

Campus Beats



Saturday November 05, 2011

Amrita School of Communication



Only when goodness awakens within, will one's personality and actions gain beauty and strength.

A home for the orphaned girls

Komal Gautham

Coimbatore: Lakshmi shows remarkable determination for an 11-year-old. "I do not want to go back home at any cost. I like it here", she asserts.

"Here" is an orphanage, where she was brought by the railway authorities after she was found sitting in a train all alone as it arrived in the city from Chennai. The girl said she had fled her home in Andhra Pradesh and got into a train because her poor parents would not allow her to study and wanted her to work, instead.

That was a year ago. Today, the cheerful girl (with plaited hair) is a topper of the fifth grade in her school. According to Jayashree Ravi, Secretary of Sevanilayam, where Lakshmi is an inmate along with 150 others, "We not only mould the future of these girls but want to turn them into confident citizens. Many of these girls are working in government service as doctors, engineers, teachers and one girl from their home is an actress in Kollywood."

Sevanilayam houses a primary school, a higher secondary school, a computer lab, an approved school for juvenile kids and a working women's

hostel in their campus. Not only are the girls educated but are also trained in computer education, handicrafts, yoga, music lessons and sloka recitations. The ones taking the SSLC and the 12th Board exams are also given

school. Recently, Suryavalli, an orphan got married. "She was brought here at the age of four. I'm very happy that the society's mind-set has changed and they are willing to accept an or-

T.V.M. Thillaiammal, the daughter of great freedom fighter, T.A. Ramalingam Chettiar is the founder secretary of this organization. Widowed at a very early age, a chance meeting with Gandhiji in the 1940s completely

continues. The 63 year-old organization is in the able hands of her grand niece, Jayashree Ravi, who got involved in it by chance. On-air, in an All India Radio show, Jayashree was taken by surprise when Thillaiammal mentioned Jayashree's name asking her to take over.

"Initially I used to visit the girls once in a while. And slowly these visits increased and somehow, now, I feel I was destined to do this", said Jayashree, secretary of the organization. What happened by chance has now become her routine. "Not a day passes by, without me visiting Sevanilayam. My day somehow feels incomplete otherwise", she adds.

Every social cause faces its share of obstacles. Sevanilayam has also had tough times with the kids running away or the juvenile kids posing uncomfortable situations. Jayashree says, "It does get difficult sometimes. But amma's (Thillaiammal) dream and her blessings keep us going. We know we cannot give up".

(Names of the kids changed on request)

Contact details: Jayashree Ravi (Secretary) : (91)-(422)-2473664.



The girls having a good time at their 'home'.

extra tuitions by hired and voluntary teachers. "This year, over 5 students have scored above 400 out of 500 marks in the SSLC exam," shares K.V. Sudha, headmistress of the

phaned girl as a member of their family", says Jayashree. Over 30 girls from the organization are married and well settled. The cost of the marriage is borne by the organization.

changed her life. She set up Sevanilayam in 1948 and has worked sincerely and dedicated her entire life for the welfare of the girl children. She died at the age of 96 but her legacy

"Corruption stems from an unjust system and sustains the same": Anshul Mishra

Anjana Anand

Coimbatore: Even though getting into the Civil Services needed a little persuasion from his father, Anshul Mishra today cannot think of a better profession that he would have fit into. Taking a short break from his busy schedule, Anshul Mishra, former Corporation Commissioner of Coimbatore, and currently the Collector of Thiruvannamalai, shares with us some memorable facets of his journey so far.

Born and brought up in a small town in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, it surprises many to see this 'Hindiwala' having learnt to speak in perfect Tamil in a short span of time. During his student days in Navodaya Vidyalaya however, he claims that he was just an above-average student. "I was neither very studious nor very naughty. I was truthful, honest, shy and extremely rule bound".

So, why did this shy, duty bound young boy dream of getting into the Civil Services? "It was my father who urged me to go for civil services when I was a child and he was my role model too. Later, as I grew up, I got

more convinced about the importance of this aim", he reveals. Looking



back at his service as a civil servant, he admits that his stint as the Corporation Commissioner of Coimbatore is the one that he cherishes the most. Of course, there is no doubt about the number of positive changes that he had implemented during this cherished stint of his - the 'e-auction', 'information centre cum online grievance re-dressal system', are to name a few.

As a civil servant, what is his take on the current political scenario and the arrest of many corrupt officials? "Honesty is the best policy. Otherwise you are sure to be punished some day or the other irrespective of who you are. Recent arrest of high profile politicians and an Ex-Chief Minister are the best examples. Corruption stems from unjust system and it sustains the same. Unless you get rid of corruption, you cannot create a just and equitable society", believes this earnest officer.

Talking about the qualities that take to be an IAS officer, he feels that while it is one thing to get selected into civil services, it is another to serve in that capacity with zeal, efficiency, honesty and integrity all through. "Any well conditioned student can achieve the first one with some amount of luck while only a sincere human being with lots of courage humility and common sense can achieve the second", says Anshul Mishra. As he gets ready to get back to his busy life, a final question was posed - Does he hold any dreams for his future? After a short pause, he replies, "I want to live a respectful and dignified life along with all my fellow citizens in a developed, well administered and clean and corruption free India."

Youth Feista !

The college is conducting an audition for all the Amrita campuses for the Association of Indian Universities South Zone Youth Festival on November 5th which will be conducted on

December 18th and 19th at Chennai.

Unwind

Aalaap, the induction program of Ragasudha will be held on November 8 at the Amriteshwari Hall.

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Reliving Rajasthani Folk Arts

Spandana Kadiyala

Ettimadai, Oct 28: The Society for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth (SPICMACAY) organised an evening of Rajasthani folk music and dance, in the Amritheshwari Hall, on Friday. A troupe comprising of eight members performed a collection of numbers that included Bhajans, Sufi songs, Jugalbandi and the popular 'Kalbeliya' snake dance. "These art forms have travelled through generations and will undoubtedly be carried into the next," says Ustad Jamil Khan Manganiyar, leader of the

amazing," remarked Shiva Ranjhani, a student.

In the spotlight was 15-year-old Indira, who performed the Kalbeliya dance. Indira, a self-taught dancer, managed to make the audience sit up as she picked up a ring with her eyes, during her show. Other performances included popular sufi songs 'Bule Shah ka kalaam' and 'MastKalandar'.

SPICMACAY'S legacy, a hundred-event gala of music, dance and other art forms is all set to sail, this time with known names on board. "It is not every day that one gets to meet



Ustad Jamil Khan Manganiyar and his troupe performing Jugalbandi.

troupe, who has been in the field for two decades now.

The audience lauded Ghazi Khan's performance on the 'Morching', a rare musical instrument. "He played it with such grace and flexibility; it was

eminent artists like Padma Shri Hariprasad Chaurasia and Bombay Jayashri", says Pushparaj, faculty-in-charge of SPICMACAY, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham. "Being a part of the group is sheer luck!" he smiles.

Indira, the dancer and the showstopper



Left: Indira picking the ring with her eye; Right: Indira performing Kalbeliya

Anushree Madhavan

She spun swiftly, swayed acrobatically and even bent backwards to pick a ring with her eyes and a currency note with her mouth.

The young lady was 15-year-old Indira, who was out there on the stage of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, doing what she did best - mesmerize a hall full of audience with one of the most sensuous dances of Rajasthan, Kalbeliya.

Performed by a tribe with the same name, the main occupation of whom was capturing snakes and trading snake venom, the movements and costume of the dance too resembled that of a serpent.

As the rhythm of the dance got faster and faster, so did her sinuous

movements. At the end of it all, one wondered if this lady was made of rubber. We thought we would go ask the performer herself.

Dressed in a long black skirt embroidered with silver ribbons, she wore a calm demeanor and a smile that gave away traces of excitement and shyness. How could this girl, resembling your demure school kid next door, bring in so much of grace, energy and versatility to such a demanding act?

"Well, it is not that tough", clarifies Indira. "After my fifth grade, I dedicated myself completely to this art form".

In fact, truth is, Indira has carved a niche for herself in the folk art of Rajasthan by having mastered not just

the Kalbeliya but various other folk forms too, such as Bhavai and Chari. She says that since these arts were a part of her ancestry, she felt obliged to keep the tradition alive.

Despite being adept at many forms of Rajastani dance, Indira confesses that the Kalbeliya was her favourite. Indira is a busy one. Most of her year involves travel across the country and sometimes outside it too.

"Of course, I miss my home a lot of time. Yet I am happy that at least I have my brother coming along with me on these tours. He is a singer". After this show at Coimbatore, Indira, along with her troupe, will be proceeding to Ooty, Madurai and Coimbatore.

Amrita breaks cultural barriers



Students from the North-east in their traditional attire.

Deepthi Ramdas V

Geography would be a lot more interesting if one could visit places while studying the theories. India is a vast country, so says the text, but it is much more than that. The states on all four ends are distinct and varied in every aspect, from climate to the traditions. The states to the Eastern India are so diverse from the rest of India, that it wouldn't be wrong to call them a different country all together.

Seven students from the 'Seven Sisters States' of India, also known as the 'Paradise Unexplored', have chosen Amrita, to pursue their Masters in Social Work (MSW) and get a slice of a different culture and environment.

"We wanted to live in a different society following a culture different from ours," says Elphidia Dohling, when asked about what brought her here. "We would like to specialize in community development as it would help us in developing our community back home," adds Aiti Hun K Lyngdah Mawmai. The seven girls unanimously agreed that they did have a mild culture-shock initially, but they look at it as a positive change.

"We were scared when we studied about the caste system that prevailed in this place. At our place, though there are the upper castes and lower castes, it is not given any preference be it marital unions or otherwise," shrugs Audrilia Mary Marboh.

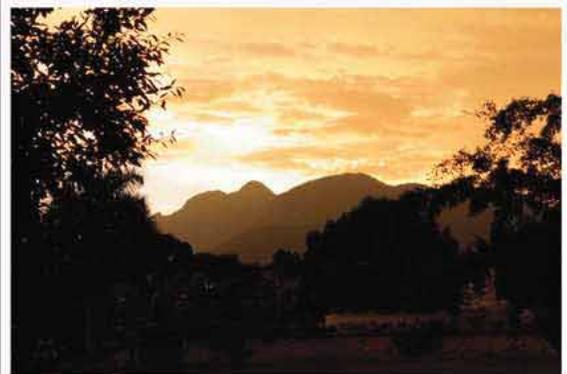
"You should come to our place to know what respect for women means," remarks Wan Suklang Surong. They follow a matriarchal pattern, where the name of the mother's family would be carried over, quite similar to the Nair clan in

Kerala. According to their culture, the youngest daughter lives in the same house after marriage, and receives a major share of the family's legacy. They were alarmed to see that the men would not get up in buses to provide a standing old woman seat. A man would offer their seat in a bus even to a standing small girl in Shillong.

Amrita would be a second home for them for the next two years, since it takes nearly 3 nights and 4 days by train to reach their home. This is excluding the 3 hours of travel from Guwahati to Shillong in their private vehicles.

Apart from the modern youth who are busy aping the Western culture, these set of girls are ready to face any obstacle in their path of bringing their state to the forefront.

Photo of the edition



A picturesque view of the sun setting beyond the mountains engulfing the Amrita Campus.

Photo courtesy:- Ananthanarayanan K.H.

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