

# Living

## Serenity song

**ROLE MODEL** Running an international holistic healing centre and several wellness clinics on oiled wheels comes naturally to Suja Issac who juggles many roles and responsibilities with panache, says Aruna Chandaraju

Suja Issac is a nutritionist by training, healthcare-administrator by work profile, landscape artist and dancer by hobby, and mother and wife by choice. And she is loving it all. More significantly, she strives to make a success of everything she does.

At Women's Christian College in Chennai, where she did her M.Sc (Food & Nutrition), she won the Best Thesis Award. She earned an M.Phil degree in the same subject and again her thesis was adjudged Best Thesis by Madras University. She also found time for music and western dance — she was the college Cultural Secretary — and also for table tennis, captaining both her school and college teams.

### Stay busy, stay alive

Elegant and articulate Suja is married to international holistic-health consultant Dr Issac Mathai. Theirs is a partnership which extends beyond marriage and into business. "Though we work together, we have clearly demarcated work spaces. I look after the administration and dietary aspects of our centres while he is in charge of all things medical," Suja explains.

Together, they own and run Soukya International Holistic Health Centre in Bangalore, which offers therapies that draw from ayurveda, homeopathy and naturopathy as well as yoga, meditation, hydrotherapy, acupressure, reflexology, etc.

At Soukya, Suja has designed the work flow systems and the interiors. She handles human resources as well. "Our focus is to create a centre for excellence in integrated medicine, where the wellness of every guest is paramount and brought about through natural and safe medicine free of side-effects," she says.

Like all nutritionists, Suja believes food is central to health and eating patterns must sustain well-being. So, she designs



diets which are low on fat, spices and salt.

Talking of the design at Soukya, Suja, who had no background in landscape or design, got drawn into these areas when the person they had commissioned failed to honour the deadline. "Going purely by my aesthetic sense and learning on the job, I worked on the landscape you see today," she says.

Suja is also managing director of Sahaya Holistic Integrative Medical Centre, a 25-bed hospital at Jayanagar. Sahaya is a more affordable version of Soukya. The Mathais planned it as a place where most of Soukya's treatments are made available but to all sections of society and in a more accessible area of the city. Besides, the couple also runs several charity clinics. The one they run for KSRTC employees is a roaring success. Some of these clinics are in Bangalore while the others are in villages on the outskirts of the city.

### Power of prayer

What keeps her going through such a madly hectic schedule? The answer is that she doesn't consider it 'madly hectic' at all. "I am very calm and imperturbable. And I attribute this strength not to myself but the Almighty. My first principle for success is unconditional faith in God. I believe in the serenity prayer. Finally, I always tell myself 'Do your best and leave the rest to God.'"

More specifically, she says success comes from clarity, focus on goals, defining of strategy, implementation of process and above all, the grace of God.