps not. Children learn relationships in many ways. They learn from parents, grandparents, friends, teachers and the people around them. A sibling teaches companionship and sometimes competition too. But life itself teaches us that caring and sharing can come from many relationships.

Not only is family life changing; friendships too are changing. Life is becoming faster and, at times, more mechanical. In our huge apartment buildings, neighbours may live only a few feet away and yet remain strangers to each other.

This enormous change in relationships is difficult to understand. But perhaps we should also remember that every generation creates relationships in its own way. People from our generation are still holding on to the fabric woven by our previous generations, while the coming generations are creating their own patterns.

Today, people may not always understand the need to invest in relationships and cherish them for a

long, long time. Relationships these days can sometimes be transient, short-lived or born out of immediate circumstances. But that does not mean that the desire for companionship has disappeared.

Talking of coming generations, it is difficult to predict what lies ahead. Our children may choose different ways of living. Many may not want to marry, while others may choose marriage but postpone starting a family. For them, these choices may seem perfectly natural.

Going by the trend, one sometimes wonders whether humans are slowly moving away from the traditional idea of family and towards a life of greater individual freedom.

But is that necessarily a bad thing? Perhaps what matters is not whether we live in a joint family or a nuclear family. What matters is whether we continue to care.

The younger generation may never understand exactly the relationships we grew up with, but they can discover something equally precious - the joy of being connected to another person, caring for someone, learning from someone, laughing together, sharing life's ups and downs and simply enjoying life with others.

Relationship is, after all, about companionship.

It is about being there.

It is about giving and receiving.

It is about knowing that somewhere, someone cares.

And perhaps, in this increasingly busy world, that is something we need more than ever.

Relationships may change their form, but the human need for connection will always remain.



Vanaprastha

Coming Home to Nature



Roopa Devadassan reflects on her return to a simpler life in the hills and on the quiet, evolving relationship with nature that emerges when one slows down and pays attention.

My parents built a cottage on the side of a hill in a village five kilometres from Kodaikanal, a town at an altitude of two thousand metres above sea level. Nested in the Palani Hills in south India, the house was built in stone, cut from this land, four decades ago, and today remains one of the few tiled roof structures in the village. My father was an artist from the Punjab, my mother a schoolteacher from Tamil Nadu; they left the bustle of Mumbai life to enter what they described as *vanaprastha*, literally 'retiring to the forest', the third stage of life in Hindu philosophy.

I establish this context, because my husband and I have come home to

this place after equally exacting and adventurous careers as doctors, in our sixties. And it feels like I have come home in more ways than one.

As far back as I can remember this house had a rhythm governed by the elements. The sun comes up over the hill, lighting the front room with its glass windows, big enough to accommodate my father's canvases and allowing natural light to filter in. The kitchen window, facing north, overlooks the banana trees and farm in front. My mother would point out to us, a red vented bulbul flying in to feed its young in a nest on the plum tree, as she cooked. The children would curl up in different parts of the house with a book, set out paints and explore, or be given a task in the

garden or orchard under supervision. Evenings the sun set over the hills across, and the lamp would be lit for evening prayers to be sung or chanted. It was never a rule, one just joined and allowed for the day to wash away and welcome the silence of the night.

I come now, with no agendas, no schedules, the gift of a roof over my head, food on the table and this incredible space to explore – within and without. And I begin to understand *vanaprastha*. Friends ask how I spend my time, and to the outsider it might appear to be a mundane life – after all what do you do on top of a hill? But with silence, old books, music and walks; and some contact with our farming neighbours; relationships with nature, people and the world open up every day.

Up at four am without an alarm, the predawn sky is dark, a starry sky predicts a clear day ahead, and the



practice of “*kharaj*” opens the lungs and brings the mind into a meditative space as I attempt to sing a single note in the lower octave. As the sky brightens to a grey, one hears the first birds' greetings and the occasional chirrup of a squirrel. A bit of *riyaaz* to compete with them, and then some yoga stretches set the tone for the day. And what delights the day may bring is the unknown gift! A walk down the winding road under an azure blue sky, just admiring the blooms along the way. Sometimes the scent of wild jasmine will bring you to a halt mid stride, or the bright orange of a palash petal on the road will nudge you to look for the tree. The shades of green along the hillside from the turquoise of the towering blue gum eucalyptus trees to the dark shade of the evergreen soothe the eyes in ways you did not realise you needed. I hear our neighbour's cow being chided by her

carer as she feeds and washes it down with water from a bucket laboriously lifted from an 'oothu', an underground spring. "Don't make my life difficult by wandering away" she says lovingly, as though speaking to a child "I am growing old"! It brings a smile to my lips, as I pass by.

The evening can bring grey clouds and as the temperature drops, the occasional drizzle falls, teasing the farmers who wait to plant their seeds.

Two little ones who come in the evening for 'lessons' are hard put to keep still as we deal with the arduous task of figuring out the symbols of letters and numbers! Dropping them to their nearby home, we see a wild gaur lazily chomping on pears, luckily, a distance away. I am struck



by the majesty of this massive creature, imposing even at a distance, and the three of us become naturally silent, as we just watch in the cold evening as the mist descends slowly down the hill.

And as I head home the lamp is lit and I rediscover the joy of chanting out loud. The age-old Vedic hymns that reiterate the All pervading One take on a new significance.

I am not the mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), ego (ahankāra), or storehouse of memory (citta) — neither the ears and tongue (śrotra-jihve), nor nose and eyes (ghrāṇa-netre). I am not ether (vyoma), nor earth (bhūmi), nor fire (tejas), nor air (vāyu)

I am of the nature of consciousness and bliss (cit-ānanda-rūpa). I am Shiva, I am Shiva.

The craziness of our modern globalised world, where we squabble over boundaries, fight over profits, defend ideologies and destroy our planet seems very far away! It has taken an about turn and a journey inwards to look for stability that is indestructible.

Maybe the ancients were on to something when they recommended *Vanaprastha*?

Bookshelf

Lose Your Anger, Become Blessed



How often do you lose your temper? How often does someone lose his or her temper at you? Anger is a disrespectful emotion...it is twice cursed...it belittles the one who gives and the one who gets. And yet it is perhaps the most common emotion. True it is to say that blessed are those who are slow to chide. Narayani Ganesh, one of our valued contributors and author and former editor of Times of India's Speaking Tree, says you can make yourself blessed too...just conquer that emotion and she tells you how to, in her new book titled **Anger**. With a

foreword by none other than His Holiness the Dalai lama, the book is a companion guide to a better life.

Sudhamahi Regunathan talks to Narayani Ganesh.

How did you think of writing on anger? Did you have many theories of your own that you were talking about at the book event where the editor Aleph was hearing you?

Narayani Ganesh: Over the years I observed that anger is a common emotion and it can erupt at the slightest provocation. It is most evident during long commutes with traffic jams. Drivers, passengers,

pedestrians, all became angry at traffic jams, at persons overtaking, at jaywalkers, and of two-wheeler drivers suddenly getting on the sidewalk meant for pedestrians, to cut through traffic. This has come to be called road rage. Abuses are hurled through rolled down windows, fists are shaken, and in extreme cases, there are physical fights and some people whip out guns and start shooting. This behaviour struck me as crude and completely avoidable.

Yes, at a book event in Delhi I was holding forth on anger with an editor from Aleph and declared I could fill a book with my thoughts on anger. And she said, “Why don't you?” And that is how the book started taking shape though in the beginning I had no idea it would lead me to discover so many aspects of anger. I remember saying, “Anger is the root cause of all violence including wars and killings.”

Most chapters of yours end with one possible suggestion on controlling anger...how did you choose the right suggestion from among the whole gamut of people you quote on the subject.?

Narayani Ganesh: Philosophers, life coaches, spiritual masters and gurus, psychologists and

psychiatrists have said a lot about the anger emotion. Of course, I haven't read them all, but I had a fairly good exposure, especially since I was editor of The Times of India's Speaking Tree column and Sunday newspaper that published articles not only on religion and spirituality but also on how to live a life of sustainability, peace and harmony.

I tried to make the book reader-friendly and anecdotal rather than preachy. That way, the messages are easier to accept and story-telling is always more interesting than a list of dos and don'ts. When you inspire someone to think for themselves and encourage them to find their own solution, that works far better than feeding them with a list of what they should or shouldn't do, as that is not an organic solution.

I find your linkages very interesting like playing games and anger, hunger and anger and so on. Which did you find most interesting? And which is the link we hardly think of as a possible source of anger?

Narayani Ganesh: A common cause of anger is when you are hungry, but few of us realise that and we end up losing our temper instead of sitting down and eating something. What I found both interesting and alarming was rage-

bait – the term the Oxford English dictionary chose as word of the year in 2025. It refers to posts on social media that provoke angry reactions to get traction and number of comments, as usually people are vocal when they are agitated. Also, there is the trend of video games that incite violence, and it is impressionable children who play these games and that is cause for concern.

You have quoted from all Indian religions as well as from scholars and thinkers of the West. Was that not an indomitable task? How did you organise your thoughts and the reference hunting?

Narayani Ganesh: I cannot say I did too much of reference hunting because over 25 years as editor of The Speaking Tree and in the course of interviewing and interacting with a range of philosophers and spiritual masters, I kind of knew what their thoughts were on anger. For the sake of accuracy, I may have referred to their discourses or books, but otherwise, I already was aware of the drift.

Has this exercise of writing this book helped you personally?

Narayani Ganesh: I guess it did, in the sense that it revealed a lot more aspects of the anger emotion than I was aware of before. Normally, I am not one to feel the anger emotion but

once in a while, I do, when something becomes unbearable. But that's human nature. What's important is to be aware of that anger and know how to steer it in ways that do not cause harm to self and others. It's not easy, because the outburst comes first, and regret later, but at least with practice, it may be possible to avoid ugly situations.

If there were three things you would advise to avoid anger, what are they?

Narayani Ganesh: First, never react to an insult, to an accusation, to a wrongdoing, to injustice, and so on, because reaction comes without thought whereas if you take a few minutes to think and then respond, the result may be more positive and helpful.

Second, Harsh words spoken in anger cannot be taken back, so it is better to fall silent or walk away when angry instead of hurling abuse and shouting cruel things you would never say if you were in control of your mind.

Third, all anger need not be avoided. When there is injustice, it is natural to feel anger, some call this righteous anger. If righteous anger is directed towards taking corrective action and garnering support from others for that, it is good, but after that, better not to keep carrying that anger with you, for that becomes a burden. You have to move on and leave that anger behind.

Swami Vivekananda

The Desire to Travel

S.Regunathan

Thus far: Vivekananda, institutionalized his master Sri Ramakrishna's legacy by setting up a Mutt while continuing his own spiritual quest. When he decided to head for the Himalayas, he faced many setbacks, but still his steps did not falter. Enroute, he met many interesting people. He even performed a miracle of curing a man. At Alwar he ate at a Maulvi's house telling him and the community thereby that the highest religion was humanity. Vivekananda explained the basics of worship in many ways...and there are times when we just know he pondered over a practice...but what did he think about it, we do not know. Read on to see:



As mentioned earlier, Swamiji had untiring wonder and curiosity that took him to visit new places and monuments. Among the many reasons that motivated him, the main one was that all of them aroused in him great pride in his country as he saw a reflection of her glory in them. When he saw the great monuments,

he heard their history spellbound and realized that the magnanimous people of India of yore had somehow become petty and jealous and spent a lot of their time fighting with each other. This was the reason why the nation was under slavery now.

In Junagad, he saw and marvelled at the old fortress and the great Buddhist monuments, particularly

the Ashoka stone. He spent a lot of his time in Junagad climbing the Girnar mountains which is sacred to the Buddhist, Jainas and the Hindus.

The Girnar range of mountains has ten main peaks and all the mountains have Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu temples. The highest peak is called the Gorakshanath peak where the sacred *dhuni* still burns. Swami Vivekananda wanted to climb that peak, but it was arduous and challenging.

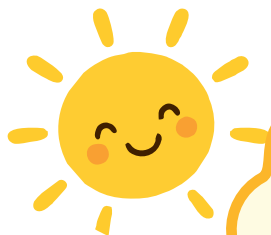
The diwan who understood that the journey could be full of perils, sent a man familiar with the terrain to follow Swamiji. Swamiji reached the peak and felt the great urge to meditate without any disturbance, in one of the caves. He did so and stayed a few days there before he returned to Junagad.

From Junagad Swamiji travelled to Somnath. There he prayed in the new temple built by Rani Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore. From here he went to Porbandhar where he prayed in the

ancient temple of Sudama. Sudama is believed to have lived in Sudamapuri which is in Porbandar.

All his travels made him extremely restless. Why? Because he could not reconcile the poverty and small mindedness of the people of the times with the grandeur and rich legacy that India belonged to.

He could not understand why people did not understand the lofty philosophy of Advaita and the glory of the nation. Somehow with this thought he recalled the words of his master Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. “You have a great mission to accomplish,” he had told Vivekananda. Swamiji was advised by many of his followers, diwans, princes and kings that India would never realize the greatness of Vedantic teaching and also Swamiji's greatness. He should visit the West and introduce advaita there. For the first time Swamiji too felt he should travel to the west



Children's Corner



A Village of Togetherness

Story: Devika Raghav



In the quiet village of Manbhedia, in eastern India, Monta lived with her family. The Rai family tended to their small paddy field with great care and derived their livelihood from it. The village was home to many different people – weavers, carpenters, fishermen, tailors, cab drivers and bus drivers. People followed different religions and had different jobs, but they lived together like one big family.

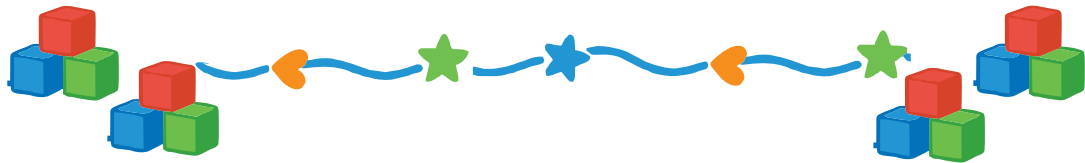
Amongst them, Rashim Chacha's residence was the oldest near the village handpump. You could spot him in his usual garb of a white and red checkered 'lungi'. Every day, he cycled slowly through the village

with a little wicker basket hanging from his bicycle handle. Chacha was a weaver, just like his father and grandfather before him. His eyes had grown weak with age, but he still loved sitting at his loom weaving beautiful cloth.

That day, the air felt damp and cold. Monta, sat herself down on the window ledge with a bowl of puffed rice with milk and a generous spoonful of jaggery. From there she could see almost the whole village.

Tall palm trees stood beside the village pond. During winter, their sweet palm juice was collected in terracotta pots. Some of it was made into jaggery cakes called Nolen-gur,





while some was used to make palm rock candy and delicious seasonal treats for special occasions.

By evening, the weather changed suddenly. Dark clouds gathered, lightning flashed and heavy rain poured over Manbhedia. The village became strangely quiet. Then, with a blinding flash, a huge clap of thunder shook the narrow lanes.

“Baba! The house is on fire!” Monta screamed.

Her father looked around in confusion. “Where, Monta? I can’t see anything!”

“Not our house, Baba! It’s Rashim Chacha’s!” she cried.

Everyone rushed towards Chacha’s house to douse the fire. Sadly, the fire had damaged his loom. The place where he kept his muslin cloth and several wooden frames had turned to ashes. Chacha stood quietly, looking heartbroken.

The rain slowly became a drizzle. Many villagers went home, but Monta and her family stayed behind with Pundit Moshai from the local temple.

At sunrise, Pundit Moshai gathered the elders in the temple compound. “We must help Rashid Chacha rebuild his loom,” he said.

Ramu, the cab driver, quickly offered, “I can help arrange the wooden frame.” The carpenter promised to repair it. The mason offered his help. Mr. Rai brought what materials he could, and Pundit Moshai promised to help every week.

Soon, everyone had a part to play. Week by week, the loom slowly came back to life.

It was not the first time that the residents had come together in unity. As long as one could remember, festivals were celebrated together, and when disagreements happened, the elders helped everyone make peace. Here, neighbours cared for one another. They knew that a village became strong when its people stood together. The real strength of Manbhedia was its people and the way they always stood together.





Leaving a Thought

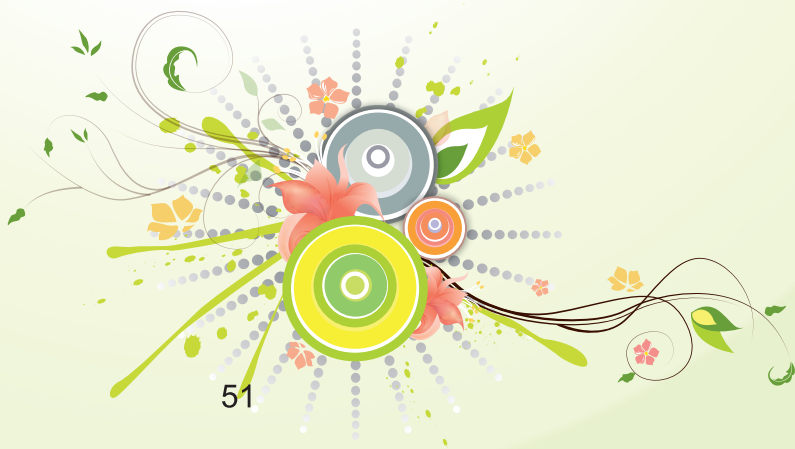
*A Constitution is written in words,
but lived in everyday moments.*

In how we listen.

In how we disagree.

*In how we respect another's freedom,
dignity and difference.*

*In the end, the health of a democracy
begins with the quality of our
relationships.*

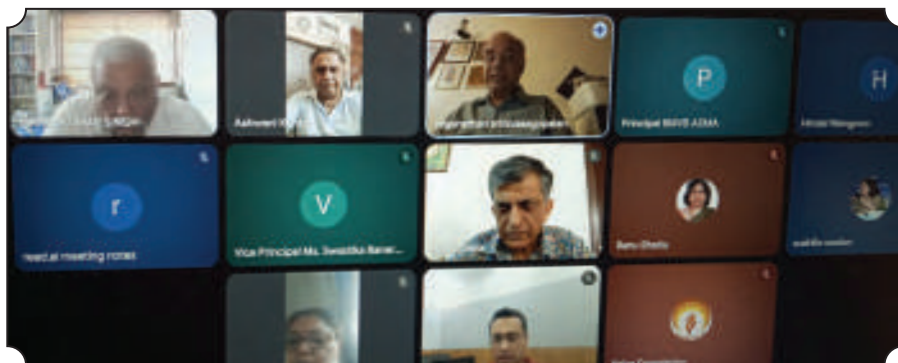


FRNV NEWS AND EVENTS

Delhi Regional Chapters Review Meeting

President/FRNV reviewed the activities of FRNV Delhi Regional Chapters in the meetings held on 22nd and 29th August 2026. It was decided that:-

- (i) Delhi Regional Chapter needs restructuring – especially for schools bifurcating in different Zones
- (ii) Periodic regular interactions within Members of FRNV Delhi Regional Chapters
- (iii) Schools Zones may have Coordinators with 10-20 schools in each Zone
- (iv) Values to be followed in schools to be identified and communicated in advance (for the whole academic calendar – about 10 months – excluding vacation/holidays)
- (v) WhatsApp Group of Delhi Chapter could be used for finalizing the values to be identified. Activities of FRNV to be highlighted and circulated to schools – including values based education curriculum.
- (vi) Social media posts circulation of best values followed by students/schools to be identified
- (vii) Rewarding best schools/students during an annual event to be explored
- (viii) President/FRNV requested Principals – Ramjas International School and Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan – to explore feasibility of addressing Delhi NCR Principals – in consultation with other Principals.



18th Annual General Meeting of FRNV

The 18th AGM of FRNV held on HYBRID Mode (Physical & Google Meet) on Saturday, the 5th September 2026 at 4.00 PM at FRNV Registered Office: Conference Hall, o/o CPM-5, DMRC, Airport Express Metro Station, Dhaula Kuan, New Delhi 110021:

Agenda for the Meeting were:-

1. To receive and adopt the Secretary's report
2. To receive, consider and adopt the Audited Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year 2025-2026
3. To confirm the continuation of the Auditors, M/s Alok Mittal and Associates for the Financial Year 2026-2027
4. To approve resolutions passed by the FRNV Governing Body
5. Any other matter with the permission of the Chair



(L-R Shri Ashwani Kumar, Shri S Regunathan, Shri Prem Arora, Shri Mahalingam Balasubramaniam and Adv. Shri Rama Nath Jha)

Members approved and adopted the annual accounts for the 2025-2026 and approved other listed agenda items. Members also extended the tenure of following Governing Body members for 5 years from 26th December 2026 to 25th December 2031:-

- (i) Shri S Regunathan, President
- (ii) Shri Shiv Murari Sahai, Vice President
- (iii) Shri Prem Arora, Treasurer
- (iv) Shri Ashwani Kumar, General Secretary
- (v) Dr. N Subramanian, Joint Secretary
- (vi) Dr. Devika Menon, Member
- (vii) Adv. Rama Nath Jha, Member
- ü Suggestions were invited from Members for more activities and bringing FRNV to the front in restoring national values – strengthening the organization is of paramount importance. Financial support is also crucial for the organization. All were requested to share their inputs through email frnvindia@gmail.com.
- ü FRNV activities need to be more Youth focused and in line with current needs of the country. Towards this, the collective efforts of all Life Members and Corporate Members of FRNV are required.
- ü Social Media Outreach for educating public and mobilizing support for the above activity.
- ü Getting the support of Hon'ble Member of Parliaments for de-criminalization of politics
- ü Values Based Education workshop also at Regional Chapters
- ü Strengthening Regional Chapters
- a) Motivate existing members to be more pro-active on Restoring National Value
- b) Enroll new members
- c) Organize seminars/workshops (both offline/online) on important national days – inculcating Living values amongst the next generation

FRNV Delhi Chapter is being strengthened with different zone-wise schools for various activities on values-based education. The prototype will be replicated in other FRNV Regional Chapters.

LIFE MEMBERS JOINED SINCE 05.05.2026

Name	Membership No.	From
• Adv. P N Mohanan	FRNV/LM/115	31.07.2026
• Smt. Asha Rani Khurana	FRNV/LM/116	31.07.2026



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