

SOPAR – Bala Vikasa Founders receive ‘Meritorious Service Cross’ MSC Award for making Canada Proud with their Outstanding Services in India



Mr. Andre Gingras MSC and Mrs. Bala Theresa (Singa Reddy) Gingras MSC, the founders of SOPAR – Bala Vikasa have been honored with the ‘**Meritorious Service Cross**’ by **Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada**, on 12th December 2017 at Rideau Hall, Ottawa. MSC is the second highest civilian award in Canada

and is equivalent to Padma Vibhushan award of India. The Cross recognizes an innovative activity performed in an outstandingly professional manner, with uncommonly high standards, to improve the quality of community life that brings honor to Canada.

Mrs. Bala Theresa Gingras MSC earned the distinction of being the first woman (and second person) with Indian origin to receive this prestigious cross. The recipients will be authorized to suffix MSC to their name from the day it is conferred.

This award has been honored to Bala Vikasa Founders for their exemplary services through SOPAR-Bala Vikasa in Rural India. Through different sectorial programs like women, water, education, capacity building, agriculture, and environment conservation, SOPAR-Bala Vikasa is impacting lives of over 4 millions from over 6000 villages in 6 states of rural India for the last 40 years.

Grand Welcome to the MSC Laureate with Overwhelming Pride to her Motherland

Mrs. Bala Theresa Gingras MSC and Andre Gingras MSC will be remembered for generations - Honourable Speaker of Telanagana

The committee members of different projects, directors of partner NGOs, prominent state level politicians, well wishers and Bala Vikasa staff gathered in hundreds to welcome Mrs. Bala Theresa Gingras MSC when she arrived to the mother land on 18th January 2018 after receiving MSC award. Grand Rally with traditional drum beats and kolatam was organised in the streets of Fathimanagar as a procession. Mr. E. Dayakar Rao, MLA, Palakurthy present on this occasion stated that, it is an honor to the Indian Government for the reckon services of the couple from Canada.



Ex-Deputy Chief Minister Mr. T. Rajaiah and Wardhannapet MLA Mr. A. Ramesh expressed that they are fortunate to be associated with Bala Theresa for years and thanked the couple for bringing recognition to Telangana in India.

All the guests and well wishers felicitated Mrs. Bala Theresa MSC with flower garlands as appreciation and wrap a shawl to honour her as mark of their respect in achieving this award.

Hon'ble speaker of Telangana State Assembly Mr. S. Madhusudana Chary felicitated Mrs. Bala Theresa and iterated that she indeed is the pride daughter of Telangana as stated by the Chief Minister Mr. K. Chandra Sekhar Rao, and it gives him honor to felicitate her. He further stated that the services rendered by the couple to the rural communities are remarkable and they will remain in the history of Telangana and remembered for generations.



Interstate 'Water Purification Committee Members' Convention at Siddipet

Bala Vikasa Water Purification Projects Federation consisting committee members of 840 water purification projects organized a convention with a theme of "Innovative methods for water purification projects sustianability" at Cotton market yard in Siddipet town on 23rd January 2018. A total of 2800 committee members from four (Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka) states have participated in this convention.

Mr. T. Harish Rao, Irrigation Minister for Telangana, who was the honorable cheif guest at the convention, congratulated the federation members for their successful management of the water purification projects in 4 states. He recalled that Bala Vikasa is the inspiration for government to initiate Mission Kakatiya, the tank de-siltation project and Mission Bhageeratha - the safe drinking water project in rural areas. He further stated that he drew inspiration from Bala Vikasa in transforming his constituency as a model in the state. He felicitated Bala Theresa Gingras MSC for receiving the prestigious Canadian Meritorious Service Cross. He stated that the state Chief Minister Mr. K. Chandra Sekhara Rao has rightly recognized Mrs. Bala Theresa MSC as pride daughter of Telangana, and now she made the people of Telangana proud by receiving the MSC cross from Canadian Government.



Smt. Bala Theresa Gingras MSC lauded the efforts of federation members and congratulated them on sustaining the projects in their respective villages. Mr. Gunavanthrao Patil, Maharashtra State Farmers' Union President and Mr. Manjunatha Reddy of Karnataka narrated how Bala Vikasa inspired the local communities to initiate community projects in their states. This convention gave a platform to the federation members for sharing their experiences, problems encountered and mitigation measures in sustaining the projects.

Convention of Model Village Committee Members



The model village convention created a plat form for the model village committee members for cross learning and sharing their expeirences in making model villages. 2500 model village committee members and sarpanches of 128 model villages wer part of this one day convention organized on 29th January 2018 at Bala Vikasa training center.



Mr. G. Sudheer Babu, Commissioner of Police Warangal Commissionerate explained the need of for promoting model villages to foster integrated community sustianbale development. He lauded the committee members for being role models to many people fromj other villages through their innovative initiatives. He appreciated Bala Vikasa for its unique approach of "building communities before building projects" which is the key for holistic development.

Mrs. Bala Theresa Gingras MSC congratulated the development committee members for initiating different development activities to bring holistic development of village through their active, selfless, dedicated, united, and honest services. She expressed her pleasure to see that the committee members are thinking different and acting different to make difference in transforming their village into a model.

Bala Vikasa Development Practices Inspires Development Agents Internationally

42 development professionals from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Canada, Ethiopia, India, Myanmar, Malawi, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Tanzania participated in Four week Community Driven Development capacity building programs held in two batches during November 2017 and January 2018. The entire course was supplemented with field exposure visits. The participants expressed that the methodologies delivered in the class room enhanced their understanding and witnessing their application in the feild gained more confidence to replicate the knowledge in their local communities.



Widows Empowerment Movement Spreads to Andhra Pradesh

The Widows' Empowerment movement initiated by Bala Vikasa 9 years ago is winning empathy of the society. District level seminars organized in districts of Telangana during the past have paved way for inviting widows to the government sponsored inaugurations. To spread the effect in the neighboring Telugu state Andhra Pradesh, a district level seminar with a theme 'Eradication of Superstitions - Protection of Widows rights' and was held in Guntur with 1650 people on 27th November 2017. The seminar was addressed by Chairperson of Women Commission AP, and elucidated the sufferings of widows in the society. Another seminar with the same theme was organized with 1050 participants at Bhoopalapalli district of Telangana on 14th December 2017.

The seminar in Telangana was organized with the contribution of Hon'ble Speaker of Telangana State Assembly and the seminar in AP was organized with the contributions mobilized from MPs, MLAs, local leaders and general public. These contributions denote the solidarity towards the widows' movement initiated by Bala Vikasa.



Bala Vikasa and Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) jointly Organize 'Prerana' for Women Entrepreneurs

A conference titled 'Prerana' was organized jointly by Bala Vikasa, State Bank of India (SBI) and CII, Telangana division at Bala Vikasa People Development Training Center for the women entrepreneurs. This conference on "Promoting Entrepreneurship among Rural Women" was addressed by 4 successful women entrepreneurs. A total of 175 women entrepreneurs attended the conference and got inspired from the speakers to develop their businesses. This conference was presided by Gundu Sudharani, Chairperson, Telangana Women Finance Cooperation, CII Telangana Chairperson Mr. V. Rajanna, Ex-Chairperson Mrs. Vanitha Datla, SBI DGM Mr. Suresh Kumar Agarwal, SBI SME (BU)-DGM, Mr. Manimaran and convener of CSR panel-CII Telangana, Mr. SN Venky. All the speakers called upon the participants to make use of the schemes promoted by Bala Vikasa, Government, and Banks.



Organic Farmers' State Level Convention



To provide a platform for the organic farmers in sharing their experiences and agricultural practices, a convention themed 'Role of organic farming in Environment Conservation' was held with 1300 organic farmers at Bala Vikasa Training Center on 28th January 2018. Mr. Naga Ratnam Naidu, a model farmer who received an International award shared his success story which convinced the farmers. He inspired the farmers to revert back to the traditional organic practices and stop depending excessively on chemical fertilizer and pesticides to make agriculture profitable.

Smt. V. Usha Rani (IAS), Director General of Agriculture, National Institute of Agriculture, Extension Management brought out to the notice of the farmers that the health consciousness among the consumers has increased, and they are showing inclination towards organic produces. Unfortunately not many are producing organic products but there is a huge demand at high prices. The farmers should take advantage of this situation and raise the crops by adopting organic practices. She lauded the efforts of Bala Vikasa and offered to provide technical inputs and trainings to Bala Vikasa organic farmers at her institute.

The honorary guest Matha Nirmalanda Yoga Bharathi observed that farmer is equal to God since he gives strength and energy to the people in the world through food grains. She requested farmers not to fall prey to the chemical fertilizers and instead raise cows whose urine and dung cure many plant pests and diseases.

Mr. G. Shyam Sunder Reddy, Ph.D. ANGRAU, and Mr. Rama Rao, progressive farmer from Khammam cultivating 101 varieties of products shared their experiences with farmers which ignited the farmers to iterate organic agriculture indeed is profitable.

Minister for Irrigation Inaugurates Digital Class Rooms set up by Bala Vikasa

The digital classrooms project supported by SBI foundation was started in 50 Public Schools of 3 Districts (Medak, Sangareddy and Siddipet) to enhance learning of 19260 students. The digital classes are helping students to compete with private school students. The project was launched at Government Girls High School by the Telangana State Minister for Major Irrigations Mr. T. Harish Rao on 4th November 2018. The inaugural ceremony was attended by students, teachers, and local leaders. Mr. P. Sankar Rao (DGM) and Mr. A. Srinivas (RM) of SBI congratulated the students on this occasion and advised them to make use of the facility.



Bala Vikasa Enters into Tamilnadu (6th State)

Bala Vikasa has partnered with Confederation of Indian Industries – Southern Region (CII-SR) to implement water body renovation projects in Tamilnadu. The first project was inaugurated on 19th January 2018 at Gangai Amman Koil kullam, Injumbakkam of Chennai District. With this Bala Vikasa operations are expanded to six states.

Detailed Project Report for 9 more water bodies have also been submitted to CII-SR and are expected to be inaugurated in the next quarter.



British Deputy High Commissioner inaugurates Seminar on 'Responsible Entrepreneurship'

Bala Vikasa International Center (BVIC) organized a seminar on 'Responsible Entrepreneurship' on 21st November 2017 at Hotel Marigold Hyderabad. The half a day seminar deliberated on diverse forms of responsible entrepreneurship and enlightened the participants with the concepts, programs and opportunities to engage in responsible business practices.

The seminar was inaugurated by chief guest Mr. Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner, Hyderabad, along with special guests Mr. Akash Suri, Asst. Public Affairs Officer – US Consulate, Mr. Vikram Jain, Trade Commissioner – Canada Consulate, Mr. K Sudhir Reddy President- Telangana Industrialists Federation and Ms Kavitha Rajesh – Treasurer, ALEAP. BVIC publication SRS4 - 'SMEs & Business Social Responsibility' was released by Mr. Andrew Fleming at this seminar.



The British Deputy High commissioner also visited Bala Vikasa Peoples' Development Training Center during his official visit to Warangal and appreciated Bala Vikasa for its sustainable community development programs.

Widows' inclusion in Bathukamma Celebrations now becomes Every Year Activity



The widows movement that started 3 years ago is gaining momentum by breaking their barriers in participating in community festivals and celebrations. Priests of Inavolu Mallikarjuna Swamy temple, and Ramalingeshwara temple, Mettugutta organized special Bathukamma celebrations with over 600 widows. Apart from this 4266 Widows participated in Bathukamma celebrations along with other women in 152 villages. This is the indication, that the inclusion of widows in community celebrations is paving a way.



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