



VANAMITRA

NAGARVASI GRAMAVASI VANAVASI - HUM SAB BHARATHAVASI

India's largest tribal welfare organisation fosters Hindu unity



India has a tribal population of more than 120 million spread over around 30 states and union territories. With the advent of the Britishers, the Christian missionaries started converting them into Christianity. Ever since then there has been a constant battle of narratives. The Britishers carefully created a bogey that tribals are not part of the Sanatan Dharma. Post-independence, a substantial section of intelligentsia continued to follow the British school of thought. This led to rapid proselytisation of tribals especially in the north-eastern region.

The change in demographic profile subsequently resulted in the emergence of separatist movements in north-eastern India.

Overview of India's Tribal Population

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was deeply concerned about it since its inception in 1925. Finally, in 1952, one of its volunteers Ramakant Keshav Deshpande (also known as Balasaheb Deshpande) set up Akhil Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to

counter the 'conversion movement' that had been running in tribal areas for more than 200 years.

Today it has become the largest tribal welfare organisation in the country. It runs more than 20,000 projects for tribals. The VKA volunteers have reached more than 50,000 tribal villages across the country. Kalyan Ashram volunteers work with all the major tribes in the country. It has more than 1300 full-time workers out of which more than three fourth are tribals.

After every three-years the VKA organises a national conference of its key workers and functionaries to decide the future course of action. This year it was held at Samalkha in Haryana from 20 to 22 September. The importance of the event can be gauged by the fact that the RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat himself attended the event and interacted with the delegates. He told them keeping in mind the situation at the ground level, they should expedite the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram's work across the nation. In a motivational address he also told the delegates not to be deterred by the challenges as every challenge comes with a solution.

Growth and Impact of the Kalyan Ashram

A look at the deliberations of this conference gives enough indications of the way things are going to pan out in the tribal areas of India as Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram seems to be all buckled up to push back the Christian missionaries, Naxals, Leftists, local vested interests and the biased think tanks and intelligentsia from the western world who are trying to separate tribals from Sanatan Dharma. In fact, in this triennial conference at Samalkha, the VKA organised an exhibition of worshipping rituals of 80 tribes showcasing how they are integral part of Sanatan Dharma. The Sarsanghchalak also visited and interacted with several tribal leaders and workers who were performing the 'puja' according to their rituals.

Interestingly, the national president of the Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (ABVKA)

Satyendra Singh called upon the tribal community across the country to set up its own narrative that Aranya Sanskriti (forest culture) is the core culture of the community. He also cautioned the community against the divisive forces, which were trying to create divide.

The ABVKA president, who himself is a tribal, also said categorically that the tribal society is not only a part but it is a strong pillar of the Sanatani society. He said, "All of us have our roots in the forests. The Vanvasi society has also played an important role in creating the ancient Vedas. The festivals and worship methods of all the tribal societies are similar to the Sanatani tradition, the meaning of which is the same."

Singh reminded that the conspiracy to separate tribals from Hindu society is the gift of the Britishers who distorted history. They created a false body of knowledge to establish this fault line.

Several other tribal leaders also spoke on various issues highlighting the priorities and concerns of the RSS and the VKA. Dr. Rajkishore Hansda from Santhal Paragana region spoke on the rising menace of "Love Jihad" and "Land Jihad" in the tribal region. Dr. Thumbai Zeliang from Nagaland touched upon the issue of tribals who had converted to Christian religion, and were returning to their original faith. Ramnath Kashyap from Chhattisgarh narrated the effect of Maoism in the Bastar region where he said the fundamental rights of the tribal community were being compromised.

Kalyan Ashram in Cities

Interestingly the VKA not only works in the tribal areas but it is also quite active in several cities across the country. Pramod Pethkar, Prachar Pramukh (publicity in-charge) of VKA told this author, "Kalyan Ashram's units are working in more than 400 cities of the country. The focus in the cities is to mobilise the necessary resources, collecting funds, etc. All of these are being carried out through the voluntary activities of karyakartas (volunteers)."

Awari Guruji

The personality of Shri Gangaram Janu Awari (Awari Guruji), who took a vow of service and travelled from village to village for 61 years, if not one or two, awakening the identity of the tribal society, was multi-faceted. There was nothing else in Awari Guruji's life except concern for the interests of his tribal society. Awakening the identity of the tribals was his only goal.

Awari Guruji was born on 5 July, 1919 in Peth village of Maharashtra. He was 17 years old when he passed the school board examination and started his professional life as a teacher.

In 1942, a severe famine struck Peth tehsil. Inspired by Pujya Thakkar Bapa, Guruji accepted the responsibility of famine relief work and devoted himself to this sacred work. He even left his job for this work of social service. He started social work through Dang Seva Mandal, a voluntary organization working in Dang district. From 1942 to 1947, this was the last phase of attaining independence, at that time he led the freedom movement. He made a lot of efforts to ensure that the Malegaon constituency should remain a reserved constituency for the tribes. He retired from politics in 1950 and took a pledge to do social work. When the employees of Dharampur Sansthan and the moneylenders did injustice to the tribal society, he was always at the forefront of that struggle. While working, he took special care that there should be no discord between the tribal and non-tribal society. This is a sign of his big heart. The traditions and customs of the tribal society are excellent. There is a cultured life in every home. He had his own thinking about this. He did a deep study of the tribal tradition, folk songs, worship system, its similarity with the entire society, and forest medicines. He also made a dictionary of 5000 words of rural dialects. Once Guruji fell ill, a village doctor's medicine helped. Since then, his faith in herbal medicine increased. He had a student - Rama Raoji Avate. At a very



Awari Guruji

Whose memory is an inspiration
(Born: 5 July, 1919, Died: 8 July, 2003)

young age, he had a very good knowledge of herbal medicine. Guruji made him his Guru for herbal medicine. Rama Avate was younger than Guruji, so whenever they met, Rama would touch Guruji's feet, but on Guru Purnima, Guruji would touch his feet. A unique example of 'Guru-Shishya Parampara'! By staying with Rama, he gained knowledge about many herbal medicines. Awari Guruji had knowledge of more than 650 herbal medicines. Later, with the help of Ayurveda Seva Sangh, a book on herbal medicine was also published.

Seeing his knowledge of problems related to tribal society, clear thinking for its solution, his efforts to take the society towards development through a constructive path, he came in contact with Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and became the state president. As a resident of rural area, a capable tribal person, Awari Guruji was leading the tribal society through his work.

The president, who stood up with courage against the anti-national activities going on in the tribal area, became an inspiration for all the workers. It was the year 1995, when he got the information that Naxalite activities were starting in Peth taluka, he achieved great success in stopping it by making all kinds of efforts from police action to social awakening.

Generally, any person feels tired after completing 50 years of his age. He retires from many works. But it was just the opposite in the case of Awari Guruji. He was seen to be more involved in social work than before. He was traveling from village to village with enthusiasm for the work of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram.

In 1997, Christians had built an unauthorized church in Kayre-Saadpada. At that time, a huge Hindu conference was held. This illegal act was stopped due to the awakening of the society. His clear thoughts, fearless speech, courage to speak the truth were the inspiration for many youths.

In the 'Hindu Vanvasi Asmita Sammelan' organized in Nandurbar, he said that no matter which state the Vanvasi belongs to, his deity is Badadev, Mahadev-Parvati. Then which religion is this? Those who do not agree that the Vanvasi are not Hindus, they should prove this.

The Maharashtra government issued a form that it is not necessary to write Hindu with the caste. That is, it is not necessary to write Hindu Konkana, Hindu Warli, Hindu Katkari, just writing Konkana, Warli, Katkari will be enough. There was opposition to this in the society. Those who said why should we not write Hindu with our caste?, gathered and met the government. It was led by Awari Guruji. As a result, the government had to reject this form.

Even today in the rural areas of Maharashtra, teachers address the teacher as 'Guruji'. Awari Guruji was not only the 'Guruji' of a school but of the entire society. It was as if his school had no walls.

When respected Awari Guruji passed away on 8 July 2003, the society lost a protector of the tribal identity. He left this world but is still amongst us as an inspiration.

On 22 June 2003, Awari Guruji was honoured with the 'Dr Hedgewar Seva Puraskar' by Dr Hedgewar Smarak Samiti.

6th October 2024

70 carton boxes filled with various apparel items, including ladies' bags, from Page Industries (Jockey) were successfully distributed in the HD Kote and Hunsur areas of Mysuru District by VKK Volunteers.

**22 September 2024**

We organized a stall for the Kamli tribes from the Rajasthan chapter at the Shankara Foundation.

22 September 2024

Traditional worship practices of the tribal society were organized today on Saturday, 21 September, by the All India Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram in Samalkha (Haryana). During the cultural program, the customs and worship practices of 80 tribes were demonstrated. RSS Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat Ji was present as a special guest in this program.



21 September 2024

Akihila Barathiya KaryaKatha Sammelan - More than 1000 Jilla Karyakartas participated between 20-22 Sept. This sammelan is organized every 3rd year. This one is after six years (cancelled in 2021 due to COVID)

Seva Sadhana Kaushal Vikas Kendra was the venue.

14 September 2024

We the volunteers of Bengaluru VKK Nagara Samithi Organised Sneha Milan on Sep 14th -5 pm -7:30 pm at Seshadripuram Law college. The Motivation behind the Milan was to re-connect with all the donors and well wishers of Vanavasi Kalyan. The total participants were around 350.



Vanavasi Kalyana® Karnataka

Cordially invites you to

Sneha Milana

at

Seshadripuram Pre-University College, Near Central, 4th Block, Kumara Park West, Seshadripuram, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560020

ON

Saturday, 14th September 2024,
From 5.00 PM to 7.30 PM.
(Followed by Dinner)

Keynote Speaker: Shri Bhagwan Sahay
Saha Sanghatana Mantri
Akhila Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram

Chief Guest: Shri Hariash Kohli,
President and Managing Director,
Acer India Private Limited

Guest of Honour: Dr M. Jadeyegowda
Professor of Agronomy,
Department of Natural Resource Management,
College of Forestry, Ponnampet

Special Honoree: Shri Somanna,
A Renowned Tribal Rights Activist and recipient of the
Padma Shri Award (2024)

Sudhir Goel
President



Krishna Gunaga
Secretary

Scan for the venue location map

Bengaluru Mahanagara Samithi,
Vanavasi Kalyana, Karnataka

22 August 2024

Students of Dr. B R Ambedkar School, Gunnur Kailancha (hobali) Ramanagara visited CSIR-NAL and CSIR-4PI. Students were given presentations on Aircraft Simulator, Aircraft cockpit and also super computers



6th August 2024

New book Launch Event - 'Mane Managala Bhushan'

On behalf of Vanavasi Kalyan Karnataka and Hindu Seva Pratishtha, the senior pracharak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Swargiya Shri K. S. Nagabhushan, the 'Mane Managala Bhushana' book dedication program was held on the evening of August 6, 2024 at Uttunga, Rangarao Road, Shankarpur. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh senior campaigner Su. Ramanna, senior activist Y.K.Raghavendra, Akhil Bharatiya Vyastha Pramukh Mangesh Bhende, Sahasarakaryavaha Mukunda CR, Sripad Ji were some of the main dignitaries who were present in the program.



21 July 2024

Pratima Ji conducted Ayurveda Medical Camp at Iruligarapalya, Tumkur. 110+ people were treated with free medicines.



20 July 2024

With the coaching of Vanvasi Vikas Samiti, four youths from Naxal-affected Narayanpur and Kondagaon districts have been selected for the State Archery Sports Academy.



29 June 2024

School kits were distributed for Mane Pata Kendras of Ramanagara VKK Students.



27 June 2024

Vanavasi Kalyana distributed school Kits for our Tribal Kids of Mane Pata Kendra across Karnataka in different districts. These are some pics of Haveri and Dharwad districts. We also distributed solar Kits for the Mane Pata Kendra of Haveri and Dharwad which will help kids to study during night in our Tuition Centres.



18 May 2024

Vanavasi Kalyana Conducted 3 days of summer camp through Sodari Nivedita Pratishthana in Iruligara Doddi Ramnagara



VanaYatra Report

Date(s) of yatra	Location of yatra	No. of participants	Haadis visited No's / names	Homes at the Haadis
7th April, 2024	Ramanagar / Savanadurga	28	1/Matakayyna Doddi	90
1st & 2nd June, 2024	HD Kote	28	2/Ayyana Kera Haadi & Damman Katte	130
30th June, 2024	Kanakapura	29	1/Halasila Hannu Doddi	90
18th August, 2024	Ramnagara	26	1/Muniappana Doddi	45
31st August, 2024	Savanadurga	27	1/Jodagatte	90





QUIZ

TIME TO TAP YOUR MEMORY...

By M. Ashok

- 01) Who had composed the original Ramayana?
- 02) Lakshmana is considered to be the incarnation of whom?
- 03) Is the following statement true/false for Gayatri Mantra?
Gayatri Mantra was formed from the first letter that comes from after every 1000 verses of Ramayana and it was first mentioned in Rigveda.
- 04) What was the name of the forest where Lord Rama, Lakshmana and Goddess Sita stayed during exile?
- 05) Ravana was a devotee of who among the following God?
- 06) What was the name of Lord Rama's father?
- 07) Who has written Bhavartha Ramayana?
- 08) The Seven parts of Ramcharitmanas are
- 09) What was the name of a bow that was used by Lord Rama in Goddess Sita swayamvar to marry her?
- 10) Name few versions of the Ramayana that have emerged outside India?
- 11) Which city did Lord Rama rule as the king?

Answers:

- 01) Rishi Valmiki
- 02) Sheshnag
- 03) True or False
- 04) Dandakaranya
- 05) Shiva
- 06) Dasaratha
- 07) Eknath-Bhavartha Ramayana was written by Eknath in Marathi around the 16th century
- 08) Bal Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Kiskindhya Kanda, Sundar Kanda, Lanka Kanda, and Uttar Kanda
- 09) Pinaka
- 10) Cambodia - Reamker, Thailand - Ramakien, Burma (Mayanmar) - Yama Zatdaw
- 11) Ayodhya

Want to contribute?

Donors can contribute any amount desired and be eligible for tax benefits:

- How to contribute and make a difference:
 - Participate in Vanayatra to have a glimpse into Vanavasi life
 - Become a member of the local VKK committee
 - Sponsor a Tuition Center (Mane Pata Kendras) – Rs 50,000/- per Year
 - Sponsor a College Student for Rs 40,000/- per year
 - Sponsor education and living expenses of a school student Rs 25,000/- per year
 - Sponsor education expenses of a school student Rs 10,000/- per year
 - Sponsor a school kit for Rs 1000/- per kit
 - Sponsor a health camp for Rs 80,000 per camp
 - Sponsor a Hostel – Rs 15,00,000/- per year
 - Sponsor specific projects like drinking water, solar lighting, infrastructure etc.
- Project-based
- Sponsor a tailoring centre Rs.80,000/-
 - Sponsor nutrition for one student Rs 2700/-



SPONSORSHIP DETAILS

- All donations are exempt from Income Tax under Section 80G of IT Act 1961
- One can make bank transfers as per below account details
- Donations can also be made through crossed cheques
- For 80G receipts, contact **Mr.Keshava +91-94829 84575**

India Resident Accounts

Account Name: Vanavasi Kalyana
SB Account number: 04212160000078
IFSC code: CNRB0011717 (For NEFT/RTGS Transactions)
IFSC Code: CNRB0000033 (For IMPS Transaction)
Bank: Canara Bank
Branch: Kuvempunagar II, Mysore 570 001
Address: 834, New Kantharaja Urs Road,
Kuvempunagar, Mysore.
Branch Phone: 0821 2342 425
Branch Cell Phone: 94498 60428



About VanaMitra



This is an attempt to provide information on the work done by Vanvasi Kalyan Karnataka and to create awareness for the comprehensive development of the tribals of Karnataka. You too can participate as a volunteer. Send your feedback to the editorial board:

VanaMitra Editorial Team:

Sripad Ji, M.Ashok, Mayuresh, Vivek

Reach Vanamitra Team at:

vanamitra@vanavasikalyana.org | www.vanavasikalyana.org