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# REFLECTIONS

WOMEN & TECHNOLOGY



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

3 - 5 FEBRUARY 2012



*Dedicated to the Mother of  
His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar*



## INTRODUCTION

The 5th International Women's Conference was organized by the International Association for Human Values, Ved Vignan Mahavidya Peeth, the Art of Living and Vista India. The Conference entitled "Women and Technology" was attended by 500 participants from 55 countries and was webcast to over 50 countries and watched by thousands of people.

The Conference saw women leaders from various backgrounds and countries, and from different spheres of life come together to discuss and share experiences and concerns on the subject. Some of the diverse discussions included how to bring women to the forefront in technology, the connection between spirituality and technology, balancing the real and virtual worlds, technology and education, the environment and social media, redefining technology with an emphasis on the technology of managing spaces and the technology of time management amongst others.

In the words of H.H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, "Spirituality is the Technology of the Consciousness." The Source of all technology and creativity is the human mind. This inspired the delegates to develop ideas for empowerment of women focused on training in various state of the art technologies including training for rural women. The warm hospitality of the Conference fostered a strong bond among the participants. Commitment met celebrations as renowned international artistes enthralled the audience with performances showcasing world culture.



## INAUGURAL SPEECH BY H.H. SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

I am surrounded by powerful women on the stage and in the audience! Trade, technology, truth and tradition needs revival again and again. If trade policies are not revised or revisited, if you continue the old trade policies, trade can never progress. It is the same with technology. The present generation don't know how difficult it was to make a phone call. But today, the technology has developed to such an extent that in a moment, you can connect everywhere in the world.

We are advancing in technology, because we are updating it every day. Similarly we need to revisit and revise the truth about our self; our life. 'What do I want?'. 'Am I doing the right thing?'. 'Am I happy?'. These questions need to be asked again and again. Spirituality is not just some mumbo jumbo. It is just revisiting the truth about our self – are we just; is the society just; are the rules and regulations that we have formulated just; is there gender equality, are children being given the right education and right care; where is our society going; where am I going? Pondering on these questions and revisiting these truths is what I call Spirituality. Anything that uplifts your spirit is Spirituality.

We need to revisit our traditions – they need to be updated. If they are meaningful, we take them along and move on if not and are harmful, we should drop them. And women play a key role because women are the keepers of tradition. At some point of time, some traditions undergo change and develop, but we continue with them blindly, without questioning. This is where women can play an important role. Superstitions develop when reasoning or questioning the tradition is lost. So we need to question our tradition and see how useful it is.

So the four aspects: truth, technology, tradition and trade need updating. Updating means fashion, it can never be old and women are into fashion. I don't think there is a woman in this world who is not fashionable, who does not love fashion.

I am glad that you have chosen a good topic 'Women and Technology'. Technology is that which provides comfort but many times it causes huge problems. It disconnects people, making our children into machines on one hand and exposing them to harmful radiation on the other. Mobile radiation is affecting the neurons of the brain and no doctors can find out what is wrong.

Some I.T. professionals who work late nights in front of the computer experience various health problems due to lack of sleep, proper exercise, proper nutrition which all affect the nervous system adversely. Today people feel happy to live in a place where there are no telephones or television and no towers from which harmful radiation is emitted. There are certain health camps, where they do not want to use high power. All they use is green energy, solar energy.

Another aspect that I'd like to touch on today is the topic of corruption. Corruption begins where the sense of belongingness ends. This continent is ruled by women all around, whether it is Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka or India. But women have a lot to do, they have to see this continent free of corruption, I'm just talking about this continent, that doesn't mean that corruption doesn't exist in other continents. As women delegates, you all think about it and come up with programs that can counter this malice in our planet. Whatever women take up, they are really successful in it. All the best to every one of you, enjoy your time.



## WELCOME ADDRESS BY SMT. BHANUMATI NARSIMHAN, CHAIRPERSON OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Namaste, welcome to all of you. With the blessings of H.H.Sri Sri Ravi Shankar it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this 5th International Women's Conference on 'Women and Technology'. Together we will journey back to the future and return to the source.

Here I would like to take a few minutes to explain this beautiful theme. Technology has been with us since the human intelligence has flowered. When we see our history, we see many monuments that are technological wonders – the Pyramid of Giza was built without cranes and computers. The ancient seers of India compiled the knowledge of Astronomy, Ayurveda and many subjects by simply meditating. They had the ability to read each others' thoughts and the ability to see the past and the future. What strengths did they draw upon to achieve this Himalayan task?

We are often amazed at how the mobile phones, internet and social media have changed the way we connect to each other but do we wonder at the capacity of the mind that created this technology? If a small machine has the power to connect, our mind is no less. But how do we train the mind so that these subtle technologies are available to us? Technology is something that follows the laws of nature to bring us some comfort. Spirituality connects you to the source, puts you back in your nature, which is enthusiasm, peace, love and joy. This is the secret we must learn from our history, the knowledge of how to return to the source, go deep within, connect to the inner-net where the power of our own mind is revealed to us. With this knowledge when we look at the future, we can ensure a better planet, using safer technology for our children. In every area where technology is in use, there is a scope for debate, there is a fine line of balance where it is useful or becomes a burden or cause of stress and fatigue, where do we draw this line? There are many leaders here to add value and throw light upon this as we share our life experiences. At the same time, we'll also learn how spirituality helps us to maintain this balance effortlessly.

Today, families that are separated thousands of miles away, who can talk to each other, see each other with the help of technology, yet it is not the same experience that we get. See we have been connecting with all of you for the past few months by emails and internet, today we are really, really happy that sisters from around 55 countries are present here, it is a different joy to see, to meet you in person, isn't it?

Here I would like to tell you about one of my friends, the couple would always argue about selecting a place for a holiday. When the wife suggests a place, the husband will say that I have already seen it in the National Geographic channel, you can see it on Youtube, why waste so much time and money. This is what has happened, the virtual experience has limited our actual experience, is it the same I'd like to ask you? Is it the real thing? Is it what we want?

As creators and users of technology, we have been greatly empowered, yet this power comes at the cost of becoming entirely dependent on this very technology. The discussion on 'Technology – Freedom or Dependence' will create greater awareness of the choices that we make in the use of technology. A world of information is available at our fingertips – stories, movies even friends; everything is available in the virtual world. Education in the remote areas has become a possibility through technology for eg distance learning programs. A few years ago, when chatting with my friends I would ask them what their children were doing? They would answer that they were playing with friends outside. Today if we ask mothers the same question they will say that they are playing with their computers inside. So is this what we want to give to our future? We have to think about it. So we will discuss the impact of technology on education and on the learning curves of children with the kind of exposure that they have these days. Technology has not only brought us several comforts but it has also shrunk the world into a village, but are we really connecting or is it just an illusion? How to move ahead without losing the human touch? So the workshop on Creativity and Innovation hopes to open up new dimensions or perception to ensure constructive advancement in technology, while the session on 'Complimenting the Human Touch' in the field of Health, Education and Environment brings to our awareness the balance that is to be maintained. Through the session 'Redefining Technology' we hope to bring a paradigm shift in our understanding of technology through the glimpse of subtle technologies of mind management.

Keeping the globalisation of human values as a focus, we will also explore the means to empower women in rural and remote areas through technology. We are in a time where most of our work is done through the fingertips, so let us take some time off in the next two days to know the mind behind these fingers and come up with creative ideas, to create a safer, happier world for our future generation. Thank you and once again I take this opportunity to welcome all my friends and sisters, all the dignitaries present here, to your home.

# LETTERS FROM DIGNITARIES


 श्रीमती दत्ता (सुप्रसिद्धा)  
 राष्ट्रपति & राष्ट्रपति कार्यालय (सुप्रसिद्धा)  
 Rashtrapati Bhawan  
 (Rashtrapati Bhawan)  
 BPSD (PR) to the President  
 श्रीमती दत्ता  
 राष्ट्रपति कार्यालय  
 नई दिल्ली - 110004  
 President's Secretariat  
 Rashtrapati Bhawan  
 New Delhi - 110004


**MESSAGE**

The President of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, is happy to know that the International Association for Human Values, The Art of Living Foundation, Ved Vignan Mahavidyapeeth and Vista India are jointly organising the 5<sup>th</sup> International Women's Conference on "Women and Technology" from February 3-5, 2012 at Bangalore.

The President extends her warm greetings and felicitations to the organisers and the participants and wishes the Conference every success.

  
 Officer on Special Duty (PR)

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 מדינת ישראל  
 The Knesset  
 MEMBER OF KNESSET  
 משרתת כנסת  
 Jerusalem, January 23, 2012  
 Tevet 28, 5772

Ms. Bhansmati Narasimhan  
 Chairperson, International Women's Conference  
 Art of Living International Headquarters  
 21<sup>st</sup> KM, Karukapura Rd  
 Udayapura, Bangalore South  
 560 082 Karnataka  
 India

Dear Ms. Narasimhan,

It is with extreme regret that I write to inform you that I will be unable to attend the 5<sup>th</sup> International Women's Conference that will take place on February 3-5, 2012 in Bangalore.

I am truly sorry that I have to cancel my participation in the Conference, however, personal circumstances prevent me from attending.

I send my very best wishes for fruitful discussions and my warm regards to the participants.

Sincerely yours,

Miri Regev, MK


 श्रीमती तीर्थ (कृष्णा तीर्थ)  
 मंत्रालय एवं जन शक्ति विभाग  
 नई दिल्ली  
 नई दिल्ली - 110001  
 MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)  
 MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
 NEW DELHI - 110001  
 श्रीमती तीर्थ  
 Krishna Tirath  
 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2012  
**Message**

I am happy to learn that the International Association for Human Values, The Art of Living Foundation, Ved Vignan Mahavidyapeeth and Vista India are co-hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> International Women's Conference from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2012.

The Conference is dedicated to the education of the girl child. This is much required in our country and I am glad that the Art of Living has taken such an active interest in education. Especially with the advancements in technology, we need to ensure that the younger generations are given the opportunity to excel and shine.

Through this Conference, I hope the participating countries will get a glimpse of the progressive work that India is doing and understand our vision for the future.

Wishing you all success in all your future endeavors.

  
 (Krishna Tirath)


 श्रीमती संगमा  
 राज्य सचिव  
 नई दिल्ली - 110 001  
 MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
 RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
 KRISHI BHAGAN, NEW DELHI-110 001  
 श्रीमती संगमा  
 AGATHA SANGMA  
 7 Jan 2012  
**MESSAGE**

I am happy to learn that the International Association for Human Values, in association with The Art of Living Foundation, Ved Vignan Mahavidyapeeth and Vista India are organising the 5<sup>th</sup> International Women's conference from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2012 at the Art of Living International Centre, Bangalore and a commemorative Souvenir will be brought out to mark the event.

I am sure the deliberations in this conference will bring a paradigm shift in our understanding of technology and explore into the subtle technologies for rural management.

I wish the Conference all success.

  
 (Agatha Sangma)

## PRELUDES: GLIMPSES OF REGIONAL CONFERENCES



Several pre conferences were held in Ohio, Washington D.C, Seattle and Atlanta in the U.S.A, Paris, Berlin, and London in Europe and Jakarta in Indonesia with the aim to spread the message of the 5th International Conference in Bangalore, India.

Over 400 women attended these conferences. Some of the eminent speakers included the Pulitzer prize winning journalist, Sheryl WuDunn in Ohio, the Baroness Shreela Flather and the Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General-Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba in London, the author and social entrepreneur Honi Borden and a leading behavioural scientist, Dr Cathy Royal in Washington D.C, and the representative of the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection -Republic of Indonesia, Mrs. Dewi Uni Muliati in Jakarta



## EXCERPTS FROM VIDEO MESSAGES

### CONGRESSWOMAN EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

*Member- House of Representatives from Texas' 30th District*



Our young women need inspiration, they need mentors so that they can begin to visualise themselves as scientists and engineers at an early age. This springtime, through my Women's Peace Initiative – A World of Women for World of Peace, I will explore the connection between science, technology and peace building. I will examine specifically how women in different parts of the world have used new media and other forms of technology as tools to empower, to affect political and social change.

### MS IRINA BUKOVA- *Director General, UNESCO*

We must support the rights of the next generation of scientists, especially women. The stakes are high, only 29% of the world's researchers are women. Women represent two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterates. We must ensure access to quality education for every girl and woman including and through the use of new technologies and media.



We must promote young women into careers of science and encourage them to set the agenda of science. We must highlight role models to inspire and show what can be done. These goals ladies and gentlemen guide UNESCO in its work to strengthen women as leaders of science and technology.

Let me give you one example, for 13 years the UNESCO Lorrell Award for Women and Science has supported women scientists of outstanding quality and encouraged young women into scientific careers.

### AMANDA ELLIS

*Head of the New Zealand Aid Programme and Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade*



We have been delighted that lessons learnt from the Caribbean and other islands have been brought here to the Pacific to enable the increase in mobile phone technology including access to mobile banking and now increasingly to health information from remote communities

### KATHERINE MARSHALL

*Executive Director of World Faith Development Dialogue*

New technologies open endless creative possibilities. Mobile phones and other technologies help savvy women use microcredit to feed their families, thrive in markets, report and prevent abuse and rape, and mobilize communities to demand their rights to keep girls in school and have decent sanitation.



Women are natural networkers. Women are also fabulous peacemakers and they suffer the worst consequences of violence and war. The sidelining of women in peace work is shocking.

The United Nations agreed ten years ago through Resolution 1325 to put women at the center of the sacred, central goal of peace but implementation is glacially slow.

Please help translate that bold vision and ideal into action and reality. Please hold up women's gifts of wisdom, courage, and generosity of spirit. You can help harness this vast woman power, their capacity to imagine and to reconcile, towards a world where violence is a disturbing memory and the dream of peace a living reality.



# DAY 1: SPEAKERS



**HON'BLE LULAMA XINGWANA**  
*Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, Republic of South Africa*

I think it is important that at all times we know that there is a superior being out there who is above our own wisdom and abilities and we need to remember that science and technology comes from that Being.

**MS. SHIREN IBRAHIM FATTAH**  
*Representative Kurdish Government, Iraq*

Before our freedom, Iraqi women didn't have any rights in the constitution and society, but after 2003 she has a right above the political, social, economical and in education.



**HON'BLE RONIT TIROSH**  
*Member of Parliament, Israel*

Nothing can withstand determination and only if you dare, you will succeed.

**HON'BLE DR. SHIRIN SHARMIN CHAUDHURY**  
*State Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh*

This conference will be an excellent platform to share the mutual experiences in our respective countries in ensuring gender equality, and how we can combine Human Values and Spirituality in using technology to empower our lives.



**MS. ORNA SAGAEV**  
*Hon'ble Consul General of Israel, Mumbai*

We should make sure that from a very young age, we as mothers and parents, should tell them (our daughters) to go the technology way... Women are not just about technology; they are about fashion, passion and compassion.

**HON'BLE DR. DAGGUBATI PURANDESHWARI**  
*Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Government of India*

Even rural women are starting to become entrepreneurs. To make rural women comfortable with technology, we have to do a lot more work at the ground level in bridging the gaps.



**DR. PREETHA REDDY**  
*Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals, India*

Women use technology driven by the heart more than the head, technology is safer in a woman's hand....The high tech and high touch have to go together like the Yin and Yang.

**SMT. AKHILA SRINIVASAN**  
*Managing Director – Shriram Life Insurance Co. Ltd, India*

Women and technology there is a great fit here. A nation that wants to progress cannot afford to ignore women's development... The answer for India's development is to empower women, give them the right education and bring them into enterprise creating streams of activity.



## DAY 2 : SPEAKERS



**MS. JOANA TOMOVA**  
*Owner Prosveta & Prozorets, Bulgaria*

I would like to quote a seminal research at CISCO – we remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we see and hear, 70% of what we say and 90% of what we say and do.

**MS. SUSHMA RAJAGOPALAN**

*Head of Global Strategy & Corporate Development, L&T Infotec, India*

Creativity is ascribing meaning, knowledge and content, content lends clarity, with clarity comes astonishment, with astonishment comes the conviction to act, when you have conviction to act, you become creative and technology is a mere catalyst.



**MS. IRINA RUKINA**

*Co-chair, Counsel of Consolidation for Women's Movement in Russia*

Women carry a vast potential to renovate the existing system, but the very system often is not ready for it.



**MS. ELIM CHEW**  
*Founder, 77th Street, Singapore*

I have PhD – Passion, Hunger, and Drive... I have seen young people with 20,000 people on their Twitter, if they say things in the right manner, people will follow them in the right manner, but if they say the wrong things, people will follow in the wrong manner



**MS. NATASHA GANGARAMANI**

*Director, Al Fara'a Properties, UAE*

We cannot move ahead without the technology of human values and human touch which has to be integrated. When it is integrated life is beautiful.



**MS. AL WAJD AL FAYEZ**

*Filmmaker, Jordan*

I chose to be filmmaker for two reasons - film is a powerful medium through which we can send messages to the world; secondly, I wanted to change the perception of Middle Eastern women, who are viewed as oppressed.



**MS. BOTHAINA KAMEL**

*Television Anchor Activist and Politician & 1st Woman Presidential Candidate, Egypt*

The traditional media closed their eyes against a young boy killed by the police via torture. Only Facebook promoted it and the whole world knew about the case.



**PROF. MAYA CHAKRAVARTI VISHWANATHAN**

*Director, Symbiosis Institute of Media & Communication, India*

Women seem to be the networkers, nurturers, gatherers, the builders of communities and communicators. Women find it a safe place to evolve and come forth on a social network.





**MS. CATHIE BURTON**

*Spokesperson, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France*

Social media is a powerful tool but it's just a tool, you've got to use it. The message is the key and the appropriate use is the key.

**V.P. RAJINI REDDY**

*Managing Director, Exemplar Worldwide Limited, India*

We want to put a representation to the government to make it compulsory to have at least one woman representative on all Boards of companies.



**MS. MAWAHIB SHAIBANI**

*Coordinator of UAE Women Empowerment Projects of Middle East & Iraq, UAE*

Working as a banker in the Middle East I was very stressed. When I did the Art of Living course, I was able to connect to the inner-net and with that to be able to connect to everyone



**MS. ANURADHA PRASAD**

*Managing Director of Bag Films Network, India*

Technology is my tool... but I was missing out on the human touch...that's why I quit Twitter. But yes, I do agree that going forward for women all over the world, technology is a boon



**MS. SHAZIA ILMI**

*Media Strategist, Team Anna, India*

If you look at any art form, any form of communication, it's what you want to say and how you want to say it. So when we look at technology it is the 'how' of the matter.



**HON'BLE DR. SHIRIN SHARMIN CHAUDHURY**

*State Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh*

In Bangladesh, through the use of mobile phones, in the rural villages, at the grass-root level, health service is now being extended to the women and particularly to the pregnant women. It has contributed in improving the health condition of the women and bringing down the mortality rate in children.



**MS. RAVINA RAJ KOHLI**

*Founder/Director, Jobcorp Company Pvt Ltd., India*

The soul of a woman is her strongest point and that is what social media uses best.





**MS. TESSY THOMAS**  
*Director, Agni Missile Project, India*

You can use a matchstick for lighting a lamp that gives brightness at the same it can be used for destruction. It is how we look at technology and how we utilize it.

When you take a little time to bond with someone, and a woman can do this easily, using technology then you can be a fabulous global citizen, and an ambassador of your own culture and your own nation.

**MS. RANJINI MANIAN**  
*CEO, Global Adjustments Services Pvt Ltd, India*



**MS. TATIANA SUPRUNOVA**  
*Director, The Art of Living, Russia*

Technology is more important for women. It is very important to respond fast and from your heart.

**MS. JOLANDA HOLWERDA**  
*Director, Lof Media, Netherlands*



Through the Lof magazine we wanted to change the perception of the media and show that women can have careers and be good mothers at the same time.

## DAY 3 : SPEAKERS



**MS. BEATRIZ GOYOAGA**  
*Coordinator for Spain and Latin America, The Art of Living Foundation, Argentina*

Love has no dimension; it is within you and everywhere. Love is the substratum of life. Feel grateful for everything you have.

**VENERABLE MASTER MOON**  
*Museum of World Religions, Taiwan*



Our body is a high tech system. It uses the six senses to perceive the outside world, but what is the connection between our body and the six senses? That's our mind, but where's the mind and what does it look like? So far, no scientific machine can find it. But I believe that we can find it through the spiritual practices.



**BISHOP DR. BARBARA KING**  
*Founder/Minister, Hillside Chapel and Truth Center, Inc., USA*

Remember you have your own spiritual internet, whenever you reach out to love somebody, you are expressing your spiritual connection.

**MS. PACITA JUAN**  
*Social Entrepreneur, Green Advocate & Founder, Figaro Coffee, Philippines*



A business can only be sustainable if it has the 3 legs to stand on- financial profitability brings social change and environmental responsibility.



**MRS. ELISA CARTER**

*Director, Erasmus MC, University Medical Centre, Netherlands*

In health care we need the dynamic interaction between the woman's touch/intuition and technology.

**MS. MAYA BENKOVICH**

*Global Director, AstroVed, India*

Over a time, I learnt astrology and I found out how scientific it is and how the ancient Rishi's and Masters of India were so evolved.



**MS SARIKA NIPUNAGE**

*Architect- Sri Sri Sumeru Realty Pvt Ltd., India*

When a building is designed, it needs to be oriented in a manner that enhances the energies to make your life happier and prosperous. The rules of Vastu ensure that the house is in harmony with its surroundings as well as the universe.



**DR. NISHA MANIKANTAN**

*Ayurvedic Doctor, Sri Sri Ayurveda Centre, India*

We have to be intuitive in our diagnosis. We cannot rely totally on numbers and images from machines. There are some symptoms that cannot be diagnosed only with technology.



**DR. ZAHRA YOUSEFI**

*Chiropractor, Washington, DC, USA*

The advantage in this diagnostic procedure is that we utilize the innate wisdom and it tells us what structures are out of alignment.

**MS. SUCHARITA EASHWAR**

*Executive Director, WEConnect International, India*

The voice of women is critically important for the world's future, the time has come for us to stand up, speak up and transform the world, are you ready?



**MS. EMANUELA PALLAZANI**

*CEO and Strategic Planner, T-IMMOBIL-I Italy*

The word Women starts with 'W', the same as Winner, and a winner never quits and because we are women, we know that quitters never win.



**MS. BHAGYA RANGACHAR**

*Founder Executive, Director/Managing Trustee of Children's Lovecastles Trust (CLT), India*

We don't fuss about curriculum— we get them excited about learning technology. Many girls and boys have got into professional degrees and are on college scholarships. So that's our equalizer.





**MS. JAYA ROW**  
*Founder Vedanta Vision, India*

When you go back, go with these few ideas, that ‘more is not more, more is less’, ‘grab and you lose, give and you gain’, ‘attach means lose, detach and you gain’, ‘chase after desire you lose, let go and you win!’ And you will see how wonderful your life is.

This land (India) has been a land of technology and knowledge. It is a continuously living civilization that has survived all these 8000 years with knowledge and technology available to us today in the form of ancient texts.



**MS REKHA PILLAY**  
*Head Business Process Consulting & Outsourcing Unit-Sumeru Software Solutions*

It's not just about profits or the bonus cheque that you get, but about making money so that you give something back to the society

Everything is converging, so shouldn't women, technology and education converge? This is the next big convergence and I call it Womanity (Humanity & Woman)



**DR. DIANA BEATTIE**  
*Dean, Oman Medical College Muscat, Oman*

When students tell me they had to think –I say Yay! That's what we want you to be able to do!

**DR.HEMA HARI**  
*Conceptualizer - Bharath Gyan, India*



# THE VISHALAKSHI AWARDS



The Vishalakshi Award is a special award instituted in the memory of the mother of H. H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. It is a tribute to the exemplary contribution of women across different spheres. The Vishalakshi Award has been presented from the first International Women's Conference in 2005 and 84 Awards have been given so far.

The Award is an honor given not only to a person but also the principles that the awardee embodies. The principle of human values - love, compassion, selfless service, a sense of duty and belongingness - that extends beyond the layers of caste, creed and religion.



**DR. HITESHINI JUGESSUR**  
*for her outstanding commitment in promoting harmony at the grass-root levels in Sudan and Canada*



**MS. NIRALI DESAI**  
*for her work in creating a framework for community driven development through thousands of youth leaders in rural India*



**DR. PREETHA REDDY**  
*for her achievements as one of the pioneers in health care in India*



**MR. & MRS. MONTU AND JASPREET BASSI**  
*for enforcing human values in society through uplifting & humorous video productions*



**MS. KALA ALAGAPPAN**  
*for reinforcing human values and peace in the Naxal area of Jharkhand*



**MS. DALIT LAUFER**  
*for promoting the wisdom of yoga and meditation in Israel*



**MS. ROMILA SEN**  
*for her contribution towards service and for being instrumental towards catalysing positive social transformation through the International Women's Conference*



**MS. KAMLESH BARWAL**  
*for her outstanding achievement to bringing yoga to lives of thousands worldwide*



**MS. RASHMI PALIWAL**  
*for consistent enthusiasm and dynamism in the attitude to serve*



**MS. KATJA GREGL**  
*for being instrumental in spreading knowledge of yoga and meditation across East and Central Europe*



**MS. EDIE FRASER**  
*for her efforts to promote philanthropy and encouraging a giving nature through her talks and publications*



**MS. NILAKSHI DEKA**  
*for promoting human values, youth leadership and peace in remote tribal regions in North East India*



**MS. TESSY THOMAS**  
*for her achievements in the field of technology & for being a part of the elite team, responsible for the Agni III Missile Project*



**MS. DARSHANA MATHUR**  
*for creating an uplifting visual experience through graphic design*



**MS. MEERA DUT**  
*for integrating culture with the delicate stroke of the brush*



**MS. SALVA AL SHAIBANI**  
*for her women empowerment initiatives in the Middle East*



**MS. RESHA PATEL**  
*for her efforts in promoting the wisdom of yoga and meditation online*



**MR. FRED LOURADOR**  
*for inspiring video production that supports the vision of globalising human values*



**MR. SAMEER MEHTA**  
*for his work on short films that convey the message of love, wisdom and service*



**MS. LAKSHMI MIRGH**  
*for her efforts to bring the wisdom of yoga and meditation to the Middle East*



**MS. UMA VISHWANATHAN**  
*for promoting youth leadership, human values and environmental awareness in Haiti*



**MS. SHARADA DWIVEDI**  
*for taking the wisdom of yoga and pranayam to the grassroots in Uttar Pradesh, India*



**MR. RAJEEV NAMBIAR**  
*for promoting wisdom, yoga and meditation through the medium of print*



**MS. KAVITA KHANNA**  
*for her efforts in eradicating the dreaded disease of Kalabazar in India*



**MS. VASANTI IYER**  
*for being instrumental for spreading spirituality throughout the Indian sub-continent*



**MS. NAMRITA GAUTIER**  
*for her commitment and enthusiasm towards service*

# THE ACHARYA RATNANANDA AWARD



The 5th International Women's Conference saw the inception of The Acharya Ratnananda Award. The Acharya Ratnananda Award was instituted in the honor and fond memory of Acharya Ratnananda, the father of H.H Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. His whole life was dedicated to the service of humanity especially to uplift and empower rural women through VISTA INDIA. An erudite scholar, Acharya Ratnananda was humble and compassionate. This award recognizes the exemplary attitude of service with a smile.



**MRS DIVYA KANCHIBOTLA & MR SIVA KANCHIBOTLA**

*for their "can do" attitude and their commitment to service that also earned them the reputation for being the angels of IWC 2012*

## ACHARYA RATNANANDA ON THE OCCASION OF THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE - 8TH, FEBRUARY, 2009

The Light of Leadership is there for all people. What is the speciality of women? The speciality of women in the Light of Leadership contains grace and charm. Only with grace and charm the Light of Leadership of women comes.



In my sojourns to Europe many times I came across the slogan 'women belong to the fair sex'. I agree, there is so much fairness, it is the quality of womanhood but does it mean that the men-folk belong to an unfair sex? I don't think so, being a man myself. But I have to concede that in many parts of the world, men are unfair, and unfortunately they are afraid of leadership.

The challenge of womenfolk remains that you have got to correct the balance. What is a woman? A woman is one who owns men- she owns man as a mother, as a wife, as a daughter. By love, by faith, perseverance and performance- by all these things, women have to set right the balance.

Let women get the Light of Leadership with grace and charm. To achieve this, there are 5 ways, the Pancha Tantra. I have been associated with an organisation which has focused on women welfare, managed by women, benefitting only women for the last 17 years - VISTA 'Value Integrated Services for to All'. In these 17 years, more than 2000 women have been trained to uplift their lifestyle, to earn more and to live better. More work and less words is what we have done and this is what we have to do. So, in here is the Pancha Tantra, for the entire gathering here, you have to carry these five ways of wisdom.

Patience - the world is large and half of it contains womanhood. In India, which is as big as Europe without Russia, having a population of more than 1 billion, more than half of it are women, 70% of those women live in villages and in villages, their life is not a life, it is just existence. This is our challenge. To work there, we must have patience. All women here must have patience to uplift women.

*Perseverance*

*Performance*

*Faith*

*Love*

*Patience*

When you carry all these five, I am sure you will all succeed beyond measure, Jai Gurudev!



# WOMEN & TECHNOLOGY

# A QUANTUM OF LOVE





INTERNATIONAL  
3-5 FEBRUARY 2012

**S**hobhana Chandrakumar:  
Danseuse and Actor  
performed dances  
dedicated to the Mother  
Goddess & the Ramayana  
in a capsule.



**I**ngrit Byrt: Art of Living  
Teacher, Norway, played  
a series of soothing and  
meditative piano pieces during  
which the audience meditated  
in absolute peace.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE  
3-5 FEBRUARY 2012



**E**litsa Todorova: Bulgarian percussionist  
and singer combined folk songs with the  
energy of the percussions presenting in  
a most touching way the emotional power of  
Bulgarian culture.



**T**he St Petersburg Ballet Theatre:  
Performed pieces from the  
Nutcracker Suite & Don Quixote



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE  
3-5 FEBRUARY 2012



## CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

### LIGHTING THE SPIRIT OF LIFE



The 5th conference saw a convergence of talented women achievers who have made a mark in society. Each one, a success story: whether it is a triumphant balance of work and home duties; helping governments shape policies; or creating inroads in media, commerce, or art.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar often says: Only a lit candle can light others.

This spirit rang true in the conference, where all the participants committed themselves to reaching out to others in their communities and countries.

### SUPPORTING EDUCATION

*Sending more girl children to schools, creating teachers*



Since inception in 2005, the conference proceeds have supported girl child education. Keeping up with the tradition, the 5th conference has pledged to support The Art of Living free education program. Currently running 175 schools, the organization aims to start 50 new schools across 50 new rural districts in India within the next two years.

The Art of Living will also begin special training programs for rural women with the aim to make them teachers. This would fulfill the dual role of creating more teachers as well as creating employment opportunities for women.



### PEACE INSTITUTE IN THE MIDDLE-EAST

Middle East countries Breakaway Session

100 women from 14 countries of the Middle East participated in a break away session on the third day of the International Women's Conference. The gathering of women comprising ministers, parliamentarians, media professionals, judges, teachers, business women, homemakers and artistes committed to work together to spread the message of peace in the conflict torn region.

The group also established The Middle East Women's Network that will create a platform for existing women peacemakers, develop national youth peace centers in Jordan and Afghanistan as well as foster social entrepreneurship amongst women.

### FOCUS ON RURAL PROGRESS

Creation of jobs for rural youth

A group of 80 women brainstormed on the issue of unemployed rural youth, expanding on Art of Living's Youth Leadership Training Program. The group constructed a Road Map which consisted of :

Identifying natural resources unique to each village

Partnering with IT companies to give youth an exposure and technological aids

Continuing to participate in the women empowerment initiatives of The Art of Living, the IWC team will inspire and support the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) initiative of the organization to start computer centers for women in rural Karnataka.



NATASHA GANGARAMANI



Born into the family that own Al Fara'a Construction, Industrial and Property Group, she gained years of training and first hand experience under the leadership of her father, Chairman J. R. Gangaramani. As Director of Al Fara's Properties, Gangaramani plans to deliver over AED 30 billion worth from her projects.

AL WAJID AL FAYEZ



A freelance filmmaker with a Masters in Filmmaking, she has worked as an Assistant Director on a feature film, and with renowned directors from the Middle East. Currently as a freelance director and producer she has created several TVCs and awareness campaigns for organizations such as UNICEF and CPF.

Without losing the human touch young women are coming to the forefront and skillfully integrating technology in their lives. Natasha Gangaramani and Al Wajid Al Fayez are two such dynamic youth leaders who were an inspiration to the International Women's Conference team. They are a living example of the integration of technology and human values and of modernity without compromising on tradition and the preservation of their culture. The International Women's Conference Chairperson, Committee and team applaud their contribution and commitment to society. These women are the future generation of leaders whose example are an inspiration to the youth of today.

## BOOK RELEASES AT THE CONFERENCE

*Quantum of Love* - a coffee table book dedicated to the exceptional women in Art of Living who have made a profound difference in the society. The book talks about each one's life story, their challenges and experiences.

*What is Wrong with You Shailaja* - is a book detailing the story of Shailaja Menon, an Art of Living teacher in Singapore and also a recipient of Vishalakshi Award, in 2009. The book talks about her journey in Art of Living and her experiences with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. The book was released by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

*Voices of IWC*- "Voices of IWC"- a Souvenir was released which showcases the previous conferences' proceedings as well as outcomes. The book also highlights the women empowerment projects undertaken under the aegis of the International Women's Conference and provides information regarding how women have been benefited under the 5H program of the Art of Living.

*Quantum of Love*



*What is Wrong with You Shailaja*



*Voices of IWC*



## IN THE MEDIA

Is there a subtle link between technology and spirituality? If so, how does technology impact women in particular - and society in general? These and other questions, asked at the conference, were reflected in the media. Print, television and digital media captured several thought-provoking ideas through 68 news reports and features in six languages across nine states of India. We received heart-warming feedback from some of the readers before and after the event.

### A FEW HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COVERAGE:

“Touching upon the debate on technology versus human relationships, Bhanumathi Narasimhan (Chairperson, International Women’s Conference) said: “Technology has shrunk the world into a global village but are we really connecting or is it just an illusion? We need to move ahead with the human touch.” This message was carried to the world by rediff.com, a popular Indian online electronic news site (among others).

Manu Dev from Speaking Tree shares in his piece: You could say it was a blockbuster event. The galaxy of women achievers included ministers, parliamentarians, business tycoons and spiritual leaders from 55 countries...The high-energy, all-women event charged the atmosphere with so much positivity that you could expect any seed sown here to turn into a robust tree that would not only bear fruit but also give shade and succor.”

IndiaTechonline.com quoted Lulama Xingwana, Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, Republic of South Africa on India’ role in the world. “This is a country rich in indigenous technologies that we all need to learn from. Empowering rural women, fighting rural poverty is the theme of the United Nations this year. 43% of Ministers in South Africa are Women. “

There was a large delegation from the UAE and the Conference was extensively covered in the Arabic and English media. Arabic newspapers like the Al Bayan and Al Ittihad along with English newspapers - Gulf News (a popular English daily in the Gulf) and Khaleej Times carried news of the conference on a daily basis. Interviews of the participants and of Mrs. Bhanumathi Narsimhan were carried on MBC Television (a popular Arabic TV network) and Radio 4 FM channel – most popular radio channel in UAE.

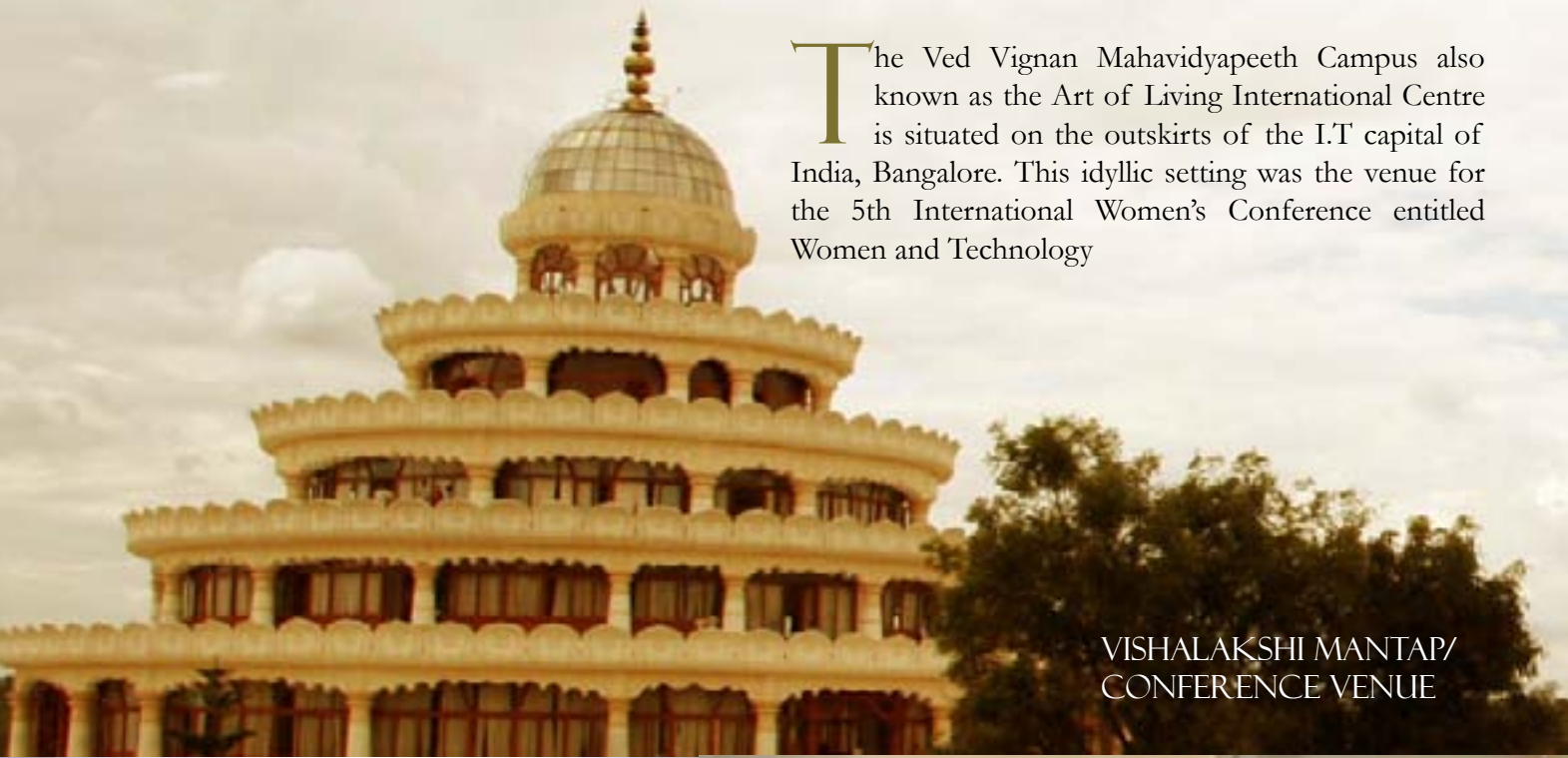
In Egypt, CMN Correspondent quoted Bothaina Kamel, who narrated that a journalist friend of hers was detained in 2008 and she shared how social media came to her friend’s rescue. “I made an event through Facebook. It attracted a lot of people, majority of them youth, who were not just from Cairo.” Once the movement gathered momentum on the social network, there was no stopping them and the journalist had to be released.

MSNShe profiled several ladies who have made a mark with their work.

Pacita Juan, a speaker at the conference and head of the Women’s Business Council of the Philippines, shared her experience of staying at Conference venue on TheManilaTimes.net: The therapists so love what they do for Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ... As with some European volunteers I met who were serving food in the kitchen. They are all smiles and later I found out, they are “homestays” or volunteers who have stayed to serve in the Ashram, a service called “Seva.”



# Conference VENUE



The Ved Vignan Mahavidyapeeth Campus also known as the Art of Living International Centre is situated on the outskirts of the I.T capital of India, Bangalore. This idyllic setting was the venue for the 5th International Women's Conference entitled Women and Technology

VISHALAKSHI MANTAP/  
CONFERENCE VENUE



PANCHAKARMA CENTRE/  
AYURVEDIC SPA



PANCHAKARMA CENTRE/  
AYURVEDIC SPA



RADHA KUNJ (CELESTIAL GARDEN)



GOSHALA/COW SHELTER



MADHURYA BOUTIQUE



TWIN SHARING ACCOMODATION



CONFERENCE DINING HALL

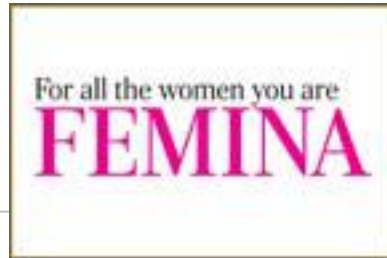


SRI SRI AYURVEDA COLLEGE



SRI SRI AYURVEDA HOSPITAL

## CONFERENCE PARTNERS



## CONFERENCE ANGELS

AKANKSHA  
AKHILA  
ANJU BHATIA  
APARNA ADDANKI  
BHARATHY HARISH  
CELINE  
CHARU  
CHINKY SEN  
DARSHANA MATHUR  
DEBBIE  
DIVYA KANCHIBHOTLA  
DREEMA PATHAKJI  
GARGI GARG  
HARSHAL JADHAV  
HETAL MEHTA  
JAINA DESAI  
JANAK PATEL  
JASPREET BASSI  
KALPA SHAH  
KAMLESH BARWAL  
KARTIK KRISHNAMURTHY  
KATJA GREGL  
KAVITA KHANNA  
KIRA TITAEVA  
MADHUSHRI TEJASVI  
MALLIKA KRISHNA  
MALLIKA THAKKAR  
MANAL PENDSE  
MANSI  
MEERA NAIR  
MEGAN  
MONICA MARC  
MONTOO BASSI  
NAMRITA GAUTIER  
NEERU PREMANAND  
NIKITA VASA  
NIRALI DESAI

PALLAVI JOSHI  
PREM THAKKAR  
PRIYA RAO  
PUJA MATHUR  
PURAVI HEGDE  
RADHIKA SANTANAKRISHNA  
RAJITA KULKARNI  
RAJIV NAMBIAR  
RASHMI PALIWAL  
REKHA PRASAD  
RESHA DESAI  
RESHMA GANESH  
RICHA CHOPRA  
RITA KHATLAWALA  
RUCHI NAGDA  
RUPALI NAIK  
SANGITA GUJRATI  
SAVITA  
SHARMILA MURARKA  
SHIKHA GROVER  
SHILPA SOOD  
SHREYA  
SHREYA SHAH  
SIVA KANCHIBHOTLA  
SMITA MATHUR  
SNEHAL DIGHE  
SRINIVAS UPPALLURI  
SUBBU  
SUDHA JHUNJHUNWALLA  
SWAROOPA JS  
SYLAJA KANNAN  
VASUNDHARA UPPALURRI  
VIDYA

## ALL THE SIMC STUDENTS

KARTHIK DILIP RAMANATHAN  
TANVI BANDAL  
PANKHURI  
PRASHANT KUMAR  
RAKESH RAVISHANKAR IYER  
SUBHAMOY GHOSHAL  
SUPRIYA VIJAY CHAR  
VIKAS SRIVASTAVA  
NAKUL DUTT  
NATASHA ASNANI  
AYUSHI SRIVASTAVA  
AYSHWARYA PRAKASH  
VANYA SHRUTI  
RAJBEER KAUR SANDHU  
SATUTI GUPTA  
ROSHAN SHEETY  
ARJUN TIWARI  
HARDIK NARENDRA PATEL  
KAVYA NATRAJAN  
MAITHILLI SAWANT  
RAVI PANJWANI  
RAVINDER KAUR  
SACHIN SAXENA  
THRILOK KARKERA

*We thank all our VVMVP Departments and our National & International Coordinators for their support in making this Conference a memorable one.*

## COUNTRIES ATTENDED

ARGENTINA  
AUSTRALIA  
BANGLADESH  
BAHRAIN  
BELGIUM  
BOSNIA  
BRAZIL  
BULGARIA  
CANADA  
CURACAO  
DENMARK  
DUBAI  
ECUADOR  
EGYPT  
FINLAND  
FRANCE  
GERMANY  
HONG KONG  
INDIA  
INDONESIA  
IRAQ  
IRELAND  
ISRAEL  
ITALY  
JORDAN  
KENYA  
LEBANON  
LIBYA

MALAYSIA  
MOROCCO  
MEXICO  
MONGOLIA  
NETHERLANDS  
NEW ZEALAND  
NIGERIA  
NORWAY  
OMAN  
PAKISTAN  
PALESTINE  
PERU  
PHILIPPINES  
QATAR  
RUSSIA  
SCOTLAND  
SINGAPORE  
SOUTH AFRICA  
SWEDEN  
TAIWAN  
TCHAD  
TUNISIA  
TURKEY  
UAE  
UK  
USA  
ZIMBABWE



2005



2007



2009



2010



2012

*We look forward to seeing you at our next conference...*

*Harmony - The Perfect Remedy*



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

7-9 February, 2014