

A VILLAGE'S FIGHT FOR NATURE

Strong communities are often built when people come together to share knowledge, resources, and care. Across the world, grassroots initiatives prove that collective effort can transform lives, turning challenges into opportunities and dreams into realities. One such inspiring example is the Youth of Kodaganallur Endeavour (YOKE) Society, based in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu.

Founded by Chitra, Vasudevan, and a group of committed natives, YOKE works with focus and heart across education, employment, health, and the environment. Its mission is simple yet profound: to improve living standards while bridging the rural-urban divide. Today, YOKE touches the lives of nearly 1,000 people every year, nurturing both individuals and the community as a whole.

“The village gave me my ancestry. Coming back was not just about staying connected, it was about taking responsibility,” reflects Chitra, Founder and Chairperson of YOKE.

The very name “YOKE” signifies unity and energy. Its members, young in both age and spirit, are driven to build a self-reliant, vibrant community. While partnerships with individual well-wishers and corporate donors sustain its activities, the real strength of YOKE lies in deep local participation.

Education: Unlocking Opportunities

Education has been YOKE’s anchor from the beginning. Its NEET coaching programme for government school students has already enabled seven young aspirants to enter medical colleges—a life-changing milestone for their families and villages.

The efforts extend far beyond exam preparation. YOKE organizes guest lectures, excursions, English-language workshops, and much-needed infrastructure improvements in schools, including water supply, sanitation, and classrooms. “Education is not just about textbooks—it is about confidence, exposure, and the ability to dream bigger,” Chitra emphasizes.

Employment: Pathways to Self-Reliance

YOKE has also invested in creating livelihood opportunities. Classes for job seekers prepare young people for competitive exams, with several achieving state-level success. Soft-skills workshops and self-help initiatives further encourage entrepreneurship and financial independence.

One inspiring story is of a young mother who, after attending YOKE’s classes, cleared a government exam and secured employment. This single achievement dramatically reshaped her family’s future, proving how empowerment can ripple across generations.

Health: Caring for the Community

Healthcare in rural areas often struggles with accessibility and awareness. YOKE



addresses this by partnering with the Indian Medical Association to conduct health camps covering diabetes, geriatrics, dentistry, and eye care. The Society also promotes holistic wellness through yoga, sports, and fitness events, reinforcing the message that health is both prevention and care.

Environment: Protecting Roots

The natural environment of Kodaganallur remains central to YOKE’s vision. Through its annual Vanamahotsava tree-planting festival, the organisation increases greenery along riverbanks and village roads. Volunteers regularly clean water bodies, monitor river quality, and

engage school NSS units in awareness drives.

“A clean environment is not a luxury—it is the very basis of a healthy community,” Chitra reminds us.

The Spirit of YOKE

Among YOKE’s most beloved initiatives is the Karam Yokathon, an annual marathon that celebrates resilience and unity. Chitra recalls the story of a young man who joined the event doubting his own stamina. Not only did he finish, but he came third—and later shared that the race gave him the courage to join the army. “That’s what YOKE is about,” says Chitra, “helping people discover their own strength.”

Rooted and Forward-Looking

From classrooms to riversides, YOKE is shaping Kodaganallur and its neighbouring areas into a community that is deeply rooted yet future-ready. Its mission is not charity, but empowerment: giving people the tools to take charge of their own lives.

As Chitra puts it, “We are here to give people the tools to stand taller, dream bigger, and build stronger roots. Because when the community grows, we all grow.”

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