

SOPAR Celebrates 40 years of Dedicated Services Impacting over 4 Million People in 5 States of India



The community driven development revolution that is in full force today across 5 states was sparked 40 years ago, with the evolution of SOPAR in Canada. It all started when Ms. Bala Theresa Singareddy, a woman born in the remote village of Reddypalem, Warangal district of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh (now Telangana), got married to a French Canadian Mr. Andre Gingras and left Canada to lead the rest of her life. She could lead a comfortable life with all the luxuries in the developed country, but couldn't. Her heart grieved for fellow citizens who did not have basic amenities, and lived with lack of dignity and opportunities. She wanted to contribute something to mother land and shared her thoughts to her husband. They made efforts together to start SOPAR in

Canada with the support of family and friends in 1977 and initiated raising funds.

These funds were sent to India to initiate community development. When the program volume expanded, to maximize scope and impact, Bala Vikasa Social Service Society was established in 1991 with the same motto of SOPAR, 'Helping Communities Help Themselves'. The organization has grown exponentially since then, now reaching over 6500 villages in 5 states of South India.

360° Community Driven Development and Capacity Building

Sopar built 360° approach over 40 years of field experience with concrete results helping entire communities reach their full potential. Community assets, strengths and resources are assessed and required capacity building is provided in mapping and utilizing them to foster positive outcome. People are consulted in decision making and emphasis is made on creating a sense of unity, responsibility, leadership and equal representation of men and women. Committees are formed with voluntary membership to drive the project and assure its sustainability. Bala Vikasa facilitates the communities to assure that expected results are achieved and ownership continues.



40th Anniversary Celebrations

Sopar - Bala Vikasa marked its 40th anniversary celebrations grandly at Ottawa, Canada. A big delegation of government representatives including local MPs and Mayor, SOPAR Donors, VIP guests, SOPAR-BV members, volunteers and well wishers were present on this auspicious day. The guests present lauded the efforts of SOPAR-Bala Vikasa in bringing remarkable changes in the lives of millions of poor.

Speaking on the occasion **Mr. William Amos, Member of Parliament, Pontiac** on behalf of Federal Minister of International Development Marie-Claude Bibeau said, "Bala Vikasa is fostering attitudinal change to help people take charge of their own development".



Gatineau Mayor Mr. Maxime Pedneault-Jobin appreciated the humanistic approach of SOPAR through the idea of teaching the poor how to fish rather than feeding them. She said "The founders of SOPAR Bala Theresa (Angèle) and André Gingras are friends of the society and we all need many friends like them".

40 Years Culminates into Three Impacting Areas

Facilitating grassroots change through Community Driven Development Programs (CDDP): From the beginning, SOPAR-Bala Vikasa has focused on community driven development programs with an emphasis on capacity building and bringing attitudinal change among the communities. The community programs include provision of safe water, women's empowerment, food security, environmental sustainability, children, youth development and model community building as its core sectors. 360° approach of Bala Vikasa has developed a model village Gangadevipalli which attracted enormous attention of the Indian government as inspiring model village of the Nation. This has embarked 128 more model villages in over 6000 Bala Vikasa working villages. The 10 golden rules of Bala Vikasa developed and practiced over the years lead the communities being able to sustain themselves.

Reaching development professionals across the globe through Peoples' Development Training Center (PDTC): With the intention to spread its unique, tried and tested

philosophy of development to other deserving communities, methodologies and approaches are shared with development professionals within the country and across the globe through People Development Training Center (PDTC) established in 2002 in Warangal. So far development professionals from 66 countries across the globe have come to PDTC to learn best practices and effective ways to strengthen the development process of poor and marginal communities.

Promoting Social Entrepreneurship and Business Social Responsibility through Bala Vikasa International Center (BVIC): Many profit making companies see Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a means of business sustainability. But they usually lack the expertise to design and implement effective community development projects. SOPAR-Bala Vikasa established Bala Vikasa International Center (BVIC) in 2014 to fill this gap for companies who lack knowledge, skills and practice of community-driven development. BVIC provides training and support to corporates and social entrepreneurs with the aim of equipping them to actively conduct effective corporate social responsibility initiatives.

SOPAR Bala Vikasa Reach (1977-2017)

222,428 women transformed as agents of change from 1500 villages	12,70,000 rural poor access to potable water through 6,350 bore wells	5,00,000 rural poor access to water at doorsteps through 440 OHTs	18,00,000 rural poor access to purified water through 800 community water purification projects	1,42,137 rural children access to quality education through improved infrastructure in 491 government schools	15,000 widows mentored and creating momentum to bring social justice	21,553 families benefited with improved sanitation facilities through construction of toilets
6,384 leaders capacitated to drive development activities geared in achieving 128 model communities	220,000 farmers benefitted improving crop production through renovating 715 irrigation tanks	1,208 farmers transformed practicing organic farming	11,036 development professionals enlightened in community development approaches from 66 countries	5,00,000 saplings planted to improve greenery in the villages	5,801 poor families provided secured housing and Tsunami victims	1,100 Aged and Destitute supported their daily needs

Tribal Communities tap Solar Energy to Access Water

Solar power based community water project with 12,000 liters capacity OHT with 3 HP and 3.5 KW solar system was inaugurated in Karlai village in Mahabubabad district, ensuring uninterrupted water supply to 60 poor tribal families. This project brought water at their doorsteps through tap connections. The long struggle to access greater water resources have made a major difference in tribal women's lives. Without having to trek long distances for water, the tribal women now have more time to attend to their homes, families, and rare more livestock. Thanks to Frank Water for contributing this difference in the Tribal land. An MOU was also signed to expand these projects to benefit an estimated 2,100 tribals from 10 villages in the near future.



Raipur - Chhattisgarh Commuters now Access to Safe and Chilled Water

The rapidly popular gaining social enterprise model Sujal ATW kiosk is now attracting donors to launch in other states. Cholamandalam as part of their CSR initiative has partnered with Bala Vikasa in launching this project in Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh state. The commuters now are access to one liter pure and chilled water @ Re.1 at the most affordable price.



State Level Widows' Convention on International Widows' Day The Biggest Gathering of Widows in the History of India



A state level convention for widows was organized by Bala Vikasa on June 23, 2017 on the occasion of International Widows' day at Lal Bahadur stadium, Hyderabad. More than 10,000 widows from different parts of Telangana gathered. This was the first convention of its kind in the history of India, with large number of widows gathering to spread the social movement on widows' issues.



The convention presided by Ms. Bala Theresa Gingras, Founder SOPAR – Bala Vikasa received eminent guests and leaders from all religions, political parties, NGO sector and Media across the Nation. The dignitaries present addressing the occasion attributed the problem plaguing widows and assured their support to join hands to fight on this social issue and be part of the social movement in

creating social justice to the widows. The convention was organized through donations raised locally, amounting to over 50 lakh rupees, is an indication that the movement has secured the empathy of many.

Keshavapur village pass resolution to stop widowhood Rituals: Keshavapur villagers in Warangal district made a resolution to stop the irrational custom and ritual associated with widowhood: removing kumkum, bangles, flowers and toe rings on the 11th day upon husband's death. The villagers decided to invite and involve widows in any gatherings, festivals and celebrations in the village. The Sarpanch P.Rama said, " This is the remarkable change we want to adopt as a part of social movement of Bala Vikasa and become an ideal village and inspire other villages in illuminating the irrational customs".

Bala Vikasa Expands to Neighboring States

Bala Vikasa Opens Branch Office in Maharashtra: Bala Vikasa program volume expanded in Maharashtra. For proper monitoring of the projects, a branch office was inaugurated in Narsi Taluq, Nanded district of Maharashtra. A local coordinator was hired to enable Bala Vikasa project reach to many more communities across the state in the years to come.

Tank Renovation to Reach Tamilnadu: Confederation of Indian Industries, Southern Region (CII-SR) has partnered with Bala Vikasa to implement tank renovation projects in three districts (Chennai, Thiruvallur, and Kanchipuram) of Tamilnadu giving high regard to Bala Vikasa's expertise in water body renovation. A team from Bala Vikasa visited the tanks in the month of July 2017, conducted a feasibility study and has submitted detailed project reports. Preparations are in progress to launch the project.

Community Water Purification Project Expands to Karnataka: The benefit accrued by unity in the tank desiltation program has motivated inhabitants of Guntiganahalli from Chikballapur district in Karnataka state to initiate a local water purification project as the community was suffering from water borne diseases. This has increased the reach of Bala Vikasa's community water purification projects to a total of four states in India.

Water Purification Projects soon to Reach Slums of Main Cities in Andhra Pradesh

The success of community water purification projects in Hyderabad slums has propelled Franklin Templeton – Mumbai to expand their reach to slums in the cities of Andhra Pradesh. Bala Vikasa conducted a feasibility study for water purification projects in the cities of Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam to identify the neediest communities. The project will be initiated in the month of December 2017.

Raghavapur Wins Telangana Chief Minister's Heart

Raghavapur, a village being promoted by Bala Vikasa since 2015, has won the Best Village award twice at the district level. The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of villagers for their unity, praised them for their wonderful work and further appealed to continue the spirit and commitment with the support of Bala Vikasa. As a mark of appreciation towards the villagers' efforts, the Chief Minister approved different development projects worth over 30 million rupees and said he will come back after one year to witness the next level of development in the village.



Bala Vikasa Model Villages Awarded

It is customary for the state government to announce awards to the best villages in various categories on State Formation Day (2nd June) and National Independence day (15th August) every year. This year 18 Bala Vikasa adapted model villages received awards under different categories. The breakup of these awards:

- Best village – 6
- Best sarpanch – 4
- Open defecation free village – 4
- Village with no police cases – 1
- Village with 100% tax payment – 2
- Village with 100% voting – 1

PDTC, A Learning Place for Development Professionals Across the Globe



A team of six senior officials from Caritas-Bangladesh visited Bala Vikasa during the last week of June 2017 to explore the organisation's core approaches. As part of the visit, they learnt ABCD, RBM and visited model villages, community model schools, tank desiltation and water projects. The experienced practitioners expressed that they gained new development insights from Bala Vikasa practices that are applicable in making a change among their local communities.

Development practitioners from eight countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Canada, Iran, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Tanzania) participated in the two week and four week long Community Driven Development (CDD) program organised during July and September. With Iran participation, the sharing of BV approaches and methodologies through CDD program rise to 66 countries.

Sri Lankan Government Officials participated in Special Community Driven Development Training Program

In the past years, over 300 Sri Lankans from NGO and Government sectors were exposed to Bala Vikasa sustainable approaches and methodologies through Community Driven Development training program and specially organised customised programs. During September, a special training on BV positive approaches was organised to professional counsellors from Ministry of Education and Justice departments. They learnt on motivational strategies, NLP techniques and positive approaches of Bala Vikasa and witnessed development in action by visiting community programs.

BVIC Strengthens Collaboration with Industrial Associations and Like-minded Institutions

Collaboration with like-minded institutes and associations has been a strategic priority for Bala Vikasa International Center to create greater impact in its focus areas. As part of its continuous effort, BVIC has established close contact with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)-State Cell, Villgro Innovation Foundation, US Consulate, Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC) - incubators network, Association of Lady Entrepreneurs of India (ALEAP), Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and industry (DICCI).

BVIC is also playing a crucial role as a member of the CSR panel in CII's state chapter. It has been invited to be part of the MSME panel as an advisor. BVIC and Villgro, taking into account their similarities in mission have decided to collaborate and work together in the areas of common interest and mutual benefit.



CII Nominates Bala Vikasa as Water Task Force

Bala Vikasa's experience in implementing water projects in five states has drawn attention of CII and the State Government. CII nominated Bala Vikasa as water task force for corporates, and as a governing body in initiating CSR activities by Telangana government.

Dear Readers - Bala Vikasa is happy to announce that a column will be started for the views and comments of Tharangini readers. Please keep sending them.



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