

# Isha Foundation plans to create model villages

By S GURURAJAN

Coimbatore, Dec 11: The Isha Foundation at Poondi has embarked on a mega project to create model villages.

"The aim of the project is development and self-sufficiency in villages," Jaggi Vasudev, founder of the Isha Foundation, said adding that solutions to the specific needs of the villages would be provided to ensure their development.

Initially, Periyakalandai near Kinathukadavu in Pollachi, Mullampalayam in Salem and Periyakuppam in Chennai would be converted into model villages, the Sadhguru said.

The issues that would be addressed through the project include education, health care, economic empowerment, youth development, development of basic infrastructure, preservation of cultural heritage and offering of legal aid and arbitration services, he said.

The project would focus on hygiene and sanitation by holding sensitisation programmes and providing sanitation facilities. It would initiate measures to increase life expectancy at birth and promote maternal health by providing anti-natal/post-natal care. Steps would be taken up to reduce infant mortality rate and Under-5 mortality rate and to fight malnourishment.

It would discourage the use of tobacco, drugs and alcohol. Health camps would be conducted to make the villagers aware of the ways to prevent AIDS and other diseases. Herbal gardens would be raised as part of popularising alternative medicine.

The Sadhguru said attention would be given to empowerment of the underprivileged especially women by upgrading their entrepreneurial skills. Camps would be organised to create awareness on social values, gender equality and

violence against women. Efforts would be made to demystify psychiatric disorders in the rural society.

A mechanism would be developed to take care of the law and order situation in villages.

Training would be provided in disaster management. To attain self-sufficiency in power needs, the villagers would be motivated to tap non-conventional renewable energy sources like solar and wind power by creating wind and water mills.

Steps would be taken to integrate Dalits into social and economic life of the village. Vocational training would be imparted to the youth so that they would get employment. Yoga, community games and tournaments would be organised for the psycho-social well being of the people, and community recreation centres would be established, the Sadhguru said.