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Singapore*

1950-2015



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PAGEANT OF BRIDES AT INDIAN BALL

The Kamala Club in Singapore last night held a ball and show at Raffles Hotel in aid of its building fund.

Highlight of the show was a pageant of Indian brides.

Here Miss Nargis Lall, 18, (left) portrays a bride from Bengal (Eastern India), with her attendant, Mrs. R. Jeddy.

Treat for Singapore

child cripples

Sixty crippled children from various homes in Singapore were given a treat at the Kamala Club in Moulmein Road last weekend.

Comprising Chinese, Malays and Indians, the children, whose ages ranged from seven to 17, were served drinks and cakes and entertained to a magic show.

The party, which lasted

The Kamala Club will give a reception tomorrow at 6 p.m. in honour of the Maharani of Vizianagaram and Mrs. Sjahrir, wife of Sutan Sjahrir, former Prime Minister of Indonesia, at its premises in Balestier Road.

Her first engagement is at Singapore's Kamala Club



MADAM PANDIT lays the foundation stone of new premises for the Kamala Club in Moulmein Road. Also in the picture is the president of the club, Mrs. K. M. R. Menon. —Straits Times pictures.

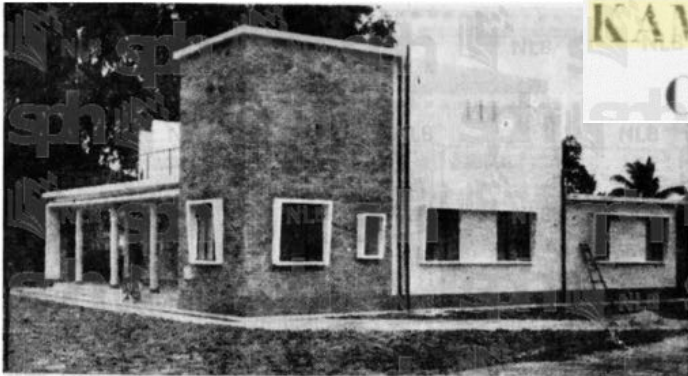


Mrs Tan Chin Tuan, wife of the Deputy President of the Singapore Legislative Council, cutting the ribbon at the opening of the Kamala Club's bazaar yesterday. — Sunday Times picture.

KAMALA CLUB OFFICIALS

Talk at club

The Indian High Commissioner in Singapore, Mr. V. Siddharthachary, will talk on "Tradition" at the Kamala Club in Moulmein Road at 6.15 p.m. today.



She hopes club's new home will become social work centre

LADY GOODE, wife of the Governor of Singapore, will open the new \$50,000 Kamala Club building (above) in Moulmein Road on September 8.

With this new clubhouse members are planning to expand their educational, cultural and recreational programme.

The club was formed in 1950 with the amalgamation of two women's social organisations.

The foundation-stone of the new building was laid by Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit when she visited Singapore in 1954 in her capacity as president of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mrs. Mary Lobo, chairman of the building fund said more Indian women should enter public life especially social work, and do their bit to help the under-privileged.

AT a combined general meeting of the Singapore Lotus Club and Ladies' Union on Tuesday, it was decided to form a Kamala Club.

The following officials were elected: President, Mrs. K. M. R. Menon, Vice Presidents, Mrs. M. M. Namazie and Mrs. S. M. R. Naidu; general secretary, Mrs. Malathi Pillai; assistant secretary, Mrs. Bezboruah; treasurer, Mrs. K. P. Koruthu; committee members: Mrs. S. R. William, Mrs. M. K. Namazie, Mrs. K. C. Cherian, Mrs. P. Sen Gupta, Mrs. J. M. Jumbhoy, Mrs. K. C. George, Mrs. M. Ponnusamy, Mrs. K. R. Menon, Mrs. M. K. Sodar, Miss Neena Pillai, Mrs. C. G. Menon, Mrs. T. N. K. Menon.

VIJAY THAKUR SINGH



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30th September, 2015

MESSAGE

My warmest congratulations to the Kamala Club as it completes its 65 years. It can pride itself of having a rich history and a record of having undertaken a number of activities, which promote strong cultural affinity and bonds of friendship.

The commitment towards service to society is evident in the work of the Kamala Club. I wish them many more successful years ahead!

I also wish all members of the Kamala Club a very Happy Diwali!


(Vijay Thakur Singh)

A Message from the President



Dear members,

65 years!

65 years of empowerment, enrichment and enjoyment.

I have been bestowed with such great honour to congratulate you for being part of a club that has celebrated multiracial harmony, promoted social and culturally enriching activities and has provided aid to those in need for the last 65 years. And I assure you; The Kamala Club will strive to continue this tradition for the next 65 years too.

It is no coincidence that the 65th anniversary of the club falls within the 50th anniversary of the independence of our lion city, or as we endearingly call it SG50. The history of the club is heavily intertwined with the past of this urban metropolis. As Singapore grew from a fishing village into a vibrant city and leading economy, The Kamala Club grew side by side. I once again would like to congratulate you for being part of the phenomenally positive growth of Singapore; our Singapore.

Flip back to the front cover.

These photos that adorn the glossy cover gives us a glimpse of how hard the pioneers of the club worked to bring it to where it is now. The contributions remain unforgettable. Due to these exceptional contributions, today we are able to celebrate our 65th anniversary.

Change is inevitable. Change is imperative.

Due to today's fast paced life and the demand for different transactions to be available electronically, we have launched an incredibly efficient and user friendly website for members. Not only are members able to pay the fees for membership and different events, but also they are able to enrich themselves with information about the club's history and aims. The website has made processes easier for our members and our hardworking committee members alike.

I request all members to send us your feedback - if you want any changes as to how the club is run or any addition of activities, let us know! We will adhere to your requests! Your suggestions will only make this club better.

As I pen down my thoughts, my mind flashes to the humble beginnings of the club; the senior members who gave everything to bring the club to where it is now - I only strive to achieve half of what they have done for this club. I hope to see you at our upcoming events whether it's our next coffee morning, Sargam session or cooking class - I just hope to see you soon. Wishing all our members and patrons a happy and prosperous Deepawali!

Warmest regards,

Patralekha Dasgupta





A Message from the Secretary

Come and join us in our numerous, unique activities, which are specially selected for you! Events held in past decade include:

AGM (Annual General Meeting) - This is held at the beginning of each year in January. This is a must for members and lunch is free! Do attend and propose ideas for coming year and we can make them happen. Your ideas will only make the club better!



HOLI - This Festival of Colors has been held every March at various locations such as:

- ✓ Choa Chu Kang Park
- ✓ East Coast Park
- ✓ Beach clubs along the East Coast Parkway

This annual event has also been held indoors at clubhouses where dry colors

are used and families come together to enjoy masti, music, dance and more!

Health talks/Cooking Demos/Yoga - Ladies- Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may be in a bit of a pickle! Health and diet!! Yes, that's right, lets start thinking about our health and diet! The Kamala Club held talks with high tea on topics such as:

- ✓ How to obtain a healthy diet
- ✓ Osteoporosis
- ✓ Heart Diseases
- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ The flu!

Professionals in the health and medical sciences conducted these talks. These talks were to keep us aware and informed about how to keep ourselves healthy and happy! Other types of sessions included Indian cooking sessions by members for members and non-members. In addition, there were Italian cooking demos and bread-baking classes. Other types of coffee mornings for members were talks on:

- ✓ Maintenance of Jewellery
- ✓ Travel and living
- ✓ Maintenance of carpets

On-going activity at special reduced rates for members are weekly Yoga lessons! Join to attain a healthy and happy lifestyle! Join now!

THEME EVENTS - The Kamala Club focuses on different Indian cultures and brings to attention diverse cuisine and cultural performances for members and non-members. Various states of India that have been represented in the past include Maharashtra, East India (West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Bihar and Jharkhand), Punjab, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Parsi cuisine. The funds received were donated to a charitable cause.



CHARITY - The aim of the club is to aid and empower those in need. Every year, members of The Kamala Club assist in extending Charity to various groups of people such as:

- ✓ Children / Students
- ✓ Old folks
- ✓ Foreign workers
- ✓ Disempowered women

We help by providing cash or necessary items. During these events, we serve food and drinks. During these events, we also celebrate the birthdays of those in need by providing a scrumptious birthday cake! In addition, some talented members volunteer to sing and perform dance items! The Kamala Club has assisted various institutions such as:

- ✓ Thuja Home at Pelangi Village
- ✓ Red Cross (Tsunami disaster)
- ✓ Bukit Batok Old Folks Home
- ✓ Missionaries of Charity (Mother Theresa's Home)
- ✓ St John's Home
- ✓ SINDA
- ✓ Singapore Indian Education Trust
- ✓ Sri Narayanan Mission
- ✓ Sunlove Old Age Home
- ✓ Thong Teck Home for Seniors
- ✓ Ramakrishna Mission Boys Home
- ✓ Society for WINGS
- ✓ Indian Migrant Workers

TRIPS - Social outings and trips are held to encourage social interaction among members. These included trips to:

- ✓ Johor Bahru
- ✓ Malacca
- ✓ Cruises to Kusu Island and Batam



SARGAM: Our monthly get-together during which ladies perform songs, dances and recitations for each other. The event is held at members' homes.

DANDIYA - Workshops commenced in 2009 and since then Dandiya is celebrated yearly in clubhouses with DJ's belting out the booming beats of the Dhol whilst ladies in colourful lengha's strike Dandiya sticks and perform beautiful dance performances such as the Garba!



DIWALI /Deepavali (Festival of Lights) - is celebrated in much style with musical and dance entertainment. This annual event, which is not to be missed, brings together friends and families. And in the spirit of Deepavali, new, long-lasting friendships are cultivated.

WEBSITE: This year saw the formation of the Club's new website (www.thekamalaclub.org.sg) which will be a great asset to members and committee members! Visit this website now! I hope to see your smiles at our upcoming events!

Best regards,
Roja Ram
(Honorary Secretary)
October 2015



Committee Members



Pratibha Dasgupta
President



Ritu Patke
First Vice President



Suma Murthy
Second Vice President



Roja Ram
Secretary



Rajani Singh
Assistant Secretary



Preeti Bhatnagar
Treasurer



Vijaya Putli
Assistant Treasurer



Sushila Nair



Saras Kannagan



Raja Chowdary



Chitra Gupta



Parul Sena



Smita Warganbhai



Vij Ramki



Rajashree Lele



Archana Aggarwal



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A Message from the First Vice President

Dear All,

As *The Kamala Club*, a non-profit organization, celebrates its 65th year, with enduring passion and conviction, we look forward to celebrating many such occasions with all of you.

As the current Vice-President, and the former President of *The Kamala Club*, I take great pride and pleasure in being associated with an organization that has such a long history and such an illustrious heritage.

As Singapore celebrates its 50th anniversary, I hope that we as individuals who have adopted this country as our own, and *The Kamala Club* as our association, will aspire to new heights of achievements in the years to come.

The Club is nothing without the generous support of all its members, donors, and committee members. I thank each and every one of you for all your support throughout the year.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Prosperous Diwali,

Rithu Patke
Vice-President





History of The Kamala Club



In the early 20th century, Indians from all walks of life came to Singapore for greener pastures. Doctors, lawyers, teachers and businessmen together with skilled and unskilled workers formed the Indian community. Their wives gathered for social meetings and formed clubs. Some of the earlier clubs were the Ladies Union and the Lotus Club. The Kamala Club was established in 1950 with the amalgamation of the Ladies Union and

Lotus Club at the suggestion of the visiting first Prime Minister of Independent India, Mr Jawaharlal Nehru. It was named after his late wife, Kamala, with the Lotus as the emblem. It was a social and cultural club that also did some charitable activities. Dance classes, cooking classes and other activities were conducted. The members' organized events like food fairs, bring and buy sales, dramas for charity. Sometimes well-known dance and musical groups from India were invited to perform here. Every year members cooked chicken curry [which was a big hit] for 100 old folks from various old folks homes in Singapore. Sponsors would donate items like towels, toothpaste and other useful items and cash.

Members raised enough cash to build a clubhouse in 1958, at Moulmein Road. In the 1970s, the Government acquired the clubhouse to build the Central Expressway. After that, Kamala Club functioned from members' homes or hotels. Nowadays, condominium function rooms are most convenient. Up to today, 65 years on, Kamala Club is functioning with dedicated and efficient ladies, who organize monthly Sargam sessions, various festivals and events with relevant topics about health and women. I fervently hope the Kamala Club will continue for many more years to come.

Sushila Nair
(Past President 1959, 1980)
(Secretary 1958)
(Treasurer 1970's)



The Kamala Club - a Living Legacy...



We celebrate 65 years of the Kamala Club this year!

We salute the Club, its passionate and dynamic leadership and its vibrant and sociable members who have kept the Club active and growing during its long history. A remarkable achievement! My involvement with the Club began almost since its inception in 1950. My mother, the late Mrs. Albuta Mary Emmanuel, was actively involved in the Club from the very beginning, and she included us in relevant club activities. There has therefore been a close and sentimental link, which has developed between the Club and us. The Club was named the Kamala Club after the wife of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. My mother was involved in the naming of the Club as she spoke quite a bit about this at that stage. I recall as a young girl, participating in a few of the social or charitable activities of the Club. These were organized in the original Clubhouse in Moulmein Road. Club members would also go out to selected adopted charitable organizations to hand out gifts or socialize with the inmates I recall that Mrs. Indira Gandhi paid a visit to the Club. There was much excitement among members about the visit. My mother was privileged to be in the VIP entourage for the visit and programme in the Clubhouse. Other dignitaries who graced the Club included Mrs Devan Nair, wife of Singapore's President, Dr. Devan Nair. Mrs. Nair later joined as a Club member and participated in activities and events.



There were fairly lengthy negotiations that were started around this time, between the Government Land Authority and The Kamala Club. The Land Authority wanted to acquire the land upon which the old Clubhouse was sited, for the building of the Central Expressway (CTE). The Clubhouse sat on a sizeable piece of land ranging from 10 to 12,000 sq feet. As the acquisition of the land became inevitable as part of the government's development plans, The Kamala Club had to vacate its premises in Moulmein Road in the late 1970s/early 1980s. The government compensated the Club with a nominal sum of money. My mother, who was the President at the time, was determined to keep the Club going. She quickly arranged for the Club to be shifted to its new official address, which was registered to operate from our family home at 11 Camborne Road, Dunearn Park Singapore 1130. The Club operated in this way for many years.



Activities in the old Club house and in our home, consisted of Committee Meetings, AGMs, cultural activities, fashion shows on the theme of eg "Fashions of India", fund-raising bazaars, charity drives and social visits etc.

The key team who worked closely with my mother from the start as Office Bearers/ Committee members included Mrs Sushila Nair, Mrs Bana, Mrs Salma Moiz, Mrs Singh, the late Mrs Barathi Nambiar, the late Mrs J. Hamid and some others, working in the old Clubhouse. Mrs Suma Murthy, Dr Claire Viegas, Mrs Saras Kannapan and many others joined when the Club moved over and operated from our home.

The Club Presidency rotated between my mother, Mrs Sushila Nair, Mrs Nambiar and Mrs Murthy. Later Presidents like Mrs Salma Moiz, Mrs Nambiar, Mrs Murthy and some others, held the Club meetings at their home, so the tradition was maintained.

There was an impressive brass plaque with the name "The Kamala Club" inscribed on it, which was removed from the old Clubhouse and was left propped up against one of the hillslopes in our garden in our Camborne Road home. We do not know what became of it when the house was sold in 1992.

The Kamala Club has grown from strength to strength over the years. New members keep joining, leading to a constant renewal of energy and enthusiasm. All enjoy the warm spirit of friendliness and camaraderie that prevails. Old and new members mingle and blend in an exemplary mixing of generations and sharing of experience and expertise. The leadership continues to be very passionate and energetic, tirelessly planning and organizing many and varied cultural social and culinary activities representing the diversity of beautiful India. All in all a demanding and exacting responsibility for the leadership, which has been meeting the expectations of those who attend.

The future looks bright and rosy for the Kamala Club!

Dr Shanta Emmanuel
Past 2nd Vice President
(1991/1992)





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*Best wishes to
The Kamala Club
on its 65th Anniversary*



*Maxine Jeganathan, Parul Sena,
Patralekha Dasgupta, Dr Piloo Chacha,
Prema Joethy, Raja Chowdari,
Rajani Singh, Roja Ram,
Salma Moiz, Saraswathy Kannappan,
Dr Shanta Emmanuel, Suma Murthy,
Dr Sumitra Subramanion, Sushila Nair,
Vasanthi Srini, Zareena Bana*

gujarati lunche







dandiya



Sargam





ਫਾਈਨ ਫੀਲਿੰਗ!



The Kamala Club, Singapore
(Established in 1950)

punjab!



Happy Diwali





Charity Events



For women, by women... the Kamala Club, made up of Indian women, and non-profit women's group WINGS have come together to help women age with confidence and dignity.

The Kamala Club handed over its \$2,500 donation to the group's cause on July 8. The event included a choir performance and a potluck lunch. The club raised the money during its annual events such as Holi, Diwali dinners and from members' donations.

WINGS is a Singapore-based, non-profit organisation which encourages women to embrace ageing with dignity, confidence and security.

The 35 women from both groups (pictured with WINGS executive director Mee Hong Teo in printed black dress) celebrated the July birthdays of those present as well as the first-time collaboration with a birthday cake.

PHOTO: THE KAMALA CLUB





Trips

&

Activities







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The Kamala Club, Singapore

Come join The Kamala Club, Singapore and become a part of its rich heritage and culture!

Annual Membership- \$30

Lifetime Membership- \$300

Participate in our cultural and charitable events; give yourself an opportunity to give back to society!

In remembrance of...

The Kamala Club, salutes its past members and committee members for their invaluable contributions for the club. It is with their farsightedness that we are able to celebrate the 65th anniversary of The Kamala Club. Thank you ladies and The Kamala Club will never forget you and your selfless contributions for the club and society.

Mrs. K.M.R. Menon, Mrs. E.V. Davies, Mrs. Mary Lobo, Mrs. M.M. Namazie, Mrs. Malathi Pillai, Miss Nina Pillai, Mrs Mary Emmanuel (known founding members)

Mrs. Sen Gupta, Mrs Susan Vetath, Mrs Amina Jumabhoy, Mrs. K.M.S. Hamid, Mrs. K.C. George, Miss. Parimala Viswalingam, Mrs. Uma Kalbag, Mrs. Vasala Dharan, Mrs. P.M. Raman,

Mrs. C.G. Menon, Mrs. M. Viswalingam, Mrs. Bharathi Nambiar, Mrs. Seetha Raman, Mrs Renu Chabra Singh, Miss Manesek Namazie, Mrs. Vijay Penna

Our sincerest apologies if anyone's name is missing but their contributions will always be remembered.



Yesteryears...







Hello to The Kamala Club!



I, Anchal Dhir an HR Professional, a chef (CookXpert), a wife, a mother and a new inductant to The Kamala Club, would like to thank a dear friend Parul Sena for introducing me to the club. I would like to express my gratitude for such a warm welcome and appreciate the confidence, support and success for my cooking lesson on 26th Aug 2015. I am honoured to be a part of a club which has such a rich culture and time-honored tradition of volunteering and conducting activities that we women enjoy and do together. The club gives us an opportunity to enhance and impart our life skills.

A club named after the wife of Late Jawaharlal Nehru, Kamala, is a wonderful place to nurture bonhomie and a support group of truly empowered women in all walks of life. The club provides an opportunity to make truly meaningful and supportive relationships based on “pulling and putting women first” whilst also laying a platform for honoring and encouraging our indigenous skills be it cooking, singing, dancing,

or event management. Most importantly, the club proves an opportunity to volunteer in order to help society as well as to celebrate festivals in order to keep our soulful Indianness alive on regular basis in such a diverse and colorful multicultural society of our home Singapore.

I look forward to being actively involved in myriad of activities that are planned for all of us by the lovely and warm Patralekha and team.

Cheers to more empowerment to the club and us!





என் நினைவுகள்

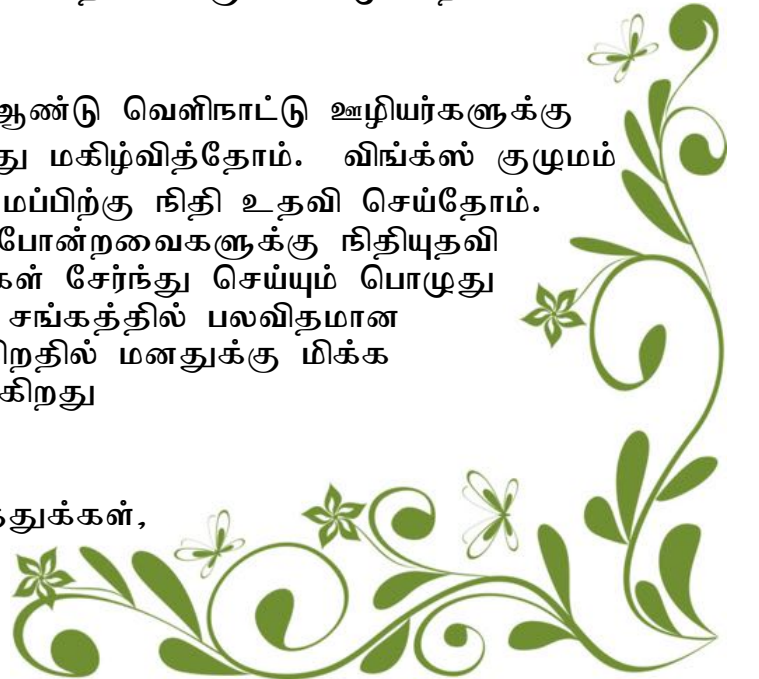
கமலா கிளப் (கமலா மகளிர் சங்கம்) என்பது சிங்கப்பூரில் உள்ள இந்தியப் பெண்களால் துவங்கப்பட்ட பழமைவாய்ந்த மகளிர் சங்கம் ஆகும். முதலில் லோட்டஸ் கிளப், லேடிஸ் யூனியன் யென்று இரண்டு தனித்தனி அமைப்பாக செயலாற்றி வந்தது. 1950ம் ஆண்டு இந்தியாவின் முதல் பிரதமரான ஜவகர்லால் நேரு அவர்கள் சிங்கப்பூருக்கு வருகைதந்த பொழுது இரண்டு சங்கங்களையும் ஒன்றாக இணைத்து கமலா கிளப் (கமலா மகளிர் சங்கம்) என்று காலம் சென்ற தன் மனைவியின் பெயரைச் சூட்டி வைத்தார்.

1980ம் ஆண்டு திருமதி நீலா சத்தியலிங்கம், கமலா மகளிர் சங்கக் கட்டிடத்தில் பரதநாட்டியம் வகுப்பு குழந்தைகளுக்கு நடத்த ஆரம்பித்தார்கள். அந்த வகுப்பில் எங்கள் மகள் உமாவும் சேர்ந்து நடனம் கற்றுக்கொண்டாள். நடன மணிகளின் அம்மாக்கள் அனைவரும் கமலா மகளிர் சங்கத்தின் உருப்பினர்கள் ஆனோம். இப்போது எங்கள் மகள் உமா அமெரிக்காவில் பல குழந்தைகளுக்கு நடனம் சொல்லிக் கொடுத்து, நம் கலாசாரத்தை பரப்பிக்கொண்டு இருக்கிறாள். கமலா மகளிர் சங்கத்தின் மூலமாகத்தான் அவளுக்கு இந்த வாய்ப்புக் கிடைத்தது என்பதில் பெருமைப்படுகிறேன்.

கமலா மகளிர் சங்கத்தில் சென்ற ஆண்டு வெளிநாட்டு ஊழியர்களுக்கு MUSTAFFA சன்மானச் சீட்டுகள் கொடுத்து மகிழ்வித்தோம். விங்க்ஸ் குழுமம் (Society for WINGS) என்ற பெண்கள் அமைப்பிற்கு நிதி உதவி செய்தோம். ராமகிருஷ்ணா மடம், ஸ்ரீ நாராயணா மடம் போன்றவைகளுக்கு நிதியுதவி செய்தோம். இப்படிப் பெண்களாகிய நாங்கள் சேர்ந்து செய்யும் பொழுது மகிழ்ச்சியாகவிருக்கிறது. கமலா மகளிர் சங்கத்தில் பலவிதமான நடவடிக்கைகளில் ஈடுபாடு கொள்ள முடிகிறதில் மனதுக்கு மிக்க மகிழ்ச்சியாகவும், பெருமையாகவும் இருக்கிறது

கமலா மகளிர் சங்கம் மேலும் வளர வாழ்த்துக்கள்,

சுரஸ்வதி கே





Thoughts from Saras

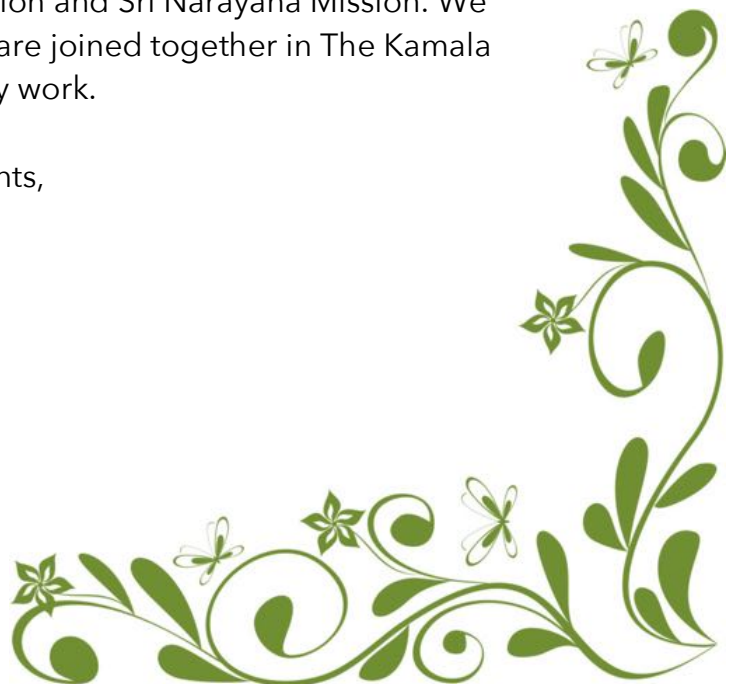
The Kamala Club is the oldest club for ladies started by Indian women in Singapore. Initially, there were two clubs known as the Lotus Club and Ladies Union. In 1950, when the first prime minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Singapore, he was instrumental in joining both clubs and renaming them The Kamala Club, in remembrance of His Late Wife Mrs. Kamala Nehru.

In 1980, Mrs Neela Sathiyalingam started conducting Bharatanatyam classes in the Kamala Club Building. Our daughter Uma joined this class at the time. All of the mothers of the dance students joined The Kamala Club as members. Currently, Uma is teaching Bharatanatyam in USA. We are very proud indeed, that because of The Kamala Club, our daughter Uma learnt Bharatanatyam and is teaching children our culture in Virginia, USA.

Last year we organized an event for foreign workers in one of the Hindu Temples in Serangoon Road and distributed MUSTAFFA Gift Vouchers to every attendee. We helped Society for WINGS, a ladies organization with donations. We also extended our donations to Ramakrishna Mission and Sri Narayana Mission. We ladies, feel very proud that we are joined together in The Kamala Club and continue to do charity work.

Greetings for more achievements,

Saraswathy Kannapan





कहानियों का बच्चों के जीवन में महत्त्व

मैं अपना बचपन याद करती हूँ तो मुझे याद आता है रात को मेरी दादी जी जब तक हम भाई-बहनों को रामायण, महाभारत की या कोई अन्य पौराणिक कहानी नहीं सुनाती थीं तब तक हम उनके कान खाते रहते थे। वास्तव में वह घर बड़ा समृद्ध होता है, जहाँ कहानियाँ सुनाई जाती हैं। जीवन के महत्त्वपूर्ण सबक बच्चों को कहानियों के द्वारा मिलते हैं। दरासल जो बच्चे माता-पिता या दादा-दादी से कहानियाँ सुनते हैं, उनका सामाजिक और भावनात्मक विकास दूसरे बच्चों की तुलना में बेहतर होता है। आजकल एकल परिवार और माता-पिता की व्यस्तता के कारण कहानी सुनाने की प्रथा गुम हो रही है। जबकि ये रात की कहानियाँ माता-पिता और बच्चों के मध्य रिश्ते की मजबूत कड़ी हैं।

यू.एस.ए. के “चिलड्रंस मेडिकल अस्पताल” में हुए अध्ययन में पाया गया कि रात को सुनने वाली पौराणिक कथाएँ और कहानियाँ बच्चों के विकास में बहुत मुख्य भूमिका अदा करती हैं, बच्चों की कल्पना शक्ति को बढ़ाती हैं साथ ही शब्दों और भाषा पर उनकी अच्छी पकड़ होती है। आज के माहौल में बच्चों को जाने-अनजाने यह शिक्षा मिल रही है कि जो जीतता है वही सफल है। तो क्या विफल होने वालों के लिए कोई जगह नहीं है? इस विरोधाभास को समझने लायक बनाती हैं-हमारी पौराणिक कहानियाँ और जातक कथाएँ। इन्हीं से बच्चों को यह शिक्षा मिलती है कि जीतने के लिए कई बार हारना भी पड़ता है।

इस दौर में बच्चों के भावनात्मक विकास में कमी आ रही है। महँगे आई पैड, प्ले स्टेशनस, वीडियो गेम्स से ज्यादा आत्मविश्वास 50 या 60 रुपये की कहानी की पुस्तकों से आता है। किस्से और कहानियों से होने वाले विकास का एक उदाहरण है-एक मानवविज्ञानी दक्षिण अफ्रीका में आदिवासी बच्चों के बारे में अध्ययन करने गए। उन्होंने कुछ आदिवासी बालकों को लाइन में खड़ा किया और कहा कि उन्हें एक साथ दौड़कर उस पेड़ को छूना है, जहाँ फलों से भरी टोकरी रखी है। जो सबसे पहले वृक्ष को छुएगा उसे वह पूरी टोकरी मिलेगी। उन्हें आश्चर्य हुआ जब उन्होंने देखा कि सभी बच्चों ने एक दूसरे का हाथ पकड़ा और सीटी बजते ही वे एक साथ दौड़ पड़े। सारे बच्चे पेड़ के समीप एक साथ पहुँचे। मानवविज्ञानी ने कहा, इस तरह तो तुम सबको एक-एक ही फल मिलेगा। बच्चों ने कहा कि उन्हें बचपन में ऐसी कहानियाँ सुनाई गईं कि जब तक वे साथ हैं उनका अस्तित्व है और तब तक वे जीवित हैं। यह उन सभ्य समाजों के लिए एक सबक है, जो आदिवासियों को पिछड़ा समझते हैं।

चित्रा गुप्ता

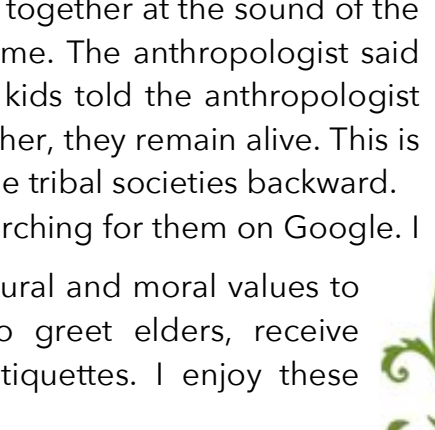


Importance of stories in the lives of children

When I think of my childhood, I am constantly reminded how my siblings used to stay awake till our grandmother told us mythical stories such as Ramayan and Mahabharat. The families which share stories with their children are very fortunate in that children learn some of the best life lessons from these stories. Children whose parents or grandparents tell them stories show signs of better social and emotional development in comparison to those of kids who do not have the opportunity to listen to such stories. Furthermore, these bedtime stories aid in building a strong bond between parents and children. Unfortunately in recent years, the tradition of story telling is losing itself amidst nuclear families and the fast-paced lives of parents.

A study conducted by a USA children's medical hospital has shown that the bedtime stories help in the development of kids in that they cultivate their creative skills and enhance their language and literary skill set. Today, society promotes the message that those who win are successful. Does that mean that there is no place for those who are deemed unsuccessful? The historical and mythical stories help in correcting this perception. They teach that sometimes we need to lose, in order to win.

In this current era, children lack emotional development of their counterparts from previous eras. Childhood tales and stories aid in the development of confidence in children to a greater extent compared to expensive iPad, video games or PlayStation. This is illustrated in the following example. An anthropologist was conducting a study about the native children of South Africa. He asked the children to stand in a line, opposite a basket of fruits. The anthropologist instructed the children to run and touch the basket. He said that the first child to touch the fruit basket would win the entire fruit basket. Much to his chagrin, the anthropologist observed that all the children held their hands and ran together at the sound of the whistle. All the kids reached the basket at the same time. The anthropologist said that, like this, each of you will only get one fruit. The kids told the anthropologist they had heard a story that whilst they are united together, they remain alive. This is a good lesson for progressive societies that consider the tribal societies backward. I personally find stories to tell my grandchildren by searching for them on Google. I find happiness in doing so and am able to impart cultural and moral values to them. Through these stories, I teach them how to greet elders, receive blessings, bring water for guests and other such etiquettes. I enjoy these moments a lot.





The Kamala Club, Singapore

wishes you

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New Year*



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