

## WELLNESS

5

SUNDAY ■ 5 JUNE 2016

■ THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE

## THE FITNESS *Maverick*

A holistic coach in Chennai believes 'healthy' curriculum in schools can divert young minds from drug addiction *By JAGYASENI CHATTERJEE*

A holistic coach is more like a mentor or a person who inspires action. Everyone knows exercise is good, having the right kind and quantity of food is mandatory, being stress-free is healthy and meditating ensures longevity. But knowing isn't doing. Gita Krishna Raj, CEO of Maverick Fitness Studio in Chennai, motivates people to act for that perfectly fit body and healthy mind. Her work is not limited to the boundaries of health centres; she works with corporates who opt for fitness programmes for their employees. She is also busy designing physical literacy education curriculum for children and inspires people to take the right choices when it comes to their body and mind.

Daughter of internationally renowned documentarian couple, Dr S Krishnaswamy and Dr Mohana, Gita has had a family of over-achievers. In 2003, her husband, Krishnaraj, launched Maverick Fitness Studio as a diversification from his successful air-conditioning business. He wanted to participate in the grooming of the fitness industry, which was just getting launched in India.

"I wanted to spend some qual-

ity time, working together, since we were otherwise too busy in our own careers. My role was limited to being the administrative head. It was in 2010 that circumstances made me to take charge of the business," says the husband, Krishnaraj.

Gita accomplished international certification in fitness to do justice to her responsibilities. Not just that, she also encouraged 40 trainers from her studio to undergo the same and ensure she has an expert team.

Sharing some snippets of her recent trip to Manila for EARCOS (East Asia Regional Council of Schools) Teacher's Conference on Innovating Arts and Motion, she says, "There were about 800 delegates from across the globe willing to brainstorm, learn, motivate and create the foundations for physical literacy for the children. It is interesting to note how it has become a buzzword today. It is a very positive sign. Learning the fundamental skills in a structured and fun way will make a child healthy and active."

During the initial years, Gita was into dancing. She completed her Arangetram at the age of nine and performed in many stages. She stepped into acting when she was 13 and by the time she



Gita Krishna Raj in her gym

SUNISH P SURENDRAN

was 18, she was assisting her father in direction. "For me, dance was a way of communion with my God. It doesn't require me to wear any masks of emotions. All these experiences helped me to innovate a good structure for Maverick," she says.

The entrepreneur's day begins at 4:30 in the morning. After some meditation, she grabs a cup of coffee, catches up with her emails, writes articles and devises lessons. By 8 am, she is ready to go to the gym. Otherwise, she is happy to go for a walk, swim or

The eight days when I am away from the world is literally a rebirth of sorts," she shares.

At present, Gita is busy with her Australian endeavours. "The company is a start-up to see if we can spread our fit kids' programs to the South-East Asian countries. We have just begun exploring the opportunities," she adds.

Gita says India is far behind in terms of infrastructure and availability of space in the schools. "We need to work on the science of curriculum design where fitness plays an important component, the use of music, innovative ap-

proach to inspire movement in daily life, technological backing for consistency, nutritive and health based support. All these contribute to the navigation of young minds from unnecessary addictions like smoking, alcohol or drugs," tells Gita.

Besides a fitness expert, Gita is also a writer. Her series on the life of Swami Vivekananda (52-parts) was recently released. Her book 'Kaivalya' was published in 2015 and she continues to write for various magazines.

But why did she choose fitness? She smiles and says, "The more I read and understand the nuances of the workings of our body, the more I am at awe of its miraculous self-sustenance. Fitness seemed the most natural lifestyle and one that makes me feel happy. Finally, that's what we all want to say, I am happy."

### MULTI-TASKER

- Gita is working in partnership with firms in Australia to take fitness programmes to schools in South-East Asia.
- She has written a 52-part series on the life of Swami Vivekananda. Her Kaivalya is a reflection of the Bhagavad Gita's life altering experiences.
- She was a dancer, an actor and assisted her father in direction—all before she was 18.

cycle. Shooting days are hectic and super-packed. Being an early riser, she likes to end her day early. "I fail to make any sense after 9 pm," she says.

A lover of meditation, Gita attributes her Guru Mahatria for introducing her to the path 'infiniteism'. "Since 2002, I have been participating in the annual spiritual camp with my guru.