

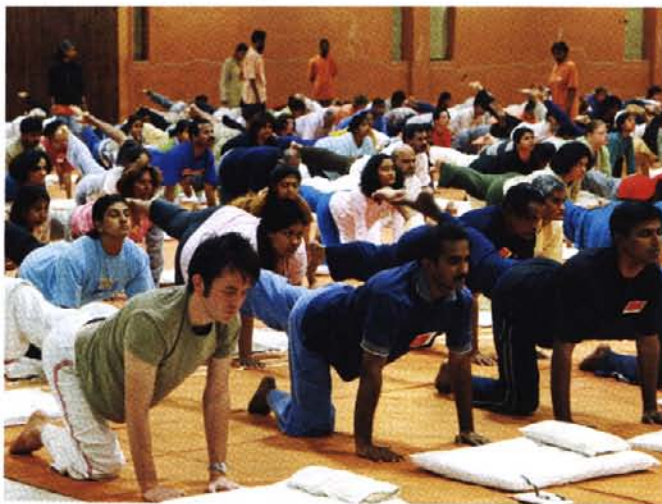
Youthful exuberance at a Yes!+ programme organised by AOL

Young people are increasingly banking on programmes offered by various spiritual organisations to mend their inner lives and forge new directions, says **Nipun Augustin Jacob**

Alas, our educational system may set us up for livelihoods but not for life. It does not teach us how to get over a broken heart and bounce back to life. It does not teach us how to transcend failure, combat anger, or handle fear. It does not teach us how to forge fulfilling and lasting bonds with family and friends and how to resolve conflicts amicably. It does not help us understand or know ourselves. Indeed, all of the present educational system would be called avidya by the Indian scriptures – false knowledge. According to them vidya or true knowledge only consists of any system of education that enables one to understand, life, God and one-self – all of which is really the same thing.

Fortunately for the young of our land, several spiritual organisations are attempting to fill the lacunae by offering short and extended courses that can enable them not only to

understand and school themselves but also develop a viable value system and to cultivate leadership skills. Youngsters are being supported to divert their energies productively into making a difference to society. Here are some of the leading ones:



Youth doing yoga at an Isha Foundation programme

Isha Foundation

Isha Foundation's Inner Engineering Programme is an intensive module for youth and adults. It consists either of three hours for seven days or a full three-day programme which includes guided meditations and transmission of an ancient sacred yogic process called Shambhavi Mahamudra. "Inner Engineering helps participants add an inner foundation and vision to life. It helps strike the necessary balance between the challenges of a hectic career and the inner longing for peace and well-being. If your body, mind, emotion and life energies begin to happen the way you want them to happen, then you will be joyful, peaceful and blissful by your own nature. That is exactly what every human being is seeking," explains Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, the founder of Isha Foundation.

Sadhguru adds, "Youth is humanity in the making; they can shape themselves in whichever way they want. They can construct themselves either into the most beautiful human beings or into ugly ones, into a tremendous possibility or a disaster."

The process of Inner Engineering goes beyond the need for self-worth and appreciation so that every individual feels complete within. It is provided as a free course in tribal villages, as an exclusive corporate retreat as well as a large-scale programme. Juliet from UK shares the positive transformation wrought in her by the programme: "I was not told to love people, but somehow, my response to life events started to change. Now I am more considerate and less hasty. This change took me by surprise, but is a beautiful one."

Swami Patanga of Isha Foundation highlights the important elements of the course. "The tools offered in the programme have the potential to enhance one's experience of life on many levels. The practices learnt will surely give an edge to the performance level. The programme offers a wide space for exploring a new way of living, which establishes a positive and open approach to improve interpersonal relationships. Fear, anxiety, and other limitations can easily be transcended with these simple yet powerful methods."

DO WORKSHOPS WORK?

"I felt at the end of the Inner Engineering Programme course that I had become a more loving and giving person. There is more laughter and freedom in my thoughts. I am inspired to lead a life full of possibility."

Sarath, 21, Medical Student, India

"I do feel more alive, energetic with a sense of freedom after attending the Inner Engineering Programme."

Roma Iskandar, freelance consultant, United Kingdom.