

Vikasa Tharangini

A news update from Bala Vikasa



Bala Vikasa

EDITORIAL: A MILESTONE FOR BALAVIKASA - AUGUST 17, 2009

As usual in India, August 15, 2009 was a day of celebration: its 63rd Independence Day.

Still under the spell of this anniversary, two days later, on August 17, Bala Vikasa reached another important milestone in its 19 years of history. During its annual General Assembly, the diocese of Warangal returned the responsibility of Bala Vikasa entirely into the hands of the Civil Society.

In 1998, we, the founders of Bala Vikasa, and Sopar, its Canadian counterpart, felt the need for a strong, professional, local and long lasting leadership. Therefore, the responsibility of Bala Vikasa was entrusted to the Diocese of Warangal.

The understanding between the Founders, SOPAR and the Diocese was that, under the responsibility of the Diocese of Warangal, Bala Vikasa would continue to be a "secular, non-partisan, non-profit, voluntary social service organization working all over India" inspired by the Vision, Mission and Values of its Founders. At that time, Bishop, Rev. Thumma Bala agreed that Bala Vikasa would eventually be returned to the "laity" once the professionalism of the organization reaches a new level of maturity.

During the last ten years, from 1998 to 2009, under the tenure of the Diocese of Warangal, Bala Vikasa developed itself and became an apex voluntary organization in community development of service to millions of marginalized people.

Certainly, these outstanding results were obtained thanks to the support, dedication and involvement of Bishop Thumma Bala and his clergy:



particularly, Fr. A. Colombo, Fr. S. Balashowry, Monsignor D. Raja, Fr. G. Sudakar and several other diocesan priests. Although sometimes we disagreed with decisions made by the Diocese, we remain grateful to them for their support and commitment. In addition, we want to specially acknowledge the important and selfless contribution of a secular chore staff, supported by SOPAR, who, during this period, grew in their work to become successful, professional and

effective agents of change and managers of Bala Vikasa and its programs.

From 2007 onward, a long and arduous process of negotiations took place which culminated last August when the Diocese of Warangal passed the responsibility of Bala Vikasa to a new Board of competent Civil Society representatives supported by a new organizational structure lead by a team of professional and experimented staff who, for many years, have already proved themselves.

For all of us involved with Bala Vikasa: Founders, Board members, staff, partners NGOs, may August 17 of each year, be an occasion to renew our pledge to be of service to the marginalized of our society with professionalism, transparency and dedication."

August 17, 2009: A new and important milestone for Bala Vikasa! For our organization, a very promising date to remember for the future of our relationship with the poor of this world!

Bala Theresa Singareddy-Gingras
& André Gingras

Founder & Co-Founder of SOPAR-
BALA VIKASA 

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Necrology: Fr. Augusto Colombo

BALA VIKASA NEW GOVERNING BODY

President: Mr. B. Marreddy

Mr. B. Marreddy is a retired businessman. He is a well known personality in the corporate sector of Andhra Pradesh. He was a member of the initial Executive Body of Bala Vikasa, and after a few years of absence, returned for the past two years.



Even in his absence, Mr. Marreddy kept in touch with the activities of Bala Vikasa. He is a committed individual who wants to see Bala Vikasa reach as many marginal people as possible.

Now that he is elected as the President of Bala Vikasa, Mr. Marreddy has set as one of his personal objectives to increase the level of donations from Indian locals. He believes that the donations coming from India should surpass that of foreign countries.

Secretary: Mr. S. Suresh

Mr. S. Suresh is a young and dynamic individual. He holds Masters degree in Social Work and Law. He is well experienced in development work. He currently is the director of CFCA, an NGO that helps for the education of poor children. CFCA is based in Hyderabad with several branches all over Andhra Pradesh.



Before his election as Secretary, Mr. Suresh had been a member of Bala Vikasa Executive Body for the last two years. In this capacity, he was always ready to help and guide Bala Vikasa in as many ways as possible.

As secretary of Bala Vikasa, the organization will benefit from his continual commitment and expertise.

Treasurer: Mrs. G. Vasantha

Mrs. G. Vasantha is an experienced senior Lecturer at Fathima B. Ed. College, Fathimanagar, Warangal.

In the past, as volunteer, she has been deeply involved in an Education Program for orphan girls sponsored by Bala Vikasa.



Committed and devoted to children, her soft nature combined with her strong convictions makes her a true asset to the organization.

Mrs. Vasantha wants to see Bala Vikasa grow and vows to help in any way possible.

Other members of the Governing Body

Msgr. D. Raja - Vice President; Sr. Theresa, FMM continue to be members of the Executive Body, and are joined by two new members, Mr. Y. Raja (Social Worker) and K. Joji Reddy (Lecturer A.P. Govt. Cooperative college).

Following the historical General Assembly of August 17, 2009, the new Board together with the complete staff of the organization pledged to abide with renewed determination by the Vision, Mission and Values of Bala Vikasa.

BALA VIKASA VISION:

We long for a just and peaceful society in which each individual and each community is empowered and self-reliant; where human dignity, equal rights and equal opportunities are enjoyed by all.

BALA VIKASA MISSION:

Our mission is to support and strengthen the development process of the poor communities in India, particularly in Andhra Pradesh,

BY:

- Helping the poor, particularly women, to help themselves through development programs.
- Building up the capacity of the people at grassroots, the Non Government Organizations and the Community Based Organizations through participatory training.
- Providing technical support to agencies, institutions and Government Organizations involved in people's development.

BALA VIKASA VALUES:

In pursuing our mission, we are guided by loyalty, professionalism, transparency and commitment.

BALA VIKASA MOTTO:

"Helping people to help themselves!" 

In 1998, the board members and the staff of Bala Vikasa adopted a formal code of ethic which establishes a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities and promote high standards of practice. The adoption of this code of ethic was reconfirmed by the new Board members elected in August 2009 and by the staff of Bala Vikasa.

Some extracts of this code:

Governance

Art. 1. Bala Vikasa shall be governed fairly, impartially and responsibly by its Executive Board of Directors...

Art. 3. Bala Vikasa's Executive Board of Directors shall adopt a policy which prohibits direct and indirect conflicts of interest by members of the Board of Directors, and/or employees and volunteers of the organization...

Organizational Integrity

Art. 1. Bala Vikasa's affairs shall be conducted with integrity and transparency. Bala Vikasa's activities shall, upon request, be open and accessible to scrutiny by its respective donors...

Art. 3. Bala Vikasa opposes and shall not be a participant to any wrongdoing or financial impropriety in any of its activities...

Finances

Art. 1. Without limiting any obligations that may exist at law, Bala Vikasa shall conduct its finances in such a way as to assure appropriate use of funds and accountability to donors...

Art. 6. Contributions, at all times, shall be used as promised or implied in the fundraising appeal or as requested by the donor...

Communication to the Public

Art. 2. There shall be no misleading information... no use of misleading photographs, nor any other communication which would tend to create a false impression or misunderstanding...

BALA VIKASA NEW MANAGEMENT TEAM

Mr. Shoury Reddy Singareddy: Executive Director

Mr. Shoury has been with Bala Vikasa since the first day of its inception in 1990. At Bala Vikasa he worked in different positions: Water Program manager, and for the past 6 years as the Associate Director.



"When I joined Bala Vikasa, it was initially a job to earn money. But after spending 4 years in Delhi with the Founders, working under their guidance, inspired by them, I was enlightened and transformed. I understood their mission and values. Since then, it has transformed from being a job to my life mission, and I became passionate in helping the poor to help themselves" says Shoury.

Mr. Shoury holds a Masters in Social Work and a Diploma in Development studies from Coady International Institute, St. Frances Xavier University in Canada.

Mrs. Latha Dodda: Program Director

Mrs. Latha joined Bala Vikasa right after her completion of Masters in Social Work in 1995. Since then she has been working in Women Development program. Her role has evolved from being a coordinator to taking responsibility of the program. On August 17, 2009, Mrs. Latha was promoted as Program Director to oversee the Women program in hundreds of villages, Youth program in 30 villages, Community Development program in 100 villages and Education program for 1500 orphan children.



Mrs. Latha is a capable and dedicated person. She believes that her health, wealth and happiness are in working with the poor and making them to come up in their lives. Supported by her husband who believes in her mission, Latha vows to spend her life time with Bala Vikasa.


Mr. Pratap Kandula: Program Director

Mr. Pratap joined Bala Vikasa in 1996. He holds a Master in Economics and Master in Social Work. Pratap is soft hearted and kind person. Very keen on fulfilling his responsibilities. he brings unity in co-workers, making them all feel that they are part of the Bala Vikasa family. Having worked as responsible for different water projects, he has developed a considerable expertise in Water Project Management. Promoted as Program Director on August 17, 2009, Pratap is responsible for all the Water programs, Farmers programs of Bala Vikasa as well as Vidya Vikasa Padakam.



Mr. Pratap is ready to take his new challenges with full commitment to the mission of Bala Vikasa and its values.

Dr. Magimai Pragasam: Program Director

After being appreciated for several years as one of Bala Vikasa People Development Training Center most competent resource person, Dr. Magimai is a new comer on the staff of Bala Vikasa. In his new capacity, he will assume the directorship of PDTCT. Dr. Magimai is an expert in Communication and Mass Media. He has done his studies in India, UK and France. He is recognized as a media activist working at the grassroots and as a first rate development trainer in India and in several Asian countries. He is a National Executive of Signis, India affiliated to the World Catholic Association for Communication. 



NECROLOGY

FR. AUGUSTO COLOMBO (1927-2009)

My last meeting with Fr. Colombo took place during the evening of July 25, 2009 at our training center for an informal gathering with Bala Vikasa staff. During our chat, the word "compassion" was used several times by my old friend. Indeed, Fr. Colombo had been a man of great compassion. All his long life, compassion and empathy to the multitude of poor who were constantly knocking at his door had been at the center of his action.

For me, this selfless Catholic priest was the perfect model of the typical foreign missionary completely dedicated to his vocation of selfless "Giver". Giving up his family, his country, his culture, his language, he wanted of course to be "Giver" of his Lord. This desire brought him to become a giver and builder in the real physical sense of the word. How much money did he raised and give without counting to those in dire needs? Here, I think of his special relationship with the lepers. How much money did he bring to the diocese for its infrastructure?

I remember that night when in Canada, in 1990, both of us, seating around the kitchen table, wrote the first draft of Bala Vikasa by-laws with the motto "Helping People to help themselves". I remember also his reaction when Bala



Theresa, the foundress of Bala Vikasa, shared with him her plan to mobilize 50,000 women. He could not comprehend, that the Indian village

women he knew could be empowered and be able to take their lives in their own hands. Despite this "existential" doubt, he told Bala to go ahead and gave her all his support.

Fr. Colombo played an important role in the history of Bala Vikasa. From 1990 to 1995, nominated by SOPAR he acted as its president and again from 2004-2009, he was appointed by the diocese as director of Bala Vikasa. His style of management was "hands off". This approach allowed the senior staff of Bala Vikasa to grow in knowledge and experience and be ready to take over the management of the organization, on August 17, 2009.

Two weeks later, August 30th, Fr. Colombo suddenly passed away. This was a shocking news for all concerned at Bala Vikasa Family. He was 82 year old.

"For a job well done, come and be in peace, good and faithful servant" I imagine that these are the words that his Lord told Fr. Colombo when He welcomed him in His Paradise...

André Gingras
Co-Founder, Bala Vikasa 🌸

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



Bala Vikasa

H.No. 1-1-867, Siddarthanagar, NIT
Warangal - 506 004, A.P., India.

Phone : 0870-2459287, Fax : 2459738

E-mail : balavikasa@sify.com

Website : www.balavikasa.org

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