

Vasudhā Calling

A newsletter for enabling sustainable living

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Comprehensive Platform for Knowledge Sharing on Sustainable Living





From "Hunting" to Heritage: My Journey with the Bishma School¹

Prof. Kshitij Patukale²

Bhishma School of Indian Knowledge Systems (BSIKS)

Rooted in a legacy established in 1976 by Itihās Bhushan late Shripadji Kulkarni, the Bishma organization was founded to reclaim India's true narrative. Blessed by the Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, the institution initially gained renown for its monumental 18-volume series on Indian History, correcting the "gloomy" colonial perspective and highlighting millennia of indigenous rule and cultural zenith.

Today, under the leadership of Prof. Kshitij Patukale, the Bishma School of Indian Knowledge Systems (BSIKS) serves as the modern gateway to this heritage. Its brand essence—"Our Roots Give Us Wings"—reflects a mission to use ancient wisdom as a launchpad for a sustainable future. Globally accredited by the IACDSC, the school moves beyond theory to provide applied knowledge in fields ranging from *Vimāna Vidya* and *Artha-shastra* to Vedic mathematics and environmental systems.



Beyond the "Buzzword"

For many years, my life felt like a "hunt." I was moving through different professional fields, achieving success, yet feeling a persistent sense of emptiness. It was only when I reconnected with the spiritual strength of our masters that I found my true calling. Today, I don't see myself as a founder or a professor, but as a *Nimitta Matra*—a mere instrument of the divine.

This realization led to the birth of the Bishma School of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). We chose the name Bishma because he represents the pinnacle of sacrifice and *Dharma*. But we didn't start this school just to talk about the past. We started it to show how the "Indian Way" is the most advanced path for the 21st century.

¹ Based on Prof. Kshitij Patukale's speech in a webinar organized by VK-NARDEP on 18 December 2026

² Prof. Kshitij Patukale is an eminent academician, author, and expert in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). An entrepreneur and practitioner of Yoga and Ayurveda, he integrates Sanatan Vedic traditions with modern finance and management.

IKS is a popular term today, but we must be careful not to treat it as a collection of dusty historical facts. It is a living system of science and logic. At the Bhisma School, we aren't just looking for literal translations of ancient texts; we are looking for the scientific and psychological metaphors within our Vedas and Puranas that can solve today's problems.

Whether it is *Vimana Vidya* (Aeronautics) or *Artha-shastra* (Economics), these are not just subjects for a textbook. They are tools to help us navigate modern technological and financial challenges with a steady mind.

Education for "Value Addition," Not Just Jobs

Modern education is often a factory designed to create employees. While jobs are important, the Bhisma School focuses on something deeper: Value Addition for the individual. Our goal is to create "catalysts." When a student learns "how to live" according to IKS principles, they don't just change themselves; they influence their families, their small businesses, and their entire communities. They become a source of positive energy in a world that often feels chaotic.



Bringing Wisdom Down from the "Ivory Towers"

One point I emphasized in our recent webinar is that IKS must be grounded. If we spend all our time discussing the technical minutiae of ancient machinery without relating it to the common man, we lose our purpose.

Wisdom should not live in "ivory towers." It must "touch the ground." For a sustainable lifestyle to work, the knowledge must be:

- **Practical:** Can you use it in your daily routine?
- **Relatable:** Does it make sense to your family?
- **Actionable:** Can it lead to a small, positive change today?

We focus on "Orientation." We want to orient the common citizen toward their heritage so they can apply it in their own small way. Sustainability isn't a grand government project; it is a series of simple, actionable lifestyle changes rooted in our own culture.

The Infinite Journey

The more we learn about Indian Knowledge Systems, the more we realize how much remains to be discovered. It is an infinite ocean. In our tradition, the highest form of validation isn't a certificate—it is personal experience. You must *experience* the knowledge to truly own it.

As we move forward, the Bhisma School is committed to simplifying these complex Vedic concepts for today's youth. We are using digital outreach to reach every corner of the world, but we are doing so while maintaining the sanctity of the *Guru-Shishya* tradition.

I invite you all to stop "hunting" for external solutions and start looking into the vast repository of our ancestral roots. Let us become the catalysts that *Vasudha* so desperately needs.





Nature Proposes - Man Disposes

Dileep Kulkarni

In this series, we will look at the salient features of the nature's system one by one, and understand the follies of human system vis-a-vis that. It will provide us many insights for making changes to move towards sustainability.

10. EPILOGUE

In this series, we discussed 9 salient features of the nature's system. In each case, we first tried to understand the nature and function of that feature, and then saw how we are disrupting or destroying the nature's system by behaving in the exactly opposite manner. Such an opposition started in 1750, with the invention of steam power, and has been constantly intensifying since then. We have now reached a point, where man-made system has become totally antagonistic to that of nature's system. The following chart depicts this antagonism. It summarizes the whole discussion in the articles.

Nature's System

1. Cyclicity
2. Give and take
3. Mutual Dependence
4. Equal Importance (Ecocentrism)
5. Maximum Bio-diversity
6. Dynamic Equilibrium
7. Degradability
8. Decentralization
9. Limits to Growth

Present Man-made System

1. Linearity
2. Take
3. Undependable species
4. Homocentrism; VIPism
5. Heavy Loss of B.D.
6. Increasing Imbalance
7. Huge Non-degradability
8. Centralization
9. Unlimited Growth

It is important to note that the salient features of nature's system are the basic principles of sustainability. If any system has to be sustainable for millennia, its method of organization and operation must be like this.

The present man-made system being totally antagonistic to the nature's system, it is, by default, non-sustainable.

The basic reason for this, as seen in practically every article, is the use of 'produced energies'. Till humans were working within the limits of 'passively available energies', they were very much aligned with the nature's system. Whatever more losses used to occur due to civilizational activities, they could be made good by nature.

But, with the invention and use of produced energies, there has been an unprecedented scaling of such activities. Because of that, over the last two-and-a-half centuries, the ecology has got so much disturbed and damaged, that we are on the verge of an ecological collapse. Nature is totally incapable of making good the losses, or repairing the damages. We are paying too



heavy—disproportionately large—a price of the so-called 'development'. We are causing our own destruction!

Hence, it is very urgent that we relinquish the suicidal concept and pattern of development. We ought to reorient development from outer to inner. In fact, it has to be holistic, in which there is a proper balance between outer and inner growths. Our lives should be inwardly rich and outwardly simple.



For that, what is needed is 'downsizing'. With the extravagant use of energies and technologies, we have upsized everything to the extent of ecological collapse. Hence, our priority should be to downsize the use of energies basically. Technology being a function of energy, its downsizing will automatically follow. This can be done by individuals, families, societies, groups, or even nations. There could be two simultaneous approaches: bottom-up and top-down.

'Using produced energies' is the historic blunder committed by humans. It is only by correcting that mistake, that the development can once again be sustainable.

Yes, it is seemingly a very difficult task; but, to be frank and straight forward, it is the only valid tool for survival. The sooner we adapt our life-styles to that type of living, the chances for survival are better.

It is said that 'an ounce of practise is more important than a ton of knowledge'. In this series, we tried to get a bit of knowledge about how the nature's system works, and why it is important to align ourselves with it. But, only having the knowledge is of no use: taking practical steps is the most important thing.

Best wishes to all for such a change in life-style.





PERSPECTIVES

The Ghost of Newton

Raghunandan Trikanad

The sun was approaching the western horizon, while the moon
Making its presence felt, cool quiet breeze aiding the senses,
But the mind was restless as if expecting something or someone,
Among the hushed milieu, it was dusk in the place of learning.



I was unable to pin the mind on anything, so had left the library,
Unable to go back to the room, for I did not have the books I needed,
All friends were busy burning midnight oil, for the trials were on,
And so, I waited there in the shadows for the mood to pass.

God knows how long the wait was but I remember I was awake and worried,
And then out of the shadows emerged a gentleman, frail, face bloodless,
Hair long and wavy reaching his shoulders, even that was all right for I
Too had such hair, but it was his dress that made me jump.

I racked my brain, where was it, and who was it that wore such apparel?
It was simultaneous, my recognition and his smile, it was Newton,
Sir Isaac Newton alive, just as from the portraits we used to see,
“But what is he doing in this particular space and time?” I wondered.

His theories and laws are being questioned, is that why he is here?
I asked myself, and looked into his eyes for convincing reply,
He must have it, or why is he wasting my time? I had books to read,
And pages to write, for one of the life’s ambitions was about to be fulfilled!

I heard him say, his voice distant:
“My theories be questioned or destroyed but the three laws shall remain,
Ever with creation, may be the humankind or may be the mind.”
“So that’s why he’s here, to prove his relevance.” I thought.

And why not, nobody wants to be negated, and especially Newton,
For he had given the students many a restless night and uneasy day!
Had it not been for his meddling with everything we would be relaxed.
But he rejoined as if reading my mind:

“No, they are not *my* laws, they are laws of *motion* I only discovered,
It was not my fault if they were misinterpreted, they were meant for
Men to learn from life, and not *only* for experimentation and knowledge.”
I wished he could be clearer, why are such men always abstract?

“I am not being abstract, I was never so practical as I am today,
Since you are waiting for your *mood to study*, can I be of help?
I will tell you what I meant by those laws, but had failed to say,
After my departure I realised my folly but only today I got time.

“Take your present mood frinstance, it follows the first law,
It will continue to be in that state till acted upon by a force!

The moment your mind is touched by another thought, say desire,
It changes, don't you do this every time, to come out of your boredom?

“Life needs an external force, a desire or if you're lucky, aspiration,
Which makes the life worth living, for me it was a search,
That kept me going from one explanation to another till my last breath,
Though I never thought it would all end as dead memories in your minds!

“The drive in life depends on the second law that the acceleration is
Directly proportional, to the force, and inversely to your mass.
Acceleration is your progress, and mass is your resistance to wisdom,
Which is so much today that you still haven't got out of your mood!

“The third law: that action and reaction are equal and opposite, is
Universal, has been in every experience of everyone, yet little known,
Else why is there so much self-created misery in every life?
If only all of us had made this law our own, in every action!

“It took my death and centuries of thought to come to this point,
I was passing by this time and space and saw you inert in mood,
I thought of applying an external force to change your mental state.
Have I succeeded, my friend? Am I all that bad as I'm made out to be?”

Surprised pleasantly, that he had called *me* a friend and helped,
Truly was I out of the mood and was ready for books and thoughts.
“How could this man dedicated to learning, harm anyone?” I thought.
“Thank you!” I heard him say and he vanished, and heard someone call.

It was my friend in search of *his* much needed external force,
I smiled and gratefully looked into the shadows, at the spot *He* was seen,
“I now know what you mean!” said I in my own mind, for I knew, he knew
The minds of troubled and inert students, for he called them friends.

As we entered the canteen to refresh our mind and to wipe off sleep,
The friend commented that I looked fresh and ready, how come?
With a tongue in cheek I said, may be an external force.
How was my friend to know I had just met Newton's ghost!

You may question the existence of ghosts, that too Newton's,
For how could a scientist be a ghost? I cannot vouchsafe for the ghost,
But aren't all thoughts like ghosts that haunt us towards
The consequent feelings of fear, anger, lust and greed and jealousy?

The ghost of Newton, may have been my own aberration but it brought
A fresh benign ghost of thought into my life and now I just make use,
Of those laws of motion to come out of my inertia, to accelerate, or to
Watch out for reactions and may be to help some to do these very things!





When Your Companion Dies

N. Krishnamoorti

The Deadly Order:

What Extinction Foretells for Humanity

The Legend of Linked Fates
The Alphabet of Death
Poet Kalidasa proved that the prisoner's death was the step before the King's own end.

The Chain of Life
Every living creature in the land, sea, and sky is a vital link.

"Mankind May Be Next"
Every species lost is a warning that human existence is nearing its own finish.

The Modern Reality
Empty Forest Syndrome
Scientists describe forests that appear green and healthy but are ecologically lifeless within.

Irreversible Destruction
Humans can drive species to extinction, but lack the power to bring them back.

200,000 Years of Impact
Short Geological Span
In a short geological span, man has already devastated global soil, water, and forests.



King Bhoja, though admired for his abilities as a ruler, was also impulsive. Over a minor dispute, he imprisoned his court poet and friend, Kalidasa. In the same prison cell sat Bhukkundu, a criminal who had been sentenced to death and was expected to face execution within a day or two.

Kalidasa understood Bhukkundu's desperate situation and decided to act—not with pleading, but with intelligence. He composed a poem listing famous men whose names began with "Bha," all of whom were already dead. The poem warned that Yama, the god of death, seemed to be following a deadly order: Bha, Bhe, Bhi, Bhee, Bhu, and finally Bhoo. Since Bhukkundu was next, Bhoja himself—Bhoopati—would soon follow. The message was clear: Bhukkundu's death would be the step before the king's own downfall. Shocked by the warning, Bhoja immediately released both prisoners and restored Kalidasa to honour.



Humanity today stands in Bhoja's position. Man, who has existed for barely two lakh years, has already destroyed forests, polluted soil and water, and wiped-out countless species. Every living creature—whether on land, in sea, or in the sky—is a link in the chain of life. When one species disappears, the balance of nature weakens. Scientists now describe many forests as suffering from "Empty Forest Syndrome"—green in appearance, but lifeless within. Man can drive species into extinction, but he cannot bring them back. Every companion that dies is not merely a loss—it is a warning that mankind may be next.





Vandana Shiva: The Revolution of the Living Seed

A.Madhan Kumar

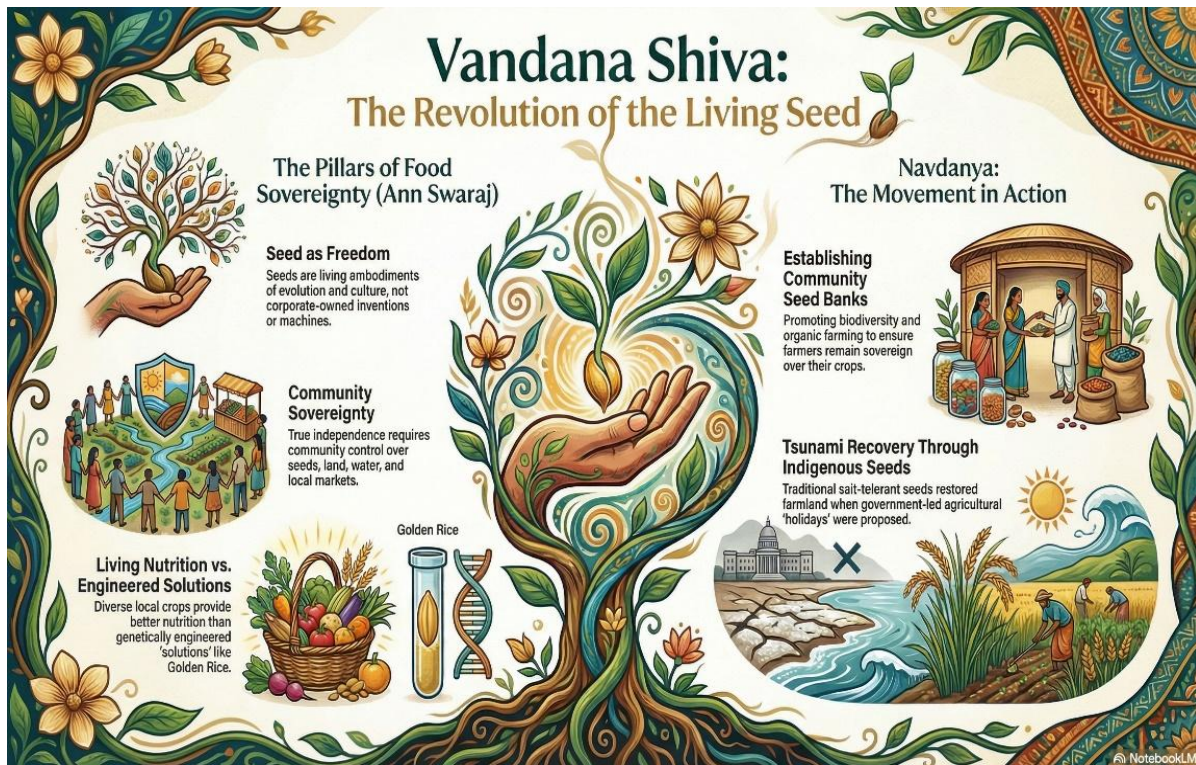
Dr. Vandana Shiva is not the kind of environmentalist who merely speaks about climate change in conferences. She is a fighter—direct, uncompromising, and rooted in the soil of India. Based in Delhi, she has built her life's work around a simple but radical belief: **a seed is not a machine, and it is not an invention. A seed is the living embodiment of evolution, culture, and freedom.**



Often called the “*Gandhi of Grain*,” Vandana Shiva has consistently challenged corporate globalization and the industrial food system. She argues that multinational corporations have turned agriculture into a profit-driven model of monoculture, chemical dependency, and farmer indebtedness. In her view, this is not development—it is disguised exploitation.

Her response was **Navdanya**, meaning “nine seeds” and also “new gift.” Through Navdanya, she promoted biodiversity conservation, organic farming, and seed saving. The movement has established hundreds of community seed banks and nurtured thousands of seed keepers, enabling farmers to remain sovereign over what they grow and eat.

For Shiva, sustainability is not an abstract concept. She links it directly to Gandhi's philosophy of **Swaraj**—self-rule. She calls this **Anna Swaraj**, food sovereignty, where communities control their seeds, land, water, and local markets. Without this, she argues, political independence is meaningless because the food system remains colonized.



She strongly criticizes genetically engineered “solutions” like Golden Rice, calling them inefficient and dangerous compared to India’s natural nutrition sources such as moringa, turmeric, and diverse local crops. She insists that real nutrition does not come from engineered pellets made in factories, but from living biodiversity grown in healthy soils.

Her activism has repeatedly proven practical value. After the tsunami, when coastal Tamil Nadu farmlands were ruined by salinity, the government suggested an “agriculture holiday” for five years. Shiva intervened with salt-tolerant traditional seeds sourced from farmers, and cultivation resumed within a season—an example of indigenous resilience outperforming bureaucracy.

Dr. Vandana Shiva’s life is a reminder that India’s future will not be protected by corporate control or artificial food, but by **local knowledge, living seeds, and ecological courage**



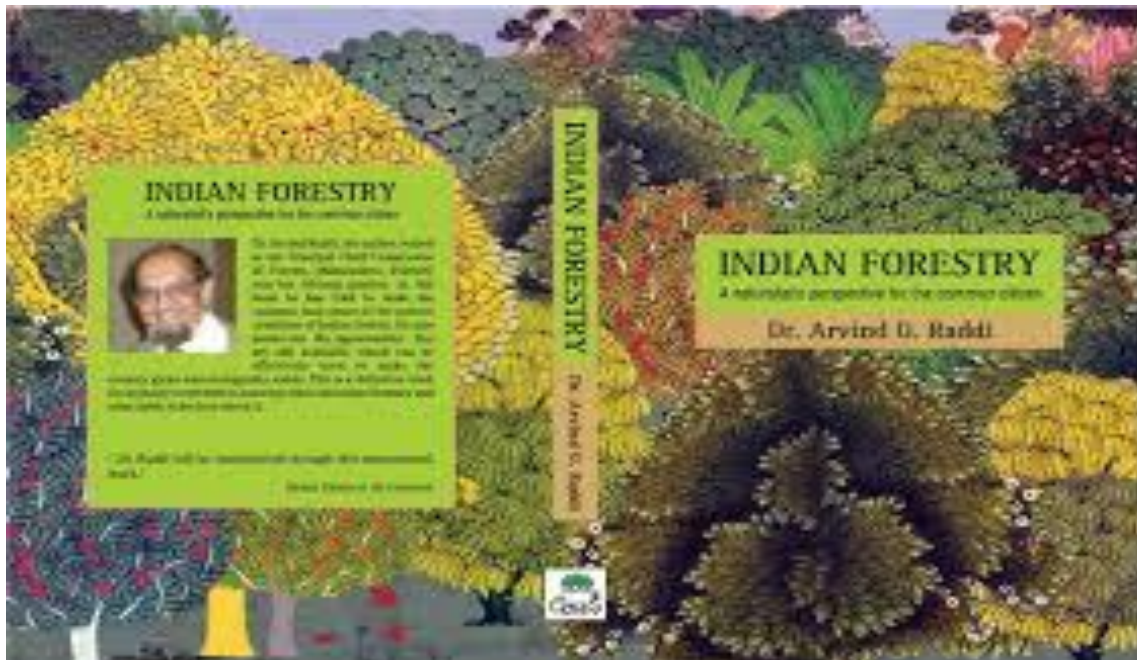


Author: Dr. Arvind G. Raddi

Ajit Sharad Barje

Indian Forestry: A Naturalist's Perspective for the Common Citizen by Dr. Arvind G. Raddi is a thoughtful and informative book that helps ordinary people understand India's forests and how they are managed. Written by a senior Indian Forest Service officer and a passionate naturalist, the book combines scientific knowledge, field experience, and concern for nature. Its main aim is to make forestry understandable and relevant to every citizen, not just experts.

Dr. Raddi begins by explaining why forests are vital to life on Earth. Forests are not just collections of trees; they are complex living systems that support plants, animals, insects, soil, water, and climate. Indian forests are especially rich in biodiversity and play a key role in maintaining rainfall, preventing soil erosion, purifying air, storing carbon, and regulating temperature. They also provide people with fuelwood, timber, medicinal plants, fruits, and fodder, making them essential for rural livelihoods.



The book then takes readers through the evolution of life and forests, showing how forests developed over millions of years into different types such as evergreen, deciduous, mangrove, and mountain forests. This long history helps readers understand that forests are ancient ecosystems that need time and care to survive and regenerate.

A significant portion of the book focuses on the history of forests in India. In ancient times, forests were respected and protected through religious beliefs and traditional practices. They were revered as sacred groves. During medieval times, forests were increasingly used for agriculture and settlements, but local communities still played a role in managing them. The biggest change came during British rule, when scientific forestry was introduced mainly for timber production. Forest laws restricted access and reduced the role of local communities. Dr. Raddi explains that many present-day forestry systems and challenges are rooted in this colonial legacy.

The author provides an honest discussion of the Indian Forest Department, drawing from his own experience. He highlights its strengths, such as trained professionals, scientific planning and

legal authority to protect forests. At the same time, he points out weaknesses, including limited resources, bureaucratic challenges, and a gap between public understanding and actual forestry work. He stresses that better communication and cooperation between the Forest Department and citizens are essential for effective conservation.

One of the book's most important ideas is village eco-development. Dr. Raddi argues that much forest degradation happens because villages depend heavily on forests for fuel, fodder, and small timber. His solution is to make villages self-reliant by growing trees and resources within village lands. This approach reduces pressure on forests while improving village livelihoods. Inspired by Gandhian principles, village eco-development promotes local responsibility, sustainability, and long-term environmental balance.

The book also discusses social forestry, which involves planting trees outside traditional forest areas, such as on farms, roadsides, and degraded lands. This helps meet people's needs while restoring ecological balance. Ecotourism is presented as another opportunity where conservation and income generation can go hand in hand, provided it is managed responsibly.

Towards the end, Dr. Raddi addresses modern challenges like climate change, urbanisation, industrial growth, and lack of environmental awareness. He warns that unchecked development and ignorance can cause irreversible damage to forests. At the same time, he remains hopeful, believing that informed citizens can make a difference.

The central message for the reader is clear; forests belong to everyone, and their protection is a shared responsibility. Dr. Raddi urges citizens to understand forests beyond their economic value and recognize their role in sustaining life and the environment. With public awareness, community participation, and thoughtful policies, India can protect its forests and ensure a greener, healthier future for generations to come.

Indian Forestry: A Naturalist's View for Every Citizen

Author – Dr. Arvind G. Raddi | Publisher – Vanarai

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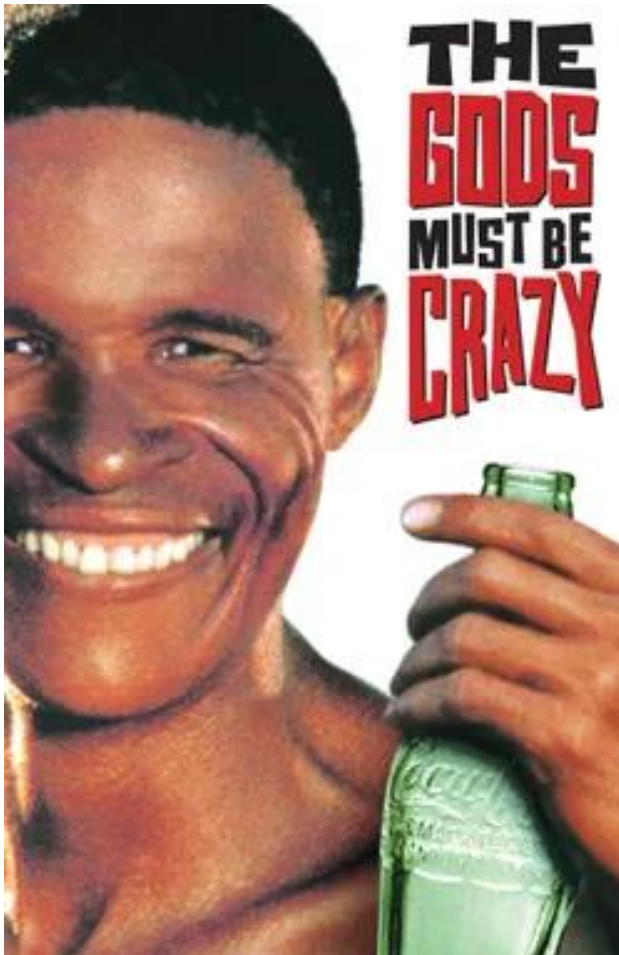


RESEARCH REVIEW

Film: The Gods Must Be Crazy – Part 1

N. Karthikeyan

The Gods Must Be Crazy (1980), directed by Jamie Uys, is often remembered as a comedy. But beneath its humour lies a deep and thoughtful message about human life, nature, and sustainability. Seen through the lens of sustainable lifestyles, the film becomes a powerful reflection on two very different ways of living: one rooted in balance with nature, and the other driven by consumption, speed, and control.



The film begins in the Kalahari Desert, where a small San (Bushman) tribe lives in close harmony with the natural world. Their life is simple, slow, and deeply connected to nature. They take only what they need from the forest, share everything within the community, and leave no waste behind. When they hunt, they use only what is necessary for food. When they gather, they respect the rhythms of seasons and the limits of nature. There is no ownership, no hoarding, and no competition. Life is organised around need, not desire — a core principle of sustainable living.

One of the most powerful early scenes shows the tribe receiving a glass Coca-Cola bottle that falls from an aeroplane. To them, it is a mysterious object sent by the “gods.” At first, it seems useful — it can crush roots, scrape hides, and make music. But slowly, the bottle becomes a source of conflict. People begin to fight over it. Jealousy, anger, and greed appear for the first time in their peaceful society. This single object introduces scarcity, possession, and competition — ideas that did not exist before. This scene beautifully shows how

consumer objects can disrupt social harmony and ecological balance.

In contrast, the film presents the modern world as chaotic and disconnected from nature. In the city scenes, we see traffic jams, accidents, office confusion, and constant stress. People rush, shout, and compete. Technology is everywhere, but peace is absent. One memorable scene shows a scientist struggling to drive a vehicle through a city street while causing multiple small accidents — a comic moment that also shows how machines dominate human life rather than serve it wisely.

Another striking contrast appears in the scenes of military conflict and violence, where weapons, control, and power define relationships. Here, nature is treated as a space to dominate, not respect. Forests, land, and people become tools for political and economic control — the opposite of sustainable living.

The character of Xi, the Bushman, becomes the bridge between these two worlds. When he decides to return the bottle to the “gods,” his journey symbolises a moral mission — to restore balance. Xi moves through farms, cities, roads, and military camps, quietly observing the strange

ways of modern people. His calm presence highlights the madness of modern systems. He does not try to control nature; he walks with it. He does not exploit; he adapts. His way of being reflects ecological wisdom without formal education.

From a sustainable lifestyles perspective, the film clearly shows that development without values leads to destruction, while simplicity with wisdom leads to balance. The tribal community lives with low consumption, low waste, shared resources, community care, and ecological respect — all pillars of sustainability. Modern society, on the other hand, is shown as high-consumption, high-waste, fast-paced, and disconnected from both nature and human relationships.

The Gods Must Be Crazy reminds us that sustainability is not only about technology, solar panels, or green products. It is about how we think, what we value, and how we relate to nature and each other. Sometimes, the most “undeveloped” communities teach the most developed lessons.

The film gently asks a powerful question:

Who is truly civilized — the one who lives simply in harmony with nature, or the one who lives fast while destroying it?

In today’s world of climate crisis, overconsumption, and ecological breakdown, this simple film carries a timeless truth: A sustainable future needs not more machines, but more wisdom.





In the month of January 8,689 visitors attended the Vasudha exhibition.



Comments on Reel

The Indian ethos has always put premium on Sacrifice as the foremost of virtues. Self-abnegation lies at the core of Self Realisation or Moksha, in vedantic dialect.

The modern day's rediscovery of our pristine values, notably for the Materialistic West, is being touted as the mantra, albeit born out of the Fear of Overconsumption that has reared its ugly head founded on the abject Consumerism that has been the Engine for the warped Corporate Model of Interminable Growth.

Today, the average middle class household, which has aped the decadent West and is in the throb of mindless purchasing spree, is indulgent owing to too much prosperity, sans social responsibility.

Unless this irresponsibility abates in our people, slogans will continue to remain as empty slogans, nothing more.

Ram Ram

Auditor – R.Swaminathan, Chennai

