

Temple Transformation

Key Principles

- Basic principle is to empower devotees and give them a chance to grow, even if they make mistakes as far as they are genuine.
- Mistakes should be tolerated. Otherwise they will never grow. Leadership should not be over-protective.

Workforce

- Major workforce in the temple consists of Brahmacharis, a few Grihasthas and a huge congregational devotee force.
- After H.G Acharya Ratna Prabhu took over as Temple President in 2009, he took to cultivating congregational devotees. Plans are in force to integrate them more with the temple and also focus on quality of congregation and not just numbers.
- Brahmacharis are quite united, thanks to H.G Radheshyam Prabhu's training. They need to be given challenging services along with responsibility and freedom for efficient growth.

Programs for Spiritual Nourishment

- For congregational members, programs are held every evening at different locations. Once a week, all congregational leaders get together and have a program.
- Apart from morning programs, congregational devotees have 2-3 Brahmachari sessions in a week. There needs to be a balance between service and programs.
- There is a constant effort to unleash the potential of the talented Brahmacharis to the fullest.

Overview of Workflow

- Since 2001, after HG Dayaram Prabhu took over, there have been many ups and downs due to which he had to dissolve the governing body originally formed.
- After HG Acharya Ratna Prabhu took over as Temple President, he formed various committees in-charge of different activities. In this way, Brahmacharis got an opportunity to take responsibility and grow and in future be able to independently run temples.
- Earlier, during Rathayatra, devotees had to be brought in from Mayapur as there were not enough congregational devotees. Now, there are sufficient devotees to make it successful.
- Various congregation groups are given responsibility of festivals like Janmashtami, Narasimha Chaturdashi, etc.
- There is a need to involve congregation devotees in deity worship and other activities, atleast in the morning if not the whole day. In this way, Brahmacharis, who otherwise manage the temple, could focus on preaching.
- Congregation Development Committee (CDC) looks after congregational preaching. Under that is Assistant Preacher- organizes the class and Independent Preacher- takes class. CDC member could go once in 3 months for inspection.

Challenges

- There is a huge youth preaching program but it is a challenge to keep it sustainable. They must be engaged in services that satisfy them as well as the temple.

- Seva must be given according the devotees' capabilities eg. Developing Mayapur tourism, PARTHA Coaching classes, etc.

Threats

Apart from the Madhu Pandit case, there are no major threats affecting the temple. Minor issues from the municipal authorities are taken care of.

Key Success Factors

- Temple leaders should come forward and face problems and must also allow people under them to learn and grow.
- Empowerment is the key. Success is when juniors can handle the temple in the absence of their seniors.

Lessons

- Should not be afraid of difficulties. Most of the brahmacharis are timid and a system of training must be given to them to make them stronger.
- With the help of HG Radha Raman Prabhu, in the next 2-3 years, we hope to implement a training program.

Internal Challenges

- Young intelligent boys who have joined the temple have to be given challenging and satisfactory responsibilities according to their capabilities, otherwise they may be dissatisfied.
- There is a challenge to find a growth path for them and engage them effectively.

Financial Model

- The Kolkata temple lacks a secure and reliable financial model. Sources were not that strong. Restaurant funding, congregation members' donation, etc. were the prime sources.
- There is a plan to introduce a better financial model by garnering memberships.
- PARTHA Coaching class and Trans Enigma, started by devotees help in raising funds.

Public Relations

- Cordial relations are maintained with the Government authorities and political groups.
- Smt. Mamta Banerjee attends the Rathayatra festival every year. With the help of HG Radha Raman Prabhu, many IPS and IAS officers are being cultivated.
- Cordial relations are maintained with the media too.
- Earlier, ISKCON had quite a negative image among the locals and the Marxists. But not now, things have improved. HG Dayaram Prabhu brought about similarities between their ideology and ours and stated that people from ISKCON have a deep connection with West Bengal, thus bringing oneness.