

Conversations Today

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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

The arrival of a New Year is often marked by ambitious resolutions and promises of personal change. Yet, as weeks pass, many of these intentions fade under the weight of routine. This familiar cycle invites reflection: what if the New Year were less about reinvention and more about reaffirming enduring values—especially gratitude and responsibility?

Gratitude is often mistaken for a polite sentiment or fleeting emotion. In reality, it is an active value that shapes perspective and behaviour. To practise gratitude is to recognise interdependence—to acknowledge that personal and professional achievements are rarely solitary efforts. Families, colleagues, communities, institutions, and the natural world contribute in ways we often overlook. A grateful outlook counters entitlement and restores balance by reminding us that progress is collective.

When gratitude becomes a value rather than an occasional gesture, it influences how we work and relate to others. It encourages humility in leadership, fairness in decision-making, and empathy in everyday interactions. In professional spaces, gratitude tempers competition with collaboration. In public life, it fosters respect for institutions and systems that, despite imperfections, enable stability and opportunity. At a societal level, it nurtures civic responsibility—the willingness to protect and strengthen what we have benefited from.

Resolutions, too, gain depth when grounded in values rather than outcomes alone. Instead of asking, “What will I achieve this year?” value-based resolutions ask, “How will I conduct myself?” They focus on integrity, consistency, and contribution rather than short-term results. Such resolutions are not confined to January; they endure because they are anchored in principle.

Gratitude and resolution reinforce one another. Gratitude grounds resolutions in realism, preventing dissatisfaction and excess ambition. Resolution gives gratitude direction, translating appreciation into action—whether through ethical choices, sustainable practices, or giving back to communities and institutions.

In an uncertain and fast-changing world, values provide stability. Technologies evolve and circumstances shift, but values offer an internal compass. Entering the New Year with gratitude and value-based resolve is therefore not idealistic but practical.

The New Year need not demand dramatic transformation. It can instead be a quiet recommitment to what matters—recognising the good that exists and choosing to move forward with responsibility, integrity, and care.

Wish you and your family a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Marie Banu Rodriguez

EDITORIAL

Latha Suresh
Marie Banu Rodriguez

VALUING NATURE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Sri.Ramana Maharshi never spoke of environmental conservation in the modern sense of policy, activism, or sustainability frameworks. Yet, few spiritual teachings offer a deeper and more enduring foundation for valuing nature than his vision of reality. His teachings point us to a truth that is especially relevant for the next generation: nature is not a resource to be used, but an expression of the same consciousness that we are.

At the heart of Ramana Maharshi’s teaching is the understanding that the Self alone is real, and that the world, the body, and the mind arise within that Self. This does not reduce nature to an illusion to be dismissed; rather, it dissolves the false sense of separation between human beings and the natural world. When one recognises that the same awareness shines through all forms—trees, animals, mountains, rivers, and human life—the impulse to dominate or exploit nature naturally weakens. Respect replaces control, and care replaces consumption.

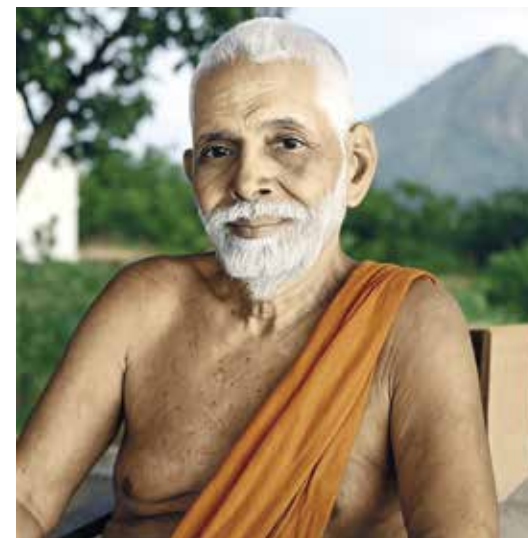
Ramana lived at the foot of Arunachala, not merely as a backdrop to his life, but as a living presence. For him, the hill was not an inert object; it was a manifestation of the Self. His reverence for Arunachala was quiet, non-sentimental, and deeply grounded. This attitude offers a powerful lesson for future generations: valuing nature begins not with slogans or strategies, but with reverence born of understanding. When nature is seen as sacred—not symbolically, but experientially—our relationship with it changes at its root.

One of Ramana Maharshi’s central insights was that human suffering arises from the ego’s sense of separateness. This same sense of separateness lies at the heart of ecological destruction. When humans perceive themselves as separate from nature, they feel entitled to extract, alter, and exhaust it for personal or economic gain. Ramana’s insistence on enquiring into the ‘I’-thought directly challenges this mindset. As the ego loosens its grip, the rigid boundary between “human” and “nature” also softens. What remains is a sense of participation rather than ownership.

This shift in understanding has important implications for the next generation. Environmental education often emphasises external behaviours—reduce, reuse, recycle—without addressing the deeper inner attitudes that drive exploitation. Ramana’s teachings remind us that lasting change cannot arise from behaviour alone; it must emerge from a shift in identity. When young people are guided to see themselves not as consumers of nature, but as expressions of the same life force, responsibility arises naturally—without moral pressure or fear-based messaging.

Ramana also emphasised simplicity as a natural outcome of self-knowledge. He did not glorify austerity, nor did he celebrate accumulation. His life quietly demonstrated that contentment arises not from possessions, but from inner stillness. This insight has profound relevance in a world shaped by overconsumption. Teaching future generations to value nature cannot be separated from teaching them to value sufficiency—to recognise when “enough” is enough. Inner fullness, he showed, reduces outer excess.

Closely linked to this is Ramana’s understanding of non-violence—not merely as a moral discipline, but as a way of seeing. To objectify nature is a subtle form of violence; to recognise it as alive, interconnected, and worthy of respect is to live non-violently. Ramana’s compassion extended



effortlessly to animals and all living beings around him, not as a cultivated stance, but as a spontaneous expression of awareness. This form of compassion—rooted in clarity rather than sentiment—is especially vital for the next generation.

Importantly, Ramana did not advocate withdrawal from the world. His teaching allows for full engagement with life, while remaining inwardly anchored. Applied to our relationship with nature, this means we need not reject development or progress, but we must ground them in awareness. Action that arises from inner stillness is naturally more balanced, less extractive, and more attentive to long-term consequences. For future generations, this offers a way to engage with science, technology, and economic growth without severing their bond with the Earth.

Ultimately, Ramana Maharshi’s message to future generations is simple yet radical: know who you are. From that knowing flows right relationship—with people, with society, and with nature. When the Self is recognised as the common ground of all existence, caring for nature is no longer an obligation imposed from outside; it becomes an expression of self-respect.

In a time when environmental crises are accelerating and solutions often feel fragmented or reactive, Ramana’s teachings offer a quiet but steady anchor. They remind us that the future of the planet is inseparable from the inner state of human consciousness. To teach the next generation to value nature, we must also teach them to value silence, awareness, and inner truth. From that soil, a more harmonious and sustainable relationship with the Earth can naturally grow.

For the next generation, this perspective also restores humility. Nature is no longer something to be mastered, redesigned, or endlessly optimised, but something to be listened to. Ramana Maharshi’s life itself was a quiet demonstration of this humility—living lightly, consuming minimally, and allowing life to unfold without force. When young people learn that wisdom lies not in domination but in alignment, sustainability ceases to be a technical goal and becomes a way of being. Valuing nature, then, is not taught through fear of loss, but through intimacy with life itself—an intimacy that begins within and naturally extends outward to the world we share.

Source: Inspired by the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

UNIBOSE: REDEFINING DIGNITY AND PROTECTION FOR LABOURERS

Across many industries, particularly in developing economies, hazardous jobs are often carried out by people from low-income backgrounds who have little choice but to accept dangerous work to earn a livelihood. Generational inequality and lack of access to education force many into roles that pose severe risks to their health and safety, from cleaning sewage tanks to entering live petroleum storage units filled with toxic gases. These practices, though long normalised, remain deeply unethical.

Unibose, an Indian Deeptech, developing robots for confined space cleaning and inspections, aims to dismantle this reality by replacing human entry into hazardous industrial environments with advanced robotic solutions. At the heart of this mission is Manikandan Dakshinamoorthy, Founder and CEO of Unibose, whose journey combines technical expertise with a strong sense of social responsibility.

A chemical engineering graduate with a master's degree in project management, Manikandan spent years working with large engineering firms, including L&T, Schlumberger. During an overseas assignment in South Africa, he witnessed young men entering hazardous storage tanks and confined industrial spaces, jobs that exposed them to toxic gases and life-threatening conditions. "As a chemical engineer, I was fully aware of the health hazards involved," he recalls. "What shocked me most was seeing how people accepted these risks simply because they needed work."

Those experiences became the catalyst for Unibose's transformation from an idea into a full-fledged mission-driven enterprise. While Unibose was founded in 2016 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, it went into full operational focus around 2020, with Manikandan leaving his corporate role in 2021 to work full-time on the venture. He joined forces with Samayaraj Durairaj, Sakthivel Panneerselvam, Venkatesh Sundaramurthy Co-Founders and Directors, focusing on robotics innovations, growing the company from a two-member team into a 16-member organisation today.

At its core, Unibose addresses one critical issue, the continued use of human labour for cleaning and inspecting hazardous industrial assets, such as live petroleum tanks. These tanks can be valued anywhere between ₹150 crore and ₹1,500 crore, and operators often fear deploying machines due to the risk of sparks or damage. As a result, labourers are sent in instead despite the obvious dangers. Unibose's answer to this problem is the No-Man Entry Robot (NMER), a remotely operated



robotic system designed specifically for cleaning and inspecting hazardous and explosive environments. The robot eliminates the need for human entry entirely, protecting workers from toxic exposure while also improving efficiency and reducing downtime for industries.

"Our most meaningful achievement has been removing the need for human entry into hazardous confined spaces. Every successful deployment shows us that our technology is protecting real lives on the ground and proves that an Indian startup can build world-class, safety-critical robotic solutions", says Manikandan.

What makes Unibose's innovation stand out is not just the technology itself, but the standards behind it. The robots are built from over 3,000 components and comply with rigorous international regulatory certifications, including approval from European agencies recognised globally. This commitment to compliance ensures both safety and credibility across markets.

Beyond oil and gas storage tanks, the NMER platform is highly adaptable. It can be deployed in flat-bottom tanks, pits, chemical storage units, sanitation systems, and even maritime ballast tanks. A single operating console can control multiple robots, making



the solution scalable across industries such as chemicals, shipping, and heavy manufacturing, sectors where safety and environmental regulations are increasingly strict.

The social impact of this innovation is significant. By eliminating manual cleaning in hazardous environments, Unibose not only safeguards lives but also challenges the long-standing belief that dangerous work must inevitably fall on the most vulnerable. Environmentally, the robots ensure more thorough cleaning, prevent contamination, and support sustainable industrial practices by improving asset efficiency and reducing waste.

Manikandan credits much of his values-driven approach to his family. "One of the most important influences in my journey

has been my brother, Mr. Vinodhkumar Dakshinamoorthy. From childhood, he supported my education and reminded me that real change comes through learning. That belief continues to shape Unibose's purpose", he shares.

Looking ahead, Unibose aims to scale its zero-human-entry solutions across regions and industries. "Our vision is to grow Unibose into a globally relevant organisation. As we scale, our focus remains the same, building safer workplaces while staying closely connected to real operational challenges", shared Manikandan. In doing so, Unibose is not just revolutionising industrial maintenance, it is restoring dignity, safety, and choice to workers who have long been denied all three.

Aatika Kundalam



SLEEP TIPS: WAYS TO RECHARGE YOUR BODY AND MIND



After all the in-depth discussions of the last two articles about REM sleep and non-REM sleep, we all know that enough sleep is good for us, and enough deep sleep offers countless benefits to our body and mind. But how to we go about making sure we get enough sleep? Here are a few handy and practical tips, some of which are common knowledge and some which are unusual and under-recommended. Let's get to them straight away:

1. Set an Alarm to Signal Sleeping, not only Waking:

It's a very common practice to set an alarm to wake up, but do you set an alarm to go to sleep at night? It might be a very good idea to do this. We often get so tired with our work and play each day that we don't have the energy to complete our pre-sleep routines and actually go to bed. But this is counter-productive, because relaxing in bed, and falling asleep is what will restore our energies. In such a scenario, hearing a strident alarm telling you its times for bed could provide the impetus needed for us to actually get to bed.

2. Cut Exercise Close to Bedtime: Whereas its a great idea to get some exercise into the day, the time you do it matters a great deal. Sprinting, playing a strenuous sport, doing HIIT workouts, or similar taxing physical movements increases our BMR (Basal Metabolism Rate) for a good three to four hours after we have stopped the activity. A high BMR is in opposition to sleep, which is mutually correlated

with a low BMR. Therefore exercising close to bedtime pushes away sleep, and should be studiously avoided.

3. Keep Dinner Light: Digestion is one of the big activities of the body. Every time we have a decent-sized meal, the body sits up and takes notice, and starts working on digesting it. This again raises basal metabolic rate and prevents us from drifting off to sleep. A really light meal two to three hours before bedtime is what works best for a good night's sleep, with your stomach in resting mode too.

(Are you wondering about why we sometimes feel sleepy right after a big meal? This happens only when the meal is in fact too big - various sugar-related, hormone-related and digestion-related issues throw the body out of gear and force it to lower other activities so that it can deal with the big meal which acts like a mini-crisis actually. Big meals are to be avoided for many reasons, and this is one of them...)

4. Look at the Sun Rise: The process and planning for going to bed on time starts at the beginning of the day, with the way your circadian rhythm works. Looking at the rising sun acts as an important trigger to let your body align with Nature. And naturally, if you are working all day, from sunrise till night, your body will be happy to fall asleep easily and quickly at bedtime. In all likelihood, you would also have completed much of the work you had planned for the day if you

started ticking off things on your to-do list as early as sun-rise time. This sense of satisfaction and unstressedness is also a large contributing factor towards a peaceful night.

5. Take a Hot Bath Before Bedtime: When body temperature dips, it signals to the body that it's time to sleep. So not the hot bath itself, but the dip in temperature when you step out of one is what signals sleep-time to the body. This is what makes a hot bath before bedtime such a good idea.

(In the same vein, it's stepping out of a cold bath that triggers the feeling of being wide awake - the rise in temperature brings about this change. This is why even a very quick and cursory cold shower wakes us up as much as a long one)

6. Eliminate the Small Irritants:

Evolutionarily, our bodies are more reactive to small sounds. Way back, when we were still in caves, survival depended on catching the sound of that small rustle made by a predator. It's interesting to notice that even now, we are more easily awakened by the small click of the main door or a quiet creak from the window, rather than the sound of a strident alarm. Therefore, it becomes important to remove the small noises from your night soundscape. Looking for, and removing small sounds like dripping taps, creaky doors, squeaking mattresses, clicking wall hangings etc, can significantly improve your sleep quality, so it is worth the trouble to address all such small noises.

Not only noises but lights flashing outside windows, rough textures bothering your skin or slight bad odours from surroundings can also impact sleep quality negatively. You could make a list of any and all such small irritants, and address them one by one to obtain the best ambience for sleeping that you can.

7. Find the Best Sleeping Position: Sleeping in unsuitable positions can give you all sorts of aches and pains, and at worst, nightmares that jolt you awake too. Sleeping on the back or on the front, with all your weight pressing against the internal organs is usually an uncomfortable experience. Yoga recommends sleeping on your left side, with your right knee folded and supporting your body so that you are not pressing against your stomach. Having said that, it's quite true that different people have different body requirements, so it is important to experiment, make notes, and arrive at the position that suits you best personally.

Deep and long sleep is the key to good health, mental alertness and longevity. It works as a preventive against a host of problematic health issues, and as the best and most natural healing balm when we do get sick. Current work-cultures are tending to undermine the significance of sleep in a most alarming manner, and one really hopes we will fight against this tendency as a society.

Here's to sleeping long and deep and right every single night, and reaping all the myriad benefits of that!



The author Ramashree Paranandi is a teacher, and a partner in The Organic Farm, Nedumaram, TN. She consults on applications of yoga, natural therapies and music for good health, and often stays over at the farm to recharge herself with pollution free days spent amidst natural surroundings. An MA in Yogashastra enables her to apply the knowledge of the ancient texts to contemporary situations.

SHINING A LIGHT ON MOTHERHOOD



➤ **Postpartum depression (PPD) impacts up to 15 per cent of mothers**

Postpartum depression has many faces, and it looks different for each person.

You might hate yourself as a woman or feel guilty that you are not bonding with your baby as a mother. The nights are long with insomnia, or you might be low on energy and unable to get out of bed. You feel the intensity of emotions and a heightened sensitivity to mood swings. You might even harbour thoughts of self-harm.

But how can you tell someone that you are struggling when bringing a child into the world is celebrated as one of the joys in life?

Founder of MotherHope Indonesia (MHI), Nur Yanayirah, struggled through a lonely journey of postpartum depression herself when she lost her first child to stillbirth, and after the birth of her second child. She recognised the pain and struggles of a mother, and it compelled her to start a non-profit organisation in Bekasi City to help mothers across Indonesia.

She explains the cultural expectations of

a mother in Indonesia, “As a mother or as a parent, we are always required to be happy, to always be strong, not to be sad, not to cry, not to be whiny, not to be weak.”

The stigma attached to postpartum depression contradicts the image of a ‘perfect mother’ - one who had a natural childbirth, has a strong body, and is happy. However, the reality is childbirth often leaves mothers physically exhausted due to fluctuating hormonal changes, with little respite. They have to comply with breastfeeding demands and fulfil maternal duties to uphold societal expectations of being a ‘perfect’ wife or mother. This societal pressure pushes women to hide their depression, hindering them from seeking necessary support and help. As a result, postpartum depression can easily go undetected or be dismissed as a lack of ‘perfection’ instead of being diagnosed and addressed. Factors that prevent equality for these women.

Mothers, after childbirth, are in the most

vulnerable state. They must have ample rest, consume enough nutrition, be supported in looking after the infant, and have the validation of family or friends in the first forty days of delivery.

“When the wife experiences postpartum depression, the father is at two to three times the risk of also experiencing postpartum depression,” Yana explains, adding that one in ten fathers are also at risk and often don’t know how to navigate and express their emotions well, which can manifest as anger, aggressiveness, or dependence on vices.

MHI welcomes mothers and fathers in their support groups, teaching them the right tools to support each other in their new parenthood journey. Participants learn to change how they communicate their feelings, especially between spouses. Additionally, they hold seminars and workshops on healthy communication and teach participants how to ask for help without feeling angry or guilty. MHI also

connects them to mental health professionals who can provide greater support in their areas of need.

Adopting the African proverb, ‘It takes a village to raise a child’, MHI is run by 200 volunteers who are primarily midwives themselves or people with lived experiences, who have gone on to help empower and bring equality to over 58,000 women across Indonesia.

About MotherHope Indonesia

MotherHope Indonesia is a non-profit organisation that provides emotional support to women and their families affected by perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (postpartum depression) and connects them with healthcare professionals. They have supported more than 58,000 women across Indonesia.

A story by Our Better World – the digital storytelling initiative of the Singapore International Foundation
(www.ourbetterworld.org)

DEEP ROOTS, LASTING IMPACT



For Dr. Mani Skaria, PhD—Founder, President and CEO of US Citrus LLC, and Professor Emeritus at Texas A&M University—Kingsville—life has been a sustained lesson in foundations: scientific, ethical, emotional, and ecological. Across continents and professional roles, through both achievement and repeated loss over more than four decades, one conviction has remained constant—enduring strength is built not through rapid expansion, but through roots that grow deep.

Born into a rural Indian household, Mani’s earliest lessons were not delivered through formal instruction but through lived experience. Both his parents were government servants in extension education—his father in agriculture, his mother in public health. Their work connected knowledge to people, theory to practice. That ethic shaped his worldview early, even if he did not recognise it at the time.

One childhood incident would later prove formative. At thirteen, Mani asked his father for a new bicycle. The family could afford it. Instead of agreeing, his father pointed to the harvested paddy field in front of their home and said, “Grow vegetables. Earn it yourself.” To the teenage Mani, it felt like an insult. Why should he labour when money was available? Yet he did it. With help from a caretaker, Mani cultivated vegetables, sold them, and earned

enough to buy not one, but three bicycles. He bought none. What stayed with him was not the money, but the experience—watching something grow from the soil, understanding effort, patience, and value creation. Decades later, as a scientist and entrepreneur in the United States, he would realise that this moment had quietly laid the foundation for everything that followed.

Learning to step back
Mani’s academic journey eventually took him to Purdue University, where he completed a PhD in Plant Pathology (Virology). Soon after, he was assigned to a USAID project in Jordan, through Washington State University supporting agricultural development under a US government programme. Though trained as a pathologist, he was placed in citrus research—an unfamiliar domain. The experience, he says, changed the way he learned forever.

Working in a foreign country, with limited support and immense responsibility, forced him to break complex problems into manageable layers. “Like peeling an onion,” he explains. Instead of being overwhelmed by complexity, he learned to step back, observe systems, and approach challenges incrementally. This habit of distance—of seeing the whole before focusing on parts—became central to his thinking. A citrus tree, he notes, looks healthy when examined too closely. It is only when one steps back that patterns of decline become visible. The lesson applied not just to trees, but to institutions, industries, and even people.

Building systems, not just careers
When Mani joined Texas A&M University in 1988, South Texas appeared to host a thriving citrus economy. Large, family-run enterprises managed extensive orchards spanning over 730 acres, operated USDA-certified citrus nurseries comparable to five-star classifications, and controlled the full value chain—from packing houses to marketing and value-added products. On the surface, the industry looked robust and self-sufficient. Yet, through a trained scientific lens, Mani identified a serious underlying flaw: nursery stock circulating across the region was biologically compromised, harbouring infections invisible to the untrained eye and quietly undermining the long-term health of the citrus ecosystem.

His global exposure—spanning Israel, California, Florida, South Africa, and Jordan—gave him comparative insight. Texas, he realised, lacked a clean citrus programme. Speaking this truth was not easy. Growers resisted. Questioning established practices rarely earns popularity. But Mani persisted. Over seven years, he helped build a clean citrus system from nothing. By 1997, the programme was

mandated into Texas law, signed by then-Governor George Bush. The achievement marked a turning point. Mani was less interested in publishing hundreds of papers than in creating an institutional framework that would outlive him.

“I wanted impact,” he says simply. Discovering plant diseases, identifying systemic flaws, and building preventive infrastructure mattered more to him than academic metrics alone.

Independence, ethics, and truth-telling
Alongside academia, Mani pursued entrepreneurial ventures that gave him financial independence. A health issue linked to indoor environments led him and his wife to establish a diagnostic laboratory after specialised training, including a short course at Harvard. The business succeeded beyond expectations.

This independence, Mani believes, gave him something invaluable: freedom to speak honestly. Academic systems, he observes, are often constrained by funding dependencies and institutional politics. When one’s livelihood is not tied solely to a salary, it becomes easier to question flawed assumptions and speak inconvenient truths.

For Mani, ethics is not an abstract concept. It is embedded in everyday decisions—whether one is selling plants, fruit, or services. Customers, he notes, recognise integrity instinctively. Without it, no enterprise can survive long-term.

He describes business not as profit-seeking alone, but as a carefully balanced system. Costs of production, logistics, intermediaries, retail margins, and a modest surplus are all necessary. Profit, in this sense, is not greed—it is resilience. What matters most, however, is character. Banks may assess cash flow, collateral, and credit, but ultimately, they evaluate commitment and integrity. Without those, numbers mean little.

Losing everything—and rebuilding again
Despite decades of professional success, Mani’s life and work have been repeatedly tested by forces beyond human control. In 2012, a severe hailstorm with winds reaching 80 mph caused extensive damage to his home. In 2020, Hurricane Hanna passed directly over the US Citrus nursery, destroying 120,000 USDA-certified citrus plants and resulting in losses exceeding twelve million dollars in a single day. The following year, an unprecedented freeze



wiped out more than a hundred acres of lime orchards, including fruit that had already been contracted to restaurants, underscoring the fragility of even the most carefully built systems. Each loss was total. Each recovery demanded reinvention. Mani does not recount these events with resentment. Instead, he frames them as lessons in impermanence. “It takes a lifetime to build,” he reflects, “and a fraction of a second to lose.” Gratitude, rather than despair, guides his response. Each setback forced innovation, leading to new systems and insights that strengthened his work.

Vetiver: science meets metaphor
It was during this period of rebuilding that Mani encountered vetiver in a meaningful way. Introduced through academic collaborators at Alabama A&M University, he was struck by an image of vetiver roots growing twelve feet deep in just eight months. Intrigued, he began experimenting. What followed surprised even a seasoned scientist. Planted alongside young citrus saplings, vetiver acted as a living protector—moderating wind, retaining deep soil moisture during drought, suppressing weeds without herbicides, stabilising soil organically. In extreme heat without irrigation, trees survived. For Mani, vetiver became more than a functional companion plant. It became a metaphor. Strong roots first. Growth later.

He was not initially interested in vetiver’s commercial by-products—oils, fibres, handicrafts. What captivated him was its ecological intelligence. Nature, he realised again, already holds many answers if humans are willing to observe rather than dominate.

Giving back to the land
The metaphor deepened after a devastating landslide in Kerala claimed hundreds of lives. Disturbed by the tragedy, Mani committed to donating a million vetiver plants to the Western Ghats. His approach was deliberately decentralised working through schools and villages, encouraging children to plant, observe, and share saplings with neighbours. The goal was not just erosion control. It was reconnection—between people and land, knowledge and responsibility. Watching a plant grow, Mani believes, builds stewardship far more effectively than lectures ever could.

Knowledge as inheritance
Why, after such a full life, did Mani begin documenting his reflections through Dr. Mani’s Insights? <https://drmanisinsights.com/> The answer lies in repetition. Again, people asked how he navigated science, business, loss, and recovery. He realised that experience, if not shared, is wasted. He recalls an international citrus conference where scientists discussed helping growers without understanding what it takes to run a viable business. The gap troubled him. Science without context, he argues, cannot serve society. His platform is an attempt to bridge that divide—to translate lived experience into accessible learning. He writes and speaks not as a guru, but as someone shaped by both blessings and blows.

A quiet call for depth
In a world obsessed with speed, scale, and disruption, Mani’s message is quietly radical. Go deep. Build foundations. Honour ethics. Learn from nature. Integrate science with traditional knowledge. Measure success not by accumulation, but by what endures after loss. Like vetiver, his life reminds us that resilience grows underground long before it becomes visible above the soil.

Marie Banu Rodriguez

GRATITUDE, AND THE SACRED WEB OF LIFE

December has always felt like a natural pause in my life—a time to slow down, reflect, and consciously express gratitude. For me, gratitude does not begin with people alone. It begins with Bhoomi Matha, the Mother Earth, without whom nothing else would exist.

I begin every day by invoking her through the ancient shloka:

समुद्रवसने देवपितृवत्सुतनमण्डले ।
वर्षिणुपतृनि नमस्तुभ्यं पादस्पर्शं क्षमस्व मे ॥

O Goddess who wears the oceans as her garments and whose bosom is adorned by mountains, Consort of Lord Vishnu, I bow to you—please forgive me for touching you with my feet.

This shloka is not ritual alone; it is a reminder of humility. Bhoomi Matha gives abundantly and silently—water, microorganisms, fungi, earthworms, prana (life force to plants), and ojus (nutrients to plants). She supports every initiative to grow our own food, helps trees grow and provide shade, and sustains life without asking for acknowledgment. My first gratitude is always to her.

So many people, creatures, and unseen forces have contributed to the sustainable greenery in my farms and to my regenerative natural farming journey. There have been ups and downs, but I have learned to welcome both with open arms. Growth, after all, is never linear.

Among the most silent yet profound contributors are my cows and bulls—fourteen of them across my farms. Whenever I visit, I instinctively seek their blessings. I carry bananas, which they love, and feed them from my own hands. What amazes me every time is their gentleness. They are careful not to bite my fingers, picking up the fruit with their tongues. Even when their teeth touch my fingers, it feels harmless—almost like a blessing.

They recognise my cars and come running, hopeful and trusting. Feeding them, touching them, and standing quietly beside them fills me with peace. I may not have served them adequately, but they give endlessly—gobar and gomutra, which form the backbone of my natural fertilisers and bio-pesticides. I bow before them with immense gratitude for giving everything in abundance.

This journey would not have been possible without my family. My wife, my sons, and my mother-in-law have supported these initiatives wherever possible, without hesitation. Without their quiet encouragement, this path would have been difficult to sustain. My extended family—nephews, nieces, and grand-nieces, over thirty of them from both sides—are a constant source of inspiration. They respond warmly to photos and videos from the farm, regularly buy Ananda Vanam produce, and offer feedback that reassures me this work matters.

Above all, my sisters inspire me deeply.



They use the produce, enquire regularly, and visit whenever possible. My immediate elder sister, who visits my farms and sometimes stays there, is particularly

enthusiastic—observing, suggesting, and participating with genuine interest. Their involvement makes this journey collective, not solitary.

Beyond Bhoomi Matha, Nature itself must be revered—the Pancha Bhoothas that sustain life.

I express gratitude to Air, which provides oxygen and nitrogen, by keeping it pristine. I do not burn waste or crop residue. I plant trees that naturally enrich the air and allow companion plants to grow, resisting the urge to maximise cultivation purely for commercial gain.

To Water, I offer reverence by worshipping the rain god, digging ponds, storing rainwater, and adopting controlled irrigation methods such as SRI. Every drop is sacred and must be conserved.

To Fire (Agni), I offer my gratitude for enabling transformation—of seed into food, of raw matter into nourishment, and of organic residues into life-giving energy—while

reminding myself to use this force with restraint and reverence.

To Akasa (Space), I offer my namaskarams for providing the invisible yet essential field in which all life unfolds—the space for roots to spread, canopies to expand, breath to move, and consciousness to grow.

I am deeply grateful to my gurus, mentors, friends, and acquaintances from whom I continuously learn to improvise, innovate, and solve problems. I am equally thankful to the companies and NGOs I am associated with and to colleagues whose support has strengthened my work.

My farm colleagues, government officers, suppliers, and vendors deserve special mention. Without their hands-on experience, practical wisdom, and cooperation, I could not have learned or achieved as much as I have.

And finally, there is Vetiver.

Vetiver is not just a plant to me—it is the divine grass, Bhoomi Matha's quiet gift to humanity. Vetiver grows almost anywhere, multiplies generously, enriches the soil, prevents erosion, remediates water pollution, protects slopes, and provides medicinal benefits. Vetiver-infused water has long been used for healing and disease prevention, while the aroma of its roots calms the mind and steadies emotions.

In our traditions, gods are adorned with vetiver garlands, symbolising purity, cooling energy, and divine protection. Vetiver allows water to percolate gently into the soil, sustaining life far beyond its immediate presence. It is spiritual in both form and function.

औषधीः पन्थानं ब्रूहीत्यत्र देवाः सहागन्नि ।
तत्र गच्छामि गन्तासि ब्रह्मणा सह वर्चसा ॥

O sacred herbs, show us the path where the divine abides with Agni.

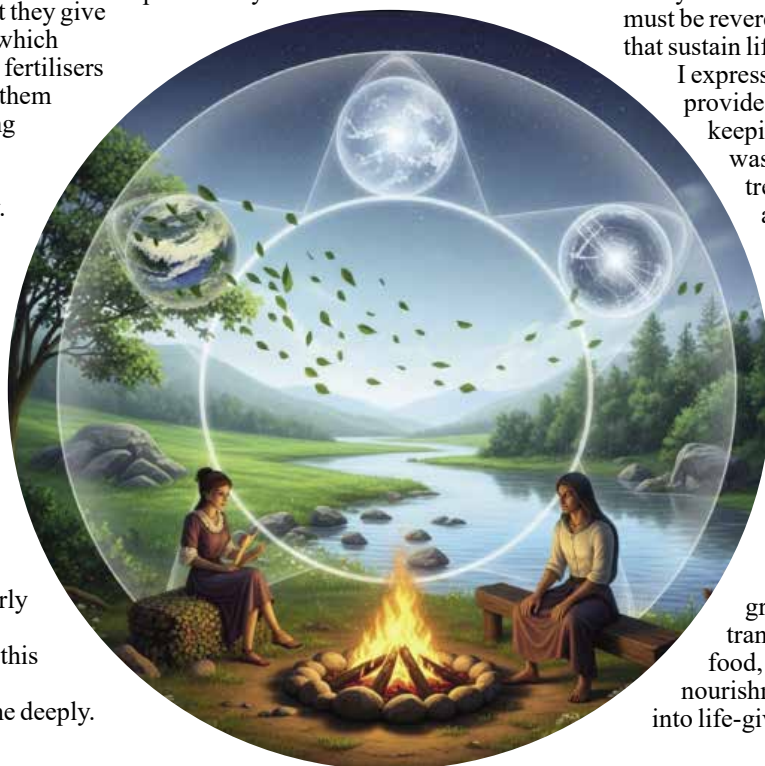
May we walk that path together, endowed with the brilliance of Brahman.

Vetiver keeps me grounded and purposeful. It gives me happiness and bliss, calms my mind, and guides me to think positively and help others. Quite literally, it allows me to eat, drink, sleep, and dream vetiver.

Over the years, I have realised that spiritual and sustainable living is not about accumulation. It is about decluttering—both materially and emotionally. By freeing ourselves of what we do not need, we create space for abundance, growth, and peace. As N. Karthikeyan, Editor of Vasudha – Everlasting Sustainable Living so profoundly articulates: “By freeing ourselves of what we do not need, we create space for sustainability, growth, and peace.”

December, for me, is not merely a month of gratitude. It is a reminder that gratitude must be practised every day—consciously and humbly. From Bhoomi Matha to cows, from family to farmers, from Pancha Bhoothas to vetiver, my life is sustained by an interconnected web of giving. To acknowledge that web is the first step toward living responsibly, regeneratively, and spiritually.

P.N. Subramanain



RETHINKING CLIMATE RESILIENCE FROM THE GROUND UP

For Karthik Gunasekar, climate action is not an abstract policy conversation or a distant global debate. It is deeply local, lived, and shaped by everyday realities of farmers, wetlands, food systems, and cities. Over the past eight years, his work has steadily evolved from corporate employment to grassroots climate and livelihood action, grounded in Tamil Nadu and particularly in and around Chennai.

An alumnus of NIT Trichy, Karthik began his career in the corporate sector, where he spent about a year and a half. Even during his college and early professional years, he recalls having an inclination towards social change. However, he also acknowledges that his understanding of social realities at that time was limited. “My understanding of on-ground issues was very different then,” he reflects. It was only through sustained exposure to grassroots realities that his perspective shifted—prompting him to leave his corporate role and commit himself fully to social and ecological work.

Today, Karthik describes himself as a social changemaker, a role that blends activism, documentation, and sustained engagement with communities. He is currently the co-founder and managing trustee of Aram Thinaï, an organisation he started with his colleague Benisha. His work, however, is the outcome of a longer journey through movements rather than institutions.

Before Aram Thinaï, Karthik was closely associated with the organic farming movement in South India. He worked with the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) Organic Council, which promotes community-based certification systems for organic farmers. He was also part of a Gandhian organisation that explored the idea of a non-violent economy—an economic model that challenges extractive and exploitative practices and instead prioritises people and the planet. This work culminated in Ahimsa Sandhai, a five-day event held at the Gandhi Museum in Madurai, organised with Ekta Parishad, and attended by diverse thinkers including former Bhutan Prime Minister Jigme Thinley, one of the architects of the Gross National Happiness framework.

While this phase was rich in ideas and narrative-building, Karthik felt the need to focus more concretely on Tamil Nadu. He observed that the state already had a vibrant organic farming movement, and believed that grounding his work here could lead to more tangible impact. He became part of the Tamil Nadu Organic Farmers Federation and began working closely with farmer collectives.

It was from this context that Aram Thinaï emerged, shaped by a central question: how can climate action be rooted in local realities, especially in a society already fractured by inequalities of class, caste, gender, and geography? The organisation’s work is anchored in what Karthik calls “localised climate resilience”—a framework that insists climate responses must be designed and led at the local level.

One of Aram Thinaï’s flagship initiatives is the Climate Resilient Chennai programme. Within this, Karthik leads the Chennai Foodscape Project, while Benisha focuses on the Chennai Wetlands Project. The idea of “foodscape,” he explains, is inspired by the concept of landscape. Chennai, he argues, need not be entirely dependent on distant, industrial food systems. Instead, it can source more of its food from the three districts surrounding the city—Thiruvallur, Kancheepuram, and Chengalpattu—through fair, local, and ecologically responsible systems.

This approach is not merely about food preferences; it is deeply tied to the city’s ecological future. Chennai’s floods, Karthik points out, are not caused only by rainfall within the city. Water



A key component of the Foodscape Project has been the creation of organic farmers’ markets in Chennai. Aram Thinaï runs a monthly market in T. Nagar and is also part of a collective organising a long-running market in Kilpauk and another in T. Nagar.

from surrounding districts drains through Chennai before reaching the sea. If peri-urban agricultural lands and wetlands are destroyed by unplanned development, the city’s carrying capacity—its ability to manage heat, water scarcity, and flooding—is severely compromised. Protecting agriculture and wetlands in these regions is therefore essential for Chennai’s climate resilience.

A key component of the Foodscape Project has been the creation of organic farmers’ markets in Chennai. Aram Thinaï runs a monthly market in T. Nagar and is also part of a collective organising a long-running market in Kilpauk and another in T. Nagar. These markets are modest in scale but significant in intent: they enable direct transactions between farmers and urban consumers, offer fairer prices to producers, and build awareness about where food comes from.

Beyond markets, Karthik and his team document organic farmers’ experiences, organise farm visits for urban residents, schools, and colleges, and create spaces for dialogue between producers and consumers. “It is about understanding farming, but also understanding farmers’ lives,” he says. “They want peace of mind as much as anyone else.”

Parallely, the Chennai Wetlands Project focuses on mapping the city’s wetlands and documenting their ecological and cultural histories. The team is also exploring community museums as a way of preserving and sharing these histories, making wetlands visible not just as ecological assets but as living landscapes tied to people’s livelihoods and memories.

Youth and civic engagement form the third pillar of Aram Thinaï’s work. Through experiential learning programmes such as wetland tours, livelihood tours, and a module titled Rethinking Development, the organisation works with colleges like Loyola College and the Asian College of Journalism, as well as schools in Chennai. These programmes are designed to move beyond classroom instruction and immerse young people in lived realities of climate, food, and water.

Karthik also hosts the Aram Thinaï Podcast, which

documents ground-level experiences of climate change. He believes that while data and information are abundant, lived perspectives are often missing. The podcast attempts to bridge this gap by sharing practical experiences from farmers, activists, and communities.

Though not a formally trained researcher, Karthik places strong emphasis on balancing action with reflection. He has written reports for organisations such as SELCO Foundation and the Centre for Financial Accountability. As an Inlaks Shivdasani Fellow, he undertook a study on dryland agriculture in Tamil Nadu—choosing this focus because dryland farmers are among the most climate-vulnerable yet least visible in mainstream discourse. His writing has appeared in The Wire, including articles on maize monocropping linked to bioethanol policies and on the complexities of agricultural labour in Tamil Nadu.

At the core of Karthik’s journey is a deep awareness of privilege. He speaks openly about his upbringing, the advantages of education, caste, gender, and family background, and how these shaped his opportunities. “The question for me became,” he says, “can I use these privileges to make things a little more equitable?” This realisation shifted his worldview from one of “helping” or “teaching” others to one of co-learning and co-working.

Aram Thinaï remains a small organisation, operating without institutional funding and sustained largely through fellowships and crowdfunding. Yet for Karthik, scale is not the only measure of success. Creating small, working models—of fair food systems, local economies, and climate-resilient practices—is itself a form of resistance and hope.

In a time when climate action is often reduced to targets and technology, Karthik Gunasekar’s work reminds us that resilience is built not only through policy but through relationships—between cities and villages, consumers and farmers, people and landscapes.

Marie Banu Rodriguez

ECOLOGY, CRAFT, AND WOMEN-LED LIVELIHOODS

Ecology, craft, and women-led livelihoods

A three-day Vetiver Grass Basket-Making Training Programme held at Kuttikanam in Idukki district, Kerala, demonstrated how ecological stewardship, traditional craft knowledge, and women-led livelihoods can be integrated into a single, purposeful initiative. Set amid the lush landscapes of the Western Ghats, the programme created an enabling space where environmental awareness, skill development, and human relationships came together in a deeply meaningful way.

The training was organised by the India Vetiver Foundation and conducted by experienced trainers from the Peermade Development Society (PDS), an institution internationally recognised for its long-standing work on vetiver-based environmental protection and livelihood solutions. Financial support was provided by MSDS, which covered training costs, accommodation, food, and travel for nine women from self-help groups. A few additional participants attended at their own expense, reflecting the wider interest the programme generated across regions and professions.

Participants included women from self-help groups, trainers, practitioners, and sustainability enthusiasts, along with the husbands of two women trainees, Poorni and Rekha; Ms Priya Vardheesh from Florida; Ms Raji Rajashekar and Mr A. K. T. Rajashekar from Theni; Dr Sangitha Saini, Professor at Bhagwan Mahavir Institute of Medical Sciences, Sonapat, Haryana; and Mr Kamaraj from Chicago. This diversity contributed to a rich learning environment, enabling dialogue between grassroots practitioners, trainers, academics, and sustainability advocates.

The programme opened with an inaugural address by Fr Sabu, former Director of PDS, who placed the training within a broader ecological context. He spoke about vetiver's role in improving soil fertility, preventing erosion, stabilising slopes, and enhancing groundwater recharge. He also traced the origins of vetiver basket-making at PDS to a conscious decision taken nearly two decades ago to retain vetiver roots in the soil while productively utilising the harvested

leaves. What began as an ecological choice gradually evolved into a sustainable livelihood model. Trainers were initially brought from Thailand, and the first group of rural women was trained. Over time, these women became master trainers, travelling across India and abroad to pass on the craft.

Nearly two decades ago, PDS made a conscious decision to retain vetiver roots in the soil rather than uprooting the plant.

Institutional support for the programme was extended by Mr. P.D. Thomas, Director of PDS. With MSDS support of approximately ₹1 lakh, the programme was designed as a fully residential training, allowing participants to immerse themselves





completely in learning. For many women, this residential format provided uninterrupted time, focus, and confidence-building away from daily responsibilities.

Participants stayed at the PDS Training Centre campus throughout the programme. The calm Western Ghats setting, clean and comfortable accommodation, hot water facilities, and nourishing food created an atmosphere of care and dignity. Exposure visits to nearby spice estates and local sites were organised using comfortable transport, adding context and depth to the learning experience.

The technical sessions formed the core of the programme and were conducted in a systematic, learner-friendly manner. Participants were guided through the entire vetiver craft process—from assessing leaf quality and understanding the correct harvesting season, to boiling the leaves with salt, drying them, and finally weaving and finishing baskets and boxes. Two women trainers from PDS led the sessions with patience and clarity, supported by volunteers who ensured the learning environment remained friendly and inclusive.



Nirmala from Sivagangai district reflected on the structured and practical nature of the training: “The training was very well structured. Participants learnt the entire process—from selecting quality vetiver leaves and understanding the right harvesting season, to drying, weaving, and finishing the boxes.”

Poorni, an experienced handicraft trainer from Pudupattinam village in Thirukkalikundram block, Chengalpattu district participated in the training. With prior experience in training women in door mats, jewellery, artificial flowers, and decorative items made from locally

available materials, she attended the programme with a trainer’s perspective: “The training gave me a completely new perspective. Vetiver was a new material for me, and the process was far more immersive than the usual panchayat-level trainings. This experience has strengthened my confidence and enabled me to train women in my district more effectively.”

Ms Raji Rajashekar described how the training expanded her understanding of vetiver beyond cultivation: “I have always been intrigued by vetiver as a plant. This workshop helped me understand its value-addition potential in a very practical way. Trying my hand at vetiver handicrafts opened new possibilities for my own farming and sustainability initiatives.”

Her husband, Mr A. K. T. Rajashekar, emphasised the ecological–livelihood linkage: “We knew vetiver mainly for its roots and fragrance, but this training showed us how the upper part of the plant can be productively used. Learning how soil conservation can be combined with livelihood creation was a powerful experience.”

Mr Kamaraj, who travelled from Chicago to attend the programme,

highlighted the overall experience and care: “I am extremely happy to have been invited for this training. I never anticipated the warmth of the reception or the quality of the arrangements. The accommodation, food, travel, and exposure visits were excellent, and the workshop itself was systematic and engaging. These three days at Kuttikanam will remain one of my most memorable learning experiences.”

At the conclusion of the programme, certificates were distributed by Dr Thomas, marking the successful completion of the training and recognising the commitment of all participants.

Dr, Thomas underscored the importance of sustaining such partnerships and acknowledged the exceptional spirit of the group. He said: “We should continue our collaboration in future for regenerating the ecology and farming. We also enjoyed the spirit of each individual in spite of their diverse background and I have not seen such enthusiasm among participants as we felt from other trainees we conduct.

Marie Banu Rodriguez



Centre for Social Initiative and Management

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Centre for Social Initiative and Management (CSIM) is a unit of Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani (MSDS). It is a learning centre that promotes the concept of social entrepreneurship.

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“NATURE IS EGOLESS. IT NEVER SAYS ‘I’; IT ALWAYS SAYS ‘WE’.”

Pratap Hegde shares with Marie Banu his perspectives on sustainable entrepreneurship and strengthening rural livelihoods



Mr. Pratap Hegde is a serial entrepreneur, management consultant, mentor, teacher, social worker, and farmer with over 35 years of experience in the IT/ITES sector. Known for his nature-inspired, bio-mimicry-led approach to business, he has built value-centric platform models across sectors including mobility, logistics, and natural resources.

As Founder, ED and CEO of telematics4u, he led innovations such as Project ACE, now a Harvard and IIM-B case study. A global business leader with presence in 15+ countries, he is currently a member of State Planning Commission, Karnataka.

Pratap is also a committed advocate of organic farming, FPOs, and ecosystem-based entrepreneurship, living and working from his organic farm, Avani Orchards, near Bengaluru.

In an exclusive interview, Pratap Hegde shares with Marie Banu his perspectives on sustainable entrepreneurship and strengthening rural livelihoods.

How has practising natural farming reshaped your understanding of entrepreneurship and value creation?

Practising natural farming has fundamentally transformed how I understand entrepreneurship. My entrepreneurial journey can clearly be divided into two phases — before I began natural farming and after. Although I was born into a farming family and spent my early years in a forested village in coastal Karnataka, my education and career eventually took me into urban centres and corporate life. Over time, I drifted away from Nature’s way of functioning.

I returned to farming at a very challenging personal and professional moment, after exiting a business under less-than-pleasant circumstances. The land at Avni Orchards, where I began natural farming, was barren. Watching that land slowly regenerate — observing soil, plants, insects, birds, water, and seasonal rhythms — became the most profound learning experience of my life.

Nature became my university. I realised that real learning does not come from books, management theories, or even the internet. It comes from observation. To observe truly, one must first accept that one does not know. Ego blocks learning. Nature, on the other hand, functions without ego. It creates value continuously, without exploitation, without haste, and without waste. This shifted my understanding of value creation — from extraction and transaction to regeneration and relationship.

You often draw from bio-mimicry and bio-empathy. What core principles from Nature should entrepreneurs consciously adopt when building sustainable enterprises?

Nature collaborates. It is inclusive. It does not operate through competition in the way humans understand it. There is no concept of “me” in Nature — only “we”. Every element supports another, and every action serves the larger whole.

Entrepreneurs need to internalise this deeply. Most conventional business models are linear, egocentric, and driven by accumulation. Nature’s model is circular, collaborative, and regenerative. It does not exploit; it

supports. It does not hoard; it circulates. It does not exclude; it integrates.

If entrepreneurs consciously adopt these principles — collaboration over control, inclusion over exclusion, balance over greed — sustainability ceases to be a buzzword and becomes a natural outcome. This applies not only to ecological sustainability, but also to financial, technological, and social sustainability. Nature demonstrates that long-term survival depends on harmony, not domination.

Many startups pursue rapid scale, while natural farming emphasises patience and balance. How do you reconcile these seemingly opposite approaches?

The obsession with speed comes largely from ego. Speed without awareness inevitably leads to collapse. This is visible repeatedly in the startup ecosystem — rapid funding, aggressive expansion, inflated valuations, followed by sudden and often painful failure.

Nature teaches us that growth must be holistic. If you heat a glass sheet evenly, it expands. If you heat it at one point, it cracks. Organisations are no different. You cannot scale revenue without simultaneously scaling maturity, governance, compliance, people, systems, and consciousness.

Natural farming taught me patience, not as delay, but as alignment. Growth must be proportionate and conscious. When organisations collapse, the damage extends far beyond founders and investors — employees lose jobs, families are affected, and communities suffer. Entrepreneurship therefore carries a social responsibility that cannot be ignored. Nature reminds us that endurance matters more than speed.

You work closely with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs). What are the most critical entrepreneurial gaps that prevent small farmers from becoming viable agri-entrepreneurs?

The FPO model is conceptually strong, but execution is weak. Fragmented landholdings are not India’s weakness; they are its strength. Small farmers are deeply committed, innovative, and capable of experimentation. The problem lies in leadership, management, and systems.

Most FPOs lack sustained hand-holding. Board members often do not understand their fiduciary responsibilities. CEOs are appointed without clarity on their role. Financial literacy — understanding cash flow, balance sheets, statutory compliance — is minimal. Many FPOs face serious legal and operational risk simply because returns are not filed on time.

Another major constraint is access to equity. FPOs

can raise debt only in proportion to their equity, but equity can come only from farmers themselves, which is practically limiting. Innovative instruments through the Social Stock Exchange could address this gap, but policy clarity is still evolving.

What FPOs need is not just funding, but continuous capacity building, shared digital platforms, professional advisory support, and ecosystem-level thinking. Without this, even well-intentioned collectives struggle to survive.

In your view, how can natural farming transition from a “movement” to a financially resilient business model without losing its ecological ethics?

The demand for authentic organic and natural food is real and growing. The biggest challenge today is trust. Consumers do not trust labels or certifications because enforcement is weak and transparency is limited.

We need trust built through systems, not marketing. Technology-enabled transparency — traceability systems, QR-based information, and credible verification mechanisms — can allow consumers to know where their food comes from and how it is produced.

Equally important is value addition. Selling raw produce has limited margins. Transforming bananas, millets, moringa, jackfruit, spices, and fruits into high-value products creates resilience and scale. At Avni Orchards, we have seen how integrating farming with experiential models such as farm stays, food education, and wellness can make natural farming financially viable without compromising ecological ethics.

Natural farming must integrate food, health, tourism, and livelihoods. When food is seen as preventive healthcare, people are willing to pay a premium — not out of luxury, but out of wisdom.

Drawing from your experience in building global platforms, how should agri-entrepreneurs think about markets, pricing, and value chains differently from traditional agriculture?

Agriculture must move from silos to platforms. Nature operates as a multi-stakeholder ecosystem — producers, processors, logistics providers, storage systems, retailers, and consumers all interacting dynamically.

Farmers should not be forced to carry produce to markets and negotiate from a position of weakness. Produce must be aggregated digitally, priced transparently, and picked up from the farm gate. Technology allows this today. What we need is public digital infrastructure for agriculture — integrated platforms that connect supply chains end to end. Fragmentation across departments and ministries has damaged rural economies. Technology gives us the opportunity to re-integrate what human systems have divided and to restore balance in value chains.

What lessons from rural and village economies are most relevant for today’s urban entrepreneurs and startup founders?

Traditional village economies were decentralised, collaborative, and largely self-sufficient. They learned from Nature, not institutions. Knowledge came through living and observing, not through consumption of information.

Urban economies are fragile because they are centralised and service-heavy. As artificial intelligence disrupts service industries, agriculture, tourism, and rural-centric activities will become the most resilient economic spaces.

Urban entrepreneurs must relearn decentralisation, collaboration, patience, and community orientation from rural systems — updated with technology, but grounded in Nature’s wisdom.