

ANNEXURE 23

VIVEKDISHA

An ICT-based Network of
Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University

Inspiration: Swami Vivekananda's Vision

Swamiji had a vision that new India would grow combining the spiritual heritage of the East and the science and technology of the West. He envisioned a scheme for dissemination of education even at the doorstep of every villager and for that he wrote in a letter on 24 May 1894 from Chicago to Alasinga Perumal: "Try to get up a fund, buy some magic lanterns, maps, globes, etc., and some chemicals. Get every evening a crowd of the poor and low, even the Pariahs, and lecture to them about religion first, and then teach them through the magic lantern and other things, astronomy, geography, etc., in the dialect of the people."

VIVEKDISHA: An ICT-based Network

VIVEKDISHA is an information and communication technology (ICT) –based network of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Belur, Howrah, West Bengal, India. VIVEKDISHA formally started working from **4 July 2008**. It is providing a single window –based services like online education from secondary to undergraduate level, online teachers' training, Spiritual Heritage programmes, telemedicine services and research programmes. At present it has **21 VIVEKDISHA centres** in West Bengal for Online and offline education, teachers training and other activities. Among these **six Ramakrishna Mission centres** are included. The University has the provision to connect **twenty five centres** for videoconferencing through **Internet Broadband facility** anywhere at any time on the globe. **Twenty three groups** are also attending our Spiritual Heritage classes from **abroad** from different countries. Professors (an ex-student of Ramakrishna Mission) from **USA, UK** are offering classes for RKM Vidyamandira, Belur students from time to time. Vivekdisha is currently working with **more than 10000 students**.

Our Vision

- ❖ **All-round uplift of the community:** We want to bring the all-round development of all the people wherever we can reach through our online services. We would like to uplift specially those who have been neglected for their poverty and backwardness. Thus we have the vision to reach the unreached as fast we can.

- ❖ **Serving global as well as rural people:** We have the idea to serve the vast expanse of mankind wherever they may be.
- ❖ **Bringing technology and knowledge directly to the door steps of people:** Vivekdisha has its next step in opening the educational doors to the world. It has already brought a new type of collaborative and interactive learning experiences through its **online classes** which may be expanded as Massive open online courses, commonly known as **MOOC**. Vivekdisha is on a path to provide quality education from secondary and beyond making the best use of current technological revolution. It can be replicated and expanded throughout the globe for learners, educators and to the general mass as well. We want to publish **online interactive courses, online e-summer courses, Blended courses** and offer learners the opportunity to **earn certificates of completion or a degree** from Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University. Vivekdisha has already been uploading study materials on several subjects in different languages and willing to create a **Knowledge Incubator in the internet**. It will enable the students to learn at their own pace and time.
The response to the current ongoing processes has been encouraging as many students, faculty, staff, alumni, and well-wishers have shown their faith in the immense possibilities of this new method.
- ❖ **Breaking the digital divide between urban and rural areas:** Vivekdisha is trying to break the digital divide in between urban and rural areas by providing quality education through online classes, telemedicine services, creating digital libraries etc. in several places.

Ongoing Activities:

The regular transmissions of various programs through the VIVEKDISHA Centres have found enormous possibilities regarding an all-round development of the locality. The regular programmes are being held from the **expert centre at Belur Math**.

(1) **Online classes:** Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology, Value Education, and Communicative English for students of Classes six to twelve level are taught mostly through multimedia presentations i.e., through texts, pictures, animations, real visual clips, video recordings from laboratory or operation theatres to make teaching-learning process more effective, joyful and fruitful. We believe that all learners can grow well in digital classrooms that are engaging, learning-focussed and inclusive. The medium of instruction is either Bangla or English. Chemistry, Economics classes for Undergraduate students conducted from USA and UK as per the requirements of the students.

(2) **Content Generation: For School and college education:** The contents of the multimedia presentations of different Science subjects were developed in local

language Bangla or in English in order to fulfil local or national level need. The content of the lessons was developed based on the syllabi of West Bengal Boards or universities or All-India level Entrance exams. The main focus point of the content generation is concept building and integrating different subjects or topics as per the context of the lessons.

(3) Youth Interaction across various regions: Students in these online classes belonging to different regions of West Bengal or different States of our country get the feeling of brotherhood and unity through interactions with a large community of eager students all studying together under one particular teacher and sharing the same study material. The common focus of these classes being science or humanities education blended with value education.

(4) Spiritual Heritage Programme for International Audience: Vivekdisha is trying to cater the need of the devotees residing in faraway places by log in to the online classes from their homes. At present devotees of Sri Ramakrishna are joining the bilingual class on “Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita” (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) and Rajyoga from different countries like United Arab Emeritus (Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah), United States of America (Cleveland, San Diego, Washington and Fargo) and Germany.

(5) Bringing out Integrated Science Text Books with modern ideas: We are keenly scrutinizing science books that have been published at the secondary and higher secondary levels, and trying to eliminate and correct certain fundamental errors that have crept into them and unfortunately perpetuated for decades on end. VIVEKDISHA has published two books on Science in Bangla of International standard to build students’ science concepts with an integrated approach to various subjects the students learn at the secondary level.

(6) Value Education: Values imbibed in one’s own life make his/her life valuable. To inculcate the attitude of practising higher ideals in life and to touch the young minds as early as possible, we have started this value education programme. Multimedia presentations were shown on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda teachings for students of various age groups, along with a lively interactive session.

(7) Creation of Book Banks in different Schools: VIVEKDISHA has pioneered groundbreaking channels to provide quality books and educational resources for free to schools serving children in need.

(8) Online and Face to face Life Science Teachers Workshops: Through conducting workshops VIVEKDISHA is assisting teachers in the process of building capacity to

bring a positive change in teaching-learning methods and to focus more on concept building rather than rote memory.

(9) Paper presented at National Conference on Communications: A paper named 'Bridging the Digital Gap in Rural India: VIVEKDISH- A Novel Experience' was presented in the National Conference on Communications in 2013. This had also been accepted in the digital library of Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Xplore (IEEE xplore).

(10) International Programmes: To address widening health and social inequalities, VIVEKDISHA at Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University (RKMVU), Belur Math, and the Global HealthShare® (GHS) initiative at the University of California, Davis (UCD) have begun a novel partnership to improve public health education and outreach efforts and to promote research that will contribute to nutritional health and increased food security in rural, low-income regions adversely impacted by climate change and seasonal disasters. Through field trial research this programme has already been able to recommend three varieties of saline tolerant rice varieties for Aila-hit Sandeshkhali region of West Bengal to bring back the sustainable agriculture in those areas.