



Tamil Nadu Foundation

40th Anniversary and
National Convention



Chicago Tamil Sangam
45th Anniversary

May 24 - 25, 2014
Chicago

Pheasant Run Resort
St. Charles, Illinois

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Tamil Nadu Foundation, Inc. USA

A Registered, Non-profit, Tax Exempt Organization
www.tnfusa.org

May 24, 2014

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Vanakkam.

On behalf of Tamil Nadu Foundation Board and the TNF 2014 Convention Committee, it is with immense privilege and pleasure I welcome you all to the 40th Anniversary celebration of our organization in St Charles, IL.

Many of the current members in TNF had not even arrived in USA on Thanksgiving Day of 1974 when a handful of Tamils led by Dr. P.G. Periasamy and Dr. R. Perumalswami gathered around a dining table to formalize a commitment they have long since made - to do something to help the less fortunate in Tamil Nadu. As befits an organization that started 40 years ago, with humble beginnings, TNF has grown up to a fully equipped Center with dedicated staff in Chennai to execute various charitable projects across Tamil Nadu.

This year's convention is being organized in association with Chicago Tamil Sangam, which is celebrating 45 years of service to Tamils in the Chicago Metro area and the newly revived TNF Chicago Chapter. The relentless efforts and hard work of volunteers from Chicago Tamil Sangam, and TNF members from Chicago and other parts of US enabled a successful convention.

The proceeds from the convention are dedicated to launch TNF ABC Project in Cuddalore district. TNF Chicago chapter has committed to support the selected schools for a period of five years. A contribution of \$99 will support a deserving student for a year with the extra coaching and guidance needed to overcome their limitation and complete their school education. Please donate, and let's change a child's future for the better!

True to the mission of TNF, you have all taken pleasure in sharing your fortunes. My sincere appreciation to all the donors and sponsors, whose generous contributions made this convention possible. Thank you all for your unwavering support to TNF through the years, and your support in years to come.

Sincerely,

P.K. Aravazhi
President

Mailing Address: 2611 Newton Avenue, Naperville, IL 60564-4696





சிகாகோ தமிழ்ச் சங்கம் Chicago Tamil Sangam

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Dear Friends,

I would like to start of by saying that I am truly blessed to be the President of Chicago Tamil Sangam at this point of time to celebrate and take pride in the excellence of our community's activities. I take immense pleasure in welcoming everyone to this mega celebration. I would also like to recognize the contributions of various people who could not make it to this event.



Can you imagine how your life would be if you had moved to Illinois 45 years ago? At the time, there was no thriving Tamil community in Chicago. Phone charges were so high that you could only talk to your families in India during the weekends. You were stuck at your house most of the time with limited Indian grocery shops and restaurants. Times have certainly changed since then and I want to take a moment to remember and appreciate the services of those individuals in the beginning that helped to start our Tamil community in this area. They are the people who brought together this Sangam and helped us unite, socialize and share our values & culture. The children of our community were able to gain confidence in life and foster better relationships and leadership skills by participating in various cultural events. Given our rich history, we should all be proud that we have grown so much in the past 45 years and still continue to grow every day. The quality of the programs and professionalism in execution by the members of this Sangam are very much appreciated and recognized in the community.

Apart from doing cultural and social programs, the current board has been committed to bring lot of charity work in the United States and Tamil Nadu. I need all of your continued support to plan and deliver that work to our community. On behalf of all of our Sangam and the board I want to thank the Tamil Nadu Foundation for giving us an opportunity to host this convention here and be part of the ABC project in the Cuddalore district.

Happy Anniversary Chicago Tamil Sangam & Tamilnadu Foundation!

Thank you

Somu Thiru,
President, Chicago Tamil Sangam.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4916, Naperville, IL 60567

ஆசிரியரிடமிருந்து...



அன்புடையீர் வணக்கம்,

தாளாற்றித் தந்த பொருள்எல்லாம் தக்கார்க்கு
வேளாண்மை செய்தல் பொருட்டு

என்று வள்ளுவர் காட்டிய வழியில், கலங்கும் உள்ளங்களுக்குக் கலங்கரை விளக்காக மட்டுமின்றி ஆதரவு கரம் நீட்டி கரை சேர்க்கும் தமிழ்நாடு அறக்கட்டளையின் 40வது ஆண்டு மாநாட்டு மலரை வெளியிடுவதில் பெரும் மகிழ்ச்சி அடைகிறோம்.

செம்மொழியாம் தமிழ் மொழியே தம் உயிர் மூச்சு என்றும், தமிழ் நெஞ்சங்களின் தேடல்களுக்கு வழிகாட்டியாகவும், தமிழறவு வளர்ந்திடவும் அயராது உழைக்கும் சிகாகோ தமிழ்ச் சங்கத்தின் 45வது ஆண்டு மலரை வெளியிடுவதில் பெரும் மகிழ்ச்சி அடைகிறோம்.

ஒருமுறை மட்டும் படிப்பதற்கான விவரங்கள் என்று இல்லாமல் என்றென்றும் பயன்படும் வகையில், கட்டுரைகள், கவிதைகள், துணுக்குகள், விளம்பரங்கள் மட்டுமின்றி அறக்கட்டளையின் செயல் திட்டங்களையும் பதிவு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது.

இந்த மாநாட்டு மலர் உங்கள் கைகளில் தவழும்பொழுது வெறும் வண்ணம் நிறைந்த மலராக மட்டும் இன்றி, இளம் பிஞ்சு சிறார்களின் ரோசா இதழ்கள் விரிய, வீசும் மணத்துடன் கொண்ட பூங்கொத்தாக இருந்திடவேண்டும் என்கிற முறையில் வடிவமைத்துள்ளோம்.

இந்த மலர் வண்ணமாகவும் வாசமாகவும் மலர்ந்திட மிக உதவிகரமாக இருந்த விளம்பரதாரர்கள், நன்கொடையாளர்கள் மற்றும் படைப்பாளிகள் அனைவருக்கும் எங்கள் மனதார நன்றியினை தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறோம்.

மணி குணசேகரன்
மாநாட்டு மலர் ஆசிரியர்



மாநாட்டு மலர் குழு
சென்னி இந்திரராஜ்
எம். பாஸ்கரன்





CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
220 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 006
Tel: 2857 4199; Fax: 2857 4431

April 11, 2014

Tamilnadu Foundation
(A Chapter of Tamilnadu Foundation Inc. USA)
27, Taylors Road, Kilpauk
Chennai 600 010

Dear Tamilnadu Foundation Organizers and Supporters:

On behalf of the U.S. Consulate General in Chennai, I would like to congratulate the Tamilnadu Foundation on the inauguration of the 40th National Convention in Chicago.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the special role that the Tamilnadu Foundation plays in supporting the Indo-U.S. relationship. President Obama has called the U.S.-India relationship one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century, and Secretary of State John Kerry rightly stated that, "Both our peoples benefit when the world's largest and oldest democracies work closely together."

The kind of work that civil society organizations like the Tamilnadu Foundation engage in is absolutely central to strengthening the vibrant relationship that our two countries share. Each member of the Tamilnadu Foundation represents one of the millions of people-to-people connections between the U.S. and India, and each member contributes to the relationship's strength and dynamism.

I commend the Tamilnadu Foundation for its efforts to support the economic and social welfare of the people of Tamilnadu and also for building important bridges between our two countries. This 40th convention is not only a significant milestone for the Tamilnadu Foundation, but also for the U.S.-Indo relationship, and we wish you continued success.

Sincerely,


Jennifer A. McIntyre
Consul General

MARK KIRK
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BANKING, HOUSING & URBAN AFFAIRS
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR & PENSIONS
AGING

United States Senate

April 15, 2014

Tamil Nadu Foundation
1709 Kenyon Dr.
Naperville, IL 60565

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to extend my warm congratulations and best wishes as you celebrate your 45th annual Tamil Nadu Foundation convention. You should all be proud to have reached this milestone.

The Tamil Nadu Foundation is a wonderful non-profit, charitable organization that represents thousands of professionals in various fields in Medicine, Engineering, Information Technology and Education. The Tamil Nadu Foundation's objective is to promote the educational, social and other charitable projects in Tamil Nadu, India. Members of the Tamil Nadu Foundation aim to share their wealth with less fortunate people.

I send my deepest congratulations to you all as you celebrate this milestone. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. It is my honor to represent you in the United States Senate.

Sincerely,



Mark Steven Kirk
United States Senator

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Greetings!

It is with great pleasure and pride that I wish to congratulate the President, Board of Directors and the members of Tamil Nadu Foundation AND Tamil Sangam of Chicago for celebrating the 40th Birthday of TNF in Chicago, USA.

TNF was given birth to on a Thanksgiving Day in 1974 by four families (Perumalsamy & Vadivu, Palanisamy & Sukumari, Thiagarajan & Sellam, Periasamy & Visalakshi) who were at my residence in Baltimore, Maryland. The objective was to give something back to our motherland by way of providing services and resources. What was started as a humble effort has now become a major non-profit charitable organisation and for the last 40 years, many members of our Tamil community in the US and Canada have undertaken many important projects in Tamilnadu by their generous contribution and participation. Our efforts may be small, but our idea that we should share something with our place of birth is remarkable and significant. Sharing is always a noble act and the fact that so many of our Tamilians are helping our Tamilnadu through TNF makes everyone of us feel proud of our heritage and culture.

There are many challenges in Tamilnadu today and your efforts and participation in meeting these challenges to whatever extent possible is unique and extraordinary. TNF may not be able to address all issues, but the thought that we must do something for our motherland is what matters most. We are united in our efforts, not only to help Tamilnadu but also to foster and develop our friendship, culture and tradition in a unified manner. I feel indeed very proud of our people in the North America. It is my privilege to convey my Greetings for the success of this 40th Birthday of TNF.

Dr. Palani G. Periasamy
First Founder President, TNF

“Tamilnadu”
7142, Rivers Edge Road
Columbia, Md 21044

TNF - Birth Story

Dr. R. Perumalswami

Dear Friends,

I am honored to share my thoughts on the subject of TNF from my historical perspective since its inception in 1974. Vadivu, our one-year old daughter Santhi and I were invited by Visa and Dr. Periasamy for spending the Thanksgiving weekend of 1974 in their Baltimore, MD residence. There we met two other families: Chellam & Dr. Thiagarajan and Sukumari & Dr. Palanisamy. We had all one thing in common, we are all graduates of PSG Colleges, both Arts and Technology. Personally, my association with Dr. Periasamy goes back to my Junior year at Tech (1962) when he came to teach Economics at the Arts College. During the '74 Thanksgiving meet we would engage in (mainly a lot of talk mostly by the men!) discussing ways of helping our friends we left back in Tamil Nadu. At that time we ourselves have not all that well settled here in the USA. In spite of that, we would go about talking how to do something to help the people of Tamil Nadu! All this talk must have gotten to our spouses for during the Thanksgiving dinner, Chellam Theagarajan challenged us all to do something rather than just talking! Actually, she said to the effect, that our talk wouldn't amount to anything! Stung by this challenge, one of the four suggested that we put \$5 per month per family starting in November '74 and worry later about what to do with the funds. No one wanted to keep the collection at first! It was decided that by a luck of the lot a person will be selected to hold the money. That luck landed on Vadivu, the first un-official Treasurer of TNF! We left the Periasamy's place with an understanding that we will talk to our close friends to see if they can join us. We did get good response from our friends. A group of eight families met during the 1975 July 4th weekend in Pocono mountains of Pennsylvania. At Pocono, the small group came up with the name of Tamil Nadu Foundation for the new organization, after much debate I should add. A set of By Laws was hammered out and the first slate of "elected" officers was also concluded with Dr. Periasamy as President and I as Vice President. It was more like division of labor than a contest! Dr. Periasamy served during 1975-77 and I served as President during

1977-79. I served another year as an ex-officio- cum Director. I am proud to have played a role in the first 6 years of TNF to make it a growing and popular charitable organization. During these years, Vadivu and I added two more daughters (Ponni and Chithra) to our family, I had a major job change and most importantly, Vadivu and I met many charity minded and compassionate Tamil Friends. As they say the rest is history!

Few significant dates and accomplishments in which I was personally involved during my active days in TNF:

November 29, 1974: Founding of a charitable concept with three other friends and families at Dr. Periasamy's residence in Baltimore, MD. that would eventually become TNF

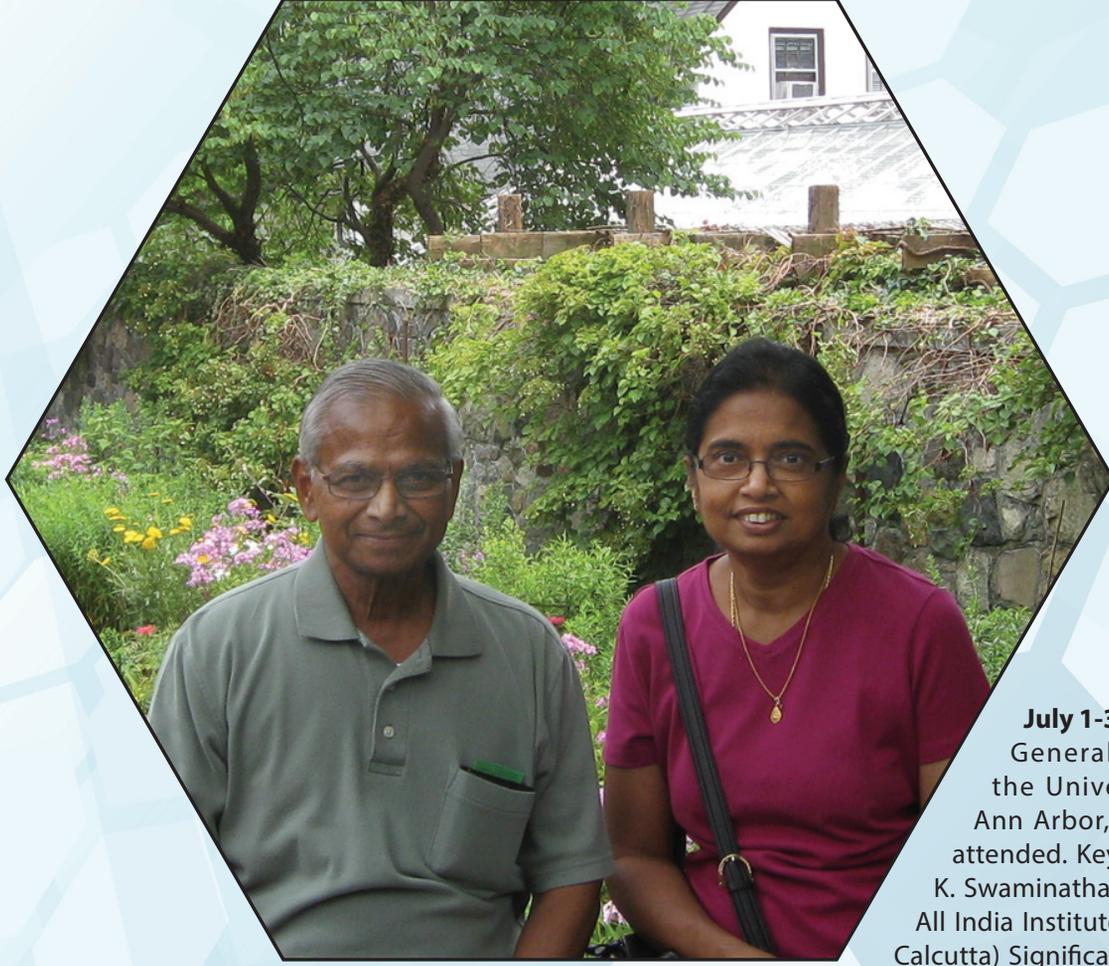
August 1, 1975: Drafting the Articles of Association with seven other friends

May 1, 1976: First fund raising for TNF by selling Indian snacks cooked by members' spouses at an international festival in Pemberton High School, NJ

June 12, 1976: First donation to Tamil Nadu was a large consignment of used clothes from Pittsburgh (and later from other cities)

June 24, 1976: IRS extends tax-exempt status to TNF with a stipulation that resulted in the modified 5th article of the By-Laws: To provide assistance at times of emergency when people's lives are threatened by floods, droughts, famines, etc. Note the phrase Tamil Nadu is not in this article thus giving members an opportunity to respond to human tragedies that might occur anywhere in the world including Tamil Nadu.

July 3, 1976: First Annual General Body Meeting of TNF at the Physics Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD; 23 families in attendance. Significant topics of discussion were: Membership drive, Fund Raising, reduction of Membership Fees and Quality / Quantity of Members.



July 1-3, 1978: Third Annual General Body Meeting at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI and 35 families attended. Keynote speech by Mr. K. Swaminathan (formerly with the All India Institute of Management in Calcutta) Significant accomplishments of the past year included Pannai Patti

Rural Development Project, Namakkal Kavinger Ramalingam Pillai Award, Tamil Pandithar Erode Deivasigamani Scholarship, Opening of TNF Chapter in Tamil Nadu and contribution to the flood relief efforts for Johnstown, PA and Tamil Nadu. This meeting set an example for frugality because donation from attendees (\$665) exceeded expenses (\$631)! The MI host families provided home-cooked food also!! Evening entertainment consisted of two movies: Nenjil Or Alayam and Gayathri. Memorial Day weekend was suggested for future Annual Meetings of TNF.

May 26-28, 1979: Fourth Annual General Body Meeting at Sea Colony, Bethany Beach, DE and 35 (same number as previous year!) families attended. Significant events during the past year included: Membership fee reduction from \$60 to \$25 per year, 120 lbs of used clothes collected in Detroit area and sent to Tamil Nadu, Rural Development Project's three programs: non-formal evening teaching for children not attending day schools, co-operative mat weaving loom for unemployed youth and low interest loans to village artisans and service providers.

September 4-6, 1976: Major membership "drive" (literally speaking the car drive from and to Cherry Hill, NJ and Baltimore, MD to Detroit and Chicago was over 2000 miles in three days!) with meeting groups of friends at Ashland, OH, Detroit, MI and Chicago, IL that increased the membership significantly

December 17 & 31, 1976: First significant fund raising for Madras Flood Relief (the flood of Nov 29, 1976 caused great loss of life and property in and around Madras) amounted to two TNF checks for \$200 each.

April 30, 1977: The motion to reduce the annual membership fees from \$60 to \$25 fails.

May 28-30, 1977: Second Annual General Body Meeting at Hidden Hollow Camp, Belleville, OH and 43 families in attendance. Keynote address by Dr.M.Anandkrishnan (formerly Consular in charge of Science and Technology affairs at the Embassy of India, Washington, D.C) This was a free-for-all meeting with many members participating in discussions! TNF Projects initiated dealt with Rural Development, School Sanitation, etc

May 24-26, 1980: Fifth Annual General Body Meeting at West Virginia Tech, Montgomery, West Virginia and 48 families attended. Keynote address by Mr. G. Parthasarathy, 1st Secretary and Press Consular, Embassy of India, Washington, D.C. Membership count stood at 210. families. Several new projects including TNF Memorial Scholarship at Diamond Jubilee High School in Gobichettipalayam up and running!

May 23-25, 1981: Sixth Annual General Body Meeting at the Fontbonne College, St Louis.

May 24-26, 1980: Fifth Annual General Body Meeting at West Virginia Tech, Montgomery, West Virginia and 48 families attended. Keynote address by Mr. G. Parthasarathy, 1st Secretary and Press Consular, Embassy of India, Washington, D.C. Membership count stood at 210. families. Several new projects including TNF Memorial Scholarship at Diamond Jubilee High School in Gobichettipalayam up and running!

May 23-25, 1981: Sixth Annual General Body Meeting at the Fontbonne College, St Louis, MO and 24 families in attendance. Keynote address by Dr. R.J. Rajasekhar Reddy, Chairman, Swallows in India, Madras. It is

worth noting that one participating "young member" Dr. Aye Goundan, who asked a question on TNF project scope, has gone on to create one of the largest TNF sponsored projects, "AGN Matriculation School" at Konganapuram, Salem District.

In parting I like to add that TNF was founded on the belief that one could do charitable work regardless of one's wealth, status or age. There are two options: one is to contribute to an ongoing TNF project of your choice, similar to the concept of contributing to United Way, namely contribute the most you can each and every year and the other, more unique to TNF is to do a project of your own. The latter can be a project of a size that is suitable to your affordability and will give you the most satisfaction, based on my experience. My own involvement in this area is three projects (always with the support/help of my close friends): the TNF Memorial Scholarship at my High School the Diamond Jubilee High School in Gobi, Erode Dist and the Computer Project & the GRD Library Fund at my engineering college PSGCT in Peelamedu, CBE. In addition, we have been donating to other TNF projects, most recent one to the AGN Matriculation School.



Le S'iam

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Community Service

Community Service is the thing that shapes and bonds people together. Everyone has his or her own 'picture' of community service, but to me it means a lot. The literal meaning of Community Service is 'voluntary work intended to be for one's common good'. Now this of course is a precise summary but community services can go a lot deeper than that.

When we think of community services, we think of charity, helping people, recycling, food drives, etc. Now, this is what it means to me but it can mean a lot more to you and other people than you may think. These services are to help people and when you participate in these, it can bring a different type of happiness that is wonderful to achieve.

One type of service that you might recognize is boy/girl scouts. You know those children that go door to door throughout the community trying to sell chocolate or cookies. These children work hard and are giving up their time and effort to do this. When they are done, they earn badges and that will make them feel proud of themselves and accomplished. Boy/girl scouts teach children how important it is to serve your community. This would be an example of feeling good about yourself while doing good for others.

Other bigger services like Red Cross help people all over the world. Their help comes in causes like natural disasters, military invasions, homelessness, blood giving, security and much more. Volunteers have decided to put their hands together and help these humans that are suffering. Whether it is small as a family's house fire or events immense as a hurricane they are there to help. We should thank them for doing so much to give help to other people. Without them there would be so many more masses of people who will be suffering and that is almost unimaginable. Just thinking of it makes us feel grateful for what we have.

Now I don't see as much folks that are begging for food or that are homeless because of the place that I live in. But I know it was a different case for other people like my parents. My dad used to tell me about how others had to work so hard just to earn some food and shelter. When I go to India I usually see beggars on the street



Manisha Muthu

begging for food and money. Many of those people are probably homeless too. It breaks my heart to see all these people suffering when we have so much more than them to appreciate. Thankfully, there are services like Tamil Nadu Foundation that help us give to people in India even though we are so far away. As you can see, community service is very crucial to society and we should try as hard as we can to take part in it. As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, "Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together." I think he was right.

Manisha Muthu

Winner, TNF Essay Contest - Seniors

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others", said Mahatma Gandhi. Community service is an act, a person or a group voluntarily render without expecting any benefits. In my perspective, community service is a phenomenal way to make your society a better place and also collaborate with like-minded people.

Community service made the world a better place than before. In spite of that a helping hand is always needed to the poor, homeless people who suffer from disasters and chronic health conditions. People are always on the lookout to create an awareness, run, walk or do a fundraiser for those people.

The first time I got involved in community service was when I was in fifth standard in Chennai, India. At that time I was in Bharat Scouts and we were to help clean



Nagasudhan Ayyachamy

the nearby reservoir. We cleaned the whole reservoir and made it look nicer. My second experience was six months ago when the 'Feed my starving children' a non-profit organization conducted a food-drive. 'Feed my starving children' helps seventy under developed countries around the world. Our teacher told us that this food helped malnourished children. I immediately volunteered to pack the food which led me to think 'there ought to be other ways to improve my country'. I did a bit of research and found out that people can volunteer individually or as a group in Boy Scouts, soup kitchens, middle or high school leadership classes, student government, et cetera.

Community service is always a helping hand. Being responsible and reliable are two main qualities for a volunteer. This also brings an inner satisfaction of accomplishment. To put it in Mother Teresa's words, "We will not be judged by how many diplomas we get, how much money we make or how many great things we have done. But we will be judged by 'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was naked and you clothed me, I was homeless and you took me in'. In conclusion, community service is a great way to help the needy. It also helps the world to be better place.

Nagasudhan Ayyachamy

Runner-up, TNF Essay Contest - Seniors

As a general statement, community service is a very positive and rewarding experience which provides the teenage population with a chance to understand and help out with their communal surroundings.

Most teenagers have a fixed opinion about their obligatory community service; that they simply must complete their required hours and graduate from high

school. I however find these service hours to be not a hindrance but a challenge to better my community that I will gladly accept. In fact I have had many opportunities to volunteer that I took advantage of, and now I have positive stories to share about each experience.

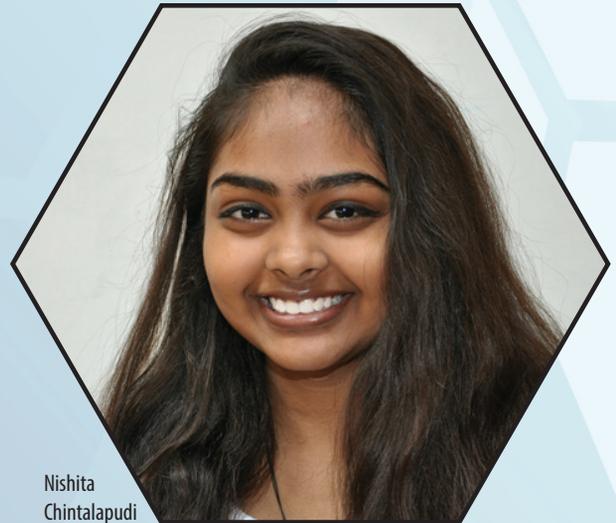
For instance this past summer I had the chance to volunteer at Safety Town, which is a program that teaches children about basic safety. I was assigned the role of Group Leader and I enjoyed every hour of this immensely. The children that I worked with were well behaved and had active roles in all of the camp activities. At the end of the summer, I was sad to let them go, as I had watched the kids learn and progress.

The next time I volunteered, it was at the Northern Illinois Food Bank. My group and I worked very hard at packaging food for the homeless. Although it was very tiring work the amount of food we packaged and the several 'thank you's we received from the staff was payment enough and spoke for our efforts. It was a positive and rewarding experience and the knowledge that about 500 homeless families were going to be able to have dinner that night made every second worth it.

There are several things people can do to help out in their community, whether it be helping out at a homeless shelter, volunteering with children at Safety Town or even volunteering at an Autism Foundation. Each experience will leave you with an amazing feeling afterwards. The mere knowledge that I have made a difference in the world is simply wonderful. It helps you feel rejuvenated and refreshed. The jubilant expression on my face every time I volunteer anywhere is proof enough. Community service is as rewarding as it gets.

Nishita Chintalapudi

Runner-Up, TNF Essay Contest - Seniors



Nishita
Chintalapudi



Farah Rahman

My view

My view of Community Services is that people help out without expecting anything.

What are Community Services?

Community has another word in it. That word is unity. People help out at different places and unite with other people. Some kids have reading buddies at their school. That helps them to unite with other grades.

What Community Services does your family do?

My dad has a group called TMACG. He helps other kids get education. My mom donates clothes and helps out at my school. I do Jump Rope for Heart. Jump Rope for Heart is an organization to help kids with heart problems. My mom and I also donate 10 inches of hair every year! I also donate money where ever I see a donation box!

What if there were no Community Services?

If there were no community services, there would be no community! If there was a fire our houses would burn down. We need community services.

My plans for the future

In the future I would like to help out at the animal shelters. I would also help out at senior homes. I also could take pictures of new baby animals so they would get homes.

That is my view of Community Services!

Farah Rahman

Winner, TNF Essay Contest - Juniors

Community service is something you give back to your community. It is a very important responsibility of each and every one.

I would like to explain the importance of the community service by telling a small story called "St. Nicholas Day".

Once upon a time, there was a Dutch named van Amsterdam. He was a baker selling cookies, pie, bread and cake to his community. On Saint Nicholas Day he made special cookies called St. Nicholas Day cookies. On St. Nicholas Day an old lady came to his store to buy a dozen of cookies. Amsterdam packed her twelve cookies. But the lady argued with Amsterdam.

Amsterdam said to her, "Everybody knows that dozen is twelve cookies; in my store, not more or not less." The old lady said, "I don't need your cookies. You may be an honest person but your heart is really small and you are not a generous person." The old lady then left the store.

Amsterdam's business was going down during the following days. At the end of the year he almost lost all of his business. The following St. Nicholas Day he started preparing for that day. No customer came. After St. Nicholas Day he sadly went to bed and started thinking if St. Nicholas would help him.

Then, when he slept he had a dream that he was a little boy playing with friends. In his dream Saint Nicholas appeared and he was giving gift to all the kids. When giving gift to all, Amsterdam noticed one thing that his basket never went empty. While he was thinking Saint Nicholas approached him and he gave a gift in his hand. When he looked down at the gift, it was a St. Nicholas cookie. When he looked up Saint Nicholas was not there but the old lady was next to him!



Jai Vivekanandan

Amsterdam woke up from his dream and realized his mistake. He started his next day with generous heart and started making fresh, delicious cookies. The same old lady came back to the store and asked for a dozen cookies. Amsterdam packed thirteen for her and told her, "From today onwards dozen is thirteen in my store." The lady told him, "Thank you. Your generosity would be rewarded." Amsterdam also felt very happy being generous and his store became a successful store.

Giving back to the community would always reward you with great happiness. Doing community service with generous heart is each and everyone's responsibility. As a student I would like to bring more awareness about recycling to save our environment.

Thank You!

Jai Vivekanandan **Runner-up, TNF Essay Contest - Juniors**

Community service can be boring, sometimes more boring than anything you've ever done. Why might that be? Obviously because you aren't helping yourself, right? Of course, community service is something you do for the society. Community service is done by people that care and want to help their desperate society get out of dilemmas. They care about how the environment will be for the people after them, the next generation. I am writing this because people think that they don't get affected by not doing community service because they won't be there and that they will be in heaven.

You can be born, live and die without a worry about how you will get the resources you need but what about the kids after you? How will they live? That is why I'm writing this, because people these days don't want to make an effort.

Firstly, these community services don't have to be HUGE! There are billions of people on earth. Aren't there? These billions can work together to make a change, a big one. When you mow your lawn it is selfish. I'm not saying it is mean and selfish to mow your own lawn, but it is selfish not to mow someone's lawn just around the corner, someone who can't mow the lawn themselves. What if you cannot walk, just like the guy around the corner? You would want someone to mow your lawn.

At my school, they say that the golden rule is to treat others the way you want to be treated, and everyone follows it because school is school. My school also sends flyers for things we can do to clean the school and its surroundings. No one shows up. I admit I

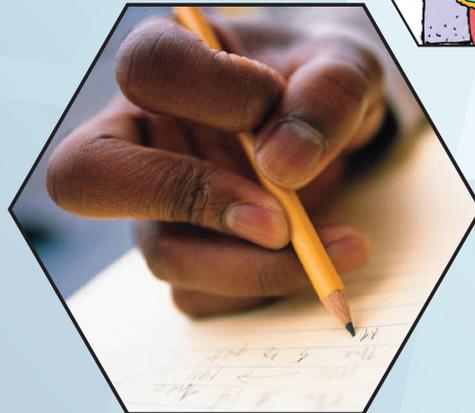


Prathmesh Premanand

probably wouldn't either. But I want to come up with an idea that motivates people-including me-to save the environment.

In conclusion, if you try, community service can be a good thing and a fun thing for everybody. In fact, you do community service daily, things like reading a Social Studies text book. I see things in those textbooks telling me to recycle. Automatically I start recycling and help the earth in a constructive way. Just make it more than reading a textbook. Make something to look back to. It is enough if you look back because community service starts with the little things.

Prathmesh Premanand **Runner-up, TNF Essay Contest - Juniors**



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அறங்காப்பீர் ஆன்றோரே!

தமிழ்நாடு அறக்கட்டளை.



அறக்கட்டளை: அறம் எனில் தர்மம், கொடை, நீதி ஆகியவற்றைக் குறிப்பதாகும். கட்டளை எனில், உத்தரவு, கடமை, செயலாக்கம் என்பனவற்றைக் குறிப்பதாகும். இவை சங்கந்தொட்டு தமிழ் நாட்டில் சிறப்புற்றிருந்தன எனவே தமிழ் நாடு அறக்கட்டளை என்னும் பெயர் சிறப்பானதாகும்.

தமிழ் நாட்டில் தலைச்சங்கம், இடைச்சங்கம், கடைச்சங்கம் ஆகிய மூன்று சங்க காலங்களிலும் கொடைவள்ளல்கள் பலர் இருந்தனர். அவர்களில் ஒவ்வொரு சங்க காலத்திலும் ஏழு பேரைச் சிறந்த கொடைவள்ளல்களாகத் தேர்ந்தெடுத்தனர். இவர்கள் யாவரும் அறத்தில் சிறந்து விளங்கினர். தமிழ் வேந்தர்கள் தங்கள் அறக்கட்டளைகளில், மிகப் பெரிய ஆலயங்களையும், அறச்சாலைகளையும் நிறுவி மக்கள் இடர் அகற்றினர். தமிழ் மூதாட்டி ஓளவைப் பிராட்டியார் சின்னஞ்சிறு குழந்தைகளுக்கு முதல் பாடலாக 'அறஞ்செய விரும்பு' என்று பாடினார். வாய் மொழி வேந்தனாம் திருவள்ளுவர் இல்லறத்தோடு வாழ்வோர்க்கு, 'அறத்தாற்றின் இல்வாழ்க்கை யாற்றின் புறத்தாற்றின் போய்ப் பெறுவதெவன்' என்று அறம் என்னும் தர்ம நெறியைப் போதித்தார்.

கடைச்சங்க காலத்தில் தமிழ்நாட்டில் சீதக்காதி மறைக்காயர் எனும் வள்ளல் வாழ்ந்திருந்தார். வறுமையால் வாடிய ஒரு புலவன் வேற்றாரிலிருந்து சீதக்காதியிடம் சென்று பாடல் பாடிப் பரிசில் பெற்றுத் தன் வறுமையைப் போக்கிக் கொள்ளலாமென்று காயப்பட்டினம் வந்தார். அங்கு வந்தபோதுதான் சீதக்காதி இறந்துவிட்டதாகவும், அவரைப் புதைத்து விட்டதாகவும் கூறினர். வேதனை தாளாது புலவர் சீதக்காதி புதைந்துள்ள புதைகுழிக்குச் சென்று, புதைகுழியின் முன் நின்று, "சீதக்காதி! உன்னை நம்பி வந்தேனே, உன்னால் என் வறுமையகலும் என்று வந்தேனே, இப்படியாயிற்றே" என்று கண்ணீர் விட்டுப் பாடல் பாடி அழுதாராம். உடனே புதைகுழியிலிருந்து ஒரு கை மேலே வந்ததாம். அந்தக் கைவிரலில் விலை மதிக்க முடியாத வைர மோதிரம் இருந்ததாம்.

"புலவர் பெரும! இம் மோதிரத்தை எடுத்துப் போய் உம் வறுமையைப் போக்கிக் கொள்!" என்று அசரீரி எழுந்ததாம். புலவர் அம் மோதிரத்தை எடுத்துப் போய் தன் வறுமை நீங்கினாராம். இதைத்தான் "செத்தும் கொடை கொடுத்தான் சீதக்காதி" என்பர்.

இதுபோல் தேரெழுந்தூரில் வாழ்ந்த கம்பர், வாழ்வு தேடி காவிரிப்பூம்பட்டினம் வந்தாராம். அங்கு பசியின் சீற்றத்தால் மயங்கி வீதியில் விழுந்து விட்டார். அப்போது அவ்வழியே வந்த கொடைவள்ளல் சடையப்பர் மயங்கிக் கிடக்கும் கம்பரைத் தன் வீட்டுக்கு எடுத்துப் போய் உணவளித்து அவரது உயிர் காத்தார். அவ்வாறு அறங்காத்தினால்தான் இன்று உலகம் போற்றும் கம்பராமாயணம் நமக்குக் கிடைத்தது. இது போன்ற அறச் செயல்கள் தமிழ் நாட்டில் எண்ணிலடங்கா.

இன்று தமிழ் நாட்டில் கல்வி பயில வழிநறித் தவிக்கும் ஏழைக் குழந்தைகளுக்குக் கல்வி வசதி, பிள்ளைகளால் கைவிடப்பட்டு ஏங்கி வாழும் முதியோருக்கு ஆதரவு தரும் முதியோர் இல்லம், சுனாமி போன்ற இயற்கைச் சீற்றத்தால் தம் பெற்றோரை இழந்து வாடும் அனாதைக் குழந்தைகளுக்குக் காப்பகங்கள், இது போன்ற பலவகைப்பட்டவைகளுக்கு உதவுவதற்கென்றே நிறுவப்பட்ட கருணை உள்ளங் கொண்டோரால் நிறுவப்பட்ட தமிழ் நாடு அறக்கட்டளைக்கு, பெருநிதி படைத்த பெருங்குணத்தோர் பெருங்கொடையும், வருமானத்திற் கியங்க வாழ்வு நடத்தும் வல்லார் தம்மாலியன்ற சிறு நிதியும் தந்து, அறம்பெருக்கிப் பிறவிப் பெருங்கடல் நீங்கிக் கரை ஏற வழி கண்டிட விழைகின்றேன்.

'இம்மையிலும் மறுமையிலும் நற்பேறு பெற்றிட அறம் காப்பீர் பெரியோரே!'

அன்பன்

ச. நமசிவாயம்

TNF EXCELLENCY AWARD

LAIA FOUNDATION



The recipient of this year's TNF EXCELLENCY AWARD is Mr. Lluís Compte, Founder Laia Foundation, Vedanthangal, Kancheepuram district.

Laia Foundation is an Indian Charitable Trust dedicated to building a better future for the people in the villages around Vedanthanal. For eight years, more than 1,000 students, along with hundreds of women and children, have benefited from the services of Laia Foundation.

The Story

In 2002, Mr. Compte, an investment banker of Barcelona Spain, came to India as a tourist. He did not visit South India at that time. But he liked India so much that, in 2004, he volunteered to serve in India through Service Civil International an international organization based in Europe. He was assigned to a project in Vedanthangal.

Most people volunteer for three months. Mr. Compte opted for one year. Also in the same year was another volunteer, Miss. Laia Mendoza of Barcelona. She volunteered for three months, and was also assigned to Vedanthangal. During the time when they were both there, the Tsunami of 2004 hit the area, killing 8,000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless.

Within 10 days after the Tsunami hit, Mr. Compte and Miss Mendoza raised funds sufficient to build hundred houses, and to supply ten fishing boats so that the fishing families could return to work. Encouraged by the success of this initiative, they decided to start a project in Vedanthangal, where they worked as volunteers for months.

Most of the inhabitants of this area belong to the most deprived communities of the country. They live below the poverty line, earning their livelihood as farm laborers. These people, though poor, wanted their children to be educated like the other children. The people were not satisfied with the quality of education provided in the rural schools. A request came from parents of students for facilitating afterschool support centers, in which their

children could find the appropriate environment to learn what they missed in their schools.

Sadly, Laia Mendoza was killed in 2005 in a traffic accident in Spain, where she was raising money for the initiative. A foundation in her memory was established to channel the support of Laia's family and friends who identified themselves with the initiative.

Mr. Compte lives in Chengalpattu with his wife Anandhi and his three year old daughter Induja.

When Mr. Thukkaram interviewed Mr. Compte for this story asked him "And, do you miss your home?" Mr. Compte replied "I go to Barcelona once a year for two weeks and I cannot wait to get back home (Vedanthangal)."



தமிழ் அணங்கு

தேவி அண்ணாமலை, சிகாகோ



அமிழ்தறியா மாந்தர் தம்
தமிழ் அறிந்தால் போதும்,
பாற்கடலையும், தேவர்களையும்,
ராட்சதர்களையும் தூது சொல்ல வேண்டாம்!

அவள் தெளி தேனோ,
தேமாவோ,
கடிமணம் வீசும்
தென்மதுரை பூங்காற்றோ!
மயிற்சீலியின்
மென் வருடலோ!
யாளியின் வன் பிளீரலோ!
அவள்...

கள் அருந்திய அவ்வை சொன்ன மொழி,
மன் மயக்கும் கன்னல் மொழி!

குறுமுனியின் அகத்தியம் புரட்டினால்
அவள் அழகின்
ஆழமும்,
உயரமும்,
அகலமும்
புலப்படும் புவி அதிசயம்!

பண்ணும், பாட்டும்
மின்னும் அணிகளாய் பூட்டிய
அவள் செல்வ சீமாட்டி!
ஐந்திணை ஆளும்
அவள் அரும்பெரும் கிழத்தி!!!

மௌவலின் காம்பையொத்த
அவள் இதழின் சுழிப்பில்
இன்னும் கிறங்கிக் கிடக்கும்
உலகின் ஓராயிரம் மொழிகள்! (ஒலிகள்)

ஆம்பல், அனிச்சம், வெட்சி என
அவள் மணிச்சிகையில்
இறுக்கக் கட்டி
இருவாட்சியும் சண்பகமும்
அவள் சடை நெகிழ் நீள,
ஐம்பெருங்காப்பியங்களை
செங்கழுத்தில் சிந்தாமணியாய்,
சங்கு காதில் குண்டலமாய்,
துடி இடையில் மேகலையாய்,

தளிர் கரம் தாங்கும் வளவியாய்,
சிங்காரச் சிலம்பு அணிந்து
அளந்து எட்டு வைத்து
அலட்சிய நடை போடுகிறாள் அவள் ஆளும்
ஐம்பெருநாட்டை!

குறுஞ்சியாம், முல்லையாம், மருதமாம், நெய்தலும்,
பாலையாம்

காந்தள் மெல்விரல்களாய்,
கருங் குவளைகளைக் கண்களாய்,
பசலை நோய் பற்றுபவளாய்,
புளிசூழம்பு சாரும் நீரும் ஆக்கும்,
கனவைக் கலைத்த சேவலை சபிக்கும்,
இடை மணிமேகலை தொலைக்கும் தையல் நாயகி
அவள் காதல் தலைவி!

செம்புல நீரில் தன் காதல் காணும்
செம்மூதாய் பூச்சிகளைச் பரிசளிக்கும்
அஞ்சிறைத் தும்பியிடம் அளவளாவும்
ஆளியின் ஊணை வெறும் கரம் கொண்டு
உடைக்கும்

களிறுகள் குழப்பிய நீரையொத்த மனம் படைக்கும்
வெண் மழை கவை இலங்கு மலை நாடன்
அவள் காதல் தலைவன்

அறம், பொருள், இன்பம் சொல்ல மூத்தோன்
வள்ளுவன்

அவள் அழகை, முருகை பாட அவ்வை
அடி அடியாய் விளக்கி அவளை ஆர்ப்பரிக்க
தொல்காப்பியன்

அகநானூறு, புறநானூறு, ஐங்குறுநூறு
நற்றிணை, குறுந்தொகை, கலித்தொகை
பரிபாடல், பத்துப்பாட்டு, பதிற்றுப்பத்து
இப்படி அவள் பால் மையல் கொண்டு பாடிய பட்டியல்
ஏராளம்...

ஒரு விசை, ஒரு முறை, திருப்பி பார்த்தால்
நீயும், நானும், விரும்பி படித்தால் நீளும் பட்டியல்!
நீளட்டும் பட்டியல், வாழட்டும் தமிழ் அணங்கு!

Vibrant Chapters are the Future of TNF

Somalay Somasundaram, Vice President - Chapters

Since its inception in 1974, TNF has been supporting individual donor projects, building the TNF center in Chennai, and organizing annual national conventions. Developments in the past 10 years, including the changing American Tamil demography and the cost and efforts involved in organizing national conventions, have encouraged recent TNF Boards to focus on creating vibrant Chapters in various cities across the U.S. Although organizing a national convention involves several challenges, they help create national visibility and an opportunity for like-minded Tamils across the country to meet. Therefore, as a compromise, TNF has adopted a bi-annual convention policy. As national conventions are becoming more expensive not only for the organizers but also for the participants, TNF is evolving towards annual regional charity events which are more cost effective and reach out to a much broader audience. These events have resulted in chapter-sponsored projects, more funds for projects, and new volunteers, donors and life members to TNF.

2014 is a significant milestone in the history of TNF with the formation and revival of ten active chapters in major cities/states: New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh), Houston, Dallas, Austin, Indianapolis, Chicago and Michigan.

New York Chapter, under the leadership of Braha Gupta, is the trailblazer in organizing annual charity events. Through Mother's Day celebrations, they have created momentum for TNF and charity in New York City area. The New York Chapter has adopted a school in Vellore district under the TNF-ABC project.

In **Indianapolis**, TNF has a unique partnership with the Tamil Sangam of Central Indiana (TSCI) which has successfully organized charity events since 2011 after some of their key members attended the TNF convention in Philadelphia in 2010. TSCI played a leading role in establishing a corpus fund to feed abandoned special needs children at Anbalayam in Sirkali and is also supporting a TNF-ABC school in Vellore district. Hats off to TSCI Presidents Sath Annamalai, Murugesan Thiraviam, and Veera Rajendran and their teams for partnering with TNF, and in organizing purpose-oriented Tamil Sangam programs that uplift the needy back home.

The newly established **New Jersey** Chapter, under the leadership of Subu Ganesan, partnered with Stage Friends USA, a volunteer based drama group with a track record of two decades of stellar performance, and organized a charity event in April, 2014, to build classrooms for the special needs children at Anbalayam in Sirkali.

Philadelphia Chapter hosted one of the most successful TNF conventions in history and has been instrumental in establishing the TNF-ABC project in Sivagangai district, in educating orphan girls in Vedaraniam and in buying the land and building a home for abandoned special needs children at Anbalayam in Sirkali.

Houston Chapter, under the leadership of Sam Kannappan and Padmini Ranganathan successfully hosted the first TNF convention in the south. The Houston Chapter, lead by Ram Sivaraman, is supporting school education efforts in Vellore and Thiruvallur districts.

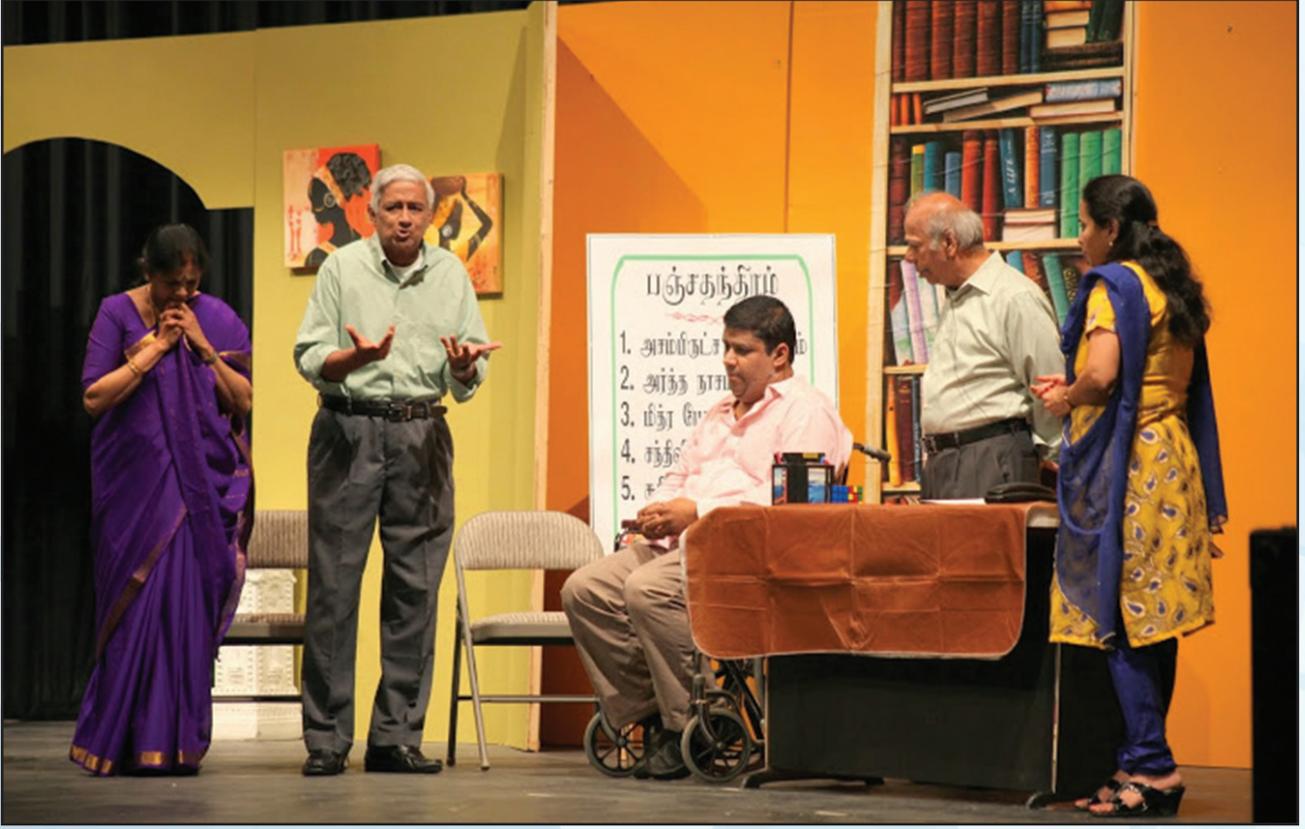
Pittsburgh-based Western Pennsylvania Chapter, under the leadership of Murugan Kannan and Usha Chandra, is partnering with Pittsburgh Tamil Sangam for a charity night. The Western PA Chapter has been one of the most active TNF chapters for a long time and has hosted TNF national conventions.

Austin Chapter, under the leadership of Ganesh Venkat and Chinna Natesan, is raising funds to adopt TNF-ABC schools in Virudhunagar district by dedicating the arangetram of Sangavai Ganesh for this project.

Chicago Chapter, lead by P.K. Aravazhi, M. Bhaskaran, Shree Guruswamy, Veera Venugopal and Mani Rajendran, has hosted several TNF national conventions. They work closely with the Chicago Tamil Sangam to support several TNF projects.

Detroit-based Michigan Chapter, lead by Geetha Pradeep, Athi Narayan, and Ganesan Naidu has hosted TNF national conventions. They have built classrooms to educate orphan girls in Tsunami affected Vedaraniam area. Latha Mani has organized New Year's Eve programs to support selected TNF projects.

Dallas Chapter, under the leadership of Elenkovan Singaravelu, has partnered with Sastha Tamil Foundation



Stage Friends (USA) drama hosted by New Jersey Chapter. Tamil Sangam of Central Indiana Committee at its Charity Festival.

to establish "Angel Janani" project which supports special needs children at Anbalayam in Sirkali, through a corpus fund. The chapter is also working with Dallas Metroplex Tamil Sangam to organize charity events.

TNF continues its journey to establish chapters in several other cities. A small group of charity-minded friends is what it takes to start a TNF Chapter in areas

where we currently have no Chapters or to explore partnerships with local Tamil Sangam or other interested non-profits.. If you are interested in learning more about starting a Chapter or joining an existing Chapter, please contact Somalay Somasundaram at Som48346@yahoo.com or 610.444.2628.

TNF Chapters and Contacts

CHAPTER	CHAIRPERSON/CONTACT	EMAIL
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சுலோகோ தமிழ் சங்கத்தின் 45வது ஆண்டுவிழா
சுயப்பாக நடாடபெறு எங்கள் வாழ்த்துக்கள்!

எங்கள் அறவாழிக்கு இதயம் கனிந்த வாழ்த்துக்கள்!

அன்புடன்,

தீருச்செங்கோடு குடும்பங்கள்

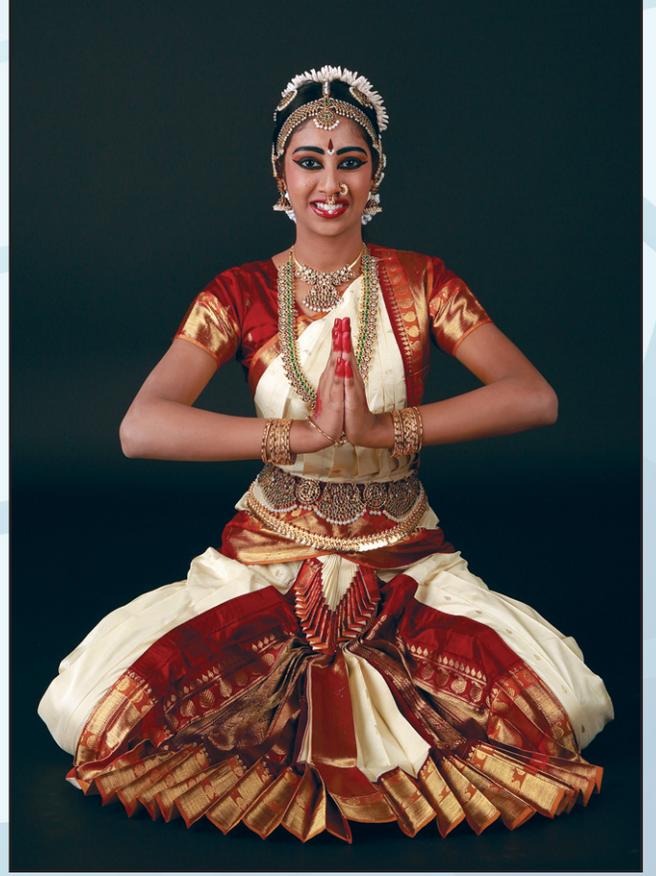


Our Youth Philanthropists

Charity can start at a young age and you don't have to be old or rich to be compassionate. Following are some of the role models among our children who have demonstrated their selflessness and compassion at a young age and in unique ways

An Arangetram with a Cause

Sangavai, a freshman at Cedar Ridge High School in Round Rock, Texas, is dedicating her Bharathanatyam arangetram to underprivileged rural students in Tamil Nadu. Sangavai has touched the hearts of her local community by requesting friends and family not to bring gifts for her arangetram, but instead bring a check in favor of TNF to adopt a school under the TNF-ABC project in Virudhunagar district. Congratulations and best wishes to Sangavai and her proud parents Malar and Ganesh!



Birthdays and Books

Shanthi and Preethi Bhaskar (Ages 9 and 8) of Downingtown, PA, had unique birthday celebrations. They requested their friends and family to bring a used or new book in lieu of gifts and donated the books and donations received to government libraries in the villages of Tamil Nadu. Village libraries have very few English books and the rural children are very eager to read English books. These great gifts from Shanthi and Preethi will bring smile to hundreds of village children. Thank you for your thoughtfulness, Shanthi and Preethi. Kudos to the philanthropic parents, Usha and Bhaksar.



Greeting Cards and Charity

Neha and Shakthi Saravanan (Ages 9 and 5) of Indianapolis ventured in making greeting cards. They were not only creative in making the cards, but also excelled in selling them at the Tamil Sangam of Central Indiana's charity nights. Their efforts resulted in raising \$1,000 to help feed abandoned mentally challenged children at Anbalayam in Sirkali. We are proud of your creativity, teamwork and compassion, Neha and Shakthi! Thanks to the Saravans for encouraging their children to invest their time to help the needy.



A Summer with a Purpose

Summer is not all about vacation and free time for Nivedha and Abirami Meyappan (11th and 6th graders) of Carmel, IN. They have made plans to visit several TNF projects in Vellore, Nagapattinam, and Sivagangai districts and are looking forward to interacting with and helping orphan and destitute girls at Kasthurba Gandhi Kanya Gurukulam in Vedaraniam. Congrats to Nivedha and Abirami and thanks to the Meyappans for enabling this service internship for their daughters. To learn more about TNF's summer internships and project tours please contact Usha Chandra (Usharani5@aol.com) or Somalay Somasundaram (som48346@yahoo.com).



about anbalayam

The proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child" is true for a normal child. But it takes more than a village to raise an orphaned special needs child in rural India. There are more than 10 million special needs children in India. These children, like lepers, continue to be treated as outcasts by the society; most parents, particularly in rural areas, do not want to keep mentally challenged children at home because of the community's derision towards them.

Anbalayam (Loving Home) was founded in 1998 by Mrs. Meerabai Egambaram, a single woman and a humanitarian. It was started as a sanctuary for abandoned special needs children in Sirkali, a small rural town in Tamil Nadu. Soon, children from several districts found their way to Anbalayam. Most were abandoned by their parents who are impoverished agricultural laborers unable to support a special needs child. Anbalayam's 60 children's situations include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism and multiple disabilities. Anbalayam's rented tiny hallway was getting dilapidated and the landlord forced them to vacate. The children starved on most days as there was no sustainable source of funding for food. Tamil Nadu Foundation (TNF) was approached by Anbalayam in 2006 and TNF, through funds raised by the Philadelphia Tamil community, bought 3 grounds of land and built a 3,000-squarefoot building as the new home for these destitute children. Tamil Sangam of Central Indiana and Dallas-based Sastha Tamil Foundation (through "Angel Janani" project) have initiated corpus funds to provide food for these children.

“வறியார்க்கொன்று ஈவதே ஈகை மற்றெல்லாம் குறியெதிர்ப்பை நீரது உடைத்து”
“The only charity is giving to the poor; All else is exchange”
- Thiruvalluvar

TNF has developed a 5-year plan with a lofty goal of establishing Anbalayam as a role model center for rural special needs children. The plan includes:

1. Classrooms to educate the children and to train them to become self-reliant
2. A health room to provide physiotherapy and basic health care needs
3. A sleeping room for boys
4. A dining hall
5. Corpus funds for food, staff salary and health care (only the interest will be used)
6. Resource (machines and trained staff) for vocational training such as making envelopes so that the "mild" and "moderate" category grown up children can be gainfully employed and do not become a societal burden
7. Networking opportunities with other leading organizations serving special needs children Chennai

அறம்செய விரும்பு - Learn to love virtue
இயல்வது காவேல் - Don't forget charity
தானமது விரும்பு - Be kind to the unfortunate
- Tamil Poet Avvaiyar





Anbalayam – After TNF involvement in 2012

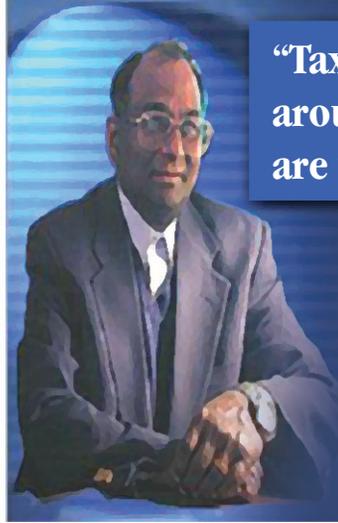


Anbalayam – Before TNF Involvement

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27

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Best Compliments to Annual Convention 2014 by Tamilnadu Foundation and Chicago Tamil Sangam from Rust-Oleum



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28

ஆங்கோர் ஏழைக்கு எழுத்தறிவித்தல்

Results of TNF painting competition

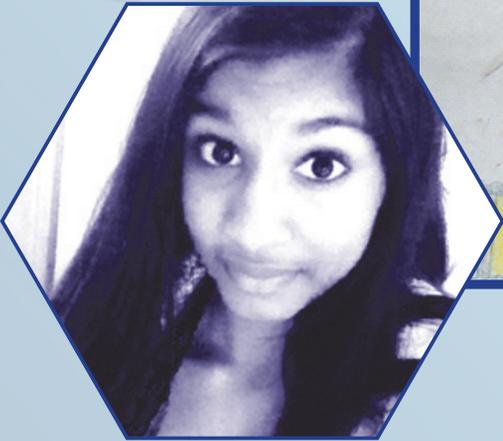
My School



Rithika Somu
(Winner, TNF Painting
Contest - Seniors)



Manisha Muthu
(Runner-up, TNF Painting
Contest - Seniors)



My School



Nishitha Marikumar
(Winner, TNF Painting
Contest - Juniors)



Surya Chandrakasan
(Runner-up, TNF Painting
Contest - Juniors)



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TNF Corpus Fund By Dr. M. Rammohan

“

**Give me a thousand more births, if you must!
But only if it is in this holy land, India.**

- Vivekananda

”

Most of us were blessed to be born India, though the struggle to excel has brought us half the world across! Like you, I also earned my fundamental education in India. Now that we are established, we have not forgotten the debt we owe to our parents and family. We have helped them in so many different ways. **Let us also not forget the debt we owe to our motherland.** One forgotten fact: the “**Indian Tax Payer**” who subsidized our education by underwriting most of the expenses for those wonderful institutions where we studied. The foundation we got from India gave us not only a strong foothold in USA but helped us to excel and outshine others.

Here is an opportunity to pay back that enormous debt. Tamilnadu Foundation has so many projects in the field of

1. Education,
2. Women's empowerment,
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Tamilnadu Foundation is not only the first organization that started work in all these areas but also probably the only organization that has carried out projects virtually in all the districts of Tamilnadu and also **to have a central office in Chennai** to supervise and carry out all the charitable projects you donate for, all this while keeping the overhead costs to the barest minimum. **Less than 5 % to be precise.** Organizations like **United way**, and even **Red Cross** have overhead cost exceeding 30 %! **Tamilnadu foundation has the lowest**, if not one of the lowest overhead expenses, since volunteers carry out most of the work. There is no organization with Zero overhead expense, as there is mandatory expense for Tax filing, Auditing, Registration with government etc.

Our goal is to make 100 % of your donations go for charity. How is this possible? We are raising a **Corpus fund of Rs. One Crore**, which will fetch sufficient interest income to cover the overhead, so that 100 % of your donations can be put to use for charity. Already, about Rs. 30 lakhs have been raised. We are requesting you to donate

Rs.One Lakh or equivalent \$ 1,650 or more towards this project. If you prefer, it can be done in 2-3 installments. **It can be paid in Indian Rupees in India or in US Dollars in USA.** The former gives tax deductions in India and the latter, a similar deduction in USA.

Your name or name designated by you will be recognized in some form in Tamilnadu Foundation Building in Chennai permanently. Hundreds who visit TNF Chennai center will be inspired seeing your name. Please note the names listed in the picture is not current as new donors commit regularly and their names may not show.

Let us lay a strong foundation to Tamilnadu. Come and join to become one of **the Hundred pillars of Tamilnadu and Tamilnadu Foundation.**

Please mail your check to **M. Bhaskaran, Treasurer, 1709, Kenyon Drive, Naperville, IL 60565. In India,** please send the check in the name of **Tamilnadu Foundation and mail to 27 (Old No. 9), Taylors Road, Kilpauk, Chennai 600 010. Please mention in the memo column "Corpus Fund".** For further details please contact **Dr. M. Rammohan** at **330.717.2136**, Coordinator-TNF Corpus Fund.



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34

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தமிழ் பேச்சுப் போட்டி முடிவுகள் ஈதல் இசைப்பட வாழ்தல்



பிரணவ் ஐயர்



இனியா மணி



நிமிலன் S ராஜ்குமார்



ராகா சுந்தர்

இளையவர் (6-8 வயது)

முதல் பரிசு

பிரணவ் ஐயர்

“சிறுவர்கள் நாம் என்ன செய்ய முடியும்? ஏன் முடியாது? நமக்கு பெற்றோர்கள் இல்லையா? அறிவார்ந்த பெரியோர்கள் இல்லையா? பணம் உள்ளவர்கள் இல்லையா?

நாம் ஏன் அவர்களிடம் உதவி கேட்க கூடாது? “தட்டுங்கள் திறக்கப்படும், கேளுங்கள் கொடுக்கப்படும்”. இந்த பெரியோர்களின் அன்பால், அரவணைப்பால் நன்கொடையால் புதிய தமிழ்நாடு என்ற சமுதாயத்தை உருவாக்குவோம்.”

இரண்டாம் பரிசு

இனியா மணி

“தானம், தருமம், கொடை, ஈகை நான்கும் தூய தமிழ் சொற்கள். தானம் - கேளாமல் தருவது, தருமம் - கேட்டுத் தருவது, கொடை - பொதுவின் கொடுப்பது, ஈகை, ஈதல் - தனக்குவரியவனவற்றையும் தருவது”

இரண்டாம் பரிசு

நிமிலன் S ராஜ்குமார்

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இரண்டாம் பரிசு

யாவனா சக்தி



யாவனா சக்தி



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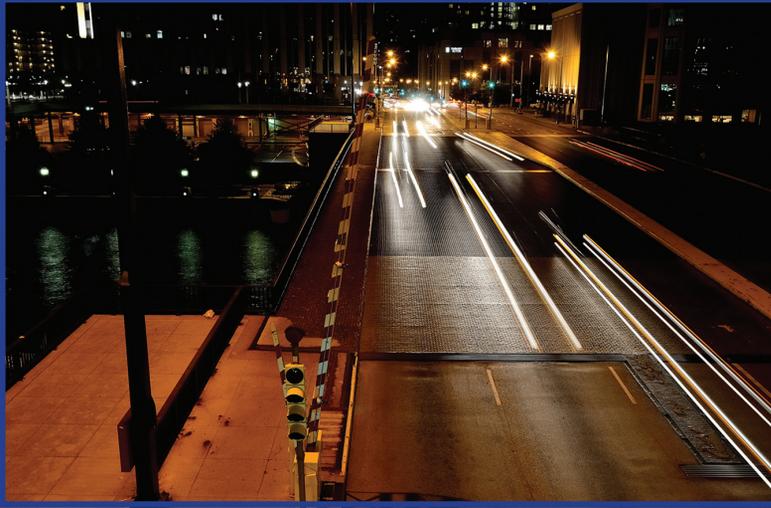
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As we celebrate 40 years of continued service to Tamil Nadu, please take this moment to review, contemplate and cherish our great memories and notable accomplishments. Our growth has touched many lives, and we plan to help many more.

This story of The Tamil Nadu Foundation is really a story that is best told by citing some specific projects in our 40-year history. Here are some of our highlights and a few of the notable challenges we have overcome.

1974 - 1983

The birth of the foundation occurred, essentially, at a Thanksgiving Day gathering in Baltimore, Maryland. There was a gathering of members of the Tamil diaspora on that American holiday. During the gathering there was a discussion of how the group could best help to improve the quality of life in our place of birth, Tamil Nadu.

The foundation was formed with founding members Dr. P.G. Periasamy, Dr. G. Palanisamy, Dr. P.R. Perumalswami and Dr. P. Theyagarajan. In December 1975, TNF was incorporated in the state of Maryland. The very first TNF gathering was in 1975, in Bethany Beach, Delaware. The foundation was granted tax exempt status in June 1976.

In 1976, the first annual meeting was held at Physics Hall, University of Maryland in College Park, MD. Twenty three families attended the meeting that centered on establishing a membership drive, fund raising, reducing membership fees and assessing membership quality. The first significant fund drive was to raise funds for the Madras Flood Relief in 1976. The flood of November 29, 1976, caused great loss of life and property in and around Madras. TNF donated a sum of \$400.

In 1977, the second annual meeting was held at Hidden Hollow Camp in Belleville, Ohio, and was attended by 43 families. Dr. M. Anandakrishnan, formerly Consular in charge of Science and Technology affairs at the Embassy of India, delivered the key note address. The most frugal annual meeting was the third one at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor attended by 35 families. The revenue of \$665 exceeded expenses by \$34. Among the significant conference announcements was the starting of the TNF Chapter in 1977.

For this first decade, TNF operated mainly from the United States. During that time, member donations were sent directly to specific projects in local villages. TNF focused on the socio-economic needs of places that were familiar to donors. Many successfully implemented projects included: vocational training for women to help them become self-reliant, revamping run-down schools, providing scholarships to the economically disadvantaged and extending economic support to orphanages.

1983 - 1988

As the number of projects grew, it became apparent that TNF needed to establish a local board of trustees in order to monitor the projects properly. In 1983, TNF Chennai chapter trustees were nominated and Dr. N. Mahalingam was named the first chairman of the local board of trustees. All trustees worked out of their homes.

1989

TNF Thukkaram Career Guidance Program

In 1989, the TNF Thukkaram Center Guidance Program was created at the College of Engineering, Guindy. Ram Thukkaram, the benefactor who funded the program, felt that a guidance program would help students avoid some of the obstacles Mr. Thukkaram, a graduate of the college, experienced in his career.

Mr. Thukkaram sponsored two career guidance programs. One was at his alma mater, College of Engineering, Guindy. The other career guidance program was near his hometown, the city of Thanjavur, at the Periar Maniammai College of Technology For Women in Vallam, Thanjavur district. By the end of 2013, more than 10,000 students of both colleges had benefited from the programs.

The program at Guindy administered by the Guindy Alumni Association continues to gain momentum today with 900 students attending the program in 2014. The Career Guidance Program at Guindy celebrated its 25th year of continual service in 2014.

1991

TNF Anna University Computer Training Program for Rural School Children

The objective of the program was to popularize the use of computers in rural areas. Dr. M. Anandakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor of Anna University at that time, developed the working model of cooperation between an NGO such as TNF, a technology institution like Anna University, and the education department of the government of Tamil Nadu. The shared vision of computer training for rural children was the catalyst that brought about this cooperation.

The students were provided with 100 hours of practical training in DOS commands, Wordstar, Lotus 123 DbaseIII Plus and graphics through BASIC. Within four years, more than 100 teachers and thousands of rural school children received this training in 22 Government schools in Vellore, Salem and Trichy districts. Dr. V. Sankaranarayanan, Director of the Ramanujan Computer Centre, Anna University, was especially helpful getting his enthusiastic and dedicated team of teachers and student volunteers to help. The project coordinator bringing the program to rural schoolchildren was Mr. P. Chandrasekaran, then Special Consultant to TNF Chennai Chapter. Ram Thukkaram, TNF Center coordinator, funded the project.

This training program helped TNF begin to be recognized as one of the progressive NGO's in Tamil Nadu. The Anna University

Computer Training Program for Rural School Children was the inspiration for starting a computer lab at the TNF center, after the first phase of the building was completed. The computer center enabled TNF to convince Indira Gandhi National Open University to establish a Program Study Center to offer low cost MCA and BCA degrees to working adults through evening and weekend programs.

1990 - 1998

TNF Center, Phase 1

The board decided to build a center in Chennai to be staffed for the proper execution of the growing list of member-sponsored projects in Tamil Nadu. At that time, then chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. M.G. Ramachandran was in the United States on an official visit. During that visit, Dr. G. Palani Periasamy met with the Chief Minister, who was told of TNF's plans and accomplishments. The Chief Minister was impressed by the work that had already been done. Because of what is known as the Land Ceiling Act, which redistributed land, the Chief Minister allotted three grounds of land at Kilpauk, Chennai - a prime location in the city. Dr. Periasamy's role was significant in getting the land allotted to TNF.

The decision to build the center was crystallized and put on a firm track when Mr. C.K. Mohanam was named TNF President In 1989. During the discussions, three different building plans were debated at length regarding how to construct the building. Mr. Mohanam's leadership helped bring a consensus.

But, there were many roadblocks to getting this center built. The condition of the allotment was that TNF would establish a technology center within two years from the allotment date. However, there were problems such as a shortage of funds and difficulty finalizing the plans for the center, which put TNF in danger of missing the deadline. Subsequently, the government had the right to take back the land. In the spring of 1990, under Dr. Pitchumani's presidency, Mr. Ram Thukkaram was appointed TNF Center Coordinator with the responsibility to complete the center in two phases. Phase 1 consisted of the basement and first floor and Phase 2 added three floors, creating a 10,000 square feet building with ten wings of 2,000 square feet each.

When Dr. Pitchumani's term expired in July 1990, Dr. A.M. Rajendran took over as TNF President. Because of the threat of losing the land, Dr. Rajendran acted quickly to install a new board that would be best able to deal with the land issue. The reconstituted board included Justice Venugopal as Chairman. Other board members included: Dr. M. Anandakrishnan, Dr. S. Daivamani, Dr. Arcot Gajaraj and Prof. G. Ayyasamy. Mr. P. Chandrasekaran who had been serving as a Special Consultant to monitor of TNF projects, became Secretary of the board. The foundation, at that time, did not have any title or documents to the land to prove the ownership. All TNF possessed was a government order number. TNF was quite fortunate to have Justice Venugopal as our counsel to deal with such a legal quandary.

TNF was also fortunate for the work of Dr. S. Daivamani, who was a senior executive in the government. He was able to find the government order number, along with the conditions of allotment of the land to TNF for the construction of the Technology Center. By the fall of 1990, the two-year deadline had passed and, at that point, a simple order from a revenue official could have deprived TNF of the allotted land.

TNF applied for an extension with a convincing presentation about how the potential of the Technology Center would help the people of Tamil Nadu with education, technology transfer, health and hygiene, and rural development. TNF received the extension after explaining that there had been a delay in raising the funds in the United States for the construction. Despite this victory, another legal problem erupted.

An opportunist created a document claiming ownership of the land, since TNF had not immediately occupied the land and begun construction of the technology center. The opportunist obtained a stay order from the high court of Tamil Nadu, thereby stopping TNF from proceeding with any construction activities. The stay was vacated thanks to Justice Venugopal with the help of senior advocate Mr. M.N. Padmanabhan. Construction of the compound wall to the TNF center began. But the opportunist appealed against the ruling and won another stay. Construction was stopped again. The legal battle continued for five years. TNF fought the battle in Madras High Court and won a favorable court order. It was a long step-by-step process.

The opportunist tried to go to the Supreme Court. Justice Venugopal filed a caveat with the Supreme Court arguing that the case should not be admitted because there was no public interest in reversing the order of the Madras High Court. The report submitted was so convincing that the Supreme Court rejected the appeal outright. The Supreme Court did not even hear the case. Finally, after five years, TNF was allowed to proceed with the construction of the technology center.

TNF Board at that time had in its control Dr. Muthu Veerappan Memorial Fund (\$13,000) donated by his friends from Ohio and Maryland. The board had authorized this money for the TNF Center construction. However, the money was depleted due to the legal battles. There was really no money remaining for the construction of the center. In the meantime, the price of construction had increased significantly. TNF now needed \$100,000.

At that point, Mr. Thukkaram, TNF Center Coordinator, prepared a 16-page pamphlet describing all the activities of TNF to date. The pamphlet also briefly outlined future possibilities. More than 2,000 pamphlets were printed and distributed to Americans of Tamil origin. The pamphlets were sent to members and also to non-members of TNF. Dr. C. Manogaran and Dr. T. Sounderpandian, both professors at the University of Wisconsin and directors of TNE, helped with the funding appeal.

Dr. Rajan K. Raj, a neurosurgeon and American of Sri Lankan Tamil origin from Oakbrook, Illinois, and a good friend of Mr. Thukkaram, donated \$20,000 to sponsor a wing in the name of his deceased wife. The remaining cost of Phase I was paid for by Mr. Ram Thukkaram and his brother, Mr. San Santharam, who donated their father's home in Chennai in Besant Nagar. Mr. Thukkaram provided the final funding to complete Phase I.

On December 21, 1998, The TNF Center was inaugurated by Honorable Mayor of Chennai Mr. M.K. Stalin. The final cost of Phase I was approximately \$ 90,000.

1994

TNF Chemkit Project

There are a number of high schools in Tamil Nadu without any laboratory facilities. The Chemkit is a miniaturized laboratory kit that allows students to perform experiments necessary for their studies. The Chemkit was developed by Professor K. Balasubramaniam of MIT, Anna University-Chrompet. With Dr. Anandakrishnan's enthusiastic support, TNF organized a number of workshops on the Chemkit. Many TNF members supported this project, particularly Mr. Paul Pandian. These kits were distributed to more than 25 schools. This was a very innovative project. In view of TNF's involvement in education enhancement focus, this project deserves to be reignited.

1998

TNF Computer Center

TNF Center opened the computer center in December 1998. Two years earlier in 1996, TNF started training students from Chennai Corporation Schools. A significant percentage of students in those schools were economically disadvantaged. TNF computer Center helped thousands of students learn computer programs at a very low cost.

TNF helped set up computer centers in more than 25 schools, reaching more than 10,000 students in ten districts. Working with many NGOs, TNF provided computers to more than 200 schools. TNF headed many activities to spread computer education throughout Tamil Nadu. More detailed descriptions and information is available at the TNF Center Chennai.

Due to the vast expansion of computer training centers in Chennai, TNF decided to close the Computer Center in 2010. When the center was closed it had 25 computers and four instructors. All software and hardware from the center were donated to the schools with which TNF had involvement. Primary funding for the computer center was provided by Mr. Thukkaram.

1999

TNF Hacin Family Foundation

TNF was associated with the Hacin Family Foundation for more than 10 years. Mr. Janez Hacin an architect and a philanthropist of Geneva, Switzerland, funded several charitable projects in Tamil

Nadu. These projects included: The Kovalam self-help group, a free medical camp, the Ponnai school children project, scholarships, the Kuthambakkam toilet project, a rainwater harvesting project in Nagarkoil, the Citizen Development Center Project, the Thulir science project and many more. An \$18,000 dollars donation from Hacin Family Foundation, for example, provided two hundred households in the village of Kuthambakkam low-cost sanitary toilets. Mr. Janez Hacin supported more than 25 different projects over period of ten years.

2000

TNF - Eye Camps

TNF has been conducting Eye Camps since 2000. Cataract surgery can help someone who is visually handicapped regain sight. In June 2000, 160 patients were treated at Siluvathur village. More than 2000 were treated at TNF Eye Camps. Arvind Eye Hospital Madurai provided the treatment in most of the camps.

TNF & Ms. Pamela Walsh of Friends of India

Ms. Pamela Walsh is chairperson of Friends of India, a Geneva-based NGO. She came to know of TNF through Mr. Nazeeb Dajani, trustee of the Global Harmony Foundation of Switzerland. Mr. Dajani was a friend of Dr. M. Anandakrishnan. Ms. Walsh is a longtime donor to TNF and a driving force behind many of our projects. When ASC International Language School, owned by Ms. Walsh, was planning to celebrate their silver Jubilee year of 1999, she was looking for a good, charitable project to support.

Ms. Walsh visited many schools in Vellore and sat on the benches of the crowded schools. She realized that the girls could not even do their written schoolwork comfortably. After the Vellore visit, she funded many projects related to infrastructure development in schools. Every year, Ms. Walsh comes to Chennai to visit the projects funded by ASC International. After her ASC International Career, she formed Friends of India. Friends of India raised money for 400 school uniforms for students in Tamil Nadu. TNF worked with Friends of India to identify 400 students in need of the uniforms.

In addition, Friends of India donated money through TNF to Kovalam village to provide PVC water tanks, desilting village temple tanks and for repairing the toilets at Panchayat School and many more important needs.

2000 - 2010

Indira Gandhi National Open University & Tamil Nadu Open University at TNF Center

TNF Chennai trustees decided to approach Indira Gandhi National Open University to qualify the TNF computer center as a Program Study Center for training students in MCA, BCA degree programs offered by the university. This would bring recognition to the center. One of the trustees, Prof. G. Ayyasamy, with the help of Mrs. Soundravalli Kulandaiswamy, then Regional Director of Indira Gandhi National Open University, got approval. For a study center to be approved it must have adequate computers, software, and a

program administrator. It also needed an academic counselor who would need to be approved by the headquarters of Indira Gandhi Open University in Delhi. Mr. Chandrasekaran was approved and managed the overall program.

The MCA, BCA and Certificate programs from Indira Gandhi National Open University gave the TNF Computer Center credibility to run its own programs. When Tamil Nadu Open University was started in 2004, one of the directors of Indira Gandhi National Open University joined Tamil Nadu Open University. TNF was now engaged to be their Program Study center also and offered similar courses.

TNF conducted 6-month courses for the B.com, BBA students, and B.A. corporate secretary students. Nearly 6,500 students graduated, at a very low cost at the center. Funding that came about because of these programs helped the operation of the TNF Chennai chapter. It also contributed 10 Lakhs (\$25,000) towards the second phase of construction.

2005

Smokeless Kitchens

TNF invited Ms. Walsh to visit Athur in Sholavaram block in Thiruvallur district, where she wanted to establish a computer center. During her stay, she visited Anganwadi day care centers in Tamil Nadu. These day care centers used conventional mud chulas to cook the mid-day meals for the children. These chulas created a lot of unhealthy smoke, which lingered around the children. Concerned over the safety of the children, Ms. Walsh launched the Smokeless Kitchen Project.

Aided by donations from Friends of India, TNF members, and from the government of Tamil Nadu, the program spread. Nammakka Namme Thittam and self-sufficiency schemes also helped. TNF was able to help spread donations from Friends of India to many districts, including Theni, Dindugal, Villupuram, Dharmapuri, Ariyalur, Thirunelveli, and others. As of 2013, the initiative by Ms. Walsh has helped TNF implement more than 12,000 smokeless stoves in Anganwadi Centers in Tamil Nadu.

The government of Tamil Nadu has adopted this project and is committed to providing smoke-free stoves to all day-care centers in Tamil Nadu. Recently, the government of India suggested that all state governments help day care centers to be smoke free. This is tremendous progress.

Tailoring Program

As part of a woman's empowerment program, a tailoring program was started at the TNF Center in 2005. A full-time instructor employed by TNF has trained more than 500 women from economically disadvantaged areas. The training has helped many women get employment in garment shops. Since 2012, sewing machines have been provided to the women.

In March 2012, TNF Chennai received a Vocational Training Provider Certificate from the central government in Delhi. This

certificate and registration with the government allows TNF Chennai to provide a government-approved certificate to those who finish the course. This official certificate opens many doors for job opportunities. This tailoring program is scalable in rural areas of Tamil Nadu.

TNF Center - Phase 2

The impetus for starting the second phase of the TNF Center came from Indira Gandhi Open University. The university was considering cutting off funds because the Phase 1 TNF center did not have enough space for the number of students studying there.

At that time, TNF Chennai was fortunate to have Dr. Anandkrishnan as Chairman. Mr. Thukkaram, TNF Center Coordinator, explained that TNF needed approximately \$150,000 to complete Phase 2, which would give the center additional space needed for the Indira Gandhi Open University requirement. Mr. Thukkaram suggested contacting a few individuals to ask for a \$20,000 donation. In return for this generosity, one wing of the center would be named after a loved one of their choosing.

Dr. Anandkrishnan donated \$20,000 after listening to the proposal. That spontaneous gesture surprised Mr. Thukkaram and provided the motivation required to complete the second phase. Mr. Paul Pandian of Dallas, Texas, donated \$20,000. Mr. M. Manickam, President of TNF- USA at the time, donated \$20,000. Mr. Chandrasekaran, who managed the Indira Gandhi National Open University Program, was able to generate surplus funds saving 10 Lakhs Rupees that also became part of the construction fund. Mr. A.C. Muthiah of SPIC donated \$2,500 (1 Lakh Rupees) and the balance was donated by Mr. Thukkaram. The second phase was opened June 10, 2005 by Mr. Ravi Candadai, U.S. Consul General in South India. The approximate cost of construction was \$160,000.

2006

Laia Foundation

TNF started working with the Laia Foundation in 2006. The Laia Foundation is an Indian Charitable Trust dedicated to building a better future for inhabitants of many villages around Vedanthangal, Kancheepuram District. TNF secretary Mr. Chandrasekaran has counseled on many initiatives of the Laia Foundation. Funds from overseas were channeled through TNF to the Laia Foundation. TNF provided help to the Laia Foundation in dealing with many government regulations. This led to the successful implementation of many Laia Foundation projects. Mr. Luis Compte, founder of Laia Foundation, Vedanthangal, Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu, is the recipient of the TNF Excellency Award for 2014.

2007

Ponneri Library Improvement

Ponneri is a small town in Thiruvallur district north of Chennai. Though Ponneri library had existed for a long time, everything changed in 2007 with the involvement of TNF. Mr. S. Natesan, TNF Chennai Chapter Trustee, and Mr. Chandrasekaran took personal

interest in the library. With complete cooperation of Mr. Panick Pandian and government officials, TNF implemented five new programs.

1. Establishing a computer center primarily used by students and local population for browsing
2. Computer training during summer holidays
3. Infrastructure assistance, tables, chairs, shelves, etc.
4. Book bank system
5. Soft skill training program to college students in the Ponneri area for motivation and personality development

The sixth program increased committed donors from double digits to triple digits, nearing 300 donors. These local donors provide 1000 or 5000 Rupees to be considered as donors. Ponneri now is one of the most used branch libraries in Tamil Nadu and has transformed the area.

Because of the success of the Ponneri library, Mr. Pandian was promoted to Tiruvottiyur Library which was in dilapidated condition. In the last two years, as a result of funds raised through local charities and the community confidence in Mr. Pandian's abilities, Tiruvottiyur Library is taking shape at the cost of one crore (\$170,000).

2007

Anbalayam

Anbalayam, in English, means loving home. Anbalayam, located in the rural town of Sirkali is the home for 55 special-needs children. The home was founded in a rundown rental building by Ms. Meerabai Ekambaram, a local resident with a heart as big as it can be.

There are more than 10 million special-needs children in India. Most of the children were abandoned by their parents in public places like bus stands, railroad stations and local markets, with the hope that somehow their children will be taken care of. When Mrs. Meerabai founded Anbalayam in 1998 she had picked the children wandering around in the bus stand at Sirkali. Anbalayam's children have the typical maladies of special-needs children, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, Downs Syndrome, autism and multiple disabilities. Genetic consanguinity (marrying close relations) is one of the significant causes of offspring that are diagnosed with special-needs. Genetic consanguinity is not un-common, even in highly educated communities in Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Somasundaram, TNF Director who was involved with an orphanage project near Sirkali, was made aware of the plight of children of Anbalayam. He visited Anbalayam in 2006 and to his dismay found that the children starved most of the days. The orphanage was in such a bad condition that when it rained the children had to stand along the wall because the roof leaked badly.

A focused effort by Dr. Somalay in raising funds through Philadelphia Tamil community resulted in a new building of 3,000 square feet in TNF owned land. Tamil Sangam of central Indiana and Dallas-based Sastha Tamil foundation (through “Angel Janani” project) initiated corpus funds for food assistance.

TNF is in the process of implementing a five year plan. In projects like these, any kind of help anyone can provide, however small, is a big plus.

2008

Kalanjiyam Pilot Project Primary Education

The focus of fund raising at the 2008 TNF National Convention was to prevent dropout at the primary school. The TNF USA board, based on funded study, showed that the dropout rate in rural areas was twenty to thirty percent. The funds collected were to be spent on a pilot project to study the problem thoroughly and eventually come with a methodology to make a difference in primary education dropout issue.

For the pilot project TNF USA Board identified a proven organization that had enough experience in primary education in rural villages. It chose Kalanjiyam run by two individuals with a proven record of performance. After a field visit by TNF President Mr. Sami Palanisami, along with TNF Chennai staff, Kalanjiyam was awarded a three-year contract for \$60,000 to improve the primary education and reduce the dropout rate on four villages, chosen for their economically disadvantaged situation.

Kalanjiyam worked with local village leaders, government education authority and local school staff. Women from the villages were hired as social workers to promote instant buy-in. They also served as substitute teachers or teacher’s assistants. They were responsible for improving the educational environment to include, purchase books and notebooks, basic furniture, enable clean drinking water and toilet facilities, transportation assistance to children, computer training, sports and recreational activities.

The Kalanjiyam engagement convinced the TNF board of the need to undertake a similar program of its own in a vastly improved cost effective way. The learning experience was very useful for the successful implementation of TNF ABC Project.

2008

Elathur Coaching Project to Improve Passing Rate in the 10th Standard

A very concerned headmistress, Mrs. Ambika, dismayed at the miserable passing rate of her students provided the primary reason for TNF starting a customized coaching program for the tenth grade students at Elathur government high school in Vellor District, an Adhi Dravida school functioning under Adhi Dravida welfare department. In the year 2006-2007, the passing rate was 28%.

Four months of customized coaching was given in all subjects. Food was provided for the students as the coaching sessions went into late evening. The results were phenomenal. The passing rate jumped to 82% in 2008 compared to 28% in 2007. During the school term 2008-2009 there was an opportunity for failed 10th grade students to reappear for the examination. TNF, with the help of Mrs. Ambika, recruited field staff to bring back the failed students. Almost all the students were working as laborers. A few of the girls were engaged to be married. Some were just idling, but all of them were interested in completing 10th grade standard. However, prior to TNF’s involvement, no one in the village had the capacity to motivate them.

TNF gave additional coaching to all the 75 failed students and enabled them to take the board examination. The passing rate for this group was 85%. All of the passed students continued their school education.

In 2009, Mrs. Ambika was transferred and the new administrative staff was not keen on continuing the program. In 2009 the passing rate dropped down to 35%! Mrs. Ambika, alarmed at the number, was able to get Elathur High School back into the program and in 2010; the 10th grade passing rate was 100% for the first time. Thanks to Ms. Kavitha, treasurer of the TNF Foundation, who took the initiative and followed through for successful completion of the program.

2010

First Annual TNF Chennai Chapter Conference

A significant milestone was achieved in 2010. First annual TNF Chennai Chapter conference was conducted under the leadership of Dr. A.M. Swaminathan, Chairman, and was attended by more than 200 guests and representatives from other NGOs. Four speakers from government and four from non-governmental organizations addressed the gathering on the real issues in Tamil Nadu on Education, Women’s Empowerment, Health and Hygiene, and Rural development.

The ideas generated were essential in guiding TNF in identifying future-oriented projects that will strengthen the four pillars of TNF. TNF has conducted annual conferences ever since. These conferences elevate the stature of TNF among all other NGOs in Tamil Nadu.

2011

Soft Skill Training Program

In Tamil Nadu, passing 10th grade is absolutely required to be employable. The future for those who have not passed 10th grade is pretty grim. Mrs. Andal Domodran, former chair of the board of trustees, urged TNF Chennai chapter to initiate a project to improve the 10th grade passing rate through a program to motivate students.

TNF center chapter tried to develop a two-day program for the high schools of Tamil Nadu that would be similar to the career

guidance program TNF started at Engineering College, Guindy, Chennai. But the issues for high school students were very different. The high school program had to be affordable, and TNF needed to be able to take the program to schools. Also, TNF needed to convince the heads of the schools that the program would deliver what it promised since the students would be away from regular classes for two days.

At first, TNF was not very successful in developing the program to meet all the requirements. But when a discussion of the training came up at a board of trustees meeting held at project site, Ponneri Library, M.N. Reguraj, Trustee, offered a solution. He is president of Nettur Technical Training Foundation (NTTF), and he offered materials and trainers from the two-day soft skill training that were offered to all the students of NTTF Bangalore.

NTTF Bangalore is the biggest training center in South East Asia. NTTF has 23 Training Institutes throughout India, and annually trains about 8,000 students in various job skills. This training can be 3 months to 3 years. TNF accepted Mr. Reguraj's offer. Under the informal agreement, NTTF provides two trainers and the training material. All the expenses related to training will be paid by TNF, including travel expenses, boarding and lodging as well as expenses at the training locations. The training would be brought to the students in their schools.

The two-day soft-skills program covers a number of specific areas on each day.

On the first day the following subjects are covered.

- Knowing the game - personal details, strengths and weaknesses
- Analysis of weaknesses - how to convert weakness into strength
- Communication
- Concentration - listening, reading, understanding
- Memory improvement
- Presentation skill
- Communication game

And in the second day these following subjects are covered,

- Thought for the day
- Time management
- Health and personal hygiene
- Civic sense
- Confidence building
- Memory improving exercise
- How to prepare for the examination and overcome fear
- Career planning - different courses and job opportunities
- Feedback

As of May 2014, TNF has trained 1450 students in 33 schools in 7 districts. Fund availability at TNF center will determine the number schools the training will be offered. TNF has also started the process of "train the trainer program", to eliminate the dependency on NTTF

2011-2012

Kattupakkam Coaching Class for 10th Standard

Kattupakkam Government High School is the only school for five villages. 242 students are enrolled for grades 6 through 10. TNF, at the request of Kattupakkam village people and school administration, started a similar coaching program. The passing rate for both 2012 and 2013 academic years at Kattupakkam was 100%. The Elathur and Kattupakkam programs were funded by Mrs. Kavitha and Mr. Thukkaram.

Starting in 2013, Elathur and Kattupakkam have become part of second cluster in Vellore District for ABC Project and are now funded by Houston Convention funds and the TNF Chennai chapter.

2012

ABC Project

The ABC project provides after school coaching to students lagging behind in class or academic performance. ABC originally stood for Academic Bridge Course. Based on three years of experience in conducting the ABC Project, the project has a new meaning. A stands for achieving grade level proficiency; B stands for building the morale; and C stands for championing higher aspirations. TNF launched the ABC project in eight schools in Sivaganga district. The project has transformed the schools, and the students, for better, in many ways.

Dr. Somasundaram, director of TNF along with Chennai executive director Mrs. ManmathaDevi, visited Kalanjiam project and reviewed the methodology and visited many schools in Sivaganga district. They had extensive discussions with education officials and community leaders in Sivaganga area, TNF Chennai chapter. They also reviewed the special coaching sessions conducted at Elathur and Kattupakkam schools. With input from TNF board USA, Dr.Somasundaram came up with a winner, the ABC Project.

Results show that students who are part of the ABC Project have become academically competent and on par with fellow classmates. Armed with this good information, TNF has launched a second cluster in Vellore, North Arcot district in five schools. The third cluster is slated for Cuddalore.

2013

TNF ART GALLERY

Tamil Nadu foundation, working with Tamil Nadu Arts & Crafts Improvement Association, facilitated the opening of an art gallery for members of TACIA. The gallery is on one of the 2,000-square foot wings of the TNF center. There are ten of these wings, and one was leased to TACIA at a subsidized cost. The art gallery at TNF Center was inaugurated on November 21, 2013.

The idea of this art gallery could be traced back to 2009 when Mr. Thukkaram wanted to visit a public art gallery in Chennai. He had no luck finding one. Then he visited all the retail art galleries in Chennai. There were less than 10. Talking to the owners of retail

galleries, he realized there was a need for public art gallery in order to promote art appreciation and create an environment for better career opportunities for the artisans of Tamil Nadu. With more successful artists, a public art gallery could be a reality, besides meeting another socio economic need.

In 2012, Mr. Thukkaram urged Mr. Sanjeevi to start a project to promote art in Chennai. Mr. Sanjeevi made it happen. He developed a plan after talking to many people in the art community. Dr. B.R. Annapillai founder and president of Tacia was very enthusiastic to have the art gallery at TNF center for the artists and for Chennai.

Founded in 1991 TACIA has more than 300 aspiring artists as members. TACIA has conducted Annual exhibitions, artist camps, competitions and seminars in major cities in India. However TACIA does not have a permanent place to exhibit the works of budding new artists.

Dr. Annapillai has said for the last 37 years TACIA has been promoting art in India without any financial assistance. Several of artist members of TACIA have gone on to win state and national awards. He often requests that the general public and companies buy their art works, and support the art community. He hoped someday, someone will acknowledge TACIA's efforts and help launch TACIA to the global arena.

TACIA is the only non-profit organization in Tamil Nadu promoting art.

As of May 2014, eight art exhibitions, including two children's exhibitions, have been held at the gallery. At a typical exhibition, 60 paintings were displayed and more than 500 visitors saw the paintings, which were all for sale.

In Conclusion, The TNF Difference

There are many other organizations doing good work in India. These are familiar to TNF members including, America-India Foundation, Prithim, Udavumkarangal, and Kalanjiam. TNF is very different because our work is so acutely focused. When you donate to TNF, you are not just donating to some cause of good.

You are donating to something very specific- a smokeless kitchen, eye camps, or any of our many projects. You can see exactly where your money goes. Other organizations typically have the same core management team since inception and they get their funding from corporate donors, wealthy individuals, and fund-raising events or from well-known foundations such as the Ford Foundation, the McArthur Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. TNF is different from many of these nonprofit organizations that operate in India.

We were founded on the premise that we can be a vehicle for members, primarily situated in North America, to fund a specific charitable project any place in Tamil Nadu. Because of this, our projects are spread all over Tamil Nadu. TNF gives equal focus to small and large projects. . Because of the close relationship between the donor and the specific project, there is more satisfaction for both those on the ground receiving the aid and those of us giving the aid.

Think of this: In our world, no child has the option to choose his or her parents. Some children start at a disadvantage in life and our goal at TNF is to even the playing field as much as we can. Quite simply, we try to help those who need assistance. In our 40 years, we have had to innovate responses to better help those in need. We have learned as we have gone along. In fact, many of our projects started small and then over time gathered momentum and made a real and significantly greater difference than we originally envisioned.

The Tamil Nadu Foundation is like the banyan tree, growing and spreading roots. TNE, over a period of 40 years, has grown huge to include more than 750 family members with many projects, just like roots, growing ever stronger. TNE, like the banyan tree, casts long shadows that give shelter to many from the hot sun.

This report has been prepared by Mr. Ram Thukkaram (TNF Center Coordinator) and reviewed by Mr. C.K. Mobanam, and Mr. K. Manickam (past presidents of TNF) and Mr. P.C. Chandrasekaran, (Secretary TNF Chennai Chapter).



கல்விக்கும் உண்டோ அடைக்கும் தாழ்

A short story written by: Sekar Chandrasekar



சுப்பையா வாத்தியார் பள்ளியின் மெயின் கேட் அருகே வந்த போது, இவர் எதுக்கு இங்கு வருகிறார் என்ற சந்தேகத்தோடு, வாட்ச்மேன் செபாஸ்டின் பார்த்தான். அவரை எக்காரணம் கொண்டும் பள்ளிக்கூடத்திற்குள் விடக்கூடாது என்று நிர்வாகம் அவனுக்கு உத்தரவு போட்டிருந்தது.

“என்ன செபாஸ்டின், எப்படி இருக்க? எட்மாஸ்டர் இருக்காரா?” சுப்பையா சார் கேட்டதும், செபஸ்டின் முகத்தைத் திருப்பிக்கொண்டு காதில் வாங்காதவன் போல் நின்று கொண்டிருந்தான்.

சுப்பையா வாத்தியார், கிட்டத்தட்ட நாற்பது வருடங்கள் அந்தப் பள்ளியின் ஆசிரியராக இருந்து சில வருடங்கள் முன் ஓய்வு பெற்றவர். தமிழ், ஆங்கிலம், கணக்கு, சரித்திரம், பூகோளம் என்று ஆறாம் வகுப்பு முதல் பத்தாம் வகுப்பு வரை அப் பள்ளி மாணவர்களுக்குப் பாடம் சொல்லி கொடுத்தவர். ஏகப்பட்ட மாணவர்கள், பல்வேறு ஆசிரியர்கள், பனிரெண்டு ஹெட்மாஸ்டர்கள் என்று தம் ஆசிரிய வாழ்க்கையில் சகலமும் பார்த்தவர். பள்ளி மாணேஜ்மெண்டுக்கு இவர் மீது நல்ல அபிப்பிராயம் இருந்தது. அதற்குக் காரணம், சுப்பையா வாத்தியார், தம் தொழிலையும், அந்தப் பள்ளியையும் நேசித்த விதம். மேனேஜ்மெண்ட் என்ன சம்பளம் கொடுக்கிறதோ, அதைப் பேசாமல் வாங்கிக்கொள்வார். தம் வாழ்க்கை முழுதும் அந்தப் பள்ளிக்கே அர்ப்பணித்தார். அந்தப் பகுதி மக்கள் சிலர், அப்பள்ளியை நிஜப் பெயர் கொண்டு அழைக்காமல், சுப்பையா ஸ்கூல் என்று அழைக்கும் அளவுக்கு அப்பள்ளியுடன் ஒன்றி விட்டவர்.

அக்காலத்தில் வெறும் டீச்சர் ட்ரைனிங் மட்டும் முடித்து பள்ளியில் சேர்ந்த அவர், படிப்படியாக

அஞ்சல் வழிக் கல்வி மூலம் தமிழ், ஆங்கிலம், கணக்கு என்று பயின்று ஒவ்வொரு பாடத்திலும் முதுகலைப் பட்டம் பெற்றார். பாடம் சொல்லிக்கொடுப்பதிலும், மாணவர்களை ஊக்கம் சொல்லி வளர்ப்பதிலும் கில்லாடி. அவர் வகுப்பு மாணவர்கள், பள்ளி இறுதித் தேர்வுகளில் நூறு சதவிகிதம் தேர்ச்சி பெற்றனர்.

ஊதியம் வாங்காமல், ட்யூஷன் கிளாஸ் எடுப்பார். திருமணம் பற்றி எல்லாம் அவர் சிந்தித்துப் பார்க்கவே இல்லை. எனவே அவருக்கென்று குடும்பமோ, அதனால் ஏற்படும் அதிகப்படி செலவோ இல்லை. உறவினர்கள் என்று யாரும் இல்லை. காலையில் அய்யர் கடை டிபன், மதியம் அம்பாள் மெஸ்ஸில் வஞ்சிர மீன் சாப்பாடு, இரவு உணவு நைட் நாச்சியப்பன் கடை என்ற ஒழுங்கில் ஒரு நாளும் தவறியதே இல்லை. இந்தக் கடைகள் விடுமுறை விட்டால் மட்டுமே வேறு இடங்களுக்குச் சென்று சாப்பிடுவார். ஒரு பழைய டேப் ரெகார்டரில், பாகவதர், வசந்தகோகிலம், மகாலிங்கம் என்று அந்த நாளையப் பாடல்கள் கேட்பார். எப்போதாவது பார்வதி டாக்கீசில் அவர்கள் நடித்த படம் வந்தால் பார்ப்பார்.

மூன்று வருடங்களுக்கு முன் மேனேஜ்மெண்ட் அவருக்கு ரிடயர்மெண்ட் கொடுத்தது. நிறைய பரிசுப் பொருட்களும், பொன்னாடைகளும், மாவட்டக் கல்வி அதிகாரியின் பாராட்டுப் பத்திரமும் கொடுத்தார்கள். இதெல்லாம் மகிழ்ச்சி தந்தாலும், இரவு உறங்கப்போகும்போது தான் உண்மை உறைத்தது. இனி மறுநாள் முதல் பள்ளிக்குச் செல்ல முடியாது என்பதை உணர்ந்ததும், அவரால் அதைத் தாங்க முடியவில்லை. என்ன செய்யப்போகிறோம் என்று தவித்தார். புத்தகங்களையும், வகுப்புகளையும், மாணவர்களையும் விட்டால் அவருக்கு வேறு ஒன்றும் தெரியாது.

ஓய்வு பெற்ற முதல் வாரம் வெறுமனே ஊரைச் சுற்றி வந்தார். பிறகு தாங்க முடியாமல், ஹெட்மாஸ்டரையும், மேனேஜ்மெண்ட்டையும் சந்தித்து, தம் மனக்குறையைச் சொன்னார். அவர்களும் ஒரு வாரம் யோசித்து விட்டு, மேலும் ஒரு வருடத்துக்கு அவருக்குப் பணி நீட்டிப்பு கொடுத்தனர். ஆனால், வாரத்துக்கு ஒரே ஒரு வகுப்பு மட்டும் எடுக்கலாம். தேவைப்பட்டால் வினாத்தாள், பாடத் திட்டங்களில் பிற ஆசிரியர்களுக்கு உதவலாம், மற்றும் சில சில்லறை வேலைகள் என்று, சில நிபந்தனைகளுடன் ஒப்பந்தம் போட்டு, அதற்கு சொற்பத் தொகை ஒன்றை ஊதியமாகவும் கொடுத்து சுப்பையாவை வைத்துக் கொண்டனர்.

இரண்டு ஆண்டுகள் இப்படியே சென்றன. சுப்பையா அதில் ஏதோ வெறுமையை உணர்ந்தார். தனக்கு இன்னும் கொஞ்சம் பொறுப்பு அளிக்க வேண்டும் என்று பள்ளி நிர்வாகத்திடம் கேட்டார். அதற்காகத் தனக்கு எந்த ஊதியமும் தனியாகத் தர வேண்டாம் என்றும் சொன்னார். பிற ஆசிரியர்களோடு நிர்வாகம் ஆலோசனை நடத்தியது. இளம் ஆசிரியர்கள் சிலர் சுப்பையா மீது சில குறைகள் வைத்தனர். அவருக்குப் புதிய பாடத் திட்டங்களில் பரிச்சயம் இல்லாததால் வினாத்தாள் வடிவமைப்பில் பல கோளாறுகள் இருப்பதாகச் சொன்னார்கள். மேலும், பள்ளியில் கணினியின் உதவி கொண்டு பாடத் திட்டங்களும், வினாத்தாட்களும் வரும் ஆண்டு முதல் அமைக்க இருப்பதால், சுப்பையாவின் உதவி இனி தேவைப்படாது என்று முடிவு செய்தனர்.

பிறகு மிகுந்த நெருக்கடிக்கிடையே, நிர்வாகம் ஒரு நாள் சுப்பையாவை அழைத்து இனி அவர் பள்ளிக்கு வர வேண்டாம் என்று சொல்லியது. மேலும், மற்ற பள்ளிகளில் சுப்பையாவின் திறமை பற்றிக் கூறியிருப்பதாகவும், அப்பள்ளிகளில் ஏதாவது வாய்ப்பு வந்தால், சுப்பையாவின் பெயரைப் பரிந்துரை செய்வதாகவும், அவரிடம் ஆறுதலாகச் சொல்லி வைத்தனர்.

ஆனால் சுப்பையா தினமும் பள்ளிக்கு வந்தார். கொஞ்ச நேரம் சயின்ஸ் லாப் அருகே இருக்கும் வேப்ப மரத்தின் நிழலில் நிற்பார். அந்த மரம் அவர் நட்டு வைத்தது. இன்று பெரிதாக வளர்ந்து தலை நிமிர்ந்து நிற்கிறது. 'நிர்வாகம் வேண்டாம் என்று என்னை ஒதுக்குது, உன்னையும் ஒரு நா ஒதுக்க போகுது, ஜாக்கிரதையா இருந்துக்க', என்று அந்த மரத்திடம் பேசுவார்.

ஸ்டாஃப் ரூமில் திடீரென நுழைந்து “என்ன கிளாஸ் போகாம அரட்டை அடிக்கிறீங்க. நான் போயி உங்க வகுப்பை எடுக்கட்டுமா ?” என்பார். மற்ற வாத்தியார்களின் மேசையில் அடுக்கி இருக்கும் மாணவர்களின் கட்டுரை நோட்டுக்களை எடுத்து, அவற்றில் பிழை திருத்தி மதிப்பெண் இடுவார். வகுப்பு வராண்டாவில் உலாத்துவார். ஒருமுறை காலியாக இருந்த வகுப்பறையில் தன் முன் மாணவர்கள் இருப்பதாகக் கற்பனை செய்துகொண்டு, சுப்பையா வாத்தியார் ஏதோ பாடம் எடுத்துக் கொண்டிருந்ததை ஒரு ஆசிரியர்

பார்த்து விட்டு, மற்ற ஸ்கூல் ஸ்டாஃப் எல்லோரையும் அழைத்துக் காட்டினார்.

நிர்வாகம் சுப்பையாவை அழைத்துக் கடுமையாக எச்சரிக்கை செய்து, இனிமேல் அவர் பள்ளிக்கு வரக் கூடாது என்று கண்டிப்பாகச் சொன்னது. மேலும் வாட்ச்மேன் செபாஸ்டினிடம், சுப்பையா வாத்தியாரை இனி பள்ளியினுள்ளே வர அனுமதிக்கக்கூடாது என்று உத்தரவு போட்டது. இது நடந்து கிட்டத்தட்ட நான்கு வாரம் ஆயிற்று. சுப்பையாவால் பொறுக்க முடியவில்லை. இன்று ஒரு முடிவு தெரியாமல் வரக்கூடாது என்று, ஹெட்மாஸ்டரையும், நிர்வாகத்தையும் பார்க்கக் கிளம்பி விட்டார்.

வாட்ச்மேன் செபாஸ்டின் அருகே சென்று, அவன் தோளைத் தட்டினார். அவன் “என்ன விஷயமா வந்தீங்க சார்? உங்களை உள்ளே வரக்கூடாதுனு சொல்லிருக்காங்களே சார்...” என்றான். குரலில் சிறிது அக்கறை தெரிந்தது. சுப்பையா அவனுக்கு ஐம்பதும், நூறுமாக நிறையத் தடவை கொடுத்து உதவியிருக்கிறார்.

“இல்லப்பா, ஹெட் மாஸ்டர்-ஐ அவசரமா பாக்கணும்”, சுப்பையா சொல்லிக் கொண்டிருக்கும்போதே ஒரு பெரிய வேன் கதவருகே உறுமி விட்டு நின்றது. வேனிலிருந்து டிரைவர் இறங்கி செபாஸ்டினிடம் சென்று ஒரு பேப்பரைக் காண்பித்து, “வேன்ல கம்ப்யூட்டர் வந்திருக்கு, கதவைத் திறங்க. கொண்டுபோய் இறக்கணும்...” என்றான்.

வேன் உள்ளே போவதற்காக செபாஸ்டின் கதவை அகலமாகக் திறக்க, அதன் இடைவெளியில், சடக்கென்று சுப்பையா உள்ளே நுழைந்தார். வேகமாக நடந்தார். பின்னால் செபாஸ்டின், “சுப்பையா சார் உள்ள போகாதீங்க” என்று கத்தியதை சட்டை செய்யாமல், கிடு கிடுவென ஹெட் மாஸ்டர் ரூம் சென்று கதவைத் தட்டி அனுமதி கேட்காமல், அவரது அறைக்குள் சடக்கென்று நுழைந்தார்.

திடுக்கிட்டு நிமிர்ந்த ஹெட்மாஸ்டர், “ஓ! சுப்பையா... வாட்டிஸ் திஸ் ? எப்படி உள்ள...? என்ன விஷயம்?” அவர் பார்வையில் முன்னர் இருக்கும் சிநேகத் தன்மை இல்லை. “சிட்” என்று எதிரே இருக்கையைக் காட்டினார்.

“ஆஃப்ரீனான் சார். என்னால வீட்ல சும்மா இருக்க முடியலை. பள்ளிக்கூடம், வகுப்பறை பாக்காம, சாப்பாடு, தூக்கம் எதுவும் செல்ல மாட்டேங்குது. எப்பப் பாத்தாலும் ஸ்கூல் நெனப்பாவே இருக்கு. திருப்பி சேத்துக்கங்களேன்” என்றார்.

“லுக் மிஸ்டர் சுப்பையா. உங்களுக்கு நானும், மேனேஜ்மெண்டும் ஏகப்பட்ட சலுகைகள் நிறையத் தடவை எங்க தகுதிக்கு மீறிக் கொடுத்துட்டோம். மற்ற ஸ்டாஃப்ஸெல்லாம் நிறைய கம்பளைண்ட் பண்ணாங்க. அவங்க விஷயத்தில நீங்க அனாவசியமா தலையீடு செய்றதை யாரும் விரும்பலை. உங்களைத் திரும்ப நாங்க எடுத்துக்க முடியாது. லீகல் காம்ப்ளிகேஷன்ஸ் நிறைய இருக்கு. ஏன் இவ்வளவு அடமன்ட்டா இருக்கீங்க ?

ரிடையர் ஆயிட்டிங்க. குடும்பம், கொழந்த குட்டினு ஒங்களுக்கு ஒரு பிரச்சினையும் இல்லை. பேசாம ஒரு ஆல் இந்தியா டூர் போயிட்டு வாங்க.. இல்லைனா பக்கத்துல சிங்கப்பூர், மலேஷியா ட்ரிப் அடிங்க. எனக்கு தெரிஞ்சவங்க அங்க இருக்காங்க. அங்க தங்கிக்கலாம்...”

“சார், ரொம்ப தாங்கல் சார். ஆனா, அங்கெல்லாம் நம்ப பள்ளிக்கூடம் இல்லியே சார். ஸ்டாஃப் ரும், கிளாஸ் ரும்ஸ், நான் வெச்ச வேப்ப மரம், விளையாட்டு மைதானம், எட்செட்ரா, எட்செட்ரா, எதுவும் நீங்க சொல்ற இடங்களே இருக்காதே சார். எப்படி சார் போறது? என்னால நம்ப பள்ளிக்கூடத்த ஒரு நா கூட பாக்கமா இருக்க முடியாது சார். எப்பவும் இங்கியே இருக்கணும்... இதே ஸ்கூல்லயே ஏதாவது வகுப்புல இருக்கும்போதே செத்துப்போய்டணும் சார்..”, சுப்பையாவின் கண்கள் கலங்கின.

“ஸ்டாப் இட் சுப்பையா. ஐ திங் யூ ஹேவ் கம்பல்ஷன் டிஸாடர். ஐ மீன் ஓ சி டி. நல்ல டாக்டரைப் பாத்து ட்ரீட்மெண்ட்...”

வாசலில் நிழலாடவே, வாக்கியத்தை முடிக்காமல், ஹெச்செம் டக்கென்று பேச்சை நிறுத்திக் கதவை நோக்கி,

“வாங்க ராமகிருஷ்ணன்.”

ராமகிருஷ்ணன் ஒரு ஃபைலுடன் ஹெச்செம் அறைக்குள் நுழைந்தார். சுப்பையா அங்கிருப்பதைப் பார்த்து அதிர்ந்து, வேண்டா வெறுப்பாக லேசாகச் சிரித்தார். பிறகு, “எச்எம் சார், நம்ப புதுசா ஆரம்பிக்கிற சம்மர் கம்ப்யூட்டர் டிப்ளோமா கிளாஸுக்கு இதுவரைக்கும் நம்ப ஸ்டாப்ஸ் எட்டு பேர் என்றோல் பண்ணி இருக்காங்க. பக்கத்துல இருக்கிற பாங்க் ஸ்டாஃப்ஸ் ஒரு பத்து பேர். மீதி எல்லாரும் பப்ளிக். கிளாஸ் ஷெட்யூல் போட்டிருக்கேன் சார். நீங்க பாத்து ஓகே சொல்லிட்டிங்கனா எல்லாருக்கும் அஃபிசியலா லெட்டர் அனுப்பிரலாம்”. ராமகிருஷ்ணன் கொடுத்த ஃபைலை ஹெச்செம் பார்த்தார். அவரிடம் ஏதேதோ கேள்விகளைக் கேட்டார்.

சுப்பையா மவுனமாக இதையெல்லாம் பார்த்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார். தானும் இதே போல் சில வருடங்களுக்கு முன்பு வேறொரு ஹெச்செம்மிடம், தாம் ஒரு ஷெட்யூல் காண்பித்தது நினைவுக்கு வந்தது. ஒரு பத்து பதினைந்து நிமிடங்கள் அவர்கள் உரையாடலில் கரைந்தன.

“வெரி குட் ராமகிருஷ்ணன். எவ்ரிதிங் லுக்ஸ் குட். கம்ப்யூட்டர் கிளாஸ் மே 16ஆம் தேதி ஆரம்பிக்கிறதா எல்லாருக்கும் இன்ஃபார்ம் பண்ணிடுங்க”

“ஷூர் சார். தேங்க்யூ” என்று ராமகிருஷ்ணன் வெளியேறினார்.

“ஓ! சுப்பையா சார், நீங்க இன்னும் போகலையா? இட்ஸ் கெட்டிங் லேட் ஃபார் மி... கடைசியா உங்ககிட்ட என்ன சொல்லிட்டுருந்தேன்... ம்...” தன் நெற்றியில் விரலால் லேசாகத் தட்டிக்கொண்டே, “ஆ கரெக்ட். நவ் ஐ ரிமெம்பர்... டாக்டர் பத்தி சொல்லிட்டிருந்தேன்.

டாக்டர் வசந்திக்கு ஒரு நோட் கொடுக்கறேன். ரொம்ப நல்ல சைக்யாடிரிஸ்ட். அவங்களை உடனே போயிப் பாருங்க” என்றார்.

“சார், ஐ ஆம் ஆல்ரைட், ஐ ஆம் நாட் இன்ஸேன். பட், தாங்கல் ஃபார் யுவர் கன்சர்ன். அதெல்லாம் இருக்கட்டும் சார். ஒரு விஷயம் ரொம்ப ரெக்வேஸ்ட் பண்ணிக் கேட்டுக்கறேன். செய்வீங்களா?”

“என்ன? டெல் மீ”, வார்த்தை ஈரம் இல்லாமல் வந்தது.

“இப்போ ஏதோ கம்ப்யூட்டர் டிப்ளோமா கிளாஸ் பத்தி பேசிக்கிட்டு இருந்தீங்களே... அதைப்பதி கொஞ்சம் விவரம் சொல்ல முடியுமா...” சுப்பையா இழுத்தார்.

“எஸ். சம்மர்ல ஆரம்பிக்கிறோம். தமிழ்நாடு அறக்கட்டளையின் உதவியால் இந்த கம்ப்யூட்டர் கோர்ஸ் நடக்கப் போவுது. ஒரு வருஷ கோர்ஸ்... எதுக்கு கேக்கறீங்க அது பத்தி? ஓ !! புரியுது. புரியுது, அந்தக் கோர்சை நான் டீச் பண்ண வரட்டுமானு கேக்கப் போறீங்களா? வாட் எ ஜோக்... ஹ... ஹா...” என்று உரக்கச் சிரித்தார் ஹெச்செம்.

“நோ சார்... ஐ வான்ட் டு என்றோல் ஆஸ் எ ஸ்டூடண்ட்”, அமைதியாகச் சொன்னார் சுப்பையா.

“வ்வ்வ்வாட்?” ஹெச்செம் முகத்தில் அத்தனை அதிர்ச்சி.

“ஆமா சார், நான் ஸ்கூலுக்குள்ளே இனிமே வரக்கூடாதுனு சொல்லிட்டிங்க. என் மீது நீங்க எல்லாரும் வச்சிருந்த அன்பு இப்ப ரொம்பக் கொறஞ்சு போச்சு. சாரி சார், கொறையலை... சுத்தமா அன்பே இல்லாமப் போச்சு. அன்பிற்கும் உண்டோ அடைக்கும் தாழ்வு சொன்னதெல்லாம் பொய்யாப் போய்டிச்சு. நான் உள்ள வரக்கூடாதுனு பள்ளிக்கூட கேட் தாழ்ப்பாள் போட்டிங்க... வாட்ச்மேனை வச்சு உள்ள வரக்கூடாதுனு தடுத்தீங்க. வாத்தியாராத் தானே வரக்கூடாது. ஒரு மாணவனா இந்த ஸ்கூல் காம்ப்லெண்டுக்குள்ளே வரலாமே சார்! அதுக்கு எந்தத் தடையும் இருக்காதில்ல? தயவுசெஞ்சு என்னை அந்த கம்ப்யூட்டர் கோர்சுல ஸ்டூடண்ட்-ஆ சேத்துக்கங்க சார்... அன்புக்குத் தாழ் போட்டிங்க. கல்விக்கு போடாதீங்க சார். எந்த வயசுலயும் படிக்கலாம் சார். டேக் மீ ஆஸ் எ ஸ்டூடண்ட். கல்விக்கும் உண்டோ அடைக்கும் தாழ்?” என்று அழுதார் சுப்பையா.

விக்கித்துப் போனார் ஹெச்செம்,

இண்டெர்காமில் ராமகிருஷ்ணனை அழைத்து, “இன்னொரு ஸ்டூடண்ட் கம்ப்யூட்டர் கிளாஸ்-ல சேரப்போறார். மேனேஜ்மெண்ட் கோட்டா. நோ டூஷன் ஃபீஸ். நோ லாப் ஃபீஸ். ஸ்டூடண்ட் பேரு சுப்பையா.. ஆமா நம்ப சுப்பையா சார் தான்”.

கல்விக்கும் உண்டோ கட்டுப்பாடு

கரு.மாணிக்கவாசகம், ஹூஸ்டன், டெக்சஸ்

“கேடில் விழுச்செல்வம் கல்வி யொருவற்கு
மாடல்ல மற்றை யவை.”

அம், கல்வி ஒன்றே அழிவற்ற செல்வமாகும். அதற்கொப்பான சிறந்த செல்வம் வேறு எதுவும் இல்லை என்ற வானுயர்ந்த வள்ளுவனின் வாக்கு வாழ்ந்த, வாழ்கிற, வாழயிருக்கும் தலைமுறையினர் யாராக இருப்பினும் எந்நாட்டவர், எம்மதத்தவராயினும் யாவருக்கும் பொருந்தக்கூடிய ஒன்று என்றால் அது மிகையன்று. வறியவர்க்கு மீனைக் கொடுப்பதைவிட மீன் பிடிக்கக் கற்றுக்கொடுப்பதே சாலச் சிறந்தது. இது நாம் அனைவரும் அறிந்த ஒன்று. அதனைத்தான் தமிழ்நாடு அறக்கட்டளை அரும்பாடுபட்டு ஆரவாரமில்லாமல் தொண்டாற்றி வருகிறது

ஏட்டுச் சுரைக்காய் கறிக்கு உதவுமா? உதவாதுதான். ஆனால் அந்த சுரைக்காயை விருத்தி செய்ய கல்வி உதவுமே. கல்வி என்பது கல்விச்சாலைகளில் கற்பது மட்டுமே அல்ல. கல்விச்சாலை என்பது காலம் கண்டுபிடித்த களம் எனலாம். ஆனால் அளவிடற்கரிய அனுபவமிக்கோரிடம் கற்றுக்கொள்வதும் கல்விதான். கற்றுத் தெளிந்த கல்வியாளர்களிடம் கற்றுக் கொள்வதும் கல்விதான். எப்படிக்கற்கிறோம் என்பதைவிட என்ன கற்கிறோம் என்பதே கருத்தில்கொள்ளவேண்டிய ஒன்று.

அந்த வகையில் தமிழ்நாடு அறக்கட்டளை தமிழகத்திலுள்ள வறியவர்களுக்கு வாழ்வு மேம்பட வாரி வழங்குவதைக் காட்டிலும் அவர்தம் வாழ்வை அவர்களே மேம்படுத்திக்கொள்ளும் வகையில் வசதி செய்து தருவது என்றும் போற்றுதலுக்குரியது. அதன் பணி ஆண்டாண்டு மென்மேலும் தொடரும் என்பதில் அய்யமில்லை.

அதேபோன்று, இங்கே அமெரிக்க மண்ணிதல் நமது தமிழ்ச்சமுதம் அம்மாதிரியான வறியநிலையில் இருக்க வாய்ப்பில்லை என்பதனால் அடுத்ததாக கல்விக்கு நாம் ஆற்றும் பங்கு என்ன என ஒவ்வொருவரும் சிந்திக்கும்போது நம் எண்ணத்தில் இயல்பாக உதிப்பது தமிழ்க்கல்வி.

பொதுவாக தமிழை வளர்க்கிறோம் என்று ஆர்வமிகுதியில் சிலர் சொல்வதுண்டு. நமது தமிழ் மொழி நீண்ட நெடுங்காலமாக இருந்துவரும் மொழி. அதனால்தான் அதனை நாம் மிகத் தொன்மையான மொழி என்று சொல்கிறோம். ஆக, ஏற்கனவே நன்கு வளர்ந்த ஒரு மொழியை வளரும் நாம், வளர்க்கிறோம் என்று சொல்வதைவிட தொடர்கிறோம் என்று சொல்வதே சாலப்பொருத்தம்.

இங்கு பல்வேறு மாகாணங்களில் இயங்கிவரும் தமிழ் அமைப்புகள், கடந்த பல ஆண்டுகளாக தன்னலமற்ற தன்னார்வர்களால் தமிழ்க் கல்வியை தலையாயப் பணியாகக் கொண்டு செயல்பட்டு வருவதை நாம் அனைவரும் அறிவோம். அதன்பொருட்டு அனைத்துத் தமிழ்ப்பள்ளிகளது நோக்கம், அன்னைத் தமிழை அயலகத்தில் வாழும் நமது தமிழ்ச்சமுத இளைய தலைமுறையினரிடம் கொண்டு சென்று இன்னும் பல ஆண்டுகளுக்கு தமிழ்மொழியை நீடித்து நிலைத்திருக்கச் செய்ய வேண்டும் என்பதே.

அதேநேரத்தில் அவர்கள் கற்கும் தமிழ் அவர்களது பள்ளியின் இரண்டாம் மொழிப் பாடத்திற்கு உதவச் செய்யும் வகையில், சில பள்ளிகள் தமிழுக்கு மதிப்பீடு பெற்றுத் தருவதில் முனைப்பு காட்டிவருவது ஏனைய பள்ளிகளுக்கு ஊக்கமளிக்கக்கூடிய வகையில் அமைந்திருக்கிறது.

ஒரே கல்லில் இரண்டு மாங்காய். ஆம், தமிழ் தலைமுறை தாண்டி தொடர்வது மட்டுமல்ல. அதே தலைமுறைக்கும் தக்க வகையில் உதவுவதும் ஆகும். அங்கே தமிழகத்தில் தலையாயத் தமிழ் தாண்டவமாடுகிறது. இங்கே அயலகத்தில் அன்னைத்தமிழ் அடிதொடர்கிறது.

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56

ஆங்கோர் ஏழைக்கு எழுத்தறிவித்தல்

TNF - ABC PROJECT

ஆங்கோர் ஏழைக்கு எழுத்தறிவித்தல்

Somalay Somasundaram and Manmatha Devi

Co-Chairs, TNF - ABC Study Team

There is a huge gap in education between rural and urban Tamil Nadu. The poorest of the poor (> 10 Million children) benefit from 36,000 government schools functioning in about 30,000 villages. The TNF-ABC model was conceived, piloted, and developed over two academic years (2011-12 and 2012-13) by a study team that included students, teachers, parents, school officials, educationalists and representatives from Tamil Nadu Foundation (TNF) in Chennai and U.S.A.

The TNF-ABC project, now in its 3rd year of implementation in 2013-2014 academic year, has evolved and focuses on the fundamentals of education and life (similar to ABC, the first three letters of the English alphabet). The project was initially initiated in eight schools in Sivagangai district in February 2012. The funding came from TNF's 2010 convention held in Philadelphia. Due to its success and excellent acceptance by all stakeholders, the project was expanded to Vellore district in 2013-2014 with financial support from TNF's Chennai and New York Chapters and the Tamil Sangam of Central Indiana. Chicago Tamil Sangam and the Chicago Chapter of TNF have agreed to dedicate the entire net proceeds from TNF's 2014 convention in Chicago to launch the TNF-ABC project in Cuddalore district. Plans are being developed to expand the project to Virudhunagar districts during 2014-15 academic year with support from Dallas Metroplex Tamil Sangam, and Dallas and Austin Chapters of TNF. Initial discussions are in progress to identify suitable schools for the project in Madurai and Nagapattinam districts.

The three unique aspects of the TNF-ABC Model are:

A. Achieving Grade Level Proficiency - Uplifting the "Slow Learners"

- As part of Government of India's "Education for All" scheme, up to 8th grade education is compulsory and free, and all students must be promoted until they reach 9th grade, even if a student scores below 35% (passing grade) in the final exams. The true intent of the government was to keep failing school children

from being taken away from schools by naxalites and terrorists, particularly in North Indian states.

- Unfortunately, this caused several adverse consequences, Most students reach 9th grade without proficiency for that grade, with some unable to write the alphabets or even worse, unable to write their own name in Tamil. They fail in 9th grade or drop out of schools because of academic pressure.
- 30 to 50% of students across Tamil Nadu's government schools cannot read/write at their grade level.
- Teachers are accountable for achieving good results in 10th grade public exam, so there is intensive coaching at the 10th grade level. Post Graduate teachers take care of 11th and 12th students. Students from 6th to 9th are the ones left out of any focused initiative.
- Regular teachers have no time to focus on the slow learners because of the pressure from officials to cover the syllabus in time before the end of the school year.
- TNF's Solution: Special evening classes are conducted in the adopted schools by specially appointed teachers for students identified as "slow learners" by their class teachers. The intent of these classes is to provide the moral boost and help students develop the proficiency to learn the fundamentals and pass the final exam that year. Most of these students have failed in all the subjects in the half-yearly exams.
- A local TNF project coordinator visits these schools regularly and manages all project needs for the district. TNF has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Tamil Nadu and this enables our Project Coordinator to work directly with the schools and district officials.

B. Building the Morale

- With the rapid growth of convents and English Medium schools in villages, there is a growing concern that students in government schools in



“தமிழ்நாடு அறக்கட்டளையால் எங்கள் பிள்ளைகளுக்கு நல்ல காலம் பிறக்குது” என்கிறார் சிவகங்கை மாவட்டம் வருகாப்பயை சேர்ந்த ஒரு குடுகுடுப்பைக்காரரின் மனைவி.

the villages have no bright future. On the contrary, illustrious leaders like Dr. Abdul Kalam went to such schools.

- TNF-ABC Model also focuses on building the morale of average and above average students (in 10th to 12th grade) in adopted schools by inculcating the following values through training sessions, seminars, library visits, computer training, educational tours and other such focused activities:

- Self confidence
- Communication skills
- Time management
- Motivation
- Memory capacity
- Goal setting
- Self-discipline
- Human relations
- Hard work and smart work

- 10th and 12th grade public exams are important milestones in a student's life and significantly influence their future. By organizing free coaching classes by well trained teachers, TNF-ABC projects enables the students to better prepare for these key exams and pursue their dream for higher education
- About 10% of students fail in the public exams (10th and 12th) and a good portion of them lose interest in education, get unmotivated, and feel left out by their parents and the society. TNF-ABC model is enrolling these students in “Earn while you Learn” programs in

partnership with certain technology companies by providing them vocational training and suitable job placement upon completion of training. This project is providing the much needed inspiration and hope to these rural students.

C. Championing for Higher Aspirations

- With the help of the Head Master and teachers, students with higher aspirations and capability are identified, and their aspirations are nurtured through individual or group oriented initiatives such as:
 - College visits
 - Career guidance
 - Mentoring
 - College application process support
 - Scholarships
 - Internships
 - Job placement
 - Becoming role models for other students in their school/village

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- Dr. Mallika & Mr. Mani Rajendran
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