

'We humans are instinctively attracted to plant-based food'

Meet **Dr Nandita Shah**, 65, a homoeopath based at Auroville, Puducherry, who through her organisation SHARAN is trying to cure illnesses without medicine. She says through the right food and lifestyle many ailments can be cured. Excerpts from an interview with **S Balakrishnan**.

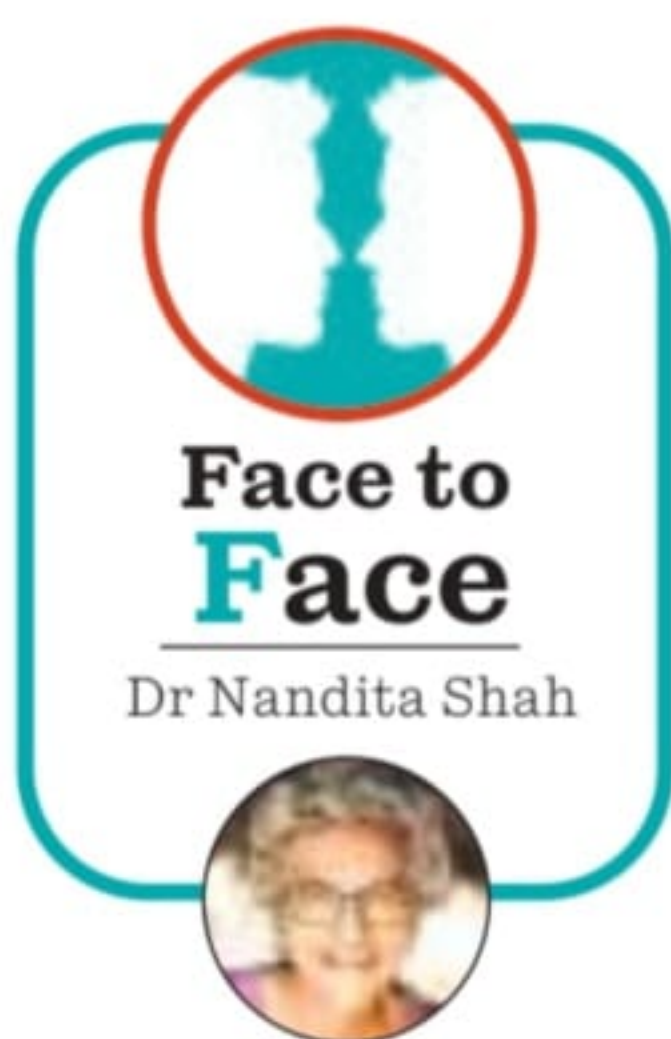
Q. When and why did you form SHARAN?

A. SHARAN is an acronym for Sanctuary for Health and Re-connection to Animals and Nature. When I moved to Auroville from Mumbai, I took a small house on the beach, and the cat moved in with me the very same day. We co-existed, and I realised that animals and nature know how to be well. The cat knew exactly what to do if she was unwell. I thought why is it that animals know this, and we don't?

I realised that we are sick because we are eating and living the way we have been taught to eat and live by our society, culture and advertisements. But we should really eat and live the way we have been designed to eat and live by God or nature. Eating food that were not designed for us is a little bit like putting diesel in a car that runs on petrol. It doesn't work very long.

I also realised that in general, medicines never cure, they only mitigate symptoms, but the body always works to heal. If we remove the impediments, cure is likely to occur.

Q. Diabetes has assumed



epidemic proportions. What is the reason for this?

A. Today we eat fast food and animal products like never before. We don't exercise, and we are totally stressed. When we get diabetes most of us go to the doctor and are told to cut down on carbohydrates, sugars and even fruit, and take medicines. But nobody gets cured that way.

Sugar is not the cause of diabetes. High blood sugar is the result of diabetes. The cause of diabetes is insulin resistance and if we work at that level we can reverse the disease.

You claim to have reversed diabetes and several other diseases in 21 days. Are these claims backed with documentary evidence?

I have been conducting 21-day health retreats since 2010. Here we check everyone with a battery of blood tests in the beginning and the end, so that each one can see the result of lifestyle changes and medicine reduction.

We also have a team of doctors and regularly do

consultations for patients with diabetes. Tests are always done with the consultation – before, after, and sometimes even during the consultation period, so we have all this documentation too.

You turned vegan in 1985. Was that for ethical reasons or were there other considerations?

I turned vegan for ethical issues but was not 100% vegan in 1985 – perhaps 90-95%. But since 2000, I have been strictly vegan. It was only after I turned vegan that I understood the health benefits of a whole food, plant-based diet. I realised that I could no longer ignore the immense health benefits, nor the logical reasons for a shift to a plant-based diet.

Q. Isn't veganism carrying vegetarianism a tad far?

A. Just like animals eat and live according to instincts, so should we. We are instinctively attracted to plant-based foods. Unlike a true carnivore or omnivore, when we see a chicken, goat or cow, or even fish, we don't salivate. We can't pounce on the animal, tear it apart, nor eat it raw as a carnivore or omnivore would. We definitely cannot eat all the parts of the animal and we usually take out the skin and bones and have to hack it with a knife and cook it to be able to eat it. No true omnivore would have to do that with their prey. It is not our food. Anatomically and physiologically, our digestive system is similar to that of a herbivore.