Only experts should decide on Ramar Sethu, says Jaggi Vasudev

Isha Foundation plans to plant 25 million saplings in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry

Meera Srinivasan

CHENNAI: “Only experts in ecology, heritage and economic aspects should decide what should happen there,” said Jaggi Vasudev, founder of the Isha Foundation, about the Ramar Sethu issue.

In an interview to The Hindu he said: “This is not just about Ramar Sethu. We are doing this all the time. Whether it is the titanium plant in Tamil Nadu or the car unit in Bengal, the SEZs somewhere else, we are trying to decide things on the streets. This is not the way to build a nation. These things must be decided by knowledgeable people, and those who are qualified to do that.”

The Isha Foundation, celebrating 25 years of Isha Yoga, has been working in the areas of education, health and environment. Last year, the Foundation’s volunteers planted over 8,50,000 seedlings on a single day, as part of ‘Project Green Hands.’ This year, the Foundation set a target of planting 25 million saplings in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

Religion and spirituality

Elaborating on the activities of the Foundation, he said its essential work was spiritual. “There is a very fundamental difference between religion and spirituality. When you say you belong to a certain religion, you naturally say that you are a believer. But the moment you say you are on a spiritual path, you are a seeker. A scientist is a seeker. In fact, they are in the same boat. One is seeking the outside realities. The other is seeking the inner realities.”

Speaking on religion, Jaggi Vasudev said most religions probably started as a device for ultimate human well-being.

“But these devices, over a period of time, are standing up like demons, ready to devour humanity. Whether they devour or not, they have definitely divided humanity. Unfortunately in a way you can’t unite, at least in the immediate span of time.”

Referring to the event held in Chennai recently, in which Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi participated, he points out that about 4.5 lakh people were present. “With no politics, no God, no enemy, you can’t gather so many people. But now, people are coming just to change their lives. We call it the silent revolution of self realisation.”

On the Foundation’s involvement with the Tamil Nadu Government, he said, “For me, this does not mean an alignment with the Tamil Nadu Government or a particular party. People have honoured somebody with leadership. I have no business not to honour that.”

‘Ethos of our culture’

The spiritual sciences were woven into the cultural fabric of India. And this science was expressed in the story form because India is a dialectical culture. Somewhere along the way, a few generations dropped the science and carried just the stories. Stories without science get exaggerated to ridiculous levels, he said.

“People should dare to look at life through current intelligence. That has been the ethos of this culture. There is no one book, one belief system we should follow. People can create their own gods. The god-making industry exists only in India and it’s fantastic. Nobody’s interested in God. People think God is a free ticket to well-being. People are interested in well-being.”