



Swami Japanandaji creates waves in the precincts of **British Parliament!**



**Swami Vivekananda Integrated Rural Health Centre  
Shree Sharadadevi Eye Hospital & Research Centre  
Sri Ramakrishna Peripheral Heart Centre  
Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management**

(Units of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama)

Swami Vivekananda Nagar, Pavagada – 561 202

Supported by Infosys Foundation

**Newsletter – January to December 2018**

**26-8-18 – SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS, BANGALORE**



For everyone associated with Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, the most intimate, joyful and important event of the year was the launch of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Ashrama and all its associate organizations: Swami Vivekananda Integrated Rural Health Centre, Shree Sharadadevi Eye Hospital and Research Centre, Sri Ramakrishna Peripheral Heart Centre and Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management. This mega event was celebrated at the Vasavi Convention Centre, Bangalore on 26th August 2018 in association with Viveka Hamsa.

The day-long convention held in two sessions had a festive feel about it. It was a well-planned gala event, organized with the close involvement of many groups and personalities, including Viveka Hamsa and Sharada Sevashrama. Throngs of devotees, many having long emotional bondage with us, were seen arriving cheerfully in the morning. Naturally, they were excited about participating in the red-letter day event of the organization they have been watching grow. They were received and ushered in by groups of volunteers clad in white. The morning session included invocation, and inauguration of the celebrations by HH Sri Sri Vishveshwara Teertha Swamiji of Sri Pejaware Math, Udupi. The lineup of dignitaries included Sri HN Ananth Kumar

(Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Govt of India) (who has since deceased), Srmat Swami Vinayakanandaji Maharaj of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram Bailru, Justice Sri M N Venkatachalaiah, Sri LA Ravi Subramanya (MLA, Basavanagudi).

HH Pejaware Shri in his benedictory address lauded the remarkable relief work recently carried out by Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama in its missions at Kerala and Kodagu. Praising Japananda Swamiji's leadership, he announced a donation of rupees ten lakhs each for our mission in both the states. His Holiness added that to attain



salvation just pooja and meditation would not suffice; rather, service to humanity is the way to attain salvation.

The popular public figure and politician, Sri Ananth Kumarji, was highly appreciative of the service being carried out by the Sevashrama. He announced the clearance of five Pradhan Mantri Janaushadhi centres (which sell generic drugs at very low costs) to Pavagada, a great gift to the people, in a gesture of joining hands with Swami Japanandaji.

The afternoon session began with devotional music by the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, followed by a Satsang of spiritual discourses by Rev. Swamis Japanandaji and Vinayakanandaji Maharaj. To listen to the soft spoken Swami Vinayakanandaji was a

very peaceful experience for the devotees. He presented a very beautiful perspective of selfless service and karmayoga, exploring many new dimensions. Swami Japanandaji's talk also was spiritually oriented, rather than on the ongoing 'celebration', revealing the true person and his philosophical approach to work. The post tea session witnessed many substantial matters dealt with by luminaries such as Sri Shivanubhava Charamurthy Shivarudra Mahaswamiji of the Beli Mutt, Justice Sri N Santhosh Hegde (Former Lokayukta of Karnataka), and Sri P Harishekhara (IPS, IGP HQ, Bangalore). Each of the speakers presented interesting talks based on their sphere of work, and paid tributes to Swami Japanandaji's leadership. Sri Vivek S Reddy (Sr. Advocate, Karnataka High Court, Bangalore) acted as the event coordinator.



## 20-12-18 – Bhoomi pooja for Rajata Bhavana

The **Rajata Bhavana** is to be an important functional part of our Silver Jubilee Celebration. This annexure to our present hospital building would house the new ENT block and two new operation theatres – all furnished with the best of equipment. As of now, three OTs are serving us well, but are inadequate to face the ever increasing rush of patients. Our eye department is now handling nearly 120 cases per week; still the caseload is so heavy that there is sometimes a waiting period of up to three months. Patients are streaming in from far off districts – they do not mind waiting when they have the assurance of best outcome, and at the least cost! However, we wish to reduce the waiting period to the least. Moreover, we are foraying into the next level of sophistication in eye-care including cornea grafting and retina transplantation, which would save hundreds of patients from the curse







of blindness. Plans are afoot for to make it a self-sufficient block with an eye bank, blood bank and related facilities.

We are also aware that there is an urgent need for quality ENT services for the poor villagers in our vicinity. The problem of speech and hearing is shockingly high. Over 600 children in the zone are badly in need of ENT, speech therapy etc, it is found. Our new full-fledged ENT department is set to serve the community of nearly 500 villages. This is being done in collaboration with the Dr. S.R.Chandrashekhara Institute of Speech & Hearing, Hennur Road, Bangalore, which is, under its illustrious CMO Dr. Chandrakala GR, serving the community in a most commendable manner.



The Foundation Stone laying ceremony for the '**Rajata Bhavana**' was held in the divine presence of H.H. Sri Sri Vishvesha Teertha Swamiji on the 20th December 2018. A host of luminaries were witness to this most memorable event, including Hon'ble Justice Sri N Kumar and Hon'ble Justice Smt. Rathnakala (both retired judges, High Court of Karnataka), Dr. B. S. Srinath, Managing Trustee, Sri Shankara Cancer Foundation, Dr. M. S. Venkatesh, Chairman, Dr. S. R. Chandrashekhara Institute of Speech & Hearing, Bangalore.



## Ashrama Activities – Spiritual

### 1-1-18 – Kalpataru Day

The Kalpataru Day, signifying the bestowing of blessings and spiritual awareness among the devotees by Sri Ramakrishna himself, was celebrated in our Sevashrama, with a special talk by Swami Japanandaji, followed by bhajan.

### 8-1-2018: Vivekananda Jayanti

As a part of Swamiji's 155th Jayanti celebration, special pooja, bhajan and Vedic chanting was done. A speech on "Vishva-vijeta Swami Vivekananda" reminded the audience of the world-conquerer Vivekananda and his heroism. The children of Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management presented devotional songs.

### 5-2-18 – Vivekananda Jayanti at SSK Rangamandira and S.V. PU College

The 156th birthday of Swami Vivekananda was organized jointly with Swami Vivekananda Educational Institutions, Pavagada, at two venues. The first one at SSK Rangamandira was graced by very popular orator-writer Sri Sulibele Chakravarthy, and presided over



by Justice Sri H Billappa, former judge, High Court, Karnataka. The event began with songs on Swami Vivekananda rendered by devotees of the Sevashrama. Sri Chakravarthy, addressing the students in his unique and powerful style, spoke about the message of Swami Vivekananda. He urged the students to follow Swamiji's messages which would make them stronger and dedicated. He highlighted youth power as the need of the hour. Rev. Swamiji in his benedictory address spoke about Swami Vivekananda's love for the motherland and quoted from his famous Madras lecture of 1897. He described the importance of Swami Vivekananda's thoughts for the present age. In his presidential lecture Justice Sri H. Billappa emphasized Swami Vivekananda's ideals of character and man-making education. Dr. Shashikiran, Vice-President of

S.V. Educational Institutions also spoke on the occasion. The event was compeered by Thallam Lakshmi.

The second celebration in the afternoon was in the Swami Vivekananda College premises organized exclusively for its students. Sri Chakravarthy's rousing speech was much appreciated by the participants. Justice Sri H Billappa and Swami Japanandaji also addressed the students. Dr. G. Venkataramaiah, Secretary, offered the vote of thanks.

### 13-2-18 – Mahashivaratri

Sri Mahashivaratri was celebrated at Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama with the usual devotional fervour by performing pooja and conduct of special bhajans, in the presence of a good number of devotees.

### 17-2-18 – Sri Ramakrishna Jayanti

On the occasion of the 183rd Jayanti of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, apart from devotional singing the devotees took part in the chanting of Sri Vishnu Sahasranama, in the morning. There was a talk on 'Yugavatara Sri Ramakrishna' in the evening.

### 23-3-18 to 25-3-18 – Sri Ramanavami

'Ramotsava' was celebrated with a special programme of devotional music over three days from 23rd to 25th March in the evenings before Arati.

### 20, 21-4-18 – Sri Shankara Jayanti and Sri Ramanuja Jayanti

The jayantis of Acharyas Sri Shankara and Sri Ramanuja were observed in the Ramakrishna Sevashrama on the consecutive days of 20th and 21st April, with the sonorous rendition of the several stotras and hymns composed by the great Acharyas.

**30-4-18 – Buddha Poornima:** Revered Swami Japanandaji gave a special talk on the life and teachings of Bhagawan Buddha. The highlight of the talk was the Buddha's incomparable compassion, and Swamiji said, "Buddha showed to the world the real meaning of kindness. It is his love of humanity that has made Buddhism the world's second largest religion."

### 31-8-18 to 2-9-18 – Sri Krishna Janmashtami

Janmashtami celebrations were held over three days at Ramakrishna Sevashrama. A highlight of the events this year was the eye catching Sri Krishna and Sri Radha costume competition. On 1st August, Saturday, the entire space of Sevashrama premises was glittering with these little Krishnas and Radhas, each prettier than the other! About 60 Participants of all ages from one and a half months to ten years provided a feast to the eyes of the beholders. The cynosure were the two Muslim sisters, Kum. Mehta and Kum. Mehannisa dressed in the attire of Sri Radha. When these little beauties came on the stage and called out for Sri Krishna in all their



innocence, the spectators were swept away by a rush of emotion, and tears of joy ran down Swami Japanandaji's eyes. It was an unforgettable sight, witness to the expression of the universality of the religion of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Rev Swamiji gave away sweets and gifts to all the children, and spoke fervently about emotional integration of the community.

Another delightful feature of the celebration was the dance performance by school children under the direction of Smt. Lakshmi Srinath.

**17-10-18 to 19-10-18 - Sri Sri Durga Pooja** – The Durga pooja and Navaratri celebrations were held for four days. The beautifully decorated image of the Divine Mother presented an enchanting sight. A large number of devotees participated in the pooja and special prayers held every day. Chandi chanting and singing of Maa-Naam Sankeertan were the other features.

### **11-9-18: 125th Anniversary of Swamiji's Chicago Speech**

The most famous speech of Swami Vivekananda at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago on 11th September, 1893, was a red-letter day for Hinduism, a momentous event in the history of India. The day marked the unveiling of the true Swami Vivekananda to the world in a spectacular way. That world event projected the might of Hinduism through its most illustrious representative, to the whole world. Every citizen of India needs to be aware of the significance of that day. The 125th of this historic day was celebrated fittingly by Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama at SSK Rangamandira of Pavagada in association with the Swami Vivekananda Educational Institutions. A grand procession of the school and college students was taken out through the streets of Pavagada lead by the portrait of Swami Vivekananda. The procession started from Swami Vivekananda Educational Institution and reached the SSK Rangamandira where it was received by Sri Shivanubhava Charamurthy Shivarudra Mahaswamiji of Sri Beli Mutt, Sri Japananda Swamiji, Dr. G V Ravikiran (VP of SV Educational Institutions), teachers and devotees.



The function started with the singing of songs of Swami Vivekananda, led by Swami Japanandaji. The auditorium reverberated with songs, rousing the spirits of the audience – the future citizens and leaders of the nation.

Welcoming the dignitaries including the Swamijis and students, Dr. GV Shashikiran in his speech praised the selfless work of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, and said 'Our institution has been going ahead, constantly seeking Swamiji's guidance.'

Swami Japanandaji described the three aspects extolled by Swami Vivekananda—Shastra, Guru and Motherland—in his unique style which was well understood by the audience. "If the youth population of India—which is the largest in the world—follows the path of Swami Vivekananda, then there will be no doubts about India's progress." He was successful in inspiring the audience to work towards country's progress.



H.H. Sri Shivanubhava Swamiji in his presidential talk described through many examples how Swami Vivekananda's thought current is very relevant to the present times. He electrified the audience, mainly comprising young women, by referring to the many great warrior-queens of Karnataka, such as Rani Abbakkadevi, Kittooru Chennamma, Attimabbe, Keladi Chennamma and Belavadi Mallamma, and briefly narrated their sagas of bravery and sacrifice. He described how with their patriotic fervour they battled for good of the land and its people. He also enlightened the listeners about the great significance of Chicago Address, and how it turned the world's attention towards India.

28-12-18 - The **166th birthday of the Holy Mother** was celebrated in the Sevashrama with all the usual features.

## ENGAGEMENTS OF SWAMI JAPANANDAJI

### 6 Jan, 2018: Rotary District Conference, Shivamogga

Swami Japanandaji was accorded the honour of inaugurating the second version of "Sanchalana", the grand annual district meeting of Shivamogga Rotary Club, held at the city's spacious PESIT auditorium. It was a big convergence of Rotarians, every member a distinguished professional, contributing to the society. Rtn. Prakash G.N. the District Governor, presided over the meeting, and Rtn. PDG Kranti Mehta represented the president of Rotary International.

It was very appropriate that the Rotarians, to whom selfless service of the community is prime motive, wished to listen to Swamiji. The topic of his talk was 'The Philosophy of Service'. Rev Swamiji began

with a purview of poverty and backwardness in India and the scenario of inequalities and exploitations; the sorry state of university education, and how right and extensive education should become the sheet anchor of nation building. Then he went on to describe the twin ideals enunciated by Swami Vivekananda: Renunciation and service. He described service as the 'finest form of human relationship, and the dire need to see every man as a human being, not differentiating on the basis of caste or other narrow considerations. Drawing from some subtle and beautiful philosophical points in the 'Mankutimmana Kagga' of DVG, Bhartruhari's 'Neetishataka', the Bhagavad Gita, and the life of Buddha, he went on to instill the concept of highest form of service in the audience.



Reminding of the glorious track record of Rotary Club, Rev Swami Japanandaji (himself a distinguished Rotarian) described its contribution to the eradication of Polio in both India and the world over as one of its great services to mankind. He praised the local Rotary units for helping school children with basic needs, and providing free health care to patients. Dr P Narayan, chairman of the conference, in his speech confirmed how the Club's major funds were allocated towards polio and education.

**21-1-18 - Lions Club programme, Chennai** – Swami Japanandaji was warmly felicitated by the Lions Club, Chennai, in deep appreciation of his contribution to the society and express their sense of gratitude for the massive relief work carried out by Team-Vivekananda during the Chennai floods last year. Accepting the honour on behalf of Team-Vivekananda, Rev Swamiji emphasized the need for deeper cooperation between communities, and that everyone should try to be helpful to others in whatever way they can. The entire world needs each other's support so that there will be no misery, unhappiness and uncertainties. He praised the service missions carried out by the Lions Club not only in India but throughout the world. "An attitude of service must be adopted by one and all in the society – not with force; we must develop the inner strength to serve others", he said.



### 30-1-18 – Martyrs' Day: Tribute to Gandhiji's Leprosy Work

Sarvodaya Day (the day of Gandhiji's martyrdom) was commemorated at our hospital by organizing a special skin camp, primarily for the benefit of the leprosy-affected, and to spread leprosy awareness among the people. Leprosy eradication has always been a prime mission of our institution. A good number of patients visited the hospital, and received counseling and treatment by the specialists Dr. Chethan, DLO, Tumkur, and Dr. Chandrakala, CMO, SVIRHC. The camp was inaugurated by offering floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhiji, who was a pioneer in the redeeming of the leprosy afflicted.



### 2-2-18 -Cultural Event at Govt. PU College, Pavagada

Swami Japanandaji inaugurated a colourful cultural meet at the Government Junior College, Pavagada, on the occasion of an NSS Camp and annual sports day. Rev. Swamiji gave an intimate and inspiring talk on Swami Vivekananda's concepts of character building and nation building. His talk was very well received by the students.

### 20-3-18 – Vivekananda Youth Convention – SVPPS Trust

In connection with Swami Vivekananda Jayanti, the Swami Vivekananda Prathima Pratishthapana Samithi Trust (under the chairmanship of Rev Swami Japanandaji) organized a Youth Convention which was hosted by the Vasavi Vidya Niketan Degree College, Bangalore, at their beautiful auditorium. The reputed inspirational speaker and columnist Dr. Gururaja Karajagi was present as the chief guest. The Convention was presided over by Sri Seshamurthy, and graced by Swami Japanandaji. It began with beautiful bhajans by the Viveka Hamsa team, led by Sri Murali Rayasam. Sri Gururaja Karajagi spoke about the glorious life of Swami Vivekananda emphasizing his love for the motherland. His



eloquent talk left the students much impressed. Swami Japanandaji explored the topic of evolving trends in the modern day, and cautioned the students about taking fascination for them. He also described the glorious picture of the great culture and tradition personified by illustrious men like Swami Vivekananda. He passionately called upon the students to get involved in nation building rather than running after materialistic, selfish ambitions. Dr. Seshamurthy, Chief Executive, Academics and Administration, in his presidential address and thanked the Prathima Pratishthapana Samithi for undertaking such activities to spread the message of Swami Vivekananda amongst the youth of India by conducting Youth Conventions in almost all the major institutions of Bangalore.

### 25-3-18 -Tumkur –Impressive Shivaji Jayanti

The Tumkur Zilla Panchayat, Mahanagara Palike, the Kannada & Culture department, and Karnataka Kshatriya Maratha Parishath came together to celebrate the 391st birth anniversary of Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaja in a grand manner at the Gubbi Veeranna Kalakshetra. An attractive pageant involving performances by folk art troupes was taken through the streets prior to the public meeting, which was inaugurated by Rev Swami Japanandaji.

In his inspiring speech, Swamiji drew the attention of the audience about the current socio-political situation of the nation, and



highlighted the great significance of celebrating Shivaji's Jayanti. "Shivaji is being studied in 135 universities around the world. But few of them are in India!" regretted Swamiji. "It is the bounden duty of every Hindu to celebrate it!" he averred. "Shivaji Maharaj would be a great uniting force for the Hindus who are broken up because of forces of selfishness. Shivaji's colour was Kesari (saffron), which were symbolic of his renunciation, sacrifice, sincerity, and sincere respect for the common man. We Indians need to realize the greatness of this saffron colour."

**1-4-18: Guruvandana– Sri Siddaganga Mutt, Tumkur:** The 111th birthday celebration of Sri Sri Dr. Shivakumara Mahaswamiji was celebrated with great devotion and éclat in Tumkur. The committee of Sri Siddaganga Mutt had organized a huge public function at Govt.



College field, Tumkur. This programme was attended by Sri Sri Siddalinga Mahaswamiji, Sri Sri Gavi Siddeshwara Swamiji of Koppal and Sri Sri Siddarama Mahaswamiji of Belgaum. Swami Japanandaji was invited to deliver a talk on Sri Sri Siddaganga seer who has finished 111 years. The programme was really a grand tribute to the seer of Siddaganga where thousands of people were attended. In his talk Swami Japanandaji expressed the association of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama and Sri Siddaganga Mutt which was started from 1990 onwards. He also remembered how Sri Sri Siddaganga Swamiji used to guide him in the project which was taken up at Pavagada and also Rev. Sri Sri Siddaganga Swamiji who launched the Leprosy eradication programme on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhiji at Pavagada in 1993. He also explained the unique life of Sri Sri Siddaganga Swamiji which is blended with spirituality and service. He also emphasized the great teachings of Basavanna to be implemented in our day-to-day life as shown by Sri Sri Siddaganga Swamiji.

#### 6-4-18: Farewell Day at Sri Venkateshwara School of Nursing Sciences

Rev. Swami Japanandaji was accorded the honour of being the Chief Guest at the Lamp Lighting Ceremony at Sri Venkateshwara School of Nursing Sciences on 6th April 2018. Sixty outgoing students were given a warm farewell, and an oath taking ceremony was also included. Swamiji in his address, exhorted the young nursing graduates to think beyond the remuneration for their work, and make service their passion; he inspired them to add their feelings and concern towards the patients to their every action, which they would find to be a far more satisfying experience. He described how Nightingale of Florence displayed her courage and commitment to serve the wounded soldiers, when no modern equipment or electricity existed. "May the model of Nightingale's life remain bright before you to be followed and achieve your life-goals", urged Swamiji. Dr. G. Venkataramaiah, founder of the institution, presided over the function.

#### April 17th& 18th – Sringeri Pilgrimage

"Akshaya Tritiya" (which fell on 18th April, 2018) is one of the most auspicious days for Hindus, according to the scriptures. Although

people generally associate the festival with worldly fortune, the day has great spiritual significance for the devout, who consider it to be a fortunate day to sanctify their life through spiritual acts, as enjoined by holy people. To enable the Ashram devotees to make



opportune use of this festive day, Rev Swami Japanandaji appealed to Sri Sri Jagadguru of Sri Sringeri Mutt, and obtained his consent and blessings to participate in the several yagas and special pooja to Sri Sharadadevi on the festive day. The devotees considered themselves very blessed to have performed all the religious rites under the direct guidance of Shri Shri Jagadguru.



The pilgrims' team reached Sri Sringeri Mutt by a special bus on 17th and took part in Sri Shankara Jayanti celebrations which started on the same day and continued till the 21st. The next morning, from 6:30 to 10 am, the 108-Modaka Gana homa, Navagraha homa, Ekavaara Rudra homa and Mrutyunjaya homa were conducted under the directions of the Mutt's Pradhan Rutvik Sri Shivashankara Peshagaar.

We also visited the Shri Rushyashringeshwara temple at Kigga. Special prayers for rain and crops were offered, particularly for the success of the restoration work of two lakes in Pavagada taken up by our Ashrama.



#### 20-4-18 – Sri Shankara Jayanti, Sringeri Mutt, Bangalore

Swami Japanandaji graciously lent his presence at and inaugurated the Sri Shankara Jayanti Utsava, organized by Sri Shankara Jayanti Seva Samithi, in the premises of Sri Shankara Mutt, Bangalore. Devotees participated enthusiastically in good numbers in the most wonderful and unique celebrations. In his inaugural address, Rev. Swamiji spoke about the glory of Sri Shankaracharya and his contribution to world philosophy. He described how Sri Shankaracharya belongs to the world, not just to India, and the fact of the universal acknowledgement of and admiration for Sri Shankara's philosophy, by the eminent philosophers of the world. He also cautioned to the audience that it is high time to keep up the traditions and the great legacy of the Sanatana Dharma as taught by Sri Shankara Bhagavadpada. Leading lights such as Sri Sri Ravishankar Guruji, Sri Narendra Babu Sharma, Dr. Gopalakrishna Sharma, Vidwan S Ganesh, and Somasundaram Dixit participated in and enriched this most impressive event.

**29-4-18 – Satsanga at Yoganiketan:** At the invitation of Yoganiketan, Shankarapuram, Rev Swamiji held a special retreat at their Yoga Bhavan. It afforded a new experience to the participants, who enjoyed Swamiji's talk totally focused on Yoga as taught by Sri Patanjali Maharshi. He enunciated the concepts through Raja yoga of Swami Vivekananda. Even though this is a technical subject, he was able to reach it to the hearts of the audience with his simple and direct presentation. The discourse was followed by a beautiful bhajan session rendered by Swamiji and his team.

#### 26-5-18: Symposium on Yoga and Cancer at Shankara Cancer Foundation

As part of the birth centenary celebration of Yogacharya Padmavibhushana B.K.S. Iyengar, a symposium on the role of Yoga in the treatment of cancer was organized by Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Centre and Yoga Mandira, Bangalore, at which Rev Swamiji had the honour to present his perspectives of the spiritual dimension of Yoga. Various facets of the topic were covered by the different speakers of eminence. The meet was inaugurated by former CJI Sri M. N. Venkatachalaiah. Dr. B. S. Srinath, surgeon, spoke about issues in combating and confronting cancer; Dr. S. N. Omkar on yoga and spirituality in pain management; Dr. Ramamani, Oncologist, on Yoga and spirituality; Dr. B. N. Gangadhar, Director, NIMHANS, spoke on Yoga and Mental health. It was a scholarly convention, with each speaker giving an eloquent talk on their respective topics, justifying their most valuable presence.



### 27-7-18 – Guru Purnima at Baba Temple, Tumkur

Guru Purnima was celebrated in a grand manner by devotees at Sri Shirdi Sai Temple, Tumkur, in the holy presence of Swami Japanandaji. Rev Swamiji, along with the devotees' troupe from Pavagada, conducted an electrifying bhajan programme. He also spoke on the glory of the day. Almost 5000 devotees enjoyed the Guruvandana programme with devotional fervour and total involvement.

**4-8-18** – On this holy day of Ashadha Friday and the Jayanti of Mother Chamundeshwari, Rev Swami Japanandaji led a satsanga at the **Sri Sharada Trust, Jayanagar, Bengaluru**. The topic of his discourse was the famous words of the Holy Mother: “Remember you have a mother...” It was an emotionally very touching talk, appealing to every heart, and created a wave of devotion. This was further enhanced by Swamiji's rendition of bhakti-filled songs, which were ably complemented by Sri Venugopal who provided the tabla accompaniment, leading to a feeling of fulfilment in the devotees' hearts.

### 14-10-18 – Founding Day of Sai Baba Mandira, TR Nagara, Bangalore

The devotees of Sri Sai Spiritual Centre (popularly known as Baba Mandira) in Tyagaraja Nagara, organized a grand three day celebration to commemorate its founding day. A mass feeding was also undertaken as part of the event, through which nearly five lakh people were fed throughout Karnataka. Rev. Swami Japanandaji was accorded the honour of inaugurating the event at the beautiful temple premises. Sri K. R. Ramesh Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker, Karnataka Legislative Assembly, and Justice Sri N Kumar, former judge, Karnataka High Court, graced this function. Swami Japanandaji in his talk emphasized on the need for everyone to acquire the spiritual outlook. “We must take to spiritual path for lasting peace. There is no alternative. However sophisticated and comfortable our lifestyle may get, with all these, man still needs spirituality. All the most modern gadgets can never be a substitute for spiritualizing our lives. Without that he +will be miserable till the end. “Swamiji heartily appreciated the activities being conducted by the temple authorities, the benefits of which are reaching numerous people, and thousands of students through the midday meals programme. Sri Ramesh Kumar in his address described the wonderful life of Sri Shirdi Baba. Justice N. Kumar cautioned the people not to run after pleasure and enjoyment, but instead turn towards the divine teachings of Baba which alone have the power to redeem our lives. A large number of devotees took part in the celebration.



**3rd to 5th November – Pilgrimage to the Abode of the Holy Trio**—Swami Japanandaji, as per his yearly routine, detached himself for three days to be all by himself, as a mendicant, at the feet of the Holy Trio and enjoy the retreat. At the Belur Math, Rev Swamiji was totally away from busy schedules, to just soak himself in the spiritual vibrations. He met the senior sadhus and sought their blessings. Swamiji spent much time in Dakshineswar—the 'leelasthan' where Sri Ramakrishna carried out all his spiritual sadhanas. Another place very dear to his heart was 'Udbodhan', where the Holy Mother spent her days when she was in Kolkata. As Swamiji reveals it, a visit to Kolkata recharges him with the inner strength and drive to carry on the life mission.

### 14-11-18 – Swamiji's Meeting with Dharmadhikari



Rev Swami Japanandaji undertook a pilgrimage of Sri kshetra Dharmasthala and had the privilege to meet the Dharmadhikari Sri Sri D. Veerendra Heggade, an all-time patron of our institutions, who has lent his support and encouragement since the earliest days. Swamiji updated Sri Heggade about all the service activities, particularly in the backdrop of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama and its constituents. A very pleased Sri Heggadeji prayed that the blessings of Sri Manjunatheshwara would always be on Swamiji and the devotees.





### 22-12-18 – Yuva Brigade Convention, Bangalore

Swami Japanandaji was invited to grace the state level convention of Yuva Brigade, a volunteers' corps led by Sri Sulibele Chakravarthy, at Sri Rama Mandira Convention Hall, N. R. Colony. Senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order Rev. Swami Nityasthanandaji Maharaj, Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Davanagere, and several other dignitaries participated in the convention. Addressing the youthful and enthusiastic audience, Rev. Swami Japanandaji interpreted the concept of service of God in Man as envisaged by Swami Vivekananda. What seemed to impress the listeners most was the emphatic reality of the outcome of the 20+ humanitarian projects taken up by his institutions,

aimed at the poorest sections of people. A question and answer session gave good opportunity to the participants to delve deeper into the subject. Sri Chakravarti Sulibele too participated in the discussions and it proved to be a very lively and impressive session.

### 22-12-18 – Golden Jubilee of C.A. Firm

Rev Swami Japanandaji graciously inaugurated the Golden Jubilee event of the auditing company owned by Sri D. L. Suresh Babu, a well-known chartered accountant and financial consultant, held at the Mangala Mantapa auditorium, NMKRV campus, Bangalore. In his benedictory address Swamiji emphasized on the need to follow the ideologies laid by Swami Vivekananda. He described how a commoner could rise to be a great personality by adopting moral and ethical values in the day-to-day life, and how serving the under-privileged people in the name of Almighty that leads to blessedness.

**30-12-18 – Lions Regional Meet at Mysore:** Rev. Swami Japanandaji was invited to shed light on the secret of service for the members of the Lions Club at their 10th Regional meeting of held at Mysore. Based on the teachings of Swami Vivekananda on the Karmayoga, Swamiji elaborated the meaning of service and he concluded by telling that whatever service we do it is for development of our own inner strength. "We must never ever think that people are waiting for our services; rather we should go to their doorsteps and treat them as the manifestation of divinity and serve them as Gods."



### 31-12-18 – Geeta Namana – Ananth Kumar Memorial Event

Rich homage was paid to and many a tear shed for Sri H.N. Ananth Kumar, a Central Minister and a much loved, popular statesman, who suddenly succumbed to fatal illness, at a memorial meeting under the auspices of Adamyia Chaitanya. It was a huge gathering of his friends, associates and followers from far and wide, bereaving his untimely death. Top political leaders, MLAs & MLCs, and eminent personalities such as the Jnanapith awardee Dr. Chandrashekhara Kambara were present. Musical tributes were later offered by famous artists like Sangeetha Katti and Kikkeri Krishnamurthy. Rev Swami Japanandaji who had the distinction to inaugurate the event, described in his talk the wonderful personality of Sri Ananth Kumar and recalled with gratitude his liberal support for the rural programmes of the Sevashrama. He stressed that all those dream projects which Sri Ananth Kumar had started must be continued and completed. His goal of serving the society must be strengthened through 'Adamyia Chetana', the institution he founded with passion, which Smt. Tejaswini Ananth Kumar has indeed been carrying forward most commendably.



## DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

### 5-3-18 – Smt. Gayathri Sathyanarayana and team, Vichara Vedike, Bangalore.

Members of 'Vivekananda Vichara Vedike', an old organization of dedicated devotees of the Holy Trio from Bangalore, led by Smt. Vyjayanti Manay visited the institution. The members refreshed themselves of all our projects, and mixed with the children at the Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management. In the evening Swami Japanandaji held a special spiritual retreat for them, followed by bhajans. Smt. Gayathri Sathyanarayan coordinated the programme.

### 24-3-18 – Sri Vishwesh Bhat & Team, Infosys

It was our pleasure to welcome Sri Vishwesh Bhat, a great musician who is creating new waves in the musical world, who paid a visit to our Rural Health Centre along with the members of his musical band. They were all warmly received by Rev Swamiji. The team was taken around to introduce the multifarious activities of our

institutions. In the evening Sri Vishwesh Bhat presented beautiful bhajans in the prayer hall of the Sevashrama.

**29-8-18 – Justice Smt. Rathnakala**, former judge, High Court of Karnataka, visited along with her family, and viewed all our service activities. Sri H.K.V. Reddy, Sr. Advocate, Madhugiri accompanied Justice Rathnakala.

**30-10-18 - Dr. S Selva Kumar**, IAS, MD (Concurrent Charge), K.P.T.C.L., and Director, Karnataka Power Corporation Limited, Govt. of Karnataka, visited our institutions.

**1-11-18 – Dr. T.K. Bhattacharya**, Addl. Sr. Regional Director, ROH & FW, Kolkata, visited and appreciated the services provided by the institution.

**12-12-18 – Dr. M. Sathiraju**, Consultant, NLEP, Telangana, Central Leprosy Division, Govt. of India, and Dr. M. Chetan, DLO, visited our hospital for a review of the Leprosy project.



Smt. Gayathri Sathyanarayana and team



Justice Smt. Rathnakala



Dr. S Selva Kumar



## SERVICE ACTIVITIES

### 24-3-18 – World TB Day

Our institution took the lead to create awareness among the masses about the killer disease tuberculosis on the World TB Day. In coordination with the local health department, we set up a stall at the town bus-stand with a banner and placards, which attracted a large number of people. The event was very well managed by our CMO, Dr. Chandrakala G.R.

**4-6-2018:** As our readers are aware, **Vatsalya Sudha** is a programme run for the poor children in the Ashrama neighbourhood, who walk into the Ashrama every morning (about 120 of them), receive hot milk and other healthy goodies such as biscuits, sing a simple prayer and leave. All these children were



each gifted a new school bag and notebooks, as they have been at the beginning of every year.



### 19-7-18 – Help for school children at K. Rampura

K. Rampura lies in a remote part of Pavagada taluk, its backwardness evidently reflecting on the school children. Although the school provides midday meals to the students, they had to carry the plate from their homes, but most of them could not afford even a decent plate to eat it from. The headmaster of the school along with the students made an earnest appeal to Swamiji to help them in this regard. Overwhelmed at the state of the school children, Rev Swamiji responded immediately to the appeal, and arranged to equip them with not just the plates, but

their needs of cups, bags and new books. This act of kindness meant a lot to the 250 students to manage their daily life. The devotees' group including Sri T. P. Gopalakrishna Setty helped in the distribution of these materials.

**11-10-2018: The 19th World Sight Day** was celebrated by our institution in association with Dist. Health and Family Welfare officer and the Dist. Blindness Control Officer, Tumkur. Present at the event were senior specialist Dr. G. Venkataramaiah, taluk medical officer Dr. N. Venkatesh Murthy, eye specialist at the public hospital Dr. Ajith, as well as the CMO and other eye specialists of our hospital.





At the outset, Rev Swamiji gave an outline of all the facilities being made available through our organizations, and the main achievements so far. He acknowledged with gratitude the close interaction and support of the district and taluk level health officers, which was essential for us to carry out the government sponsored programmes. He gave a picture of the blindness eradication measures undertaken by our organization along with the relevant data.

Dr. Venkataramaiah advised the people in detail about how to protect our vision, especially in the background of the risks of diabetes, changing lifestyle, food habits etc through proper changes.

The Taluk medical officer Dr. Venkatesh Murthy asked the people to make the best use of the most modern equipment installed for the sake of poor people. He heartily praised how the hospital under the leadership of Swamiji was extending treatment for tuberculosis and leprosy, as an NGO, and assured the best possible cooperation from the government health department.

A special eye check-up and treatment camp was also organized at our hospital, which was utilized by over a hundred villagers.

### 19-10-2018: Gifts for Civic Workers

On the occasion of the Vijaya Dashami festival, the civic employees of Pavagada town were felicitated and given new clothes at a function organized by Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama. Rev Swami Japanandaji said it was a token of love and regard for these public servants who render the most essential service to the community. Smt Suma Anil, the president of the municipality, as well as members Sri G Sudesh Kumar, Sri Manu Mahesh and Sri Vasanth Kumar were among the dignitaries present.

### 29-10-18 – Gandhi Jayanti at Leprosy Hospital, Bangalore

Traditionally, Rev Swami Japanandaji has been a part of the Gandhi Jayanti celebration at the Government Leprosarium on Magadi Road, Bangalore, involving the patients at the hospital. However, since Rev Swamiji was abroad at that time this year, the 150th Gandhi Jayanti was held on 29th October, after his return. Dr. S. Pushparaj, Director, HFW Services, inaugurated the function in the presence of Dr. KM Muniraj, Jt. Director, Dr. Rekha S, Asst. Director Leprosy, HFW, AMO of the Leprosarium Dr. Ayub Ali Khan. Other senior doctors and the media advisor RP Sambasdashiva Reddy were also present. The poor patients were gifted new clothes and other essential things to commemorate the event.





## 5-11-18 – Drinking Water Plant at Kalidasa Nagara, Pavagada

The tenth Pure Drinking water plant under our ambitious Pavana Ganga Project (backed by Infosys Foundation), was inaugurated in Kalidasa Nagar of Pavagada town. It was indeed a precious Deepavali gift to the water-deprived residents from the Sevashrama. The RO Unit was inaugurated by Sri Venkataramanappa, Minister of Labour, Karnataka. A host of dignitaries including Smt Suma Anil, Sri K M Thimmarayappa, Sri Vasanthkumar, Sri T Narasimhaiah, Sri Manu Mahesh, Sri Sudesh Kumar, Sri Rizwan, Sri Venkatesh, Sri Nagaraju and Sri Naveen Chandra were present.

Drinking water problem has persisted for years in the town and we have tried to provide our best support. It is a matter of much consolation that all the earlier nine water plants have been successfully serving the thirsty community, unlike most of those set up by government agencies which are commonly shut down in no time, due to a host of problems.



## 29-12-2018: New Toilet block at Govt. Junior College, Tumkur

Our readers remember that Rev Swamiji had played a key role in the whole process of getting drinking water supply for the water-starved Government Junior College campus on B.H. Road, Tumkur, a year ago, right from getting a borewell drilled and setting up an RO unit.



He had taken up the initiative when he found that the college lacked the infrastructure to fulfil the basic need of over 1500 students and faculty members. He had also expressed his unhappiness and concern at the lack of toilets in the campus, and offered to do the needful.

This important task was duly taken up by Sevashrama, with the financial support of Smt. Sudha Murty, the Chairperson of Infosys



Foundation who responded immediately to our request. The modern, well equipped toilet block was inaugurated on the 29th December 2018, on the occasion of the college Sports and Culture Day, in the presence of Sri G. B. Jyothi Ganesh, Hon'ble MLA Tumkur, who presided over. In his address, Swamiji gave credit for the job to Smt. Sudha Murty, the Chairperson of Infosys Foundation who responded immediately and cleared funding for it. Swamiji praised the humane qualities of Smt. Sudha Murty, and pointed out how, in spite of her busy schedules and responsibilities, she is always on the toes to help the students, farmers, and tirelessly

works to support those deprived of basic facilities like health, education. Mr. Jyothi Ganesh, MLA, Tumkur, as well as the Principal and other speakers also offered their hearty thanks to the Infosys Foundation and to Swamiji for the most valuable help.

#### Swamiji's Kindness Saves Disaster-Struck Family (17.8.2018):

Mehboob of Pavagada is a poor labourer with a small family. His wife must labour too, rolling beedies, for a few rupees. Trouble came to Mehboob in the form of kidney stones, and went to Tumkur to get operated. As misfortune would have it, the same night a short circuit in his house sparked a fire, and burned down everything. The couple, left with nothing, was devastated. When Swamiji came to know of this tragedy, he immediately rushed to their place. He consoled them, and arranged to provide them the basic household materials, clothing, bedding, rations and also helped with new electric connection. Needless to say, the Muslim couple's joy knew no bounds.

The picture of Swami Japanandaji personally rushing to the aid of a poor man in distress would have made Swami Vivekananda exclaim, "You are my shishya, indeed!"



## ACTIVITIES OF SRI SHARADADEVI INSTITUTE OF VISION MANAGEMENT, PAVAGADA

### 5-2-18 – Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management – Third Anniversary

Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management (sponsored by Infosys Foundation, coordinated by Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama) celebrated its third anniversary in the premises of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, graced by Justice Sri H. Billappa who presided over the function, Sri Sulibele Chakravarthy, and Sri S. Shivakumaraiah, CDPO, Pavagada. The blind children of the institution enthralled the audience with a variety of cultural events.



### Resolute students clear board exam

The whole family of students, teachers, volunteers and sponsors at SSIVM is overjoyed at the success of Kum. Radha, Kum. Meghana (both in first class) and Chi. Akkalappa (in second class), the three visually handicapped youngsters, at the SSLC examination in 2018. The credit for their success is due largely to the dedicated guidance and intense mentoring provided by the teachers Smts. Nagamani, Roopa, Girijamma, Sri Nagaraju,







and the volunteers Smts. Lakshmi Mohan, Sudha Ramamurthy, and Vishala Gupta.

The institution is at present nurturing about 30 visually handicapped children with free education, food, daycare, clothing, and transport facilities, and trying to bring out the creativity in them. The three aforesaid students are now pursuing college (PUC) education with the help and cooperation of the teachers and volunteers, putting in their best efforts. Smt. Rajyashree Satish, the hon. director of the institution, deserves hearty kudos for her total dedication and involvement for being the engine of its progress and success.

### 15-08-2018: Independence Day at SSIVM

The Seventy second Independence Day of the nation was celebrated by the specially-abled children of Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management in a grand manner.

The patriotic fervour displayed by these children, even though they lack the external eye, was amazing. How well they are able to see and comprehend things in such a right spirit, and feel those noble thoughts even at such a tender age, makes others think and feel shy about their own wisdom.

The way the children presented patriotic songs, they seemed to proclaim, “We are indeed the proud children of Mother India.”

Hats off to the children, all their teachers who are mentoring them so well, and to Infosys Foundation, which is extending financial support for this great cause.

### Swami Japanandaji nominated for National TB Forum

Team Vivekananda is delighted to inform its associates and well-wishers that Rev. Swami Japanandaji has been selected as a member of the National TB Forum, under the TB Division, Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi, which is constituted for the involvement of community and civil society by the government of India. The Hon'ble govt. has thought it fit to utilize the precious experience of Rev. Swamiji by conferring this prestigious and responsible position on him. It may be remembered that our Rural Health Centre (SVIRHC) run by Swami Japanandaji has had an impeccable track record over 25 years in the implementation of the Tuberculosis eradication programme under RNTCP, and so far as many as 13,000 TB afflicted men, women and children have been treated through SVIRHC. The institution has also been involved in many scientific research studies on Tuberculosis, taken up with the support of National Tuberculosis Institute, Bangalore, and many research papers have been published in the international journals. SVIRHC has also bagged several recognitions and citations in this field.

We are all sure that the Forum would benefit greatly from Revered Swamiji's presence in the nation's fight against Tuberculosis.

### Glorious Performance by CMO Dr. Chandrakala G.R.

We feel honored and delighted to share the news that our long-serving Chief Medical Officer Dr. G.R. Chandrakala, MBBS, DLO, DNB, has come out with flying colours in the All India TB Management Examination, conducted by ICMR and NIRT, online. Being among the top seven rank holders, with a score of 97% marks, she has made the entire Team Vivekananda proud. Her distinction is also a matter of pride to our state, district and taluk, and it is yet another feather of a national level recognition for SVIRHC. As for the ever cheerful and composed Dr. Chandrakala, however, the love and regard that she receives from the people is a great reward in itself. She has earned a name for herself by rendering service to the poor patients, who come from afar, in every manner. Her way of treating them with a smile, and boosting their morale with kind words has brought good repute to the whole institution. Dr. Chandrakala has the best guidance for patients with TB or problems of the chest, ENT, and OB/Gyn issues. Swami Japanandaji says with confidence that the young doctor is destined to achieve many more laurels with her excellence, renunciation and service.

**Statistical Reports as on 31-8-2019**  
**Swami Vivekananda Integrated Rural Health Centre:**

Particulars	2019	Cumulative Total
General Outpatients treated	4074	262895
Health camps conducted	8	323
Inpatients treated		
Number	1731	29929
Bed-days	5585	130995
Leprosy:		
No. of new Leprosy cases registered	7	3837
No. of leprosy patients cured and released from treatment	3708	
Reconstructive Surgeries done	14	534
No. of beneficiaries (Leprosy patients) under Livelihood Enhancement Programme	6	69

Tuberculosis :	Registered	Cured & Completed Treatment
1993-1997 Under National Tuberculosis System	2767	1115
1998-2002 Under SCC DOTS system	1432	1109
Under Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP) Pavagada & Madhugiri Taluks From 6-1-2003	8927	6984
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	13126	9208
TB cases as on 31-8-2019	267	

**Shree Sharadadevi Eye Hospital & Research Centre:**

No. of outpatients treated (at Hospital)	12676	223134
No. of cataract surgeries done (both IOL & Non-IOL)	1963	26962
Other eye related surgeries like Squint, Pterygium , DCR, DCT	2834	
No. of Schools surveyed	560	
No. of students screened	83609	
No. of students treated for Vit. A deficiency	1659	
No. of students treated for Visual defects	740	
No. of students with other eye related problems	269	
No. of students provided free spectacles	485	
No. of Pediatric Cataract, Squint, DCR probing etc surgeries done since 2002	170	



<b>Viveka Jyothi – Mobile Eye Hospital</b>	
No. of villages visited	73
<b>Total No. of persons screened</b>	<b>2028</b>
Cataract	1158
Refractive error	485
Pterygium	98
Other eye related problems	287
<b>Pavagada Pediatric Eye Disease Study:</b>	
Phase I – No. of children screened	23100
Phase II – No. of children screened	9048
<b>Find the Blind project:</b>	
Phase I – Roddam, AP area – No. of Anganawadi children screened	2224
Phase II – Pavagada Kasaba area – No. of Anganawadi children screened	7654
No. of children provided free spectacles	72

**Mobile Hospital:**

Particulars	2019	Cumulative Total
No. of outpatients treated	2021	123932
Villages covered in a week	Kothur, Nidagal, Sasalakunte and Gummaghatta	

**Sri Ramakrishna Peripheral Heart Centre:**

No. of heart health camps conducted	5	53
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No. of Cancer detection camps conducted in coordination with Sri Shankara Cancer Institute & Research Centre, Bangalore: 3

**ICTC & PPTCT – 2019-20**

General tested			General Positive		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
750	1084	1834	1	1	2

**Literary/Spiritual Discourses on DVG Themes:** Amidst the incessant flow of service activities of Sevashrama and its constituent organizations, every one of which he leads from the front, Rev Swamiji's 'Jnana-yajna' pursuits continued unabated, quenching the spiritual thirst of the devotees. The five-year old monthly series of discourses on DVG's "Manakutimmana Kagga" Tumkur, possibly the longest ever, reached the seventh year mark. Among the distinguished personalities to accompany him on the dais included (**Episodes 67 to 73**) Dr. Sripada Bhat, Asst. Professor, Tumkur Univ., DVG Kannada Study Centre, Dr. Gururaja Karajagi, International Educationist, Sri B. Suresh Gowda, MLA, Tumkur Rural constituency, Sri H.G. Chandrashekar, Industrialist, and Sri D. Rajashekar, Project Manager, Nirmithi Kendra, Tumkur etc.



The DVG lecture series in Pavagada also witnessed Episodes 3 to 11, the dignity and appeal of which events were enhanced by the presence and talks of leading lights like Dr. Sripada Bhat; Sri G.K. Kulakarni, Dist. Rajyotsava awardee; HH Swami Swaroopanandendra Saraswathi, Sri Swami Sarvadharm Sharanalaya Trust, Pavagada; Prof. Ma.la.na. Murthy (Retd.) TVV College, Madhugiri; Sri Rahamath Ulla, Lecturer, Govt. PU College, Pavagada; Sri Vishwaroopachar, distinguished teacher; Sri V.N. Govindareddy, Retd. Teacher, Bapuji High School; Dr. Sri Shivananda Shivacharya Swamiji, noted speaker and thinker; Sri Hiremath, Tumkur; Sri N. Manjunath, Science teacher, Mangalawada, Pavagada tq.



The two regular monthly discourses in Bangalore, on Sri Ramakrishna Vachana Veda at Gokhale Institute, and on Sri Ramakrishna Leelaprasanga at the Ananda Satsanga Kendra in Basavanagaudi, both of which are as dear to Swamiji as they are to the keen listeners, continued unabated through the year, enthralling the devotees.



## RELIEF PROJECTS

### Kerala Flood Relief: 2018

The year 2018 seemed to be a year of series of natural disasters for south India, which kept Team Vivekananda busy for months together. The entire state of Kerala was tormented by unprecedented rains and deluge in August when not just the roads, but even the air routes got completely closed. The airports were shut down for more than a month. People suffered untold misery and losses for long periods of time. And in the month of November the “Gaja” cyclone hit the coastal areas of Tamilnadu, specially the Nagapattinam area. The intensity of the cyclone was unexpected and it literally blew up the entire belt of Nagapattinam. The road network was destroyed and trees like papal and coconut were washed away without a trace. Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Pavagada, took it upon itself to serve at both these challenging projects. Smt. Sudha Murty, on behalf of Infosys Foundation, responded spontaneously to our resolve and extended full support to both the projects. Swami Japanandaji again led from the front in most exemplary ways, with the tremendous experience he has gained in handling disasters.



In the meanwhile, big efforts were under way to prepare the relief materials packaged for distribution by the Infosys Foundation, in a thorough and meticulous manner, under the spirited guidance of Smt Sudha Murty, with all the executives personally involved in the 'kainkary'. Each package included groceries, oil, soap, blankets, lungis, sarees etc. Other service organizations such as the Chinmaya Mission and Seva Bharathi were also involved in the relief works. The local Ramakrishna Ashram centres were doing their best, day and night.

Team Vivekananda under Swami Japanandaji headed for their destination with all the relief stock on road in lorries, following a circuitous route via Salem, Kumbhakonam, and Madurai and reached Haripada. It was a treacherous journey lasting full four days, havoc visible all



through, but the Team's spirit was never dampened. Relief work was commenced as soon as the lorries reached the spot. Hundreds of families, stranded and bereft of proper food, clothing and shelter, were each given a 20-kg packet of essential materials like groceries, soap, oil, blankets, lungis, sarees etc.



The first phase of distribution of relief materials went off rather smoothly. Simultaneously, the second and third phase were also planned for execution at the other worse affected regions— the forest areas of Wayanad including Tirunelli, Manandavadi, Kurukkanmoola, Vallyoorkavu, Anjukunnu, Makkala, Ozhakkody, Neeravaram, Sultan Batheri, and Thetyamala. Team-Vivekananda braced itself to reach these places. The relief packets were again readied at the Foundation's office in Bengaluru and despatched through lorries to Wayanad – the land of such remote hills as the Brahmagiri and Shabarimalai. The adivasi hamlets and tribal belt caught up in the inaccessible hills of Wayanad district were to be the beneficiaries of this relief project. Swami Japanandaji took the lead in trudging from one hut to another, meeting the distressed men and women, consoling them while handing over the relief materials carried on the shoulders. A grateful smile of relief on their faces kept the Team fired up.



To cover every foot of the safari was a challenge. The Team encountered several mishaps including landslides and vehicle breakdowns. In fact, we narrowly escaped the wrath of a rogue elephant in Mamalakandam area where roads are narrow and only jeeps can go. But these soldiers of Vivekananda proved to be tougher than the challenges. And it so happened that in the deep forest, as the convoy of lorries negotiated a dangerous tyranny, the road seemed to come to a dead-end, suddenly cutoff by a landslide, and the vehicles that had just proceeded ahead of this team were totally out of sight! The situation was tense: pitch dark, raining incessantly, and caught in the middle of the forest – the abode of all sorts of animals. The team members, including Swamiji, quietly spent the night in the lorry cabin. It was one of the tougher tests. In the morning, a police team arrived and rescued the team, leading them along a safer route.

It was still raining heavily. It was very risky to tread on these slippery and waterlogged grounds, but the team remained ever charged up. The village where relief work was proposed to be carried out the next day was very close to the origin of Kabini River. As we neared the spot, we





with the whole of River Pampa's shoreline deserted, and mud and slush covering up the entire road and all sorts of dwellings. During the floods, the bridges had been submerged under more than ten feet of water – the deluge was so unprecedented. The mess of the once discarded urban debris heaped on bridges and shores, coming back to haunt man as a “return gift” from Nature, was shocking and disgusting. Our team chose some areas like Periyar for relief material distribution. The roads, however, were so bad that covering a few kilometres felt like a journey of hundred miles.

After successful completion of project of Kerala and Waynad, Swami Japanandaji visited some state government schools in the interiors meant for Adivasis and found that they needed immediate help and support to continue their functioning. Plans were finalized to bring about 15 of these schools under a project called “**Sadvidya**” sponsored by Infosys Limited and Edgeverve Systems Limited of Bengaluru, for extensive help. Equipment such as computers, furniture items, book racks, lab requirements, green boards, utensils, and uniforms were procured from reputed companies in Bangalore and nearly six lorry-loads of materials were distributed among these schools. The programme was carried out in a phased manner and successfully implemented with the help of local authorities.

found hundreds of displaced people scrambling to collect what was left after the floods, from the debris of their houses. It was a heartrending sight. However, we were glad to have reached and we had some very essential things to offer to these unfortunate brethren – courtesy of the Infosys Foundation. As we announced our plans to distribute relief materials, people obliged us gladly, stood in queues and received them with gratitude. It was no small matter that relief operations could be carried out peacefully and systematically, given the suffering that people were going through, and their built up angst against the government authorities for inaction. However, at many places the local/panchayat leaders helped by keeping the mobs in control.

Then our Team joined hands with the volunteer groups that had arrived from other parts of Kerala, to help the locals in the formidable task of cleaning up their houses awash with muddy slush. It was nothing but an intense feeling of brotherhood that prevailed in the hearts of everyone who had been brought together in a noble, humanitarian mission.

The next day, our team went to Sultan Batheri, the other part of the Wayanad, which also had faced devastating floods, and distributed the relief materials to the needy.

After that, we turned our attention to the most affected and devastated Kalady town and the adjacent areas of Kozhikode, Idukki, Kunnakura, Ayroor North, Olanad (Orapuraja), Odakkaikara, Haripad and adjoining devastated slum areas and carried out relief work. It was a horrible sight,





From the Kalady Ashrama we set out for our next destination—a Govt school for the tribals at Thattekadu that we heard was badly affected by the rains. It is in the vicinity of Idukki reservoir, surrounded by the Akkimala forest. The locals warned us not to venture there during the early morning and evening hours since elephants roam freely. We heeded their advice and started at 7 AM. In spite of the bad shape of roads, we managed to reach in about three hours. The school is located near the waterfalls, and at 6000 feet above the sea level, that was a very picturesque sight. We noted that the school was in immediate need of cooking utensils, desks, bookshelves, a computer etc.

Arrangements were quickly made for the supply of all these needs—thanks to the unflinching help extended by Infosys Limited and Edgeverve Systems, Bangalore, who supported this project under the “Sadvidya” project for restoring the schools, especially those belonging to tribals and adivasis.

In fact, not just this school, but as many as 15 schools, as detailed below, were similarly supplied educational equipment and materials as the Akkimala school, under this project. In all they received over 80 Lenovo computers, screens, projectors, and other essential needs.

#### The schools are as follows:

1. Saraswathy Vidyanikethan School, Kunnukara-683 578
2. St. Thomas Higher Secondary School, Ayroor, North Ayroor-683579, Ernakulam Dist.
3. Government High School, Mamalakandam-686 681.

4. Little Flower Lower Primary School, Olanad, Varapuzha P.O. 683 517.
5. St. Peter's Upper Primary School, Vadakkekara, P.O. Moothakunnam.
6. Govt Upper Primary School, Manathvady P.O., Wayanad Dt.
7. National Public School, Ozhakkody.
8. Anganwadi School, Kuzhinilam.
9. Anganwadi School, Kaniyaram.
10. Servindia Adivasi Upper Primary School, Wayanad District, 670646.
11. Govt High School, Chenad, Sulthan Bathery Tq, Wayanad Dt. 673592.
12. Government L P S, Kurukkanmoola, Manathvady
13. Government High School, Neeravaram
14. Govt Lower Primary School, Makkimala-670 644
15. Gandhi Memorial Upper Primary School, Anjukummu, Manathvady Tq.

Our other most important task of reaching emergency needs to the flood affected was also accomplished simultaneously.

Another happy feature of our mission this time was the hearty participation of the well-known institutions of Tumkur Merchants Cooperative Bank, the Agadi Foundation, and Vijaya Vanijya Alimony Trust, Bengaluru, who extended their liberal financial assistance, to whom we are very grateful.

Team Vivekananda deemed it a great opportunity to be able to serve distressed people in their hour of need.







### Nov. 2018: “Gaaja” Relief in Tamilnadu

A terrible cyclone dubbed Gaaja, blowing at a speed of 180 kms/hour, brought great misery to the inhabitants of Nagapattinam district of Tamilnadu on 26th November. Thousands lost their belongings including the means of their livelihood – boats, fishing nets etc; countless buildings/structures were damaged, and millions of trees, poles/towers uprooted. As soon as the first reports of the havoc arrived, the Team of volunteers of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Pavagada, was organized under Swami Japanandaji with a quick action plan to rush help to the sufferers. Again it was Smt. Sudha Murty of Infosys Foundation, who readily sponsored this mission. The Viveka Hamsa Balaga and “Samarpan”, an inspired volunteer corps of techies from Infosys, also joined hands and rendered invaluable help.



This mission, in fact, felt like a seamless continuation of the Kerala works that had gone on for months. In Tamilnadu, the inhabitants were mainly the severely affected fishermen. And, as we began food/material distribution among the cyclone victims, we had to face some very tense moments. Because of their inaccessibility, no relief team had visited those villages and the people were restless, tense and getting unruly. There were some places where utter chaos reigned, with people standing in queue for hours together for some rations. Our convoy could have been attacked by the mobs any moment and the materials looted away; nothing could have prevented that. Fortunately, as we appealed to him, the police superintendent of Nagapattinam Sri Vijayakumaran, realized the situation and assured his complete support. He deputed nearly 70 police personnel for our work, and that was such a relief! But for this support and show of strength, things would have turned nasty.







In fact, transporting the goods to the spots was a herculean task in itself. Food grains were brought from Chennai and it was a treacherous journey through the badly damaged roads, frequently blocked by huge trees. The relief material package we brought for each homeless family was substantial, and consisted of a saree, lungi, towel, bedsheet (a thick sheet for protection from cold), rice (25 kgs), dal, oil, and sugar (2 kgs each), tea powder (1 kg), a straw mattress, a large mosquito net, solar lantern and a tarpaulin (18x24 ft.). The scale of our operation was also large – we covered nearly 2000 families. Needless to say, it brought great cheer to the distraught community. A festive atmosphere prevailed when Swamiji paid them a visit after the distribution. The assistance proved to be really timely and crucial; many people could save their belongings with the help of tarpaulins etc.



Apart from supplying rations and clothes to the affected families, Swami Japanandaji wanted the families rendered jobless to be put back on their feet at the earliest. Therefore he arranged to provide fishing nets to some of them. The nets were procured from a reputed company in Chennai and distributed to ten selected fisher families at a cost of Rs. 5 lakhs. Similarly, tools were provided for two woodcutters.



We conveyed our sincere thanks to the local authorities and volunteers of Lions Club, Nagapattinam and Chennai Metro for their valuable cooperation. We were particularly obliged to the district police department for their understanding and timely assistance.



So, the 2018 relief works in Kerala and Tamilnadu proved to be even more challenging than ever, and they tested and proved our strengths like never before. We are grateful to the Lord that they could be accomplished to the best of our capabilities.



### Gaaja Relief project– Follow up action

The cyclone Gaaja that struck Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry in November 2018, left behind widespread damage to plantations, trees, habitations and various amenities. Lakhs of trees, which were an important source of income for the farmer community, were uprooted. Our well-wishers are aware of the substantial relief work carried out by Team Vivekananda, spearheaded by Swami Japanandaji. He had, in fact, committed to come back later at the time of sowing to further help the villagers rebuild their lives.



In coordination with our Sevashrama, the Infosys Foundation initiated a long term relief plan called '**Project Green Corridor**' in order to build strong defence against such situations in the future and secure the lives and property of the vulnerable communities, supported by Team Samarpan.

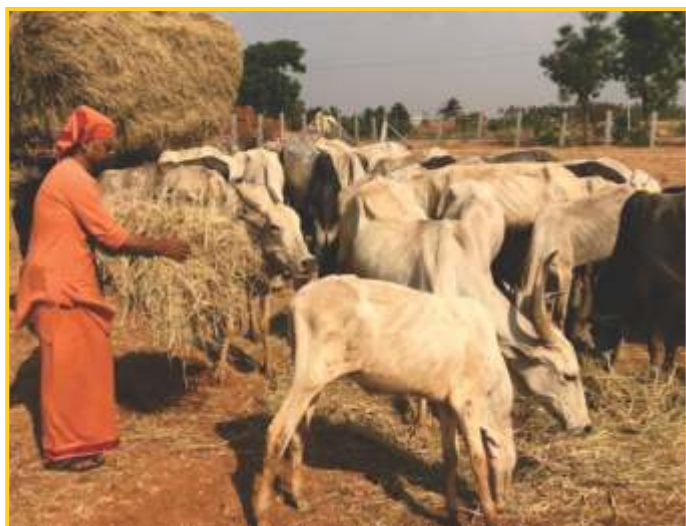
On 6th July, 2019, a function was held in the presence of Rev Swami Japanandaji at Vettaikaran Iruppu village of Nagapattinam District (Tamilnadu) to handover 3,000 saplings (coconut, mango and cashewnut) to the farmers and help in their planting. It was presided by Sri O.S. Maniyan, Hon'ble minister of Handloom & Textiles, Tamilnadu, Sri Dr. Suresh Kumar, District Magistrate / Collector, Nagapattinam, Sri Tamim Ansari, MLA, Nagapattinam, were present. Thousands of farmers got benefited out of this Initiative. It is estimated nearly 40 acres of land would be converted as Green Corridor.





## 2018-2019 – Drought Relief Project:

Knowing from experience that the drought situation this year (2019) is unlikely to be any better, Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama started the relief works much earlier, with the assurance of financial support from Smt. Sudha Murty, Infosys Foundation. **H.H. Sri Sri Vishweshwara Teertha Swamiji** of the Pejawara Math inaugurated the fodder distribution program – the first centre in the entire state – at Pavagada on 20th December 2018.



**Free Fodder Centre at Pavagada:** Post monsoon, the weather of 2018 continued to be very harsh in this part of land, worsening the distress among the mainly farming community. Watching the situation, Swami Japanandaji took steps to start our free fodder distribution centre (as part of annual drought relief operations) almost three months early, by December itself. This came as a life-saver for over a thousand farmers and their cattle heads. Many of them were coming to collect from even 20-30 kms away, indicating the gravity of the situation.

In fact, moved by the pathetic situation of cows and farmers, Rev Swamiji took the new initiative to send fodder to distant places like K.T.Hally, Roppa(near Thimmapura), Arasikere, K. Rampura and

Bestharahally from time to time to help the farmers tide over the crisis. Here is one instance of how Swamiji went to extremes to help the farmers and cows hit hard by drought. In early April, a cowherd from the village Vadrevu who had been roaming along with his herd of over hundred emaciated cows from one hamlet to another in search of fodder and water, had camped at the roadside of Nagalamadike village, completely let down. When he came and narrated his helplessness, Rev Swamiji immediately arranged for a lorry load of fodder from Andhra Pradesh, and catered to the starved cattle. The sight of poor beasts running to gobble up the fodder was heart rending, and appeared as a shameful blot on the civilized world.

**Saviour of the “God's Cows”:** Meanwhile, in February 2019, a newspaper reported that over 40 cows had died due to severe drought conditions in the Challakere taluk of Chitradurga District. Saddened and shocked by this news, Rev Swamiji rushed there, along with a relief team, and surveyed the affected areas. Those pockets of backward, semi-tribal area are populated by cowherds known as Kadu Gollas and

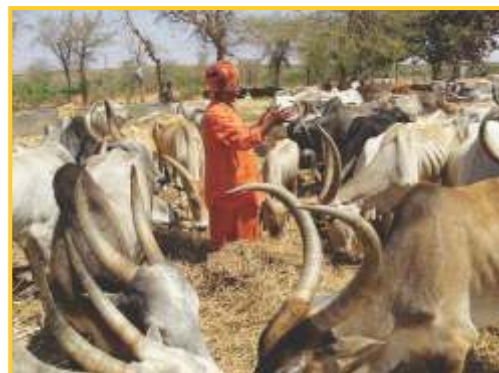


Myasa Bedas, who have been carrying on dairy farming in their own traditional ways. They look upon and brand cows as “Devara Hasugalu”, that is, God's own cows. Such is their attachment for the cattle. However, the drought had hit them very hard, and they were left in the lurch. At Bommadevarahatty, Challakere taluk, Rev Swamiji witnessed a terrible situation, with thousands of cows being on the verge of death, and the people totally helpless with no agency or government body coming to their rescue. When he found this, Rev



Swamiji was left with no doubt about taking up their cause immediately. Action was planned to save these native cows numbering about 1500 from death. **Smt. Sudha Murty was very supportive, and assured that the Infosys Foundation would extend the full support for this humanitarian mission.** Accordingly, relief work was started without delay. (However, at this time of grave urgency, unfortunately, the 'election code' came into effect; and citing that as excuse, and playing safe rather than with humane consideration, the state government officials refused to do anything. They could have been of much help in procuring fodder, for example, but that did not happen. This put up further hurdles for us.) Led by Swamiji, the Sevashrama corps went on with their mission on a war footing, even with limited resources at their disposal. In fact, at that time when the farmer community needed support urgently, we were the only agency to be supplying fodder, and our reach extended to every nook and corner of Challakere, Molakalmur and Hiriya taluks. That helped in successfully rescuing of all those cows from death.

Since then, Team-Vivekananda has continued to visit this area twice every week and provide fodder regularly to save the cattle in the tribal camps of Kuroodihally, Boodhihally, Bogenahally, Hirekere Kaval, Jogihatty, Bommadevarahatti, Bangaradahatti, Nayakanahatti, Jaganoorahatti, Nalagethanahally, Dasaramuthenahally, Hosayalanadu, Haleyalanadu, Jogayyanahatti, Bheemanabande, Nandanahally, Channabasaiahnahatti, Bukkambudhi, Obaladevarahasugalu, Near Kollapuradamma temple, Parashurampura. Over 480 tonnes of fodder as well as 6.50 tonnes of specially fortified cattle feed have been distributed to rejuvenate hundreds of cows on the throes of death. Thus we could avert an emergency situation successfully with the help of Infosys Foundation, which will go a long way in restoring the confidence and livelihood of the cowherd community.



Swami Japanandaji has involved himself completely in the task, unmindful of the scorching heat and stressful situations, implementing 'Practical Vedanta'. The exemplary help extended by the Challakere Tq. Tehsildar Sri Tushar B. Hosur and his staff, veterinary officer Dr. Hanumappa and his subordinates, the volunteering of Sri Mahesh and teammates of Samarpan, the continued

help of local youth Sri Mahesh and Sri Siddhesh, the all-round cooperation of prominent denizens and panchayat members of several villages – all these played a crucial role in the four-month long operation. The positive part played by the local media needs to be highlighted for the goodwill it generated and motivating all the voluntary groups.





Thus the camp was successfully operated for six months till 5th June, with about 930 tonnes fodder (450 tonnes in Pavagada Taluk and 480 tonnes in Chitradurga district) reaching the beneficiaries. We are justifiably satisfied having saved thousands of cattle heads from hunger and slaughter, and saving the farmers' families, too. Needless to say, the whole community is very beholden to Smt Sudha Murty, for the vital role played in this project through financial support. No less laudable was the close involvement of and voluntary help rendered by the members of **Samarpan**, the techies' group from the software giant Infosys, who arrived every week, handling every kind of work. A number of close devotees of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama also offered their valuable service at the fodder distribution centre, all through the project.



**Drinking Water Supply:** Another major feature of our drought relief works this year was reaching about 50,000 litres of drinking water every single day, to the distressed people in various places, through tankers and the ten RO units installed by us. The Infosys Foundation played the key role in this too, by providing two tankers. We are also nurturing about 150 plants/young trees in the premises of the High School in Pavagada by regular watering. The senior citizens of the town, as well as volunteers who cooperated in the task deserve our hearty thanks.

**Wildlife Protection and 'Green Revolution':** The scorching summer this year had severely distressed the wild animals, particularly the peacocks, in the jungles near K.Rampura of Pavagada Taluk. Several of them had died due to thirst and extreme heat. These forest areas are primarily a peacock sanctuary, and over a thousand of these majestic birds live there, along with many species of prey and predators. When he heard that our national birds were dying with no water to drink, Swami Japanandaji expressed grave concern, and decided that we must take up the cause of wildlife and rush to their rescue. Rev Swamiji drafted the plan to supply water and even food to the fauna. Smt Sudha Murty, on behalf of Infosys Foundation, provided the financial support for this humanitarian and environment-saving project. Three tanks were dug up by the forest department, and in spite of the inherent challenges in reaching the spots and logistics, Team Vivekananda led by Swamiji carried the water through tankers and pumped it into the tanks, twice every week, for over three months. Grains were also supplied for the peacocks. This proved to be a life saver for them, and it was noticed that these animals/birds which had started migrating to far off regions, started coming back. The local villagers were also overjoyed at the outcome, and joined the movement voluntarily.





## SWAMIJI'S USA VISIT

Swami Japanandaji visited the United States of America during September 2018, as a cultural and spiritual ambassador of India. He was the key speaker at the Sixteenth Annual **International Gita Conference** on 15th and 16th in Dallas (Texas). He was also scheduled to conduct many satsangs of Bhajan and talks, under the Chinmaya Mission, the Hindu Temple, and also the Vedanta Center at Atlanta.



The Gita Conference, with the main theme of the 16th chapter of the Gita, the 'Daivasura Sampad-Vibhaga Yoga', was held at the famous Sankatmochan Hanuman Temple of Dallas. Ever since the inception of the International Gita Foundation Trust (2003) by Dr. P. V. Nath, UK, Rev. Swami Japanandaji has been a guide and mentor of the Trust, and kindly graced all its annual conferences, held in the USA, UK and India. Swamiji was given a warm and ceremonial 'Poornakumbha' welcome by the organizers and others in the presence of devotees from six countries. The temple was glittering in decorations reflecting the culture and traditions of India. H.H. Avadhoota Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji was the other central figure. Rev Swami Japanandaji was to address a Youth Conference as a part of this event, and conduct a question and answer session. **A sparkling feature was the Bhagavad-Gita recital by about 125 well trained students in unison – all of them seated on the dais.** To the great surprise of the audience, they chanted the entire Gita, by heart! No reading from book! It boggled the mind to imagine how so many youngsters – that too in the United States – had been kept inspired and taught to learn 700 hundred stanzas of the Gita by heart! How much of planning and effort would have gone into the whole exercise! The display conveyed very powerfully the possibilities of determined action, and what needs to be done in India to prevent the extinction of our cultural and religious heredity and to pass it on to the future. The show also came as an assurance that the big bang of spiritual revolution ushered by Swami Vivekananda in this land would continue to roll for a long time to come.



**17-09-2018:** A special feature of this day at the Gita Conference was the participation of **Sri Sri Sugunendra Teertha Swamiji** of the Puttige Mutt. Swami Japanandaji was pleasantly surprised by his rare 'darshana'. Sri Sri Swamiji lovingly invited Japanandaji to their Dallas Mutt centre. As Japanandaji arrived exactly at 6 PM, he was received most cordially, and pleasantries exchanged. Since the two have enjoyed good mutual acquaintance, several points of interest regarding the march of Hinduism in the West came up. Japanandaji felt proud to hear that six new temples of Sri Krishna had come up with the bold initiative of the Puttige Seer, and heartily congratulated him saying, "All Indians must applaud your great enterprise in being able to carry the hoary Sanatana Dharma beyond the seas. You deserve our deep reverence and gratitude." The Seer humbly said, it was the Lord Krishna Himself who was providing the strength and push for this.

Japanandaji recalled with gratitude the moral support being extended by the senior and elderly Seer of Sri Pejavar Mutt. Finally, Sri Suguendra Teertha Swamiji made one revelation that warmed the cockles of Japanandaji's heart, when he said, "It is Swami Vivekananda who is the driving spirit behind all my missions, especially the overseas adventures." What a profound statement! Needless to say, Swami Japanandaji felt extremely elated, and that set him thinking about the mysterious ways in which the Divine Trio was working.

**Talk at Atlanta Vedanta Centre:** The topic of the day's speech for Swami Japanandaji was something very dear and intimate to his heart; something that is always on the top of his mind: "Contribution of the Ramakrishna Movement to the Modern Society". It was a fluent talk in English, based on his vast knowledge and firsthand experience as an active member of the Order. He began with how the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna were relevant to spiritual life. Recalling his golden period of spiritual training at the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math during 1979-80, he shared his experiences of interacting and learning from the senior-most Sadhus of the Order. He described the training system that prepares novices to move up in sadhana, as well as take up higher responsibilities. "It was our great fortune to be living amidst

monks who were of the second generation after the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna," he said, and took the names of the tenth president of the Order Swami Veereshwaranandaji Maharaj, a direct disciple of Holy Mother, and other Swami Nirvananandaji Maharaj, Swami Abhayanandaji Maharaj, Swami Gambhiranandaji Maharaj, Swami Annadanandaji Maharaj, Swami Vandananandaji Maharaj, Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj and Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj. "The intense influence of all these great spirits provided a strong foundation for our spiritual lives in the Training Centre."

This entire tour of the U.S. of Swami Japanandaji was organized/supported by Dr. G.V. Raghu, President, Chinmaya Mission, Atlanta, and Dr. Jayanth Srinivasan, PhD. Eng., MBA, TRL Frisco, U.S.A. (Dr. Jayanth, is an old volunteer-devotee of the Ramakrishna Math, Bangalore, and has known Swamiji closely since the 1980s, and is a great fan of his mission.) The first event of the tour was a Satsanga at Dr. Raghu's house, where a good gathering of devotees enjoyed the devotional music rendered by Swami Japanandaji followed by a talk. On 22nd September Swamiji spoke at the Hindu Temple of Atlanta on "Devotion as taught by Maharshi Narada". In the evening Satsanga at Sai Baba temple, Atlanta, he discussed the "Grace of the Guru".



On invitation, Swami Japanandaji conducted a special retreat programme at the Vedanta Centre of Atlanta on Sunday. It was an interesting theme for the talk: "Abhaya" as granted by Lord Krishna in Chapter 16 of Gita. Several members of the Hindu temple were present at this engrossing session. In the evening there was a special programme at the Chinmaya Mission of Atlanta. A large Sunday gathering greeted Swamiji. The topic was Humanism in Hinduism. Needless to say, this is his pet theme, which he has been putting to practice for over 30 years in India! Swamiji quoted many salient points from Upanishads and Gita to make his point clear to the audience about the humanism in Hinduism.





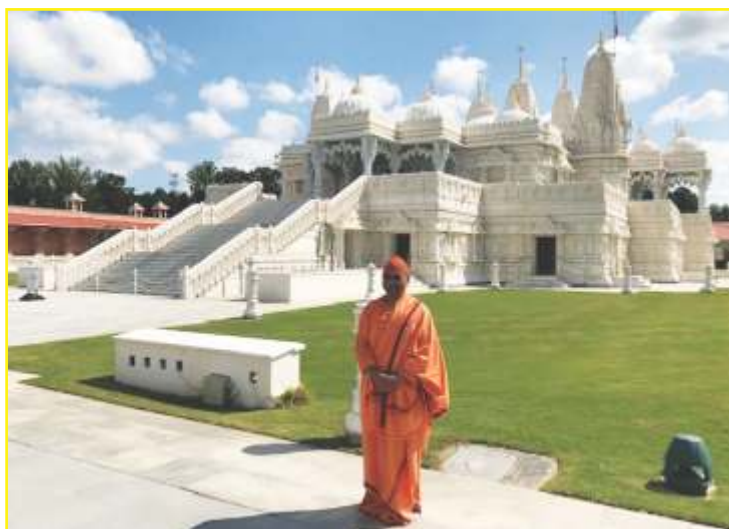
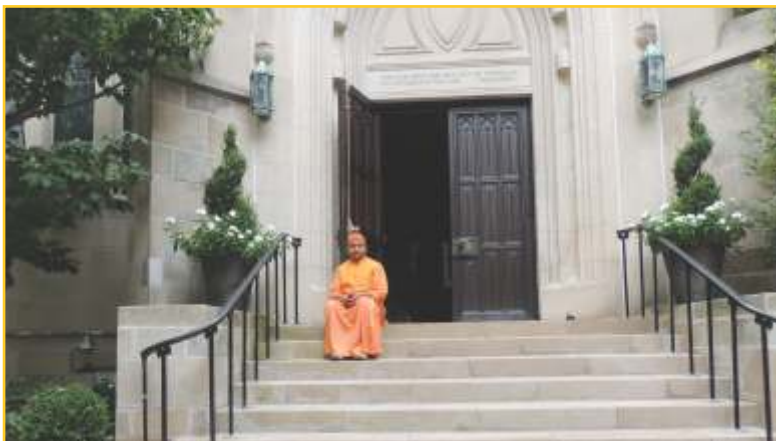
**Visit to Chicago:** The Art Institute of Chicago where the 'cyclonic monk' Swami Vivekananda delivered his famous lectures in the Parliament of Religions, in 1893 is verily a pilgrimage centre for the fans of Swami Vivekananda and Hinduism. It was a longtime dream of Swami Japanandaji to visit this historic place, nay, holy temple. Thanks to the loving help and support of Dr. Jayanth Srinivasan, this desire was realized. Free from other engagements on that day, Swamiji was able to spend almost the entire day at the Institute, exploring its every nook and corner, to his heart's content. The good lady guide at the Institute sensed Swamiji's intense interest, and proved to be of great help. Because of her intervention, the main hall which is under lock and key could be opened. Swamiji felt very blessed and felt that Swami Vivekananda himself had afforded him this opportunity to his follower to see and touch the very floor where he stood and spoke. It was a celestial experience for Swami Japananda to see the hall and the corridor where Swami Vivekananda walked. Like a small boy Swami Japananda moved round of the hall and even stood at the spot from where Swami Vivekananda addressed the audience in 1893! The guide keenly explained every relevant detail of the historic event. It was an incredible experience both to Swamiji and Dr. Jayanth Srinivas.



Swamiji felt himself fortunate to have visited yet another important place connected with Swami Vivekananda – it was a church on the Michigan Avenue where he spent his time by intense prayer to the Lord because at that situation he was literally on the street, not knowing where to stay or how to spend time till the Parliament began. One feels miserable just to imagine that situation! The church stands perfectly even today and one can see the place where Swamiji sat totally exhausted and disheveled. It was here Mr. and Mrs. George Hale saw Swamiji

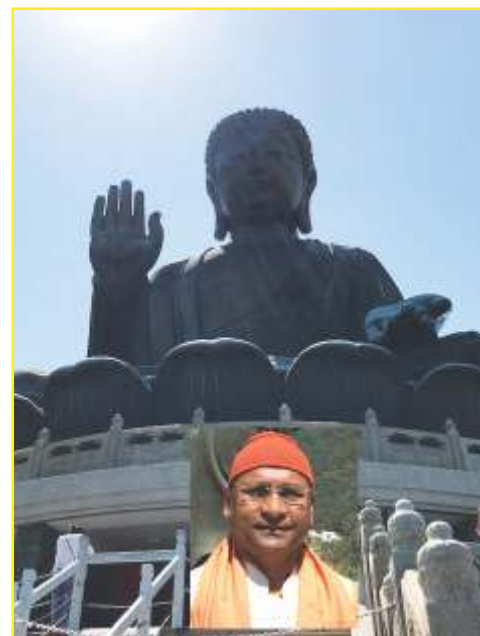
and the rest is history. Swami Japanandaji sat on the benches where Swamiji had sat, and got lost in deep thoughts, thinking of the whole dramatic situation that unfolded.

The Swami Narayana Temple of Atlanta was among the many temples and places Swamiji visited. He went there at the invitation of the head of the Temple who invited him to spend some time. Swamiji and the head of the temple had a long discussion about the activities and the present mindset of the youngsters about accepting the religion as the means to achieve their goal. Swamiji was felicitated by Sri Sri Swamiji of Swami Narayana temple.



**A Glimpse of 'Nirvana' in the Lap of Buddha:** Sometimes, the God's hand leads man towards something good, completely unknown to him, and affords him an unexpected spiritual experience. Rev Swami Japanandaji revealed that he was blessed to get such a rare experience during the last phase of his America trip. It was at the Lantau island of Hong Kong, which houses the second tallest statue of Lord Buddha. He went with his associates from Koven via Hong Kong to this land of Buddhist monks, early in the morning. They reached the island after a two-hour journey. This utterly peaceful island, covered by hills and forests, seemed like the spiritual powerhouse of the world, with the towering presence of the Bodhisattva. The Lord appeared to have renounced the attractions of this world of desires, pleasures, and riches to settle down here, emitting peace and tranquility. The very sight of this emperor of renouncers cast a spell on Swami Japanandaji, and his mind started withdrawing into itself. Buddha, the personification of serenity, covered in ochre, completely occupied his mind. Swamiji began to think how easily Buddha could shake himself away from worldly pleasures and attained the highest state of Nirvana. He could himself feel a drop of that nectar, and it felt like a new turn to his spiritual life.

Afterwards, Swamiji had the good fortune to stroll in that Buddha Vihara without any concerns amidst the Bhikkus, and consume the pure food served by them. He also witnessed Buddha's relics preserved. The emerald greenery everywhere, the roar of the sea nearby, and the blue sky as the roof, in this setting the Buddha is seated beaming a benign smile. Swamiji felt this is the peace capital of the world! And the thought started lingering, that he would come back sometime to delve deeper to seek the spiritual self. **Buddham Sharanam Gachchami!**





## SWAMI JAPANANDAJI IN EUROPE



In the midst of his hectic and most demanding different relief works at home (Pavagada) as well as the spiritual activities, Rev Swami Japanandaji undertook a short visit of the United Kingdom, in June (5th to 26th) responding to the call of devotees and supporters.

An important event this time was his presence at the prestigious meet organized by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for British Hindus, at the House of Commons, Westminster, on 11th June 2018. This was facilitated by Honourable MP Mr. Bob Blackman, who organized the “Sewa for Social Upliftment” conference, the first in a series of programmes on Dharma, the individual and society. Sri Swami

Japanandaji delivered the Keynote speech “Philosophy of Service”, before a gathering that included researchers, academicians, and prominent NRIs. His talk at Bodelwyddan was more of a conversation. Swamiji's four decades of service to humanity was recognized and honoured by the conference on behalf of the people of UK.



Apart from this, invitations took Swami Japanandaji to several other parts of England. He conducted a Satsang at New Castle's Hindu temple and 'Nama Sankeerthan' at Sri Venkateshwara temple. He delivered a talk at New Castle's Rotary club. He also participated in the events conducted by Kannada Balaga at Manchester, Bodelwyddan and North Wales. At these appearances, Swamiji successfully presented India's spiritual tradition, vision and value-based life. It must be noted that every visit and speech of a 'practical Vedantist' like Swami Japanandaji, who is verily a spark from the fire of Swami Vivekananda, raises the esteem and glory of India in the view of the world, and raises the pride and sense of belonging of the Indian diaspora.

Indeed, while delivering his talk in the precincts of the Parliament of a country that ruled us for 200 years, Japanandaji revealed that he derives his power for speaking from his idol Swami Vivekananda. In all humility he said, “God has chosen this body as a tool to carry on His work and I consider myself blessed for this.” He said, it would of no surprise if India rules the world in the coming days; not by aggression or ammunitions but purely by its wealth of knowledge and spirituality.

## In the Precincts of the British Parliament

Revered Swami Japanandaji delivered a talk on “The Philosophy of Service” at Hall No. 10, House of Commons (HoC), Westminster, on June 11th. This well attended event consisting of a responsive audience, was organized jointly by Hindu Forum Britain and Mr. Bob Blackman, Hon'ble MP, HoC, and chairperson of Inter Religious Committee, Westminster, London. Among the luminaries accompanying Swamiji on the dais were Mrs. Trupthi Patel, President, Hindu Forum Britain, and staunch supporters of Swami Japanandaji's mission, Dr. Suryanarayana Setty, MBE, Dr. Deva Prakash, and Dr. Vatsala Ramamurthy, both senior consultants.

Swamiji's discourse was based on the all-engulfing Hindu philosophy of service enunciated by Swami Vivekananda, which serves as the foundation of his mission in India. Swamiji painted the starkness of the present-day affluent world where humanism is dying. The much touted Universal Brotherhood is turning out to be a mirage, lamented Swamiji. “Only when Work is transformed into Service, and thence to Worship, would that take mankind towards its goal.” Swamiji illustrated this with the puranic illustration of Kapila Muni's advice to his mother Devahoothi which beautifully underlines the concept of the divinity in all living beings. Swamiji quoted with appropriate intonation several relevant verses from the Katha, Isavasya and Brihadarnyaka upanishats that sing paeans to the divinity of man. The HoC hall reverberated with the hymns and Upanishadic quotes sonorously chanted by Swamiji in course of his inspiring talk of an hour, which was eagerly lapped up by the august audience. Helater replied to questions from the audience.

A documentary video on SVIRHC (Swami Vivekananda Integrated Rural Health Centre), Pavagada, served to give them a true and up-to-date picture of the ground situation.

Mr. Bob Blackman, MP, was all praise for Swamiji and his inspiring talk.

One of the attendees at the talk Smt. Anathlakshmi Ramaswamy, summarized the impact on the listeners. Feeling thrilled to share her feelings, she said:

“It was great speech by Swamiji this evening. I was in tears when I heard the story of the woman suffering from leprosy who was abandoned by her family – and how she was rescued and cured by Swamiji. It was such a noble deed by Swamiji! 'Work, service and worship' make absolute sense. Yes, everyone must follow the philosophy of service. Wish we could invite Prince Harry and his wife Megan to our next meeting here (both of whom are well respected for their philanthropic services).”

During this visit to the UK, Rev Swamiji led satsanga events at the Hindu temple, Newcastle; the Rotary Club, Sunderland; Hindu Temple at Oldham; and the residences of Dr. Suryanarayan at Oldham, and of Mr. Sisodia at Epping Close, Oldham. At all these places he enthralled the devotees with his devotional presentations and spiritual talks on various topics.

A special get together was organized in honour of Swami Japanandaji by the President and members of Rotary Club of Oldham Metro. Swamiji described the progress of the ongoing projects at Pavagada, some of which have been supported by of Oldham Metro Rotary. The club has provided financial assistance through Dr. Vathsala Ramamurthy towards our Mother & Child Project which is going on for the past two decades at SVIRHC. Swamiji also presented the statistical report (ANC: 177, PNC: 158, Children: 1037 and others: 918). The President Rotary Club appreciated the initiatives taken by Swamiji at Pavagada project. Swamiji immensely thanked the president and the hon'ble members of the prestigious club for their continuous support. Rtn. Dr. R.S. Suryanarayan Setty briefed the members about the project at Pavagada.





## North Karnataka Flood Relief works – 2019

Sponsored by Smt. Sudha Murty, Chairperson, Infosys Foundation

### AUGUST 2019: NORTH KARNATAKA SUFFERS THE WORST DELUGES

The unexpectedly heavy rainfalls in early August, heavy discharges from the upstream reservoirs of Maharashtra caused terrible floods in the North Karnataka districts of Belagavi, Bagalkot, Bijapur, Raichur, Kalburgi and Yadgir. Over 60 people lost lives across 2,000 villages, while seven lakh were displaced. At least 40,000 houses have been damaged. At the time of this disaster, Swamiji was busy in Odisha, setting up cyclone relief works – particularly for leprosy patients in Puri. No sooner had he returned to Pavagada than the news of Karnataka floods broke out. Without wasting any time, Swamiji galvanized Team Vivekananda and it set into action immediately.



On 16th August Rev Swamiji and the team set out on a quick relief operations mission from Pavagada to Bagalkot and Jamkhandi, with two huge trucks of survival kits readied by Infosys Foundation. It was meant for about 500 families. The effect of the rains was visible all

through the journey. The road was particularly treacherous after Siraguppa, up to Raichur. The kits contained over 25 items including 10 Kgs of rice, a tarpaulin, essential clothes, other food stuff etc. About 2000 kits were distributed by Team Vivekananda, in



association with the Samarpan Team of Infosys and Youth for Seva, in the first phase. The magnitude of disaster and its impact was too shocking. The sight of people coming running towards the trucks to receive rations and relief materials was heart rending. Though the flood was retreating, River Krishna had at places overflowed almost 8 kms from its course, and reached a height of six feet! Villagers took shelter in temporary structures, and were waiting to go back to their houses. On 17th August, food distribution was held at Kaladagi village, 19 kms from Bagalkot. Sixty families that had lost their homes were distributed the relief materials by Swami Japananda at the Primary School in the presence of a Nodal Officer and PDO. Further, the volunteers were divided into two teams. One went to Jamakhandi and the other continued its work in Bagalkot.



The Bagalkot team, after distributing food packages at Kaladagi went to Biranur village of Badami Taluk, one of the worst affected. The crowds were restless and difficult to manage. With the help of local representatives, PDO and the police department, 201 families were given relief materials. At around 9 PM the team visited the third village Karlukoppa, where it witnessed extensive damage to the roads, pipelines, tanks, schools, and electrical installations. About 200 Families were given with kits and some homeless were given the tarpaulins.



The next day, that is on 18th August, the team visited Chimmalagi and distributed 375 survival kits with the support of local representatives, community leaders and police officials. The Bagalkot MP **Sri P.C.Gaddigoudar** visited the spot accompanied by the Guledagudda Tashildar and conveyed his gratitude to Smt. Sudha Murty Ji and Swami Japanandaji for the timely and invaluable support. Rains stopeed further relief work that evening, and the materials were handed over to tashildar Sri Biradar at the Taluk Ofce with a request to distribute to the needy. Sri Anand, a journalist at Indian Express, was of much service coordinating the entire program at Bagalkot. **The Samarpan and Ashrama volunteers went to Savalgi, where Sri N.R. Kulkarni, an official of education department took the responsibility of preparing list of impacted people, and made arrangements. He ensured that all the villages were covered for relief distribution.**



The next phase of operations was taken up in Raichur and Bagalakot Districts, and distribution done at some villages of Badami and Mudhol Taluks. Back in Pavagada, in the premises of Ramakrishna Sevashraama, over 40 volunteers – both men and women – kept working readying the materials on a war-footing. Their dedication and devotion were amazing to watch. Among them were longtime devotees of the Sevashrama, staff members of SVIRHC, associates of Bengaluru Ramakrishna Math, and volunteers of Samarpan. After the packaging, many of them accompanied Rev Swamiji on the relief work.



This time, a giant 12-wheeled truck left for North Karnataka with enough material to serve a thousand families. The villages included for this round of work were Roogi, Uttooru, Ranjanagi, Channala, Mirji, and P.G. Mallapura. Swamiji had chosen the remotest

villages for the work.

The next phase of relief operations was at Karlakoppa, 40 kms from Bagalakote. About 200 people came patiently in a line, amidst the incessant showers, to receive the family packages. Rev Swamiji felt extremely sorry for their situation, and tried to assuage them in every way. Thereafter, the Team visited Haganuru, Talakoda, Beeranuru, and S. Halooru – hamlets on the banks of Malaprabha, and reached out to the affected.

Swami Japanandaji's idea of rehabilitation is not providing just temporary succour. He wants to see them stand again on their feet with self confidence. He wants them to be strong materially, mentally, spiritually. While speaking to press reporters at Bagalakote Rev Swamiji suggested that the Government should open a separate department for long term flood management.

The ever dedicated 'Kindly mother of all' Smt. Sudha Murty extended her complete help and support for all these works. She has even declared her intent to build houses for severely affected people, if suitable land is provided.

Not a man to miss even a single moment of “the privilege to serve mankind” revered Swamiji himself led all the operations. He had set for himself a target of reaching 10,000 affected families, and that was reached in September. The cost exceeded about Rs. 1.50 crores.







**Fundraising on the Streets for Flood Relief Operations:** In a major, concerted bid to collect materials for the flood relief operations, as well as raise awareness among the common people and get them involved in a big way, Rev Swami Japanandaji joined a host of prominent citizens and organizations of Tumakuru city, including the pontiff of the Siddaganga Mutt, HH Dr. Siddalinga Swamiji who walked through the streets of Tumakuru. Among the others who joined the jathawere office bearers of the Indian Red Cross, Tumakuru MP Sri G.S. Basavaraju, MLA Sri JyothiGanesh, the Deputy Commissioner Dr. K. Rakesh Kumar, Police Superintendent Dr. K. Vamshi Krishna, president of Grain Merchants' Society Sri Paramashivaiah, scouts, Auto Drivers' Union, and students. There was an overwhelming response to the appeal of Swamijis and other leaders from all sections of the public, and people volunteered to offer the materials sought for collection, including food, clothing and other essential items. The 'Padayatra' started from the BGS Circle, and passed through the BH Road, MG Road, Vivekananda Road, Mandipet Main Road, and the APMC Market.

The leading role played by the Revered Swamijis was greatly appreciated by the public and greatly succeeded in its purpose.







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