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View of Communities

We live in a machine civilisation which is based on money, power, comfort and exploitation of people and nature. Such a civilisation is bound to fail, particularly in terms of human satisfaction and spiritual fulfilment. We are living in the jungle of mass-society.

Realising this state of affairs, many individuals and groups have come together to learn to live in harmony with each other, and re-vitalise the concept and practice of communitarian life-style. In this issue of Resurgence, we have collected a few examples of such a life-style from different parts of the world. Although the communities reported in this issue are very different from each other, nevertheless they have a very strong common thread. All of them are engaged in producing the basic necessities of simple life — food, clothes, shelter — by themselves. They are preserving the most fundamental and practical skills, which would otherwise be lost from the lives of many people. They are

the Arks for saving human, spiritual and communitarian values, leaving behind the money-motivated cult of material success.

It is true that some communities start and do not last for very long, but that is true of almost any venture and experiment, especially when such a venture is to swim against the current of the general mass-culture. But it is most encouraging to see that so many communities have survived so long and so well.

In my view, there is only one recipe for the survival of a community, and that is almost devotional love and respect between the members of the community. Just intellectual agreement on certain ideas, or just rejection of the competitive world outside the community, is not a sufficient basis for a community to last long. Achieving such a deep and devotional love, care and respect is not so easy. It is an art to be learnt. Ω

Satish Kumar