Realising your potential

In an exclusive interview Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, founder of Isha Foundation, talks about some interesting aspects of life including corruption and terrorism with N R Madhusudhan

Could you please tell us about your mission?
Each and every human being has immense potential in him and the human body is the most sophisticated machine in the entire creation. Without realising this many people are struggling just to sustain themselves. Once they realise this potential they can achieve wonderful things besides sustaining themselves. My mission is to make people realise their immense potential.

How can one realise his potential?
People gain different types of experiences through their sense organs. Though the experiences are based on external happenings the experiences are something that are experienced internally. People focus on improving external situations to gain experiences instead of focusing themselves internally. One can realise his potential by focusing inwards. Initially it might be difficult however with practice it becomes easier.

What are the main tools involved in the exercise that enables one to realise his potential?
We work with body, mind, emotions and the energy behind all these to help people to realise their potential. We do not subscribe to any particular philosophy but our practices and programs are aimed at leading a person towards wellbeing. We apply the principles of Jnana yoga, Bakthi Yoga, Kirya Yoga and Karma Yoga in our practice and efforts to help one realise one's potential. We call this program inner engineering or Isha Yoga. Our program is very popular in Tamil Nadu and has reached even the remote villages creating a wave of bliss. In fact all these things were a part of the society and taught at homes in our country in ancient days. From the past three generations these things de-generated. We are reviving them as they lead to well being.

Could you please tell us about the service activities undertaken by you?
Our service activities are focussed on nourishment, health, education and ecology. In rural areas around 60 per cent of the people, especially women, are undernourished and in many cases even the skeletons are not fully grown. When the body is undernourished the brain too cannot function properly and they become incompetent. We have various programs for rural people. Our project “GreenHands” is to improve the ecology. Till now we have planted 14 million trees and 10.2 million of them are existing. We have entered the Guinness Book of Records for planting the maximum number of trees with the maximum number of volunteers. In fact we planted 8.52 lakh trees in one day, between 8 am and 5 pm, with the involvement of 2.2 lakh volunteers. According to the forest department we have increased the green cover in the state by 5.2 per cent. We have established 1,100 nurseries for that purpose. We have also appealed to all the NGOs to do the same as safeguarding ecology is every one's responsibility.

Various problems like corruption and terrorism is plaguing the society today. How do you think one should address these problems?
One of the ministers told me that only 4 paise from every rupee earmarked for the welfare schemes reach the people. Just by putting one minister or one corrupt person behind the bars corruption cannot be eliminated. People have to realise that a democracy dies without peoples participation. In our country, people participate in the governance only during elections and many even do not do that. By voting for caste and other things they are promoting feudalism. The feudal lords strive only with money and muscle power.