

The World as seen by V Dog

A real life/ reel life character

Edited by Viren Lobo

An Especioza Trust Production



Sophia seen trotting on the horse during her regular Sunday practice session

Foreword¹

The historical division of labour resulted in women primarily being responsible for the home and the less strenuous work due to genetic differences that made such division necessary. However advancement of technology has made these genetic differences redundant. In field after field women have proved themselves equal and in some cases even better than men. Social barriers and customs however still conspire to give women less than equal chance to compete fairly. As a result we are still faced with large gaps in the way the work is divided in society. Even a field such as cooking/ catering, the traditional role of women in the household is taken over by men in the market place. Opportunities for development of thought and mind are therefore limited as a result.

Advancements made in the field of space technology have however made it possible to acquire global knowledge in-situ, through mobile and internet obliterating some more barriers that face women. Nevertheless, since knowledge progresses from the known to the unknown, it becomes necessary for women to start with that niche in which their knowledge has grown and flourished. Given the genetic makeup of women nurture of nature is the field which comes naturally. SDG3: Health and Overall Well Being therefore seems the ideal place to ground issues related to a scientific approach to women's emancipation.

Experience of Ashankur:

A detailed exposition of Ashankur's understanding of the question of women's empowerment is provided in the url below

https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/On-the-question-of-Womens-Empowerment_-Case-Study-of-Ashankurs-journey-in-the-realisation-of-SDG-5-and-SDG-10.pdf

In short Ashankur has identified discrimination of women even before they are born till the time of their death. How can this vicious cycle of discrimination be eliminated? While we in Ashankur do not claim to know all the answers, the recent process we have conducted in collaboration with Institute for Ecology and Livelihood action and Habitat Ecological Trust, point to dealing squarely with issues related to livelihood, life support systems and conservation to start with.

In an exercise done in Mandve, it was found that while a conventional perspective tended to think in compartments and straight lines, women dealt more with the immediate conditions around them. A map with uneven and crooked roads, focussing on the status of the home (whether pucca or katcha rather than on caste distinctions), health related issues in terms of

¹ Rekha, Kalpana and Rita

polluted water, water logging marked a distinctly different perspective from the way men see the village and reflected in the land use prevalent there.

The map showed that the entire region had been devoted to three major crops namely sugarcane, cotton and fodder for the cattle. Marked was the distinct absence of food crops in the region. Discussions revealed that in household interviews conducted, the men tended to dominate the discussion on the grounds that women knew nothing.

In the training programme held in June 2023 attended entirely by women, when asked about the local biodiversity and issues facing the village, women displayed a remarkable sense of what was going on, however a perspective entirely different from men as it dealt with questions related to health, nutrition and overall well-being of the families residing in the hamlet in which the SHGs were located. More details are provided at the url below

https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Action-Research-Training-and-Orientation-Workshop-at-Ashankur--7th-11th_June_2023_compressed-1.pdf

It was the enthusiasm that the women felt during this meeting that prompted many to send their children to the workshop the next day, indicating that in day to day matters, women have more say with respect to the children than men do.

Where does science fit in?

There were two major aspects that drew the women

- a. Talking about the local biodiversity and its related uses particularly in relation to health and nutrition. Their own knowledge of the same could resonate with that of the facilitator.
- b. Demonstrating the cost saving element in working closely with nature. This came out sharply when a demonstration on how to make tooth powder from local material drew a very enthusiastic response from the women who later clamoured for a share of the powder made.

As a result of the focus on the local biodiversity, Ashankur was able to initiate a programme to plant local species and grow millets this monsoon. Where this programme will go is too early to tell, however it was clear that women were enthusiastic that their children also participate in a programme that deals with science through an appreciation of the local natural resources of the region.

Way forward

A programme of action research with the help of the note cam app and GIS tools has been initiated to give women an appreciation of the inter linkages in nature which will help them in doing ecosystem assessments of issues related to sustainable development and livelihoods in their village based on the local biodiversity available there.

Background

Draft Concept Note on Atrij Wellness Centre for Holistic Living

Goal: To develop the methodology for provision of holistic living linked to the local ecology

Hypothesis: Historically, holistic living is embedded in the principle of a healthy life which in turn is related to healthy food and in tune with nature and the surroundings. Healthy life is supplemented by what is known as ‘mother’s remedies’ and local primary health care practises of vaidus carried over from generation to generation. The organised form of this knowledge is embedded in Ayurveda. Lok Swasthya Parampara Samvardhan Samiti acknowledged this traditional health and knowledge stream. Modern day science is only now being able to have a glimmer of appreciation of the value of this stream of knowledge as the foundation for sound health care incorporating what technology has to offer as well.

Objectives:

1. To make healthy life an achievable goal for all.
2. To base this in traditional knowledge and wisdom, only supplemented by modern science where required.
3. To help in the facilitation of the restoration of eco-systems on which such traditional practises were based.
4. To link this to the larger goal of healthy living.

Methodology:

- a. Revival/restoration of traditional food and lifestyle habits to the extent possible and where not supplemented by modern science for sustainable ecosystem development
- b. Revival of the traditional health practises to the extent possible, supplemented by principles learnt from Ayurveda and modern science only where required.
- c. To use modern science principles to screen knowledge while acknowledging that the framework itself may need to be modified to incorporate elements that have been ignored / side-lined.
- d. To put this in practise at all levels of daily life as a prerequisite for healthy living in tune with nature.

Proposed activities:

- a. Creation of a Learning and Capacity building centre at Visnagar housed at Habitat Ecological Trust.
- b. Creation of an outreach centre at Bhekadia to start with and similar centres in other locations as well.
- c. Developing of primary health care centres in every village by evaluating existing practises for primary health care. This includes the functioning of the existing PHC centres.
- d. Linking this to larger life processes in the region (tuning economic activity with the natural resources).

Dedication

Atrij Gupta passes away²



Atrij Gupta always smiling

Message from Dr Leena Gupta his aunt

Atrij was suffering by Duchene Muscular Dystrophy. He slowly lost all muscles, organs and yesterday he got silent attack on heart muscles. He could never stand and play since 2010. He was a brilliant student of his school. He was doing home schooling and always got 90%. He was very brave. He was terribly suffering so practically I accept his journey. But due to Covid we could not fulfil his wish to see some place; it's extremely painful for us.

² Reference Atrij Ryan Centre for Holistic Living. Atrij is the nephew of my colleague Dr Leena Gupta, CEO Habitat Ecological Trust. Ryan is my nephew. Both have different versions of Congenital Muscular Dystrophy, a rare disease with no cure. Only wholistic health care can provide some relief. The dedication made in the last edition was extremely timely.



Atrij on his 14th Birthday

On behalf of the Atrij Wellness Centre for Holistic Living would like to inform that Atrij passed away for his heavenly abode at 1.30 pm on 13th September. May his soul Rest in Peace. We pray for the bereaved family in particular Ravi, Kalpita and Kanan that they may have strength in this hour of grief. Atrij's struggle for life and healthy living and what he taught us by his life will be remembered forever as try to come to terms with this loss. His smile, zest for living and brilliant intellect stay with me as we wish him well in his heavenly abode away from suffering and helplessness he felt in his last days.

From

Sunil Dubey

I am feeling heavily shocked. Dear Leena, try to be strong to bear this loss. You were the person who knew his medical situation at best. Try to keep yourself strong for taking care of Kanan

Naushad Ahmed

Sorry to hear, Viren.

Apoorva Oza

Sad.

Vikram Singh

Rip Atrij,

Death is nothing but a passage for the soul.

May you find happiness and peace with the Gods.

Viren Lobo:

Condolences from all my family members.

[

Shankar Narayan

My heartfelt condolences.... This is very very painful.

Alpna

Leena Its terrible to hear about your loss. My heartfelt condolences to you and your family. I pray for his soul to rest in peace and for you and your family to regain strength from this

Part I

Institute for Ecology and Livelihood Action

Employment, Nutrition, Health and Overall Well Being back to Centre Stage



Sr Prisca distributing Dant Manjan to the participants at a training programme in Bhokar in November 2023

An extract from IELA annual report 21-22:

The blow hot blow cold on the pandemic and its looming threat even as restrictions have been lifted indicate the relative importance health and overall well-being are being given by Society. However as one probes deeper, there is sufficient indication to show the complete abdication of respective governments with respect to its responsibility towards its citizens. The lack of/ instability with respect to jobs and even less those with dignity have placed the onus of survival on people/ communities themselves. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1-3 defined above come in tandem with the next 3 namely SDGs 4-6 (Education, Gender Equality and Clean Water and Sanitation). These six put together and prioritised give a different handle on the remaining SDGs as well. The impact of the pandemic meant that one had to rely primarily on web meetings, phone calls, What's app conversations and emails. This help to test/reinforce issues related to whether decentralised governance had indeed come of age and whether these modern tools were sufficient for communities to get their act together. While the government, business houses and other organisations certainly relied on these, the public at large were left stranded, the impact on government schools and poor and marginal communities not having adequate access to these facilities have been disastrous to say the least.

Since IELA believes that women and children are the worst affected by ecological and social issues, a plan has been put in place that places these issues upfront in relation to any question of empowerment.

In relation to women, the following proposition was placed in discussion with women groups and organisations working with women.

- a. Issues related to livelihoods, nutrition and the relevance of the agricultural systems to meet these needs. How women are involved and deal with this question.
- b. The relevance of the collective approach and knowledge base which women as a group have which can facilitate the process of change in the delivery mechanism. This relates to government schemes in general and the Aanganwadi and mid-day meal scheme in particular.

In relation to children, the need to organise them around the 17 SDGs using the model of Children's parliament has been discussed and put into practise to the extent possible. This has been contextualised in terms of engagement with gram sabha/ ward sabha so as to engage actively with children's knowledge of governance mechanisms.

With this as the base, the larger questions related to empowerment of gramsabhas, the relevance of federations in this empowerment process and the question of regional/ thematic forums to engage on issues related to natural resources, livelihood and governance at District, State and National level have been explored on multiple platforms. Given the close association IELA has with Akhil Bharatiya Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (ABMKSS), IELA helped guide the National study commissioned by ABMKSS on the same. The output has been discussed in many forums (some facilitated by IELA). The result was a move towards the creation of a separate National Forum to deal with the issues related to

marginalisation of tribal, fisher, pastoral and small farmer communities keeping in mind that this marginalisation also leads to the need for wage labour either absorbed under MGNREGA or migration in search of labour. Separately therefore, IELA has been pushing for an ecologically sustainable approach to the use of village labour in MGNREGA and the relevance of community based planning and identification of key issues to be addressed.

As part of the process of empowerment of women, the question of introduction of local foods into the mid day meal scheme and proper examination of the nutritive and health aspects of local foods in the diet have been stressed. This appreciation of communities is then used to evaluate the health and land use policies and develop perspectives on the relevance of local knowledge and traditions in addressing these questions.

Keeping in mind the larger theoretical constructs behind these formulations in the development process, IELA responded readily to an appeal by Xavier Institute for Natural Resource Management to help them with the course on MA-NRM being conducted by the them. IELA used its experience to introduce concepts related to the Millenium Assessment tools and its relevance for ecological and climate change assessments by communities. This is work in progress at the moment and the experience gained will unfold itself more in the years to come.

Another important dimension, is IELA's participation in a workshop on Human Rights and Climate Change organised by Human Rights Law network at Udaipur. IELA used its experience to showcase its understanding on the ecological and related governance conditions in Rajasthan. Follow up on important human rights issues related to forest rights implementation based on ground work done by IELA was also planned.

IELA has been responsible to giving shape to Especioza Trust, which in more ways than one is the parent organisation and inspiration behind IELA. Managing Trustee IELA, used the time and space provided by the lockdown to give shape to his ideas through a series of seven plays brought out in two volumes and a booklet on poetry covering various facets of life. This in turn has been responsible for the quarterly magazine of Especioza Trust which features prominently IELA's knowledge on Ecological governance based on participation of its members in various Local, State, National and International events. The larger understanding reflected in the newsletter in turns guides IELA in its future course of action.

This process of Centering the process of Ecological Governance on women and children now places IELA on an entirely different footing to examine questions related to ecological governance of diverse landscapes, climate change and the basis theoretical formulations related to the correction on historical injustice outlined in the preamble of the Forest Rights Act 2006. This includes the historical understanding of communities on natural resources and governance and reflected in the historical growth and demographics of communities.

Part II

A Perspective on Ecology and Livelihood



Water treatment facility at Los Angeles



Genevieve and Sophia taking care of Leroy

Water recycling in California, a way to beat drought ?

<https://www.npr.org/2018/02/20/587195891/california-aims-to-get-past-the-yuck-factor-of-recycled-wastewater>

<https://www.governing.com/next/california-invests-in-recycled-water-as-droughts-take-a-toll>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOi8Ueadmqo>

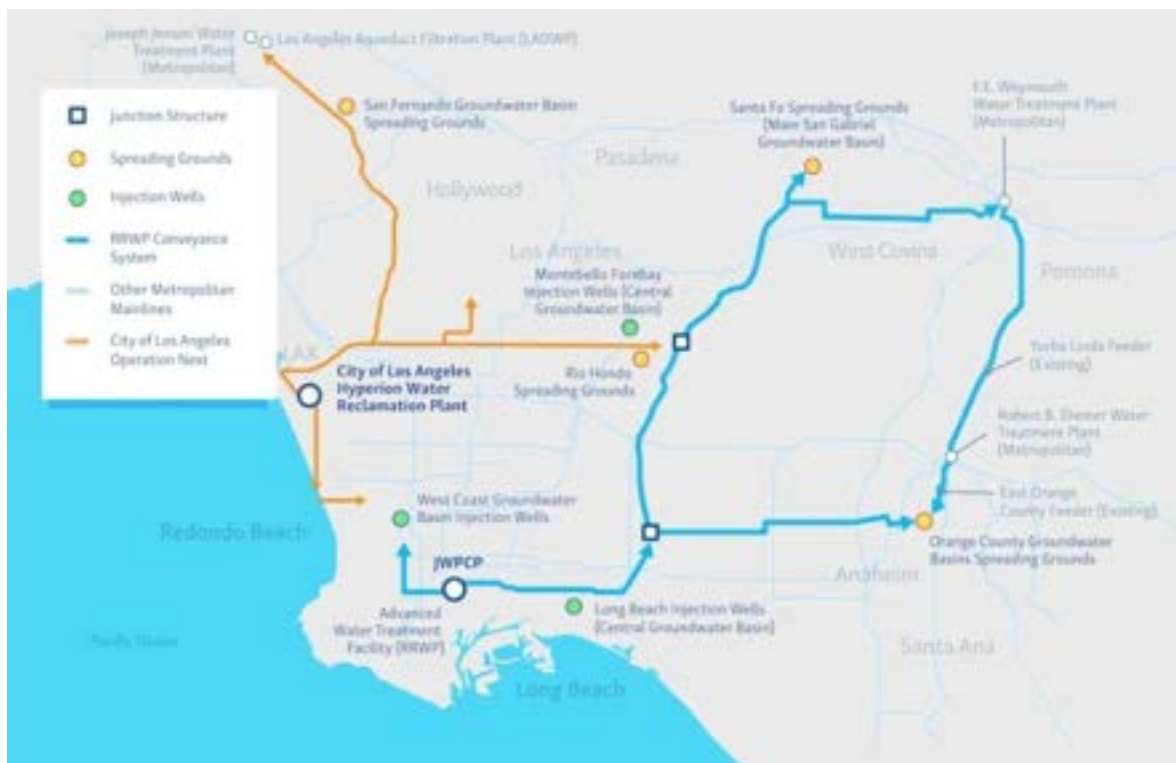
(regional recycling centre at Carson's)

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB574

Adoption of uniform criteria for water purification by Dec 2023

<https://www.cap-az.com/>

Arizona offers California funding for recycling water in exchange for a share of Colorado river waters.



Map showing combined effect of Waste water recycling in California

Dealing with the seismic threat

<https://www.rms.com/blog/2023/10/04/california-earthquake-authority-invests-in-research-and-development-to-enhance-brace-and-bolt>

<https://www.optimumseismic.com/earthquake-safety/a-history-of-earthquake-safety-californias-100-year-learning-curve/>

<https://www.earthquakeauthority.com/Prepare-Your-House-Earthquake-Risk/Brace-and-Bolt-Grants>

<https://peer.berkeley.edu/cw-woodframe?>

Quantifying the Performance of Retrofit of Cripple Walls and Sill Anchorage in Single-family Wood- Frame Buildings.

The vineyards of California

<https://www.foodandwine.com/wine/important-california-vineyards-wine-lovers>

<https://lifeatthevineyards.org/>

<https://www.cawineclub.com/blog/iconic-california-vineyards-to-know/>

A Trip to Hollywood



Wakanda forever



Luke, Sophia, Viren and Genny at Hollywood

Part III

Spiritual/Ecological Connections & Our Common Home



The church at Sacramento



Lime tree outside Roy's house



A house rebuilt after burning down



Front and back of Roy's house



Sophia, and Genevieve somewhere near the Pacific in L A county



Viren, Edwin, Anita and Genevieve outside the Goan Restaurant at Tronto



Viren and Genevieve, at Niagara during Halloween



Genevieve at Niagara and Viren at the Railway Museum in down-town Toronto



Sacramento War memorial and Secretariat

Part IV
Politics of different kinds



The Isreal Palestine conflict at Gaza

War In Ukraine

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuhQYs_imyo

John Merscheimer on the war in Ukraine

<https://warroom.org/ukraine-charity-partnered-with-usaid-is-linked-to-biden-and-blinken/>:

<https://responsiblestatecraft.org/zelensky-war-time-magazine/#:~:text=Zelensky%20no%20doubt%20intended%20the,an%20admission%20of%20delusional%20optimism.>

Gaza The US overstretches itself

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2023/10/24/the-overstretched-superpower>

<https://www.e-ir.info/2023/11/09/the-overstretch-dilemma-navigating-the-precarious-balance-of-us-foreign-aid/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/30/wall-street-morgan-stanley-td-bank-ukraine-israel-hamas-war>

US technology war with China

<https://time.com/6295902/china-tech-war-u-s/>

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/us-china-tech-war-risc-v-chip-technology-emerges-new-battleground-2023-10-06/>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/gadgets-news/us-china-tech-war-new-rules-coming-to-stop-american-companies-from-exporting-ai-chips/articleshow/104461251.cms>

US as the global reserve currency

<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/06/01/blog-dollar-dominance-and-the-rise-of-nontraditional-reserve-currencies>

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/ifdp/files/ifdp1359.pdf>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/fall-us-dollar-global-reserve-currency-causes-christopher-myers>

<https://www.jpmorgan.com/insights/global-research/currencies/de-dollarization>

Part V

Health, Happiness and the Hope Gene



The Great family reunion at Toronto



Timothy showing the way in the trudge to Balawadi Stadium in Pune: Australia Bangladesh match



Timothy and Viren getting ready for Australia Bangladesh match



New Star on the Horizon: Forrest on his first birthday



Genevieve and Lizenca at Lonavala



Viren Lobo who was influenced by liberation theology during his college days did an MBA from Institute of Rural Management Anand. He has been working the development sector since he passed out from there in 1985. Employer, employee and other contradictions observed by him during his thirty year stint at Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD) forced him to examine the relevance of Marxism as a way of looking at reality in relation to change he sought to bring. During the course of his work covering more than twenty States, he noticed a link between the livelihoods and ecology which he pursued strongly as Executive Director SPWD. The limitations of existing organisations to deal with the complex questions society posed motivated him to set up Institute of Ecology and Livelihood Action as the transition needed to address issues he was looking into at that time. The contradictions arising out of the a series of Bills that were passed during the last five years encouraged him to use the enforced sedentary life imposed on him to use his creativity to write plays. These were the first of a series which have helped serve the purpose of putting on paper the complex dilemma and diverse social opinions he came across.

About Especioza Trust:



Especioza Trust is named after my great, great grandmother who widowed at an early age brought up her only son Aogustinho (seated in centre). Shortly after a family reunion in December 2013, we got news that the family home at 84 Porvorim had been illegally sold to a builder. My aunt Marie stepped in and after getting the required mandate from the family not only got the family home back but the previous ancestral home of 85 Porvorim as well. Since then it became her project in memory of her widowed great grandmother till her death on her mother Amy Lobo's 117th birthday (25th July 2019). Since the informal trust set up by her could not achieve fruition I decided to keep the struggle and memories alive by carrying on her mission to bring unity within the family and dedicate the work of the Trust to all widows and single women of the world. My Aunt/Cousin Hazel Cardozo the daughter of Liban Pinto one of the two brothers born on my birthday (6th September) has helped me to give this project shape. The other brother Lucian in whose name the house was, also happened to be born on my birthday as well. The spiritual connection and the necessity for me to step in also come from a lot of other quarters which need not be documented here.

Viren Lobo