



**VSM
CONNECT**



July 2021
Issue 19

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Editor's Desk

Greetings from Vidyadaan Sahayyak Mandal (VSM).

We have pleasure to bring out the 19th issue of our quarterly newsletter "VSM Connect". All of us continue to live under the looming threat of Covid-19 pandemic and the calamity the earlier waves have caused during the last 15 months across our country. We believe that by this time most of us above 18 years have received at least 1st dose of vaccination. Generally, we are better prepared this time and along with the partial immunity offered by the vaccine, the 3rd wave may not be as life threatening as the earlier ones.

On the academic front, the student community continues to be under stress and confused with the uncertainties about their future. While some educational streams like Commerce, Arts have completed their curriculum and moving ahead to the next year, others from Medical, Nursing, Engineering etc. are struggling in the absence of adequate Clinical/ Practical experience. We continue to conduct our mentoring programme virtually by innovative approaches to make the sessions interactive and lively.

The present issue of VSM CONNECT covers the following topics:

- Main Feature: "Evolution of VSM's Career Guidance Teams" – Medical and Basic Science Teams
- Side Feature: "Palak Melawas" – Our effort through small virtual gatherings of our students' parents & families to make them "Atmanirbhar" and also create awareness about Covid-19 Vaccination
- VSM Alumni Corner
- Other regular features such as Calendar of Events and VSM in numbers.

We look forward to getting valuable feedback and suggestions from you all to make the quarterly bulletin more participative in nature.

Thank you.



Sewankur Camp

Main Feature

VSM Medico Team

The 1st Medical student got enrolled in VSM in May 2014, the number increased to 4 in April 2016 and Dr. Anita Mokashi started guiding the students.

The 1st WA group **"VSM Medico"** was formed to connect with each other more effectively & simultaneously the **"Write Up"** activity began wherein students started writing & expressing on different subjects freely and concisely. The same was corrected by one of the mentors which helped students to increase their vocabulary and improve on their English grammar.

To inculcate **Social values** the students were encouraged to attend various camps viz. the Somnath Camp, "Maitri Dhadak Mohim" in Melghat and from 2018 we started sending our students to Sevankur Camp- "One Week for the Nation" organized by Dr Hedgewar Hospital, Aurangabad. This is exclusively for Medical students & it gives an opportunity to understand the core social aspects of

the medical profession which is very helpful in their future practice.

A health and hygiene survey of VSM students was done in Oct. 2017 & same year the official VSM Medical team was formed.

The 1st activity of the team was conducting a medical camp of VSM students under the leadership of our 1st Intern Doctor and in the same camp were sown the seeds of Academic team. Medical students started guiding HSC students in their NEET preparation in true **"Ubuntu Spirit"**

To develop soft skills and skills to manage emergencies to become good doctors, two workshops were conducted, **"Beyond the Peak"** in Nov. 2019 and **"Six Thinking Hats"** in Nov. 2020. External Faculty comprising of expert doctors from varied medical specializations were invited to share their experiences and guide our students.

In March 2020, Corona Pandemic had started playing a havoc all over the world. Adjusting to the "New Normal", all Medico



Beyond the peak Workshop Expert Panelist



Medico Team - Monthly Meet

meetings & activities went **“Online”** since April 2020 with record participation of students and mentors.

A video was made by Medical Team & circulated in our VSM family for creating awareness about the pandemic and informing all about the Do’s & Don’t’s during the pandemic. Medical students contacted all VSM non-medical students to explain them about precautions and misconceptions about Corona. Students also carried out awareness drives in their villages & contributed as core **“Corona Warriors”** during the pandemic. Medico team prepared & circulated a video in all the “Palak Melavas” to create awareness, remove the fear & encourage parents for Vaccination against Covid-19.

In 2020 under the guidance of the medical team our students actively participated in the admission of new students by contacting needy students, screening for eligibility, collecting & documenting details & recommending candidates. A true “Student Admission Team” thus took shape.

During Lockdown, to motivate the students, academic year wise teams were

formed to discuss the academics, Senior students started guiding the Juniors & this activity continued till the students returned to their colleges in Oct. 2020.

The current strength of Medical Team is 42 MBBS students, 2 BDS students, 9 alumni and 35 mentors. Dr. Anita Mokashi leads the team and is assisted by Dr. Archana Damle for all core activities. A Library team and a budget team has been formed in this academic year to streamline the respective functions.

As the students are increasing every year, we plan to establish teams to handle specific areas for better functioning of the Medical Stream. So our future plans are to form following individual Teams:

- Academic
- Social
- English
- Media and

most importantly the team of **“Medico Alumni”** to bring about a fresh young perspective for qualitative changes in guiding our medical students.



Medico Students at Sewankur Camp



Main Feature

VSM Science Team

In the initial years VSM volunteers with science background were involved in guiding students, as there was no specific career guidance team. In 2014 Dr. Archana Damle joined VSM & took over the responsibility of Science Career Guidance.

The following courses fall under purview of Science stream: HSC, B.Sc., M.Sc, Pharmacy, Biotechnology, Agriculture, Paint technology, Food technology etc. A total of 27 students are enrolled under this stream in the present academic year.

Career guidance of 12 th Science students is a major area of focus. A well thought roadmap of guiding the student have been established. Detailed inputs of

students are collected from the mentors regarding their academic performance, career choices, their strengths, weaknesses, mentor's assessment, career team assessment and the various entrance exam marks. Taking all this into account, exhaustive counselling is carried out with the help of Engineering, Medico., Nursing and ITI team leads. All these teams work in tandem to help students to make informed career choices.

With joining of new members, the Science Career Guidance Team was formed in 2017. Ms. Vinita (Team Lead), Dr. Archana, Ms. Rucha, Mr. Nijasure & Ms. Darshana are the present members of this team.

Science team helps students in planning studies and career, doubt solving, monitoring their progress, inviting experts from specific fields to share their experiences and guide & motivate the



Wings of Science - Quiz

students. Writing a good CV & interview guidance to senior students is part of the academic activity of the Science Team.

Study tours, Science workshops, Essay competition etc are arranged to increase awareness, curiosity and inculcate Scientific temperament in students.

“Wings of Science” was one such event organised this year wherein science student groups presented latest inventions & their applications to mankind. The innovative idea of Science games was a fun activity for students as well as mentors. Students participated

enthusiastically in the 1 st Essay competition organized this year and awards were given to the best two essays.

Our future plans:

- To form sub-streams (Agriculture, Paint Technology, HSC etc)
- To increase alumni connect
- To increase interactions through bimonthly meeting of student and mentors
- To conduct novel quality science events



Interactive session in progress



One on one Career counselling of 12th Sci. student



Wings of Science



Side Feature

“Palak Melawas” - Towards being "Atmanirbhar" and Creating Vaccination Awareness.

Background :

For more than a year and a half, we have been going through an unprecedented phase in our lives where CORONA pandemic has impacted everyone regardless of the person being rich or poor, a fat salary earner or a daily wager, staying in a Metro or in remotest corner of the country. The disruptions caused by this pandemic have devastated mainly marginalised or weaker sections of the society to which our students belong, posing an existential threat to them and their families.

Realising the above, VSM as an organization swung into action and in consultation with our Volunteers extended financial help last year [May/June 2020]. This gesture was welcomed by one and all from the VSM family which included not only the recipients of the financial assistance but also the donors, well - wishers of VSM and Karyakarta Palaks(KPs) too .

With the year 2021 setting in, Covid continued its march with much more severity. Stricter lockdown restrictions by the Government brought down everyone to their knees. From the media reports it was clear that people were quarantined in

their homes, many lost their jobs / daily wages, a few had to close down their shops / businesses resulting into a sharp decline in the income and forcing them into deep financial crisis. This not only adversely affected the socio-economic well- being of the family but had a serious impact on the mental well being of every family member.

Action in Perspective:

Looking at the grim picture, without losing time, the Managing Committee of VSM decided to step in at this juncture and felt that it's high time to show SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT not only to our students but to their family also.

As we were pondering how we can help our students in this turbulent time, a timely & specific help from a Donor allowed us to provide immediate financial relief of a small amount of Rs.3000/- each to 338 students. Few students expressed that they do not need financial help, showing us the magnanimity of the “Have Nots” even at this critical juncture.

Further it was felt that establishing a direct contact with the families / parents of the students would provide us a clearer view of the situation they are in and enable VSM to assist them.

Technology came to our rescue and it was decided to organize online PALAK MELAWAS across all the branches of VSM. The objectives for organizing such Melawas were :



- 1) To engage with the family and give an assurance that VSM stands rock solid with them in difficult times.
- 2) Provide a sense of relief to the family and ensure that the parents open up and speak their mind about the challenges faced by them especially due to Covid related lockdowns and restrictions, which would enable VSM to know their specific problems.
- 3) Exploring the possibility of supporting the families in case they have specific ideas about alternate source of income for becoming Self reliant / Atmanirbhar.

Melawas were planned and held during part of May and June 2021 in groups consisting of students, their parents and KPs.

Prior to organising the Palak Melawas, all the KPs were tasked to get in touch with the families of their wards and seek information on the following points:

- Was there a job /wage loss or loss in Agriculture income of the family, on

account of Covid restrictions leading to financial crunch?

- If yes, how did the family cope up with the situation?
- Do alternate plans exist to overcome and improve the situation and most importantly is VSM assistance needed to resolve the issue and in what way?
- Have eligible members been vaccinated? If not when do they plan? A Video clip to dispel the myths and explaining the necessity on Vaccination in Marathi specially developed by our Medico Team was presented in each of the Melawas.

It should be noted that this probing in respect of above points was a very sensitive task and was done without hurting self-respect of the families.

A "Google link" was provided to KPs for uploading the data collected during one to one interaction with the family.



Screenshot of student with her mother



Parents attending first ever online meeting

A total of 29 Palak Melawas across all branches of VSM [Thane, Shahapur, Pune , Borivali, Nagpur & Aurangabad] have been conducted till end of June . All the Melawas were possible because of the whole hearted support and personal involvement of all the Branch Co-ordinators and KPs alike. The remaining few are planned in July to complete this task.

Preliminary Analysis:

Until end June close to 250 responses are received via Google link as the feedback from KP's interaction with Parents/ student families. Scrutiny of the above data would enable VSM move ahead and provide additional financial help to the needy.

Major Observations from the feedback :

1) All the Parents expressed that they are indebted to VSM for taking care of their child as far as education is concerned and nurturing them and providing timely assistance.

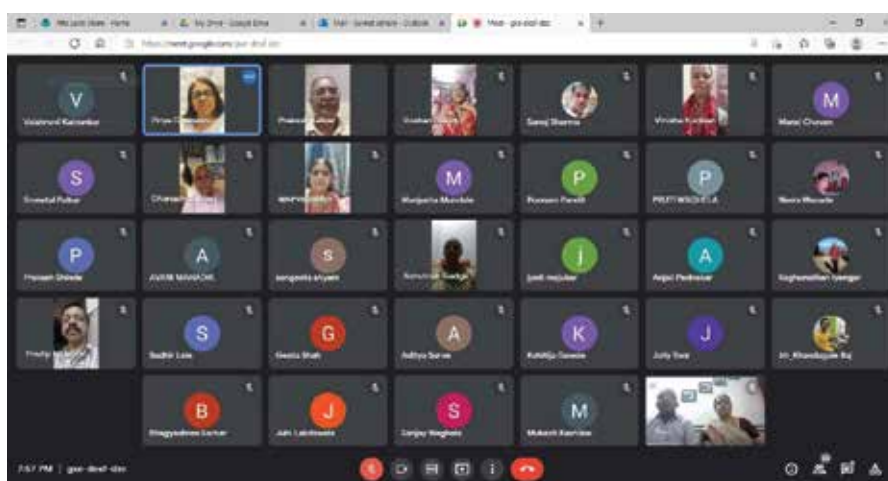
2) Despite facing Financial crunch , families were managing the show somehow without complaints

3) Although a few were holding a small piece of land, the farm income was not adequate hence had to work as a daily wagger with someone else which too was not guaranteed. For most engaged in farming, everything is dependent on rains

4) Hardly a few have plans for alternate source of income.

5) Some women folk are ready to do Sewing / Stitching / Fall Beading jobs , a few have shown interest in running a Gharghantee or Putting up a stationary stall / selling Fruits and Vegetables , however this needs to be probed further from two angles :

- a) Assessing viability of the project itself
- b) Investment required and the amount which needs to be provided as assistance by VSM.



Screen shot of another Palak Melawa



- 6) Some families have taken loans from relatives or other sources to overcome the difficult situation.
- 7) A few parents have politely said NO to the assistance offered by VSM and have stated that they would manage themselves.

The Palak Melawas gave VSM a chance to connect with the families of our students, understand their difficulties and their resolve in facing this deadly pandemic. VSM assured them that come what may, VSM will always be with them.



Vaccination awareness in Palak Melawa



Alumni Corner

My story - By Jayant Shigwan

खुदी को कर बुलंद इतना की हर तफ़दीर से
पहले खुदा बन्दे से खुद पूछे; बता-ए-बन्दे,
तेरी रज़ा क्या है?

- My life's anthem!



Jayant with his blog named Mridgandha

When you want to achieve something, give it your best effort and go for it! Art was always my first love. Through the school years, I had a collection of trophies

and prizes. Yet, after scoring over 90% in my 10th, I did 12th in Science from Bhavan's College, Andheri. I didn't know then, that I could pursue my passion: Chitrakala as a profession. My biology professor observed my frog and cockroach diagrams and encouraged me to explore Commercial Arts!

That felt like a distant dream. It was expensive! I am proud to be raised by two extremely strong and independent women- my Aai and Aaji (Aai's Aai)! My father deserted us when I was a baby. But my Aai never gave up. She worked as a home-cook and my Aaji worked as a 'Massage Aaji' for babies and pregnant women (they still do) to make a living. Having overcome several obstacles in life, my Aai and Aaji firmly stood by me and encouraged me to pursue my dream! In 2014, I got admission in L. S. Raheja School of Art.

To buy art supplies, I worked as a coolie at Virar station from 3am, distributed newspapers between 8-10am and then attended my 1pm college. But the money was insufficient. Our kind-hearted Principal, Radha Ambekar Ma'am observed my plight and directed me to VSM.

Once VSM took me under its wings, I got a strong, supporting family that helped me fly! Through monthly meetings of VSM Borivali branch, the exciting events of "Be Frank", the opportunities given to write, draw Rangolis, participation in various competitions, attending Dr. Anand Nadkarni's Vedh events, VSM not only



helped me and other students in academics but also encouraged our personality development. VSM helped me broaden my outlook towards life. Holding each other's hands, we all became one family, our dreams got proper direction. We got a new hope, and were groomed to play our part in the world.

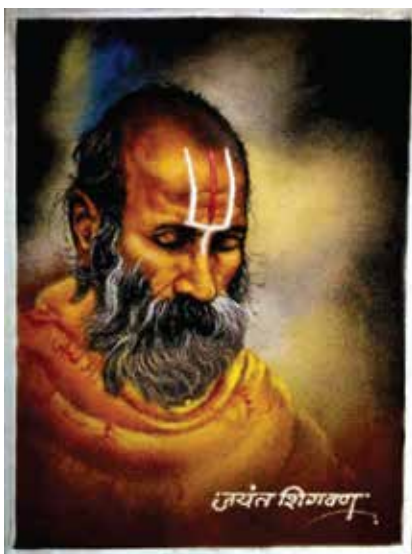
As I studied, my KP Vrunda Eklahare Mavshi and Radha Ambedkar Ma'am, encouraged me to join advertising agencies. I got the opportunity to explore the Ad industry as Graphic Designer, Visualizer and Art Director while I was in college! Through various competitions, my Arts College gave me a platform to excel and awarded me prestigious awards like: Cub Infographic Designer of the year (70th Annual CAG awards), Best Advertising Copywriter of the year (Parle Kracjack FMCG Campaign), UnderDog Trophy of the year (Nestle India FMCG Campaign), Best Television Commercial of the year-Student Category (Pulse Candy

FMCG TVC) & Student of the year (Gold Medal). I came third in Intermediate Commercial Arts exam of Maharashtra Board.

After passing out of college, I worked with Sony Pictures Network as an Art Director in their Social Media Team for two years. After viewing my portfolio, First Cry, took me on board as their Art Director from May 2021 onwards!

VSM taught me to dream big and gave me support and courage to work towards making my dreams a reality! I decided to dream again! At the age of 25, I could fulfill my dream of booking a house in Mumbai (a 1BHK in a prestigious project in Vasai) with the assistance of a bank loan. My dream home will be ready in 2024!

VSM became my family that I never had. I am thankful to every member of the VSM family for being a part of my life and students like me. Thank you VSM!



Jayant Shigwan's artwork



Jayant with an award



Alumni Corner

My story -Rameshwari Thorat

Hello, I am Rameshwari Thorat. I have pursued Master's in Statistics from Mumbai University. I stay with my Grandmother, Uncle, Aunt and cousin as I lost my mother in bus accident when I was 9 months old and father at the age of 16 due to heart attack. But my family especially my Grandmother supported me mentally and physically. She inspired me to be financially independent. That was the time when I realized that I had so many responsibilities on me.

My favourite subject is Maths. When I got 95.45% in SSC, I decided to go for Science. After completing 12 th , I wanted to pursue

Engineering but my poor financial condition was a big barrier in my career path. During that period, I came to know about VSM organization which not only helps students financially but also looks after their personality development and growth. My KP Mr. Malshe ajoba and Geeta Mavshi suggested me to complete M.Sc. in Statistics. Having no interest and knowledge about that subject I believed them and took admission for the same in Mithibai college. Steadily and slowly, I started developing interest in Statistics and I am proud to say that I completed my B.Sc. in Statistics with 97.19% and M.Sc. with 92.1%.

As I completed my education from Marathi medium, I wasn't fluent in English. My KP Mr. Malshe Ajoba started teaching



Picture with Principal of Mithibai College & others after getting 97.19 in B.Sc. Statistics

me basics of English at home and then I took admission in Indo American Society for advanced English course which helped me enhance my English. Also, he helped me in developing an interest in reading! Malshe Ajoba and Malshe Aaji stood by me in every worst situation, motivated me, guided me.

After completing M.Sc., I got a job in Accenture company through campus placement in Business Analytics.

Currently I am working in Bajaj Finance, Pune. Moving ahead, I am exploring careers in Education as a College Professor in reputed institution OR equipping my knowledge with advances in the field of Business Analytics / Artificial Intelligence.

I must say, I am very lucky to have VSM family, KPs like Malshe Ajoba and Aaji in my life. Thanks to God, my family, friends and last but not the least my VSM family for being with me throughout my journey.



Rameshwari Thorat during induction at "Accenture"

Event Calendar

2021

(June to August)

Past

June

Date: 5 June 2021

Programme Name:

Discussion on Writing Research Paper by Social Services Team

Date: 13 June 2021

Programme Name:

"Internship – Why, Where, How" - by Engg/IT Team

Date: 13 June 2021

Programme Name:

International Day against Child Labour by Law Team

Date: 20 June 2021

Programme Name:

Challenges of Online education for Architecture Students

Date: 27 June 2021

Programme Name:

Power of "NO" by Medical Team

Forthcoming

July

Date: 03 July 2021

Programme Name:

Science Career Guidance by Science Team

Date: 11 July 2021

Programme Name:

Yoga in Daily Life for Nursing Students

Date: 17 July 2021

Programme Name:

ALPS Goal setting for Art Faculty

Date: 18 July 2021

Programme Name:

Role of ITI education in Manufacturing Process

August

Date: 1 August 2021

Programme Name:

Orientation of new MSW students by Social Sciences Team

Date: 15 August 2021

Programme Name:

VSM Vardhapan Diwas

Date: 21 August 2021

Programme Name:

Presentation by Students – Fine & Applied Arts team

Date: 22 August 2021

Programme Name:

Introduction to Industrial Automation for ITI students

Date: 22 August 2021

Programme Name:

Online resources for Legal field – Law Team



Vidyadaan Sahayyak Mandal (VSM), Thane is a registered Charitable Trust working in the field of education, providing financial support to deserving students from weaker sections of society to complete education and become self-sufficient

350

Students

300

Volunteers

514

Alumni

6

Branches

230

Villages

Website: www.vsmthane.org

You Tube: www.youtube.com/user/vsmthane

FB: www.facebook.com/vsmthane

Twitter: www.twitter.com/vsmthane

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/vsmthane/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/vsmthane

www.vawesomes.wordpress.com

Email

connect@vsmthane.org

Contact details

Vidyadaan Sahayyak Mandal, Thane, Block No. 2, 1st Staircase, 1st Floor,

S.T. Stand Building, Khopat, Thane (W) – 400 601

Tel: +91 9987437446 (Trust Reg. No. E6717 (Thane) dated 21/03/2011)

