

In a world of art

"I like to be surrounded by art. I conceive anything only in art-forms," says Nanditha Krishna, Director of C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation since 1981, even as one curiously takes a look at the umpteen art objects displayed in her office room. She is the founder and administrator of the foundation's various constituents:

* C. P. Art Centre that promotes traditional, folk and contemporary arts and crafts;

* C. P. R. Institute of Indological Research working on Indian art and culture;

* Saraswathi Kendra for the learning disabled;



* Shakuntala Jagannathan Museum of Folk Art.

* C. P. R. Environmental Education Centre with facilities of a lab, library and a publications division, researched and printed in house on paper made from bagasse, an agro waste.

So many varied hues to preserving art, so many commitments, so many eggs in the art-basket. How many avatars does Nanditha don to have a grip on the newly born developments in all her institutions? Says the art and animal lover: "A high dosage of passion and commitment, support from family and immeasurable blessings from God takes me along. Our baseline philosophy is to educate people in our endeavours. We have scientists, environmentalists and psychologists constantly advising us about the right path to be taken."

Nanditha believes that the science of life is in its inter-dependency. While scientists are enriched with artistic environments, artists look for understanding the science embedded in each art.

If history and culture has chiselled her persona, she was also

consumed with the thoughts of serving the differently-abled and the uniquely-gifted: "We want to be grossly exclusive in our services. Take for example our Saraswathi Kendra, which is affiliated to National Open School and has 200 special children today. It just happened when I wanted to help a lady who had the skills of handling these children but was looking for an opening. And our 'Grove School,' affiliated to ISC Board, is also divorced from the idea of learning from rote. It is creative thinking that acts like petrol for their movement here. Or our inimitable idea of converting an ancient *Vennirul* into an art gallery and a Turkish-Tamil Bath!"

Nanditha has penned several books, all profusely researched and illustrative — *The Book of Vishnu*; *Balaji Venkateshwara*; *Folk Arts of Tamil Nadu*; and *Ganesha*. Her next in print would be 'Demons' — on *rakshashas* and *asuras* from the times of Rig Veda and Ramayana from Sanskrit Literature.

Nanditha has organised several heritage and social conservation projects with the Tribals of Nilgiris and with self-help groups to produce organic products for generat-



Nanditha Krishna

ing income for themselves.

Nanditha's industrialist husband is also the Chairman of the Blue Cross of India. She has a Doctorate in Ancient Indian Culture from the University of Bombay. Her mother was the Dy. Director General of Tourism and has penned several books too. "We are three generations of women writers in the family," says the enterprising lady who has a love for painting too and dabbles with every kind of research in art, wildlife and environment.

RANJANI GOVIND