

# TRANSFORMING LIVES



## Focus - Free Education

### Celebrating the Power of Education

Education is civilisation's greatest leveler. It has the power to empower the weakest of the weak, bring peace to the world and alleviate poverty. It is often seen as the only lit path in the pursuit of happiness. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, a globally revered spiritual leader and humanitarian, emphasises the transformative potential of education, especially for children.

In 1999, alongside a dedicated team of Art of Living volunteers, Gurudev undertook the challenging task of establishing free schools in remote tribal villages of Jharkhand. What began with a single school and 12 students in Ghatshila blossomed into an extensive network of 1,262 free schools spanning 2,032 villages across 22 states in India. Today, these free schools provide quality education from kindergarten to high school for over 1,00,000 children.

### The mission: To deliver world-class education and foster strong values

The Art of Living Free Tribal Schools weave Vedic principles and Indian culture into their fabric, creating centres where academic excellence and personal growth flourish harmoniously. Students from marginalised communities are given opportunities they would not have otherwise received - they are strengthened both mentally and physically through a rich curriculum that includes yoga and innovative learning methods. Life skills are taught alongside academics, instilling a positive outlook and a lifelong thirst for knowledge.



*An integral aspect of education is cultivating the right attitude. Proper attitude at the right time and place determines your actions and behaviour.*

- Gurudev

## Changing Mindsets

Despite the zero cost, many parents initially hesitated to enrol their children, fearing the loss of an income source. Today, these students are breaking barriers, setting new records, and bringing pride to their communities by excelling in diverse fields. Whether they're winning archery medals, dominating the football field, or showcasing their technical skills in robotics, these students are thriving. The schools provide comprehensive development opportunities, including access to libraries, sports training, and various crafts; equipping students with skills for sustainable livelihoods.



All the students come from low-income families, 48 per cent of which are girls. With a minimal dropout rate and over hundreds of new admissions annually, the schools are nurturing a bright future for their communities.



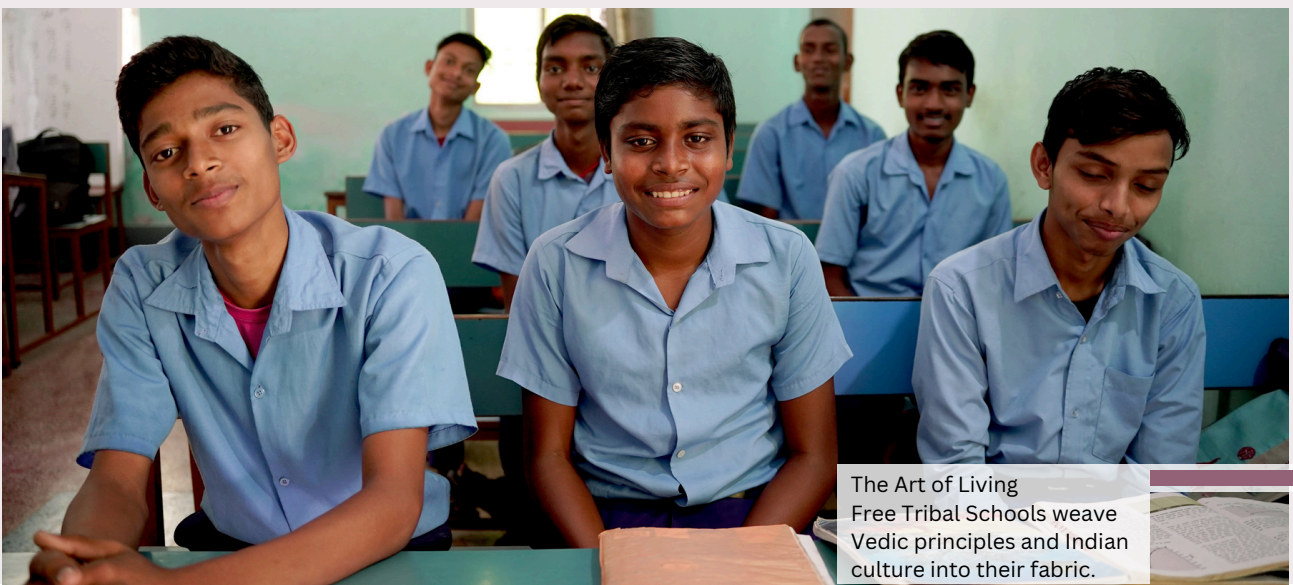
I'm Anil Kumar Murmu, an 8th-grade student at The Art Of Living Free Tribal School in HendaJuri, Jharkhand. I enjoy learning here. Besides academics, we engage in computer skills, robot programming, drawing, football, and archery. My parents, who are farmers, are proud of my education here. I aspire to join the Indian Armed Forces.

*A Student's Perspective*

## Empowering the Next Generation

"I recently took my board exams and got 84 marks," says Sunanda. Wearing a blue skirt and checked shirt, her confidence and clear communication might make one think she's from a different kind of school. But Sunanda is one of the 3,200 first-generation rural children who benefitted from free education through The Art of Living's tribal welfare projects in Jharkhand.

Sima Gope, an alumna of The Art of Living Free Tribal School in Ghatshila, Jharkhand and currently serving with the BSF, is a symbol of the success of The Art of Living's initiatives, inspiring countless young people. Her journey proves that students from these schools can, with determination, achieve their aspirations.





## Teachers Making a Difference

"I'm **Sudhanshu Sahoo**, and I have been teaching in Hendaljuri since 2018. The nurturing environment here encourages every child's progress, which I sincerely appreciate. It's remarkable that children can access a school that inspires excellence in such a remote area. I am fortunate to teach here, and I thank Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar for this opportunity."

"I'm **Babita Pathar** from The Art of Living Free Tribal School in Ghatshila, Jharkhand, 2013 batch. I teach at Kesarpur School, a branch of the same institution under The Art of Living. I thank our dedicated teachers for their hard work in providing quality education."



## Facilities and Support

Students benefit from a range of free provisions such as midday meals, medical camps, well-equipped libraries, bicycles, school buses, books, computer labs, sports equipment, and stationery. The curriculum includes exploring robot programming, artistic expression through painting, precision in archery, cultivating green thumbs, discovering natural farming practices and more.



## Collaboration

The Art of Living; Housing Finance Ltd. and the Pahel Foundation have formed a partnership to improve educational facilities and sustainable development in free tribal schools in East Singhbhum District, Jharkhand. As a result, three schools now have fully equipped computer labs. Additionally, two schools have benefitted from installing solar photovoltaic systems, ensuring a clean and renewable energy source. Transportation support is provided to students living in remote tribal settlements, enhancing their access to education.



## Shining Scholars

**Manu Singh**, a standout student from The Art of Living Free Tribal School in Khunti, secured the 4th position in the recent district exams with an impressive 92.4 per cent in Class X. Manu is a first-generation learner - his parents never attended school.

Seven outstanding Class VII students from The Art of Living Free Tribal School in Hendaljuri, Jharkhand, have been honoured with scholarships through the prestigious JRD Jyoti Fellowship for the second consecutive year.



## The Winning Streak

- The Art of Living Free Tribal School in Hendaljuri excelled at the State Archery Championship in Hazaribagh on September 29th, 2023.
- At the HCL-ICC Inter-Camp Archery Tournament in Ghatsila on March 12, 2024:
  - Meghrai Soren clinched the gold.
  - Shraddha Namata secured the silver.
  - Alomani Mahato earned two silver medals.
- The Hendaljuri football team secured the second runners-up trophy at the JRD Foundation tournament at Tin Plate on March 18, 2024, competing against nineteen teams.
- Hendaljuri secured the runner-up position in the Tata Kolhan Super League Football Tournament, held at FTC Baraghat (Mosabani) and organised by the Tata Steel Foundation.
- 7th grade Hendaljuri students won a bronze medal in JRD Tata Foundation's Inter-School Archery Competition, showcasing their remarkable achievement.



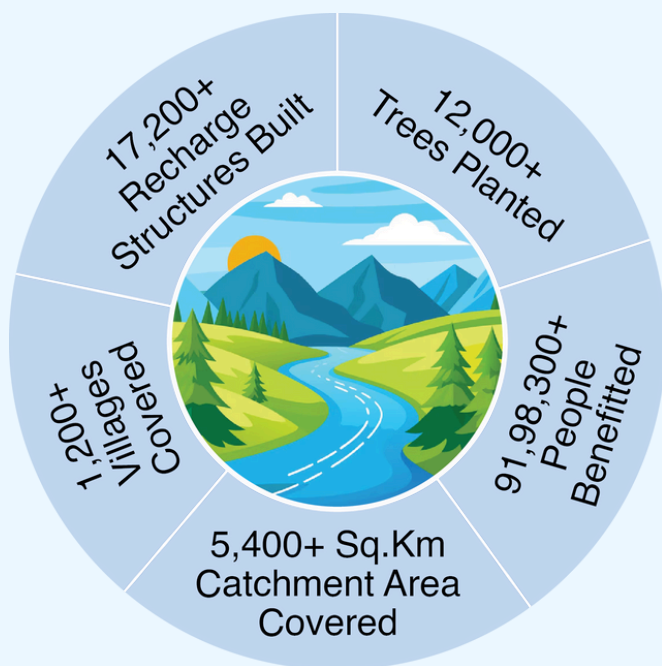
The Art of Living's dedication to education is creating a world of happiness and opportunity.

The long-term goal of tribal education is to uplift marginalised communities by providing education and empowerment. Teachers work diligently with students, encouraging their interests and aspirations. Through The Art of Living Free Tribal Schools, thousands of first-generation learners are receiving the education and support they need to succeed. Of great significance is the fact that while acquiring modern knowledge and science, ancient traditions are also preserved.



## Vedavathi river

Vedavathi river, a tributary to Krishna river, which originates in the Western Ghats near the Trilangeshwar temple in the Hoskote Village of Lakya Hobli, had run dry since two decades. The major causes for drying rivers were deforestation, eucalyptus plantations, soil erosion and siltation. To revive the complete ecosystem, different recharge structures were constructed along with exclusive afforestation.



## A Nutrition/Vedic Garden Model

We have created a nutrition garden model to aid farmers in growing vegetables. In just 750 square feet, this model can produce over 65 types of vegetables, addressing farmers' challenges in vegetable cultivation.

The model also promotes chemical free farming, reducing health risks associated with market bought vegetables containing harmful chemicals. Women can earn Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 5,000 monthly by managing these gardens - effectively covering household expenses.

We're implementing this model in schools to educate students and empower them to assist their families. It is cost-effective, built with locally sourced materials on a zero budget, and easily replicable through instructional videos.

With designated routes for planting and harvesting, this model ensures consistent vegetable supply throughout the week. By cultivating 35 types of vegetables, families can meet their nutritional needs and even generate additional income from surplus produce.



The model also promotes chemical free farming, reducing health risks associated with market bought vegetables containing harmful chemicals.



## Lakshmi Taru is Versatile and Resilient

Over 4,00,000 tree-born oil seeds, including Lakshmi Taru (*Simarouba glauca*), Mahua (*Madhuca latifolia*), and Karanj (*Pongamia pinnata*) have been planted across Maharashtra.

In the village of Shindewadi in Pune district alone, more than 15,000 Lakshmi Taru trees have been planted. Additionally, a natural farming group has been established in Shindewadi Taluka, Haveli district of Pune, covering an expansive area of 100 hectares.

Suitable for cultivation in barren lands, Lakshmi Taru offers utility in every part, including pulp, shell, seeds, leaves, twigs, stem, and roots. It serves as a valuable raw material source for industries involved in the production of both edible and non-edible oils, pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, furniture, cosmetics, and candles.

Remaining evergreen throughout the year, it is exceptionally water efficient. Remarkably resilient, this plant demonstrates no susceptibility to diseases. The seeds boast a high oil yield of 65% to 70%, and the plant's lifespan extends up to 70 years. Beyond its economic benefits, this plant contributes to environmental protection, supports health initiatives (it also boasts anti cancer properties), sustains food income, and creates employment opportunities.

Over 2,00,000+ Lakshmi Taru trees planted.



## Himalay Unnati Mission (HUM) Drives Change

**4,72,700+**

Citizens impacted by capacity building and behavioural programmes

**45,000+**

Individuals helped via disaster relief programmes

**1,95,000+**

Beneficiaries of solar electrification

**660+**

Villages impacted

**70+**

Knowledge partners collaborated in capacity-building programmes, enhancing collective expertise and impact



## Income Generation Initiatives in Jharkhand

**Kitchen Gardens:** Successfully established 12,317 kitchen gardens, cultivating a variety of crops including bitter gourd, cucumber, gourd, chili, papaya, beans, pumpkin, brinjal, tomato, and ladyfinger.

**Extensive Training:** Empowered 11,032 individuals through comprehensive training in kitchen gardening, fostering self-sufficiency and sustainable practices.

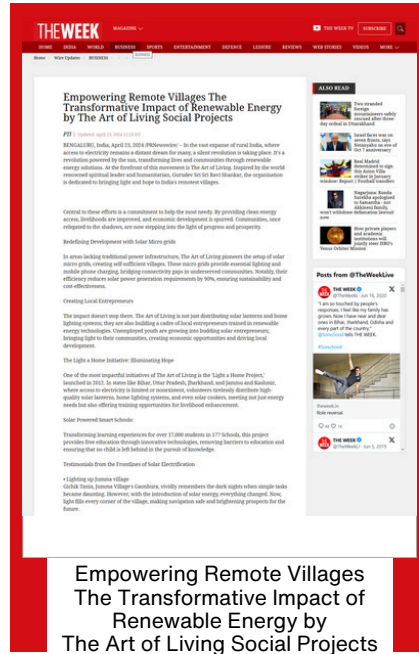
**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Programs:** Trained 688 individuals as RPL Yoga Trainers and 548 as RPL Street Food Vendors, providing diverse skill sets for income generation.

**Women's Skill Development:** Women were trained in the craft of making pattal donas (leaf plates) and mushroom farming, processing oil, broom making, equipping them with valuable skills for economic independence.





**Bijoor Mahotsav: Celebrating a Ramsar Site & The Art of Living's Remarkable Role in Community-led Conservation**



**Empowering Remote Villages The Transformative Impact of Renewable Energy by The Art of Living Social Projects**



**The Art of Living Wins Award at 5th National Water Awards (NWA) 2023**

The Art of Living wins an award in the Best Civil Society Category at the 5th National Water Awards (NWA), 2023 announced by The Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation (DoWR, RD & GR), under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Through the years, The Art of Living has been recognised for its impactful water conservation work, winning awards for initiatives like groundwater recharge, rainwater harvesting, and community-driven projects across India. These efforts promote sustainable water management and are aimed at making India Water +ve.



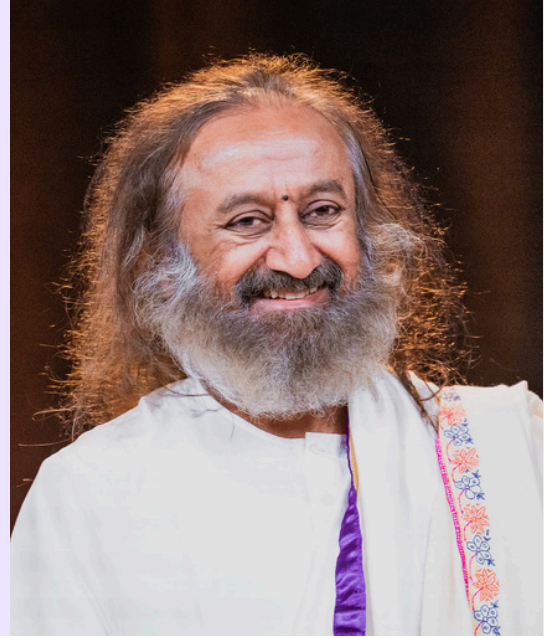
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## Dharma Sthambha Yojana

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



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



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

**SCAN TO DONATE**



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