



THIS CHARISMATIC PERSONALITY HAS A CALM DEMEANOUR, wit and intellect that resonates with individuals from every age group!

and wrong. It is just a question of freedom and bondage, slavery and liberation - anything compulsive means you are enslaved. Whatever happens in human life, it must happen consciously. If something within you is compelling you, you have to pay a little bit of attention to that; not to the food, but this being. It is not about the food; there isn't enough consciousness and everything is happening compulsively. It is the compulsiveness which has to go.

What are your suggestions for someone who wants to start meditating but is finding it hard to focus?

Don't try to bring focus. Just see how to be involved. If you are deeply involved in something, focus naturally comes. Where there is no involvement, if you try to bring focus, it will be torture and you will not be able to focus. Meditation is not about focus or relaxation, it is a certain quality within you. It is not something that you create, nor is it something that you aspire and try to get. It is something that you fall back into. Meditation is like a homecoming, it is finding your innermost core. So, being relaxed, mentally focussed or just being able to concentrate are the results of meditation. Once you are settled, your body, mind and energy will function at their best.

How can we find perfect work-life balance?

When you say work-life balance, you are juxtaposing one against the other. What I am saying is - probably you are spending far more time with the people you work with than with your own family. If you are a successful person, you won't be seen at home.

So, why is that not your life? There is no such thing as work-life. You need to live your work and your life needs to be worked at. Both need to happen at the same time.

Tell us about the Cauvery Calling initiative.

Today, we have come to a place where every water source - the groundwater and river water is depleting. This is because our ability to hold this water in the land has gone down, as a result of the reduction in the green cover. In the Cauvery basin, we have removed 87 per cent of the green cover in the last 50 years and the river has receded by over 40 per cent. As mentioned previously, the solution for this is to ensure there is sufficient tree cover in the river basin through agroforestry.

This is why we have initiated the Cauvery Calling campaign. We are looking at shifting farmers to agroforestry and planting 242 crore trees in the Cauvery river basin. Cauvery is the first step. If we successfully pull this off in the Cauvery basin, this will be a game-changer for the nation.

Apart from the depleted river levels leading to severe impact on the groundwater availability in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, what are the other problems we are battling due to Cauvery drying up?

In Karnataka, seventy-one per cent of farmers are in debt and in Tamil Nadu, eighty-two per cent. The only thing a farmer can do by default is run away, sell the land, or hang from a tree. In the last fifteen years, over 300,000 farmers have committed suicide. This can be changed dramatically with

agroforestry. If our government gives farmers a one-time incentive to shift to agroforestry, after that they won't require a loan, as their income can be increased three to eight times in five to seven years.

What is Agroforestry and how do you see it addressing the Cauvery water issue?

Agroforestry is the practice where trees are planted alongside conventional crops. This not only improves the soil and water situation, but also makes a vast improvement in the farmer's economic situation.

We want to bring agroforestry to the entire Cauvery basin, which is about 83,000 square kilometres. If one-third of the land goes under tree shade, the river flow will definitely increase because the data says that for every tree that is planted, it will retain around 3,800 to 4,500 litres of water a year in the soil. By planting 242 crore trees in the river basin, 9-12 trillion litres of water will get sequestered per year.

What holistic and concerted on-ground support will the Cauvery rally provide to make the initiative a success? Also, what is the duration of the rally?

From September 3rd to 16th we will be travelling from Talacauvery to Thiruvarur, with 30 major events and 865 minor events. This is to spread awareness - along with both the governments to support the farmers to move from regular cropping to agroforestry. If this shift happens, the 40 per cent depletion in the river waters can come back. The river will flow once again and the farmer's life and economy will get a boost. ☐