

This is a quarterly newsletter that provides updates on SMSF activities. In the words of Pujya Chariji, "This publication will essentially focus on the spiritual needs of human beings, how they are being or trying to be fulfilled by the Sahaj Marg philosophy and practice ..."

For archives of newsletters, visit <http://www.sahajmarg.org/newsletter/smsf-newsletters>.

## Featured in this issue

**CREST:** Activities of CREST, Bangalore and CREST, Berlin are covered.

**Retreat Center:** Reports on activities at Retreat Centers at Pune and Kharapur, as well as SPURS Retreat, USA are featured.

**Health:** Medical centre activities at Chennai are covered.



(above) Respected Kamlesh bhai at the International Youth Seminar held in Hyderabad

## Programmes at CREST, Bangalore

During this quarter, eight events were conducted at CREST, Bangalore and CREST scholars and team participated in some events held at other places.

### International Conference at IIM Bangalore 4 January 2016

Scholars from CREST presented the following papers at IIM Bangalore at the International Conference on 'Indigenous Models of Sustainability, Good Governance and Spiritual Transformation':

1. 'Insights for Corporate Leaders from a Spiritual Master' by Gopalan Oppiliappan
2. 'An Inner Source for Leadership Decision Making: A Yogic Perspective' by Swami Viswanathan
3. 'Mastering Change: Meditation as an effective tool' By Parthasarathi Patel

Gopalan Oppiliappan got the best Doctoral paper award and Swami Viswanathan received the Nancy Raina best research paper award.

### Pre-registration Colloquium 9 January 2016

Ten scholars from CREST presented their thesis topics for a duration of fifteen minutes to the panel consisting of the Director of CREST, respective guide, external examiner (Dr Rajeshwari Hegde from BMS College) and University representative (Dr Chandrashekar Hurugal from University of Mysore). Following each presentation, the panel conducted *viva voce* and gave suggestions.

### Visit of Dignitaries 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Fr Dr Chandran Kunnel from Philosophy Dept. Christ University, Ann-Ida-Fenn from Sweden and Maria Pecker visited CREST on 10<sup>th</sup> January.

On 13<sup>th</sup> January, Prof. Peter Tyler from St Mary's University, London (UK), Fr. Jose Nandhikkara from Dharmaram College and Fr Anil Thalakkattur from Vidya Vanam Ashram, Bangalore visited CREST.



(above) Visit by dignitaries to CREST Bangalore

(left) Participants of the Pre-registration colloquium

The CREST Director explained the functioning of CREST and training details. The dignitaries took a tour of campus, spent some time in the library and watched a movie about CREST.

### **Student Society Volunteers Training**

**14 January 2016**

CREST adopted BMS college as part of the adoption program known as SWAYAM (Strength Will Ability Youth Aim Mastery). The objectives of this programme are:

- To go beyond the short term goals of life
- To develop self-confidence, belief in self, courage and self-esteem.
- Strengthen the human values and sustain them
- Self-introspection because we cannot rise higher than our thought of ourselves

Nineteen students and two staff members were present. Dr Rajeshwari Hegde coordinated the program. Students were engaged for the full day to explore the possibilities of learning and imparting training activities.



(above) Participants of the event on the topic 'Time and Space, Here and Now' conducted during 24 – 28 February 2016

### **Library Programme I (Read, Review and Research)**

**29 – 31 January 2016**

In this programme, delegates were divided into two groups. The first group was named 'Love' and assigned the topic 'Follow Sahaj Marg in a natural way – Sahaj Marg is simple but not easy'. The second group was named 'Devotion' and the topic given was 'Recognise and acknowledge His help and support for Material and Spiritual evolution'. The participants explored the library as per the topics given to them. They also discussed in their groups about their own experience and understanding of the topic. They were asked to meditate and introspect on these areas. They also compiled the topics into real life situations and staged it into a skit. Towards the end of the programme the delegates prepared an article on the two topics.





(above) Participants of the Faculty development programme

### **Scholars with Respected Kamlesh Bhai** **6-7 February 2016**

Scholars from CREST Bangalore met Master at the Thumkunta Ashram near Hyderabad. Master assigned a research project on the topic 'Beliefs, dogmas, rituals and symbols from Indian cultural heritage.' He asked the scholars to find the scientific reasons related to each of the rituals and get authentic references from either holy books or old literature.

### **Time and Space, Here and Now** **24 – 28 February 2016**

Following topics were held during this programme:

- 'Characteristics of time – Philosophy of Time' by Br Kiran Ratnala and Br Dr Siddeshwaran
- 'Reality Only Here and Now' by Sis. Lalitha Dhareshwar
- 'Expansion and Contraction of Time' by Br Parthasarathy Patel and Br Gopalan Oppiliappan
- 'Time in the context of individual and collective consciousness' by Br Prabhakar Ravoori



(above) Participants of the event 'Practical Orientation of Youth Seminar'

During this programme the delegates discussed the topics and on the last day each group presented their viewpoints on the discussions.

### **Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagavad Gita in Global Era - National Seminar** **23 – 27 March 2016**

This seminar was organised by Gandhi Bhavan, University of Mysore in collaboration with Maharaja Sanskrit College, Mysore. Br Mohandas Hegde spoke on the topic 'Influence of Bhagavad Gita on Gandhiji.' 150 persons participated in the seminar.

### **Faculty Development Programme** **23 – 27 March 2016**

Twenty-six delegates attended this programme with four facilitators. The delegates were divided into three groups namely *Grace*, *Guru* and *Reality*. Br Manish Agarwal presented a topic – 'Essentials of an Effective Faculty'. Br Ramakrishna presented a talk on engaging participant activity. Br Somakumar gave inputs for faculty development based on Chariji Maharaj's talks. The delegates gave presentations on their topics and facilitators gave suggestions for further improvements.

### **Seminar – 23<sup>rd</sup> National Congress of Spiritual Scientists** **26 – 27 March 2016**

This seminar was conducted by Rotary Club and Vijay Foundation at Mysore under the spiritual leadership of Brahmarshi Patriji. More than two hundred participants and twelve speakers attended. Br Mohandas Hegde spoke on the topic 'Spirituality Management'.



(left) Participants of the Library programme held from 29 to 31 January 2016 in CREST Bangalore

## *Activities at CREST, Berlin*

### **Unity, Transmission and Consciousness**

The 11<sup>th</sup> session at CREST, Berlin was conducted from 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March. Preparations for the seminar started with remote satsanghs everyday for seven days before the session. This created a subtle bond among the participants.

There were three sessions on 'Unity', one on 'Transmission' and three on 'Consciousness'. Three questions were placed before the participants. What is Unity? How is it created? What is Harmony? The idea was to answer these questions in groups and come up with what they felt. A highlight of this discussion emerged with this concept — "He (Babuji) used to dream of one humanity....In the spiritual realm, there is work going on to make humanity into one solid, living system. Our work in Sahaj Marg should be to crystallize that effort, and make the physical human life as one system." (Chariji, Paris 2003).

On the second day after satsangh it was unity in action. A simple task was given to work in groups of five or six and produce a paper chair in 30 minutes. Raw materials provided were sheets of paper, scissors and scotch tape. It was fun and each group was ingenious coming up with five different chairs. It was a practical exercise that showed how to work with people we didn't know, trust them and to let go of individual prejudices to produce a working solution. This was a process of taking the spiritual brotherhood into the material realm. Somebody put it succinctly, "I thought this task was impossible, but the impossible was shown to become possible with inspiration, acceptance, unity and joy amongst us!" The afternoon session started with what 'Yoga' meant. We had a session to understand what unity meant, one session to put this into practice and finally nothing reinforces something like a good story and shared life experience.

The third day began with a session on 'Transmission'. It was explored through the only means possible: meditation, turning inwards by going through our daily practice and getting an awareness of how to do our part when preparing our heart to receive transmission. The session was to test ourselves. Do we feel the effect of transmission during our different techniques of sadhana: meditation, cleaning, universal prayer and bedtime prayer? The guided sessions were deep. The most important question was: How do we utilize transmission? And how it's time to think of us instead of me and use all the wonderful prayerful suggestions we are given to help others on their path.

Many videos were played in the afternoon session on 'Consciousness'. One video had this quote, "Like a flute, creating a vacuum inside us, we vibrate from the source." - Rumi. The learning from this session was that the present time in the world is special! We play an important role so we need to be committed with the purpose and strive seriously in expanding our consciousness. How is this to be done? By using the same elements and





(above) Participants in the seminar held at CREST, Berlin during the last quarter

forces in us that bring the consciousness down, i.e. the Subtle Bodies.

The morning session on the final day started with satsangh followed by a wonderful explanation of *Namaste*. Subtle bodies were explained. There were two exercises one to feel our subtle bodies and the effects of *sankalpa* on subtle bodies. We learned to use sankalpa and became aware of the stages this subtle suggestion goes through: Thinking, feeling, being, becoming and unbecoming (letting go).

The final session touched upon a few key aspects of what happens when consciousness expands, when thinking becomes feeling. The sister facilitating explained it simply, "The doorway to reality is in the heart and the heart having its own intelligence." She also gave a checklist.

Change	Tools
Regulation of the mind	Meditation
Inner connection	Constant Remembrance
Intellect to Wisdom	Prayer
Ego to Humility	Maxims
Thinking to Awareness	Feeling

In the beginning of this year we were able to establish fixed arrangements at CREST, Berlin for Heartfulness workshops, where we invite locals to experience meditation. For the employees of the surrounding offices we offer a meditative lunch break every Thursday. Through the relaxation and meditation with and without transmission the break becomes particularly restorative.

Furthermore we offer a Heartfulness programs every second Saturday. Giving the program a variety we are replenishing it with workshops about theatre, dancing and inviting guests for a lecture which is followed by meditation. In March the author Gabi Rimmele gave a lecture and showed practical exercises about how letting go leads to simplicity. We also offer concerts followed by meditation.

Source: Br. Christian Macketanz

## Activities at Pune Retreat Centre

During January to March 2016, 72 abhyasis stayed at the Pune retreat centre and spent 377 person days in all.

Pune Retreat Centre is now selectively opened to strengthen Heartfulness awareness among corporate and colleges. Students of Bhalachandra Pharmacy Institute visited the retreat centre. During this time, Br John and sister Betty Barlow from USA visited the retreat and spoke to the students.

(right) Sunset as seen from the Pune retreat center



## Activities at SPURS

SPURS has been renamed to 'Heartfulness Ranch Retreat Center'. It hosted six abhyasis for the quarter ending March 2016. Over this period the septic system pump was replaced and the dam reinforcement project was completed. The garden was planted and sprinklers for watering installed. On Easter after satsangh and the Easter egg hunt the kids also planted seeds to grow flowers and beans. Solar lighting was installed around the fence and signs were put up to label the meditation hall, restroom, etc. to make the place more welcoming for Heartfulness Workshop attendees and the general public.

A sample of some of the feedback expressed by retreat participants is below:

- *The last two meditations in the sanctuary were the most exquisite in my life – very beautiful. I asked how to carry this condition home with me and I heard - in all things have faith in the light.*
- *I can practice much better here. It was such a relief to be quiet enough to follow my intuition.*
- *I gained more discipline.*
- *In my meditations I felt I was going all the way to India, to Master and beyond.*
- *This is a real treasure. It allows you to get really relaxed. It's a very comfortable place. I hope everyone could come and experience this.*
- *There were no diversions, so only Master to talk to. The guidance was sometimes loud and clear.*



(above) A view of the Heartfulness Ranch Retreat Centre

Source: Sister Suzanne Garner

Abhyasis who wish to spend a few days in this very special place may find more information about the facilities and the retreat program at: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/spurs-texas-usa>. Abhyasis who wish to retreat at SPURS may now apply online at the address given above.

### Applying for Retreats

Abhyasis who wish to apply for retreats either at the **Malampuzha, Pune** or **Kharagpur** centres may find more information about these facilities and the retreat program at: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/smww/retreat-center-overview>. Abhyasis who wish to enroll for retreat programs may now apply online at the address given above.

## Activities at Kharagpur Retreat Centre



During the last quarter, twenty abhyasis visited Kharagpur retreat centre and spent 208 nights in all. Besides the normal retreat activities, the premises were the venue for the bhandara celebrations in connection with Lalaji Maharaj's birthday for the abhyasis of Kharagpur centre.

Source: Brother U.P. Dhawan

(left) Abhyasis engaged in an activity during their stay at Kharagpur retreat centre

## Medical Centre News

### Services of Free Medical Centre at Manapakkam during the period from January 2016 to March 2016

The FMC served 9,706 patients during this quarter. Details of the activities in this period are given below.

Specialty wise	Patients	Panel of Doctors	
Allopathy	9706	Dr S. Kishore, Dr G. Jaya Prasanthi, Dr Anjana U, Dr R. Sulochana, Dr Geetha Naren	
Categories	Patients	Categories	Patients
Male	3,323	Abhyasis	2,531
Female	5,034	Others	7,195
Children	1,349	Total	9,706
Other details	Patients		
In patients	136		
Pharmacist	Receptionist	Nurses	Others
A. Krishnakumar	R. Abinaya	K. Suganya P. S. Sonia K. Radhika B. Sathya M. Thenmozhi	K.Jaya (Housekeeping) N. Jamuna (Volunteer)

Source: Br. Dr Ravindran Ulaganathan

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