

Youth as a Catalyst for Social Change – NEN 202 Workshop

“Youth have the power to transform this world by their inspired and enthusiastic participation in society and in the process also feel fulfilled. This workshop provides them the theoretical frameworks, tools, and practical examples through which they can live an inspired life of social contribution.”

A five-day (40-hour) workshop was organized at NRCVEE Centre from May 2-6,2022. The workshop was held in a hybrid mode and conducted by three Professors of Practice. Twenty-Six BTech final year students actively participated for all five days.

Each day started with a yoga session by Sriman Adinarayanan Ji, which included simple asanas, and pranayama followed by a guided meditation. Introductory sessions were conducted on the first day followed by theme-specific sessions by each faculty for the next three days. The last day was dedicated to discussions, questions and answers, and feedback sessions.

Day 2- Yoga and Meditation (Sriman Adinarayanan Ji)

Sriman discussed the need of understanding yoga and the Indian knowledge system for the youth. Definition of yoga is various texts, the importance of yoga and, concepts like Panchakosha, Triguna, Tridosha, Purushartha, etc. were thoroughly discussed in the first half of the day.

The second half was dedicated to discussions and self-reflection through thought experiments to analyse states of mind.

Faculty: Adinarayanan Ji

Adinarayanan, Founder of Anaadi Foundation has an MS in Computer Engineering from North Carolina State University. He is an Adjunct Professor of Practice at NRCVEE, IIT Delhi. With more than a decade of teaching and research experience at Amrita University, Adinarayanan and his wife Smrithi started Anaadi Foundation in 2015 for inspiring youth and for global well-being. Having spent more than 200 days in Mouna Tapasya (silent intense meditation) Adinarayanan guides people on meditation, Himalayan yatra, living a healthy, fulfilled, socially conscious, and sustainable life.

Day 3 – Enlightened Leadership at the Community level: why and how to make a difference in people’s lives

This session explored how students can actually make a difference in the world around them. Varun Ji shared his life journey and how he left a lucrative job at Tata Motors and chose a tough life after reading a biography of Swami Vivekananda. He took students on his journey of working with rural communities and reflected on his experiences of the past forty years. He encouraged students to talk and listen deeply to those from less privileged walks of life to understand their perspectives before offering any guidance if needed. Many students were inspired to try this.

Faculty: Varun Vidyarthi

Varun Vidyarthi received education from IIT Kharagpur and IIM Kolkata. He abandoned a corporate career early in life and together with his wife, Dr. Amla Vidyarthi from IIT

Roorkee has been working in rural India for the last forty years. The couple is known as the pioneer of the self-help movement in India. Manavodaya, the institution founded by them, has trained and guided several thousand professionals from various parts of the world in values-led development. The methods of facilitation evolved by them are now being spread widely to tackle the imbalances of living. Varun has been Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, and the East-West Center, Honolulu.

Day 4 – Making a difference to Future Generations in India - the role of educated youth in shaping young minds

This session was conducted in person by Dr. Anuradha Balaram. The participants reflected on whether there need to be more youth leaders in India and what are the reasons why there is less participation of youth in politics – at the Federal, State, and Panchayat level.

A research scholar of NRCVEE presented the journey and working style of Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand, and how she as a youth leader has contributed to society and how and why her leadership is being admired all over the world.

Suraj Mishra, a youth social activist, who is helping communities residing near the bank of the Yamuna River shared his experiences. He shared both the trials and the triumphs of his efforts to bring the Yamuna to Life. He discussed how working for society keeps motivating him to lead a meaningful life.

Students were invited to share a few examples of youth leaders who are doing outstanding work for the welfare of society. The way in which young E. Sreedharan solved a complex situation of the Pamban bridge collapse, right at the beginning of his career, through amazing leadership involving local fishermen was discussed. This gave the participants an understanding that they too can contribute significantly to the development arena and community well-being, while pursuing their careers at the same time.

Another research scholar shared a story of a conflict between children and house owners of a residential locality and sought a potential solution for the problem from the students. This gave the students an insight into how conflict can be managed at a community level, if someone takes charge of the situation and tries to bring about a common ground for action.

Students participated actively in groups and many insightful solutions emerged.

Faculty: Anuradha Balaram

Dr. Anuradha Balaram has been privileged to serve the Government of India as an Indian Economic Service officer for over 30 years. This gave her an insight into why even Well-intentioned policies often did not take off in the field and she developed an understanding of why some developmental models worked while others did not. She took voluntary retirement in 2016 to serve full time in a voluntary capacity as the Chief coordinator of the Awakened Citizen Program of the Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi. This program has had an amazing impact on middle school children in over 5400 schools all over India. This insight and experience have enabled her to lead a team to develop value-based programs for primary school children, parents, youth, women, and corporations. Dr. Anuradha Balaram is a member of the Board of Governors, IIM, Indore, and an Adjunct Faculty of NRCVEE, IIT Delhi.

