

A Garden of Children



Children's Garden School Society
1937 - 2012



Celebrating 75 Years Of Service In The Field Of Children's Education

*Step back in time... into the world of the Children's
Garden School Society,*

Travel back in time through classrooms and corridors

Echoing with the sounds of children's laughter

From chalk and slates to the world of computers

*Through generations of tiny hands tracing letters,
playing with blocks*

Learning through play, guided by loving teachers

*Where children learn without fear, eager to explore
the world around them*

*Learning from the past and moving towards an ever
changing future*

Where new ideas and visions emerge effortlessly



*"Let none be like another. Yet each be like the highest
How can that be? Let each be perfect in himself"*

- Goethe

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THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN SCHOOL SOCIETY

2 & 4, Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai VII Street

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Tamil Nadu, India

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Ph : 2432 7060, 2434 7060



THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN SCHOOL SOCIETY

(Registered Under Act 21 of 1860)

2 & 4, Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai VII Street, Mylapore
Chennai - 600 004, Tamil Nadu, India

Founders

Dr. V. N. Sharma
Mrs. Ellen Sharma

Secretaries

Ms. Sakunthala Sharma
Mrs. Rukmini Pappu

Correspondent

Ms. Sakunthala Sharma

Members of the Committee of Management

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Mr. P. Viswanathan
Lawyer, Chennai High Court

Vice President :

Mr. K. Narayananswamy
Secretary : Seve Chakra, Chennai

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Businessman and Consultant
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Architect, M/s. C.R. Narayanarao and Co.,
Chennai

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Advocate

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Vijaya Heart Foundation, Chennai

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Retired Executive
M. N. Dastur and Co.

Dr. K.R. Ambuja Devi
Medical Practitioner, Chennai

Ms. Gita Sharma
Secretary, Ellen Sharma Memorial Trust

Dr. Shanti Pappu
Secretary, Sharma Centre for Heritage Education
Chennai/Pune

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Mr. M. Saravanan
Managing Director
A.V.M. Productions, Chennai

Mrs. Sita Laxminarayanan
Social Worker & Member, Inner Wheel Club
Chennai

From Vision to Reality:- 75 Years of the Children's Garden School Society

**Sakunthala Sharma
Correspondent**

This year, we celebrate 75 eventful years of our school family. Here we bring you a photographic documentation of the fascinating history of our school. This evolution was traced in depth in our 70th anniversary souvenir; here we take you through a photographic and illustrated record of all aspects of life in our school-through rare photographs, letters and paintings. From 1937 to 2012, the school has witnessed a phenomenal period of development. We look back on a continuous evolution of our ideas and vision, of the numbers of children, teachers and staff who have enriched us in many ways and of the growing body of friends and well-wishers who have enabled us to grow from strength to strength. On 7th September, 1937, we were a small group of 7 children, a few teachers and our founders, Mrs. Ellen Sharma and Dr. V.N.Sharma. On 7th September, 2012, we are a family of over 3000, spread in our crèche, two primary schools and middle and high school in Chennai, in the rural primary school at Karaipakkam, and in our sister school at Sholinganallore, sprung from our ever expanding 'Banyan Tree'.

We look back on the changing scenario, from a tiny school facing the challenges of a new free India, struggling against all odds to build and grow, constantly changing and redefining itself to face new mindsets and new generations of children and parents. We have faced a range of governments each with its own educational policies-both positive and negative; changing systems of thought and social values, financial burdens and difficulties. Despite all challenges, we have remained faithful to the core of our Institution-THE CHILD.

In this evolving scenario, the steadfast aspect of our vision remains that of a system of education where a child may learn without fear, in an atmosphere surrounded by love, and develop its innate talents. Our strong focus since 1937 has been on providing free and subsidized high quality education, books, health-care, accommodation, food and clothing to countless underprivileged children. Inclusive education for 'special challenged children' was initiated in our school in the early 1940's, and today our programs give these children self-confidence to face life.

We are thus far more than a school. Our programs for teacher's training, adult education and women's welfare have aided numerous individuals to recognize their own potential and move forward confidently in the face of numerous obstacles in life. Our dedicated and selfless teachers are encouraged to learn continuously, to study further and obtain higher qualifications, which can be translated into better methods to teach our children.

Above all, our children have made us proud. As successful career-persons or perfect homemakers, our children have followed the values and beliefs they imbibed during their years with us; they continue our philosophy of helping others in society and return year after year to the school to express their gratitude. As you read through their letters, we note generation after generation returning to study or to teach in our school family...and this tradition continues today....

We now enter a new era of hope and growth. We face numerous challenges in the rapidly changing social and economic structure of modern India. With the growth of new technologies adopted in the field of education, our challenge is to blend the use of electronic and other teaching aids, with our traditional methods; enabling children to explore the world not only through technology but through practical hands-on methods which have stood the test of time and which together will enable effective holistic cognitive development. Above all-the child-stands at the centre of our methods-beyond textbooks, we seek to pay individual attention to each of our children-their needs, desires, feelings, problems and to seek effective solutions to enable each child to grow in a holistic manner. We believe in our motto:

*Let none be like another, Yet each be like the highest
How can that be, Let each be perfect in himself*

-Goethe

KINDER GARTEN - SAND PIT - STUDENTS PLAYING



A Special Place Where Learning is Fun!

A Quick Look at 75 Years of Our History

- * Founded by Dr. V N Sharma and Mrs Ellen Sharma on 7th September, 1937 as a small Kindergarten with seven children, in a small quiet house in Brindavan Street, Mylapore in 1937 on 7th September.
- * Mrs. Ellen Sharma established the special Kindergarten methods and materials in a unique play way method, combining western and eastern philosophies of education.
- * Initiation of methods used later as a model for primary education in South India.
- * Early implementation of the play-way methods, use of workshops, projects, hands-on activities, art, craft, music, dance and sports, initiated in the 1930's and evolving till today.
- * Introduction of inclusive education for challenged children in the 1940's, the mid-day meal schemes and provision of free and subsidized food, clothing, education, medical aid and shelter for underprivileged children from the 1940's onwards.
- * From as early as 1942, the Society imparted Kindergarten Training courses, later recognised by the State Government.
- * In 1942, the school shifted to its present location then named 39, Edward Elliotts Road, Mylapore, which was purchased in 1948. No. 42, Edward Elliotts Road was purchased in 1948 and used as a kitchen and dining hall, and which now houses the school library and a kitchen for the midday-meal program.
- * After the retirement of Mrs Ellen Sharma, her daughter Ms. Sakunthala Sharma, was headmistress from 1961 till 1999, during the course of which she implemented many new schemes, established the administration of the school on a firm basis, brought in new educational methods, expanded the infrastructure and provided a firm foundation to the numerous dimensions which the school had acquired by then. Ms. Gita Sharma greatly aided in raising funds for the programs.
- * Establishment of training courses for teachers and programs in adult education and women's welfare schemes.
- * Establishment of a crèche and day-care centre for working mothers. The Society now runs creches at Mylapore, Sholinganallore and Balwadis at Karaipakkam.
- * Expansion of classrooms, addition of new buildings, hostels, dining rooms and kitchens, from the 1950's to 1970's.
- * Construction of a Health Centre building in 1974, a new Hostel Block in 1977 which is now converted into classrooms in the school building.
- * The primary school building (The Ellen Sharma Primary and Nursery School) was constructed in 1974 and 1975. It was originally the Creche Training Centre and Hostel for the older girls. Since we vacated the Children's Club Ground the whole building has been transferred to the Primary School.
- * A one year Diploma Course was conducted in English Medium specially for students wanting to join English Medium schools. Refresher courses of three months were conducted as an In-service course for teachers.
- * A Creche Training course recognized by the Central Social Welfare Board was conducted for about seventeen years. Under the Tamil Nadu Open University now an one year diploma course is being conducted.
- * Tragic deaths of Mrs. Ellen Sharma in 1978 and Dr. V.N. Sharma in 1985.
- * The school slowly recovered after these two tragedies under the able leadership of Ms. Sakunthala Sharma aided by her sisters, Ms. Gita Sharma and Mrs. Rukmini Pappu.

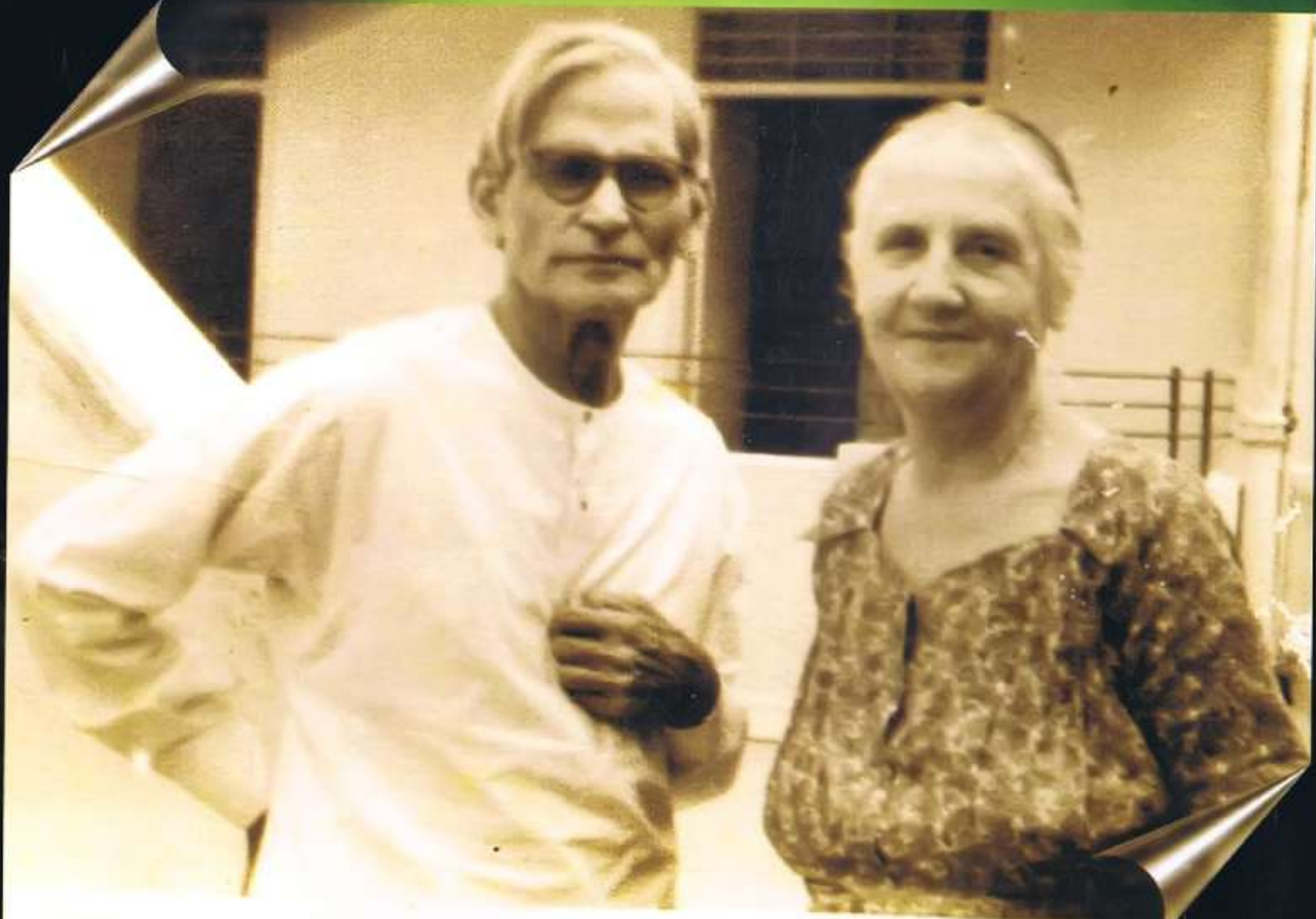
- * Purchase of lands at Karaipakkam and Sholinganallore in 1978-1979, and establishment of schools, vegetable farm, dairy and other schemes for self sufficiency and rural welfare schemes for women.
- * In 1980, a beautiful old heritage building was purchased in the 8th Street, No.100, Dr Radhakrishnan Salai and was the Kindergarten for many years. Now it houses the crèche and day-care center.
- * Another building opposite the main school campus was purchased in 1982, and now houses the Tamil Medium Kindergarten School.
- * In 1989, new buildings were constructed in the compound in place of the sheds to house class rooms; these were airy and comfortable.
- * In 1999, Dr. N. Lalitha was Headmistress till 2004 succeeded by Dr. N Saraswathi till 2011; Mrs C. R. Vijayalakshmi for six months, and by our present Headmistress Mrs R.M. Karpagambal all of whom introduced latest technologies for education and promoted the teaching of science, technology and the humanities with new methods and approaches.
- * There were many stalwarts who worked for the institution during the course of years. First of all the Managing Committee played a very important part. Mr. Pancha Natesa Iyer drafted the constitution which was later extended by Mr. T. B. Balagopal, Mr. K.S. Ramanujam and our present able president, Mr. P. Viswanathan. The members of the management committee, the late Mr. C. R. Narayana Rao, Mrs A. C. Krishna Rao, Mr. M. Natarajan Mr. K Narayanaswamy, the late Mr. M. V. Chauhan, Mr. J. Lakshminarayanan, Mr. A. S. Kailasam, Dr. K. R. Ambuja Devi, Mrs. Sita Laxminarayana, Mr. V.R.Pappu and Dr.Shanti Pappu have kept the tradition of excellence in administration alive.
- * Among the non teaching and Teaching staff we must not forget the services of many. Mr. K. Seetharama Iyer, who was first a teacher and then ran the bookshop and saw to the publishing of our early souvenirs. He loved the institution and could not be parted from it. Mr. V. Sriramulu and Mrs. A. T. Sundaramma ran the hostel. Mr. N. Srinivasan the office manager saw to the day to day affairs. Mr. B. Krishnamurthy, Mr. Raoji (Ramachandra Rao), Mr. R. V. Rao and Mr. P. V. Venkatasubbiah saw to the accounts. Mr. S. Venkatraman developed the Guide movement in the school.
- * Today our office administration is under the able hands of Mrs. Lalitha Nagaraj and Mr. R. Srinivasan.
- * Mrs. V. Annapurani as Assistant Headmistress contributed greatly. Mrs. R. James, Mrs. R. Kalpagam, Mrs. P. Subbulakshmi and Mrs. T. S. Saraswathi developed the Teacher Training and Creche Training programs. Ms. M. S. Rajalakshmi and Mrs. S. Geetha developed the Kindergarten methods introduced by Mrs Ellen Sharma. Mrs. G. Saradamba left her special mark in updating and creating a wonderful library which is a special feature of the school. One should also remember the early teachers Mrs. Sarada Balu, Mrs. G Muthu Lakshmi, Mrs. B Savithri, Ms. S Pankajam, Mrs. Pusha Bhoopathy, Mrs. S Vijaya, Ms. Kusuma Kumari and many more special beings.
- * We always remember, Mrs. S. Santhalakshmi and her pupil Mrs. A.V. Nalini who composed the first Tamil Nursery Rhymes and brought in lovely dance dramas and action songs imparting Indian culture and heritage to the students.
- * The Primary school was expanded and developed under the able guidance of Mrs. Saroja Balasubramaniam who specializes in inclusive education.



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7th September, 1937



As you walk into our school campus, past the sandpit with the old slide and jungle jim, through the old office building and up to the classrooms, every brick speaks to you...of a long and eventful journey...of timeless tales of children and teachers, of laughter and tears and the shouts of children at play, the morning prayer songs...of song and dance, and of endless stories of struggle, sorrow and joy. The story begins 75 years ago, when our founders, Mrs. Ellen Sharma and Dr. V.N. Sharma, visualized a school where eastern and western philosophies of education could be united to develop a new ideology for pedagogy in India. On 7th September, 1937, in a small house in Dwarka Colony, Mylapore, Chennai, our school began with seven children, new methods and teaching aids for pre-primary and primary education, and with lots of hope and infinite faith in the future.



The house was rented from Dr.E.V.Srinivasan, father of the renowned physician, Dr. E.V.Kalyani. The name of the school was inspired by Froebel's 'Kindergarten' or 'Garden of Children', which was to be a garden of learning, where children could learn through play and without fear. They chose the banyan tree as their logo:- India's eternal symbol of wisdom and shelter, with children swinging happily on the ever expanding roots. And so the school began....



Colors Of School !

Smt. Durgabai Deshmuh, founder of the Andhra Mahila Sabha wrote of the school in 1976; ' ..Among our neighbours in Dwarka colony were Dr.V.N.Sharma and Mrs. Ellen Sharma.They also started developing a regular school for the children and the school has now become one of the leading institutions in Madras....'

A Wonderful Thing



"On the 7th September, we went to open our Kindergarten.....It was really a wonderful thing: We had a big exhibition of all our toys and Kindergarten material, e.g. a room for the small ones, little houses, animals, dolls, cars, doll-house, pots and pans..... The Head Swami of the Ramakrishna Math opened the school with very clever profound and good words. Almost 40 people were present. We have now 3 children and 5 more are expected who can more or less not pay anything': Extract from a letter written on 8th September 1937 by Mrs. Ellen Sharma to her mother, Mrs. Alwina von Keller.



'...We welcome children of all races, religions and castes. All children are equally loved...we have neither a religions class nor a cult ...but we try to teach religion through the atmosphere of school life, i.e. to be good and kind towards others, respect and love others (CGHS Annual Report, 1938).



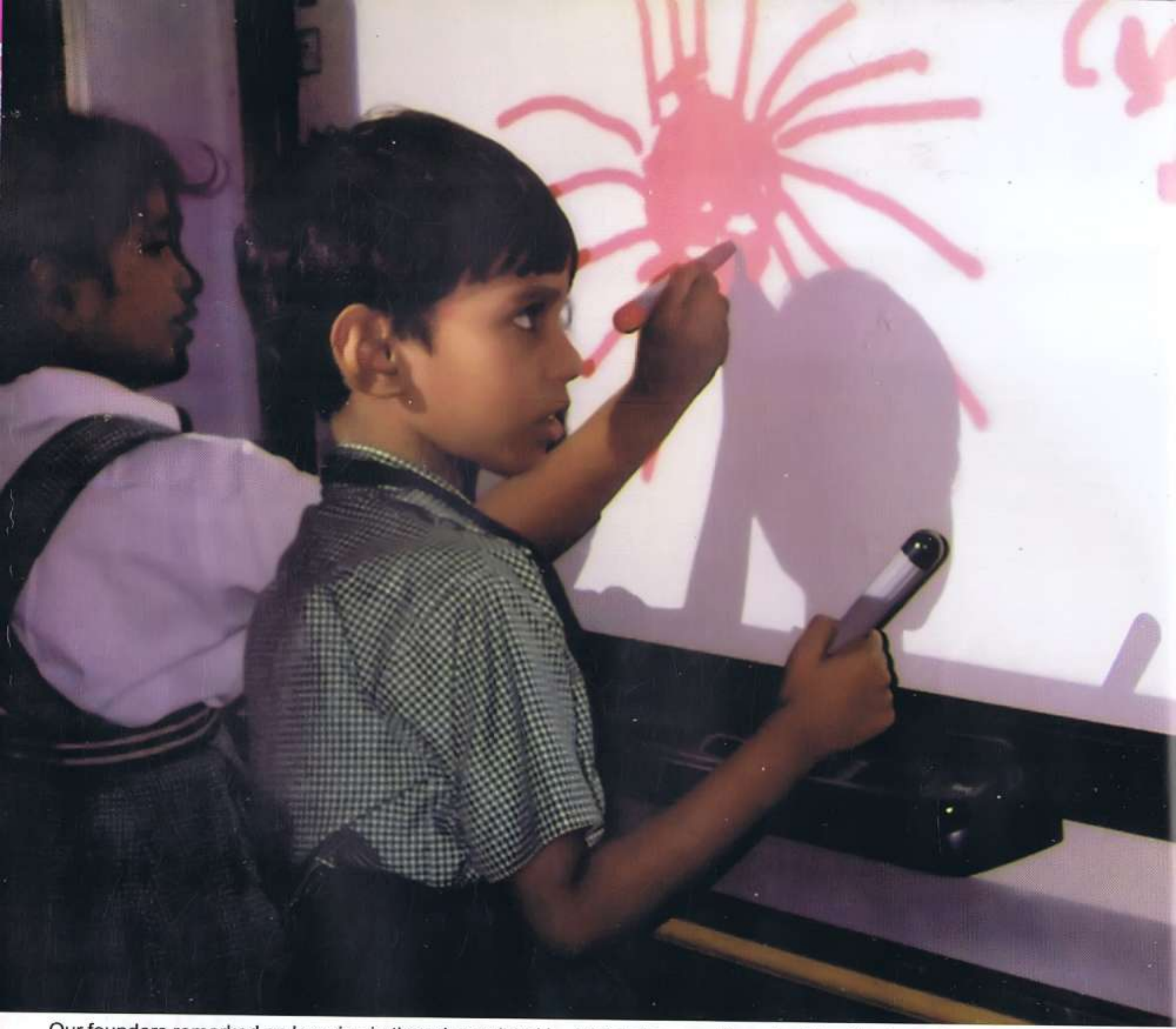
Learning Through Play



The vision of the school was laid out in 1937; 'The school will provide all possible opportunities for the expression of the most varied activities of the child. Handwork, music, dancing, eurhythmics, drawing and painting, clay modeling and paper cutting and many of the latest educational toys and materials specially made for the training of the senses and mind as well as for the development of social responsibility will be utilized. The Directors (the Sharmas) will watch the activities and interests of the child, keeping careful records of its physiological and mental reactions. Thus they will lead gradually from the often neglected play world to the domain of the of intellectual training in reading, writing and arithmetic (V.N. Sharma and E. Sharma, An Appeal, Madras 1937).



'The little ones do not learn reading and writing at this stage, but begin to experience the joy in painting and building, music and movement with other little ones. The children are always encouraged to work out a self initiated task alone or with a teacher or in natural groups.'. These are the words of Mrs. Ellen Sharma as she wrote later in the annual report of 1949.



Our founders remarked on learning in the primary level,'...At that stage, writing should not be forced on minds and hands not prepared for it, but could be prepared by lots of joyful occupations like drawing or painting on big light boards and large sheets of paper, or by clay modeling and bead threading which makes fingers skillful and sharpens the eye' (CGHS Souvenir 1963). This philosophy still prevails whether traditional teaching aids are used or through our 'Smart Classroom'.



These little scientists experiment with the laws of nature. The Sharma's believed in stimulating the curiosity of the child, and used a range of educational teaching aids, often adapting local material such as eucalyptus seeds and coconut shells for this purpose. We continue this philosophy of evolving and adapting, in tune with the increasing intelligence and awareness of children.

Mrs. Ellen Sharma



Ellen was born in Berlin, Germany on 15th November, 1898. She was an unforgettable personality. Combining a deep sense of compassion with determination, she made a deep impact on all who met her. She had the unique gift of infinite patience and faith in her vision for transforming children's education into a joyful experience focusing on the potential of each child. Above all, her humility and simplicity in the face of success, her positive spirit, joy in simple everyday events and forgiving nature..won over all who met her. Children adored her, often preferring to spend the day in her lap. She had the gift of being able to solve both personal and academic problems, and people from diverse fields flocked to her for advise.



Alwina von Keller, Paul Geheeb & Ellen Sharna

As a young girl, Ellen was greatly influenced by her dynamic and multifaceted mother, Mrs. Alwina von Keller:-a teacher, and student of Indian religion, philosophy and culture, and a student of psychoanalysis under the renowned Carl Jung. Her father Hans Teichmuller passed away before she was born, leaving the young Alwina to face the world alone. Deeply inspired by Indian philosophy, Alwina travelled to India, in 1929, along with her friend Josephine Macleod, where she met Mahatma Gandhi and was inspired by his scheme of 'New Basic Education', Swami Vivekananda and other noted personalities. She soon joined the educationist, Paul Geheeb at his school, the Odenwald Schüle, as an English teacher.



Ellen with Dr. Paul Geheeb

It was here at the Odenwald Schule, that Ellen first came into contact with Dr. V.N.Sharma, who was himself in pursuit of learning new methods of education, ...a meeting which was to change both their lives and the lives of countless generations of Indian children.

Dr. V.N. Sharma



Born in a small village in Ongole district, Andhra Pradesh on 14th June, 1897, Venkatesh Narayan Sharma was orphaned at an early age, and was brought up by his uncle, Pandit Gopalkrishna Sastr. He obtained an excellent education and grew to be a dedicated scholar, teacher and student of ancient Indian culture, religion and philosophy. Generations of children remember him as the kind grandfather, immersed in books and music, with pockets full of sweets.



V. N. Sharma with Rabindranath Tagore & Paul Geheeb

In his youth, he was deeply influenced by Sri Gadicherla Hari Sarvothama Rao, a pioneer in literacy programs, Dr. Annie Besant, G.V. Subbarao and Gurudev Sri Rabindranath Tagore. With a passion for knowledge, he worked at the National Theosophical School for a while, and then planned a journey to the United States of America via England. Fate willed otherwise. After a brief span of teaching at the Christopher's School, Letchworth and Frenshaw Heights, Surrey, he heard of the work of the Odenwald Schüle, and traveled to Germany.. a journey that was to change his life.



V. N. Sharma & Edith Geheeb

In Germany, his passion for Indology, philosophy and archaeology, drew him to meet Mrs. Alwina von Keller and her daughter Ellen, whom he married in 1931. Both drew on the inspiring and exciting new methods of education implemented by Dr. Paul and Mrs. Edith Geheeb at the school. He obtained his Ph.D. at the Heidelberg University. During this period, the Sharma's dream of setting up a school in India grew stronger and in 1937 they returned to India, initially invited to teach at the Rishi Valley School by Mr. G.V. Subba Rao. Later, they relocated to 'Madras' to translate their dream of establishing a school into reality.



By the 1940's the Sharma's were gradually able to convince parents that '....education need not necessarily mean only reading and writing but the building of all the faculties of the whole body itself towards a definite aim'. In 1941, the school shifted to its' present location, earlier named 39 Edward Elliot's Road, and a new story began. Along with a growing number of children, many visitors were keen to note the new methods of education. Mr. C. Subramaniam, Minister of Education and Mr. Bhaktavatsalam, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, were amongst other dignitaries who visited the school.

When we were young...



"Trusting that ours was a much needed work, we started the school without any financial help and never imagined the Himalayan task that we had unwittingly undertaken", remarked Ellen and V.N. Sharma. In later years, the Sharma's wrote:-'These first years will always remain unforgettable. Even before he became the first president of our school committee, Mr. Panchanadeshwar used to sit on the floor of the room where his first grandson Giri learned to become an independent little boy-yes, the first president played all the games, handled all the materials which the little ones had at their disposal' (CGHS Souvenir, 1963).



By July 1938, 25 new children joined the school. Despite the increasing number of children, the sense of all being one family was not lost. '....the older ones, the teachers are the careful gardeners of the delicate plants, the little ones. Thus the school has endeavoured since its' inception to encourage children to move freely with the teachers, freely like the members of a FAMILY (CGHS Annual Report 1938). We continue to follow this philosophy today.

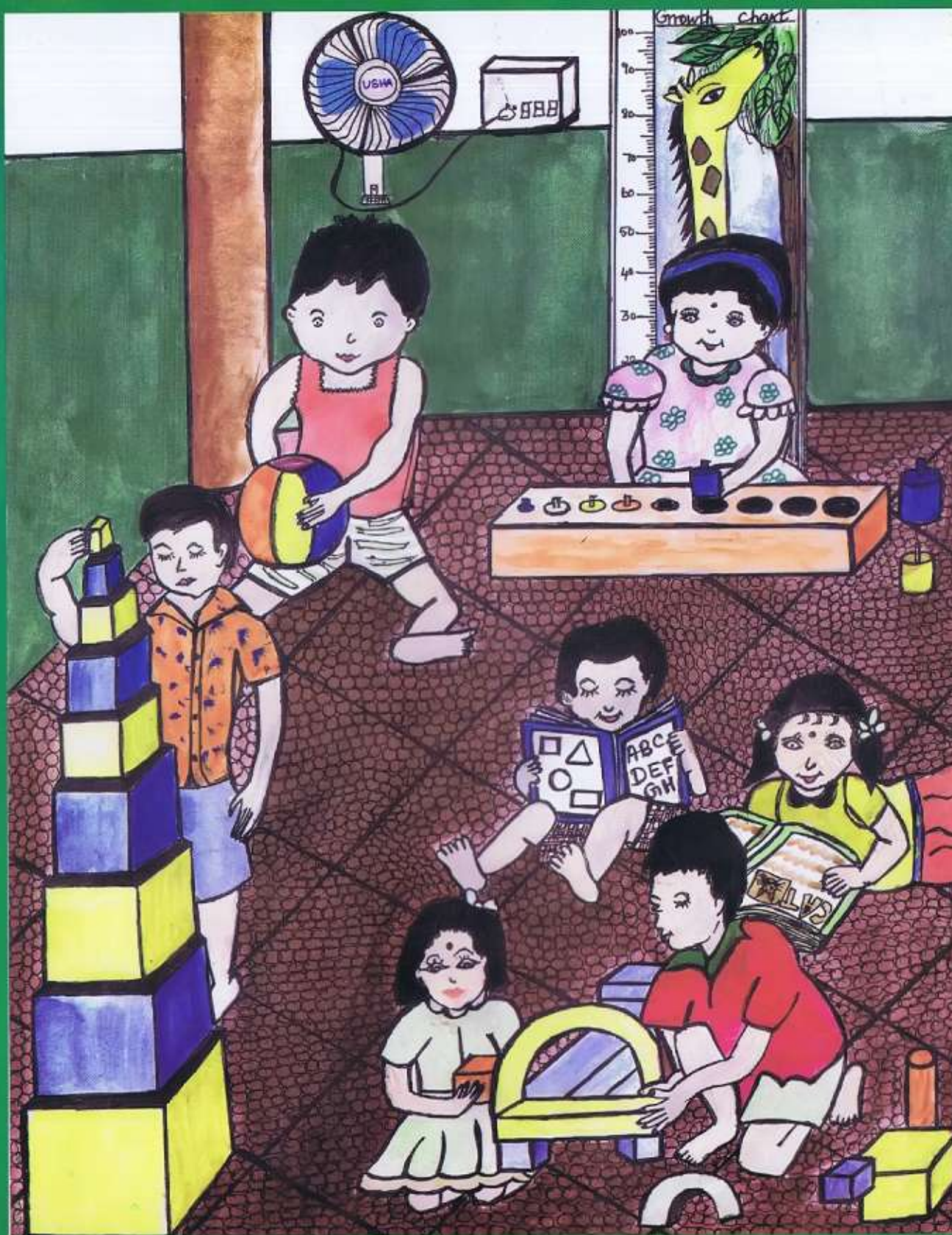


Children from all socio-economic and religious backgrounds were welcomed. The highest religion here was that of humanity, the highest goal that of love and respect.

By 1938 a School Advisory committee was formed and by 1940 a parents committee was started by Mrs. Vasundaradevi and Mr. Panchanadeswara Iyer. These helped systematize the organization of the school and to enable introduction of a new practical structure of management.



Early Years !



'The little ones do not learn reading and writing at this stage, but begin to experience the joy in painting and building, music and movement with the other little ones. The children are always encouraged to work out a self initiated task alone or with a teacher or in natural groups...' (CGHS Annual Report 1949).

War Times



Despite the turmoil arising from the second World War, the Sharma's continued to keep the school open for those who wished to attend. The Sharma's state: '...Thus we took the courage to stick on to Madras and continue our work in spite of all difficulties. The house owner realizing our difficulties did forgo the rent for a number of months and thus encouraged our work'. Through these difficult times, the Sharma's continued to support the large staff, despite huge financial burdens. By 1943, the children all returned to school. Free medical aid was now established, with Dr. Khatre's little clinic set up in 1944.



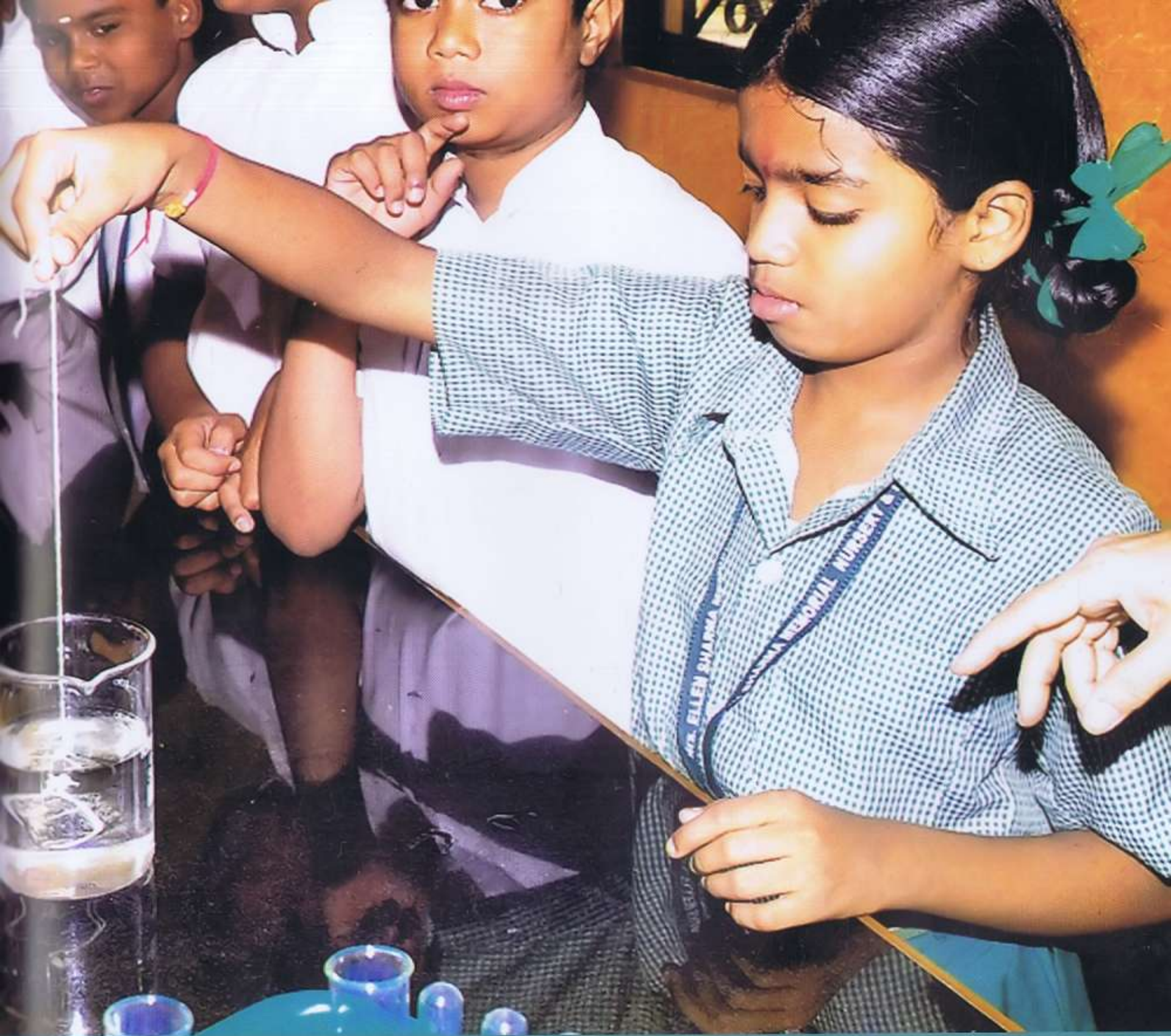
By 1945, the play-way method of teaching acquired new dimensions, enriched by traditional toys and teaching methods prepared by the Sharma's.

Cowry shells, eucalyptus seeds, wooden beads, coconut shells and many more locally available material were fashioned into teaching aids for mathematics, writing, art and craft.

An exhibition held in 1945, stunned parents and visitors who now began to appreciate the new and dynamic modes of teaching employed in the school.



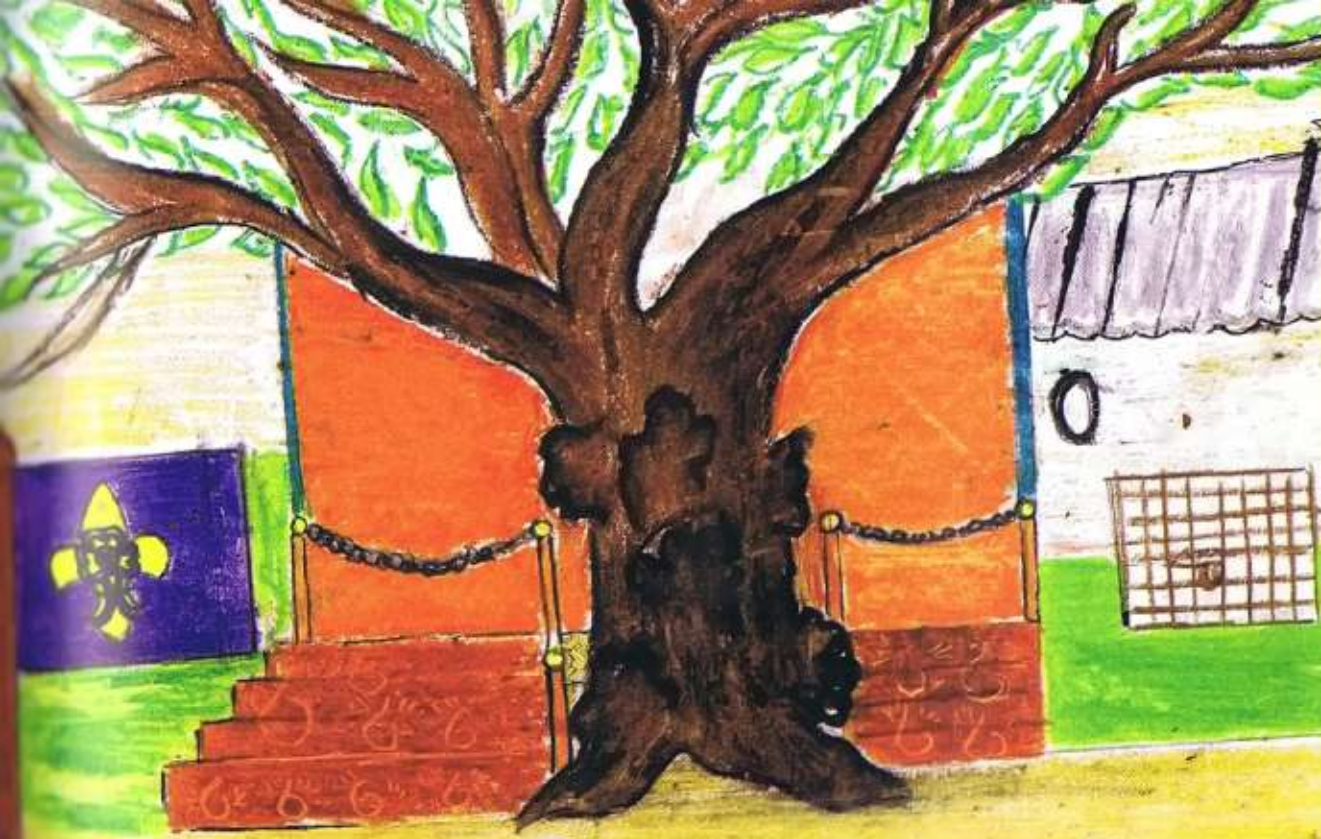
'.. The little ones have a daily dance class and even the most shy will join suddenly in the fun;-yes it is for many of the undisciplined wild little fellows the height of the morning, not what knowing what strict discipline and obedience it involves, obedience to an idea, not to a person' (CGS Annual report 1949).



'...Out of their questioning and working will come the first real instruction...'. These were the words of Mrs. Ellen and Dr. V.N. Sharma, when the school began...And we see this philosophy in this little scientist absorbed in experiments....



By 1942, the number of children rose to 132, with a staff of 13, a Kindergarten, standards III, IV and V, and a transitional section with 5-6 year olds. Along with education, the Sharma's began a mid-day meal scheme for underprivileged children, attracting them to school and beginning their long tradition of children's welfare schemes which continues till today.

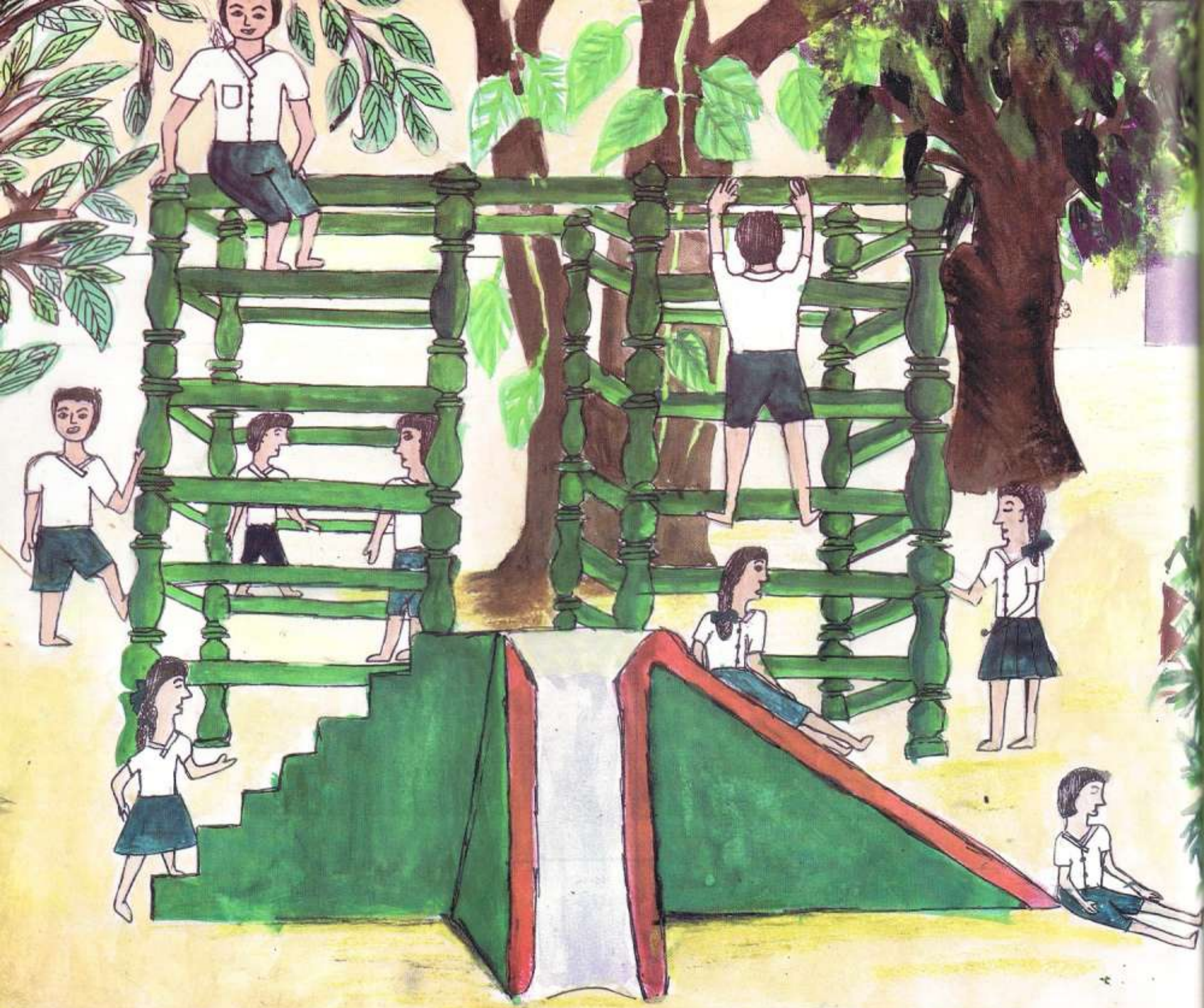


As the school grew, in 1947, Dr. V.N. Sharma, a dedicated Scout himself, introduced the Scouts and Guides program.

In a letter dated 1943, Sri S.V.Ramamurthi, Kt., C.I.K., then Prime Minister of Udaipur and Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, wrote:

'... We were struck with the freedom and happiness, with the joy of life with which children played and we felt that spirit of their play was itself an indication of the success of the school...'





In 1945, Rai Bahadur, Dr. B.B.Dey, Director of Public Instruction, wrote about our school, '...If education is not merely in the imparting of knowledge but in the drawing out of the latent powers of a boy or girl, then I think the Principals of this Institution are carrying out their task most admirably'.

Entering Independent India



Following independence the school grew rapidly. By 1948, the strength was around 350 children, with 250 Kindergarten infants. By May 1951, there were 642 children, with 40 staff members and 10 trainees and a growing demand by parents for more seats. Times were difficult, the Sharma's finding it impossible to turn away needy children.



In 1955, Mr. Kamaraja Nadar, Chief Minister of Madras State, presided over the school day function. A stream of visitors including Smt. Krishna Hathi Singh, Mr. Chintamani Deshmukh, and others visited the school. A landmark was the recognition given to Mrs. Ellen Sharma by the Indo-German Society in Munich, which presented her with the prestigious Goethe award.



In 1952, Dr. Sharma wrote back home from a trip to Heidelberg; '...Children's blessing are holier than others and they are more effective than any other things; that is why our ancestors said that speech of a child is as vital and forceful as that of Brahma'.



The Wednesday Meetings begun by Mrs. Sharma with Kindergarten teachers and the Tuesday Meetings with the Middle School staff, were new and dynamic places where problems, solutions, new strategies and future plans could be discussed. Through the years, we continue this tradition of meetings and discussion groups, where issues range from individual children to subject related matters.

A Child - Centric School



From 1947 to 1957, the school grew rapidly, with the establishment of the Brindavan Training Centre for teacher's training, and with recognition granted by the State Government. The first Annual Inspection of the school was in 1948 by the Education Department. Mrs. R.S.Swarnambal, Inspectress of Girls schools, Fourth Circle, Madras commented; '....This is one of the very few schools I have come across where in theory as in practice, 'children' are given their rightful place in school, in short and almost 'child-centric' institution where 'teachers' play the part of guides, 'subjects' form experiences, 'discipline' includes all the influences that help children to govern themselves'.



Introducing Mothers Courses on children's education, Mrs. Sharma stated that this would comprise '...study circles, discussion groups, etc. to tackle the problems in all spheres affecting the child's growth...'. This helped the mother view all aspects of her child's education with a '...new angle of vision...'. By now, numerous underprivileged children were being supported. Mrs. Sharma taught German in the University and Dr. Sharma translated books from Telugu to German and vice-versa to support their ever-growing school family. By the 1960's, 250 children were given free education, 50 more got free mid-day meals, 30 got free boarding, and a staff of 60 had to be supported.

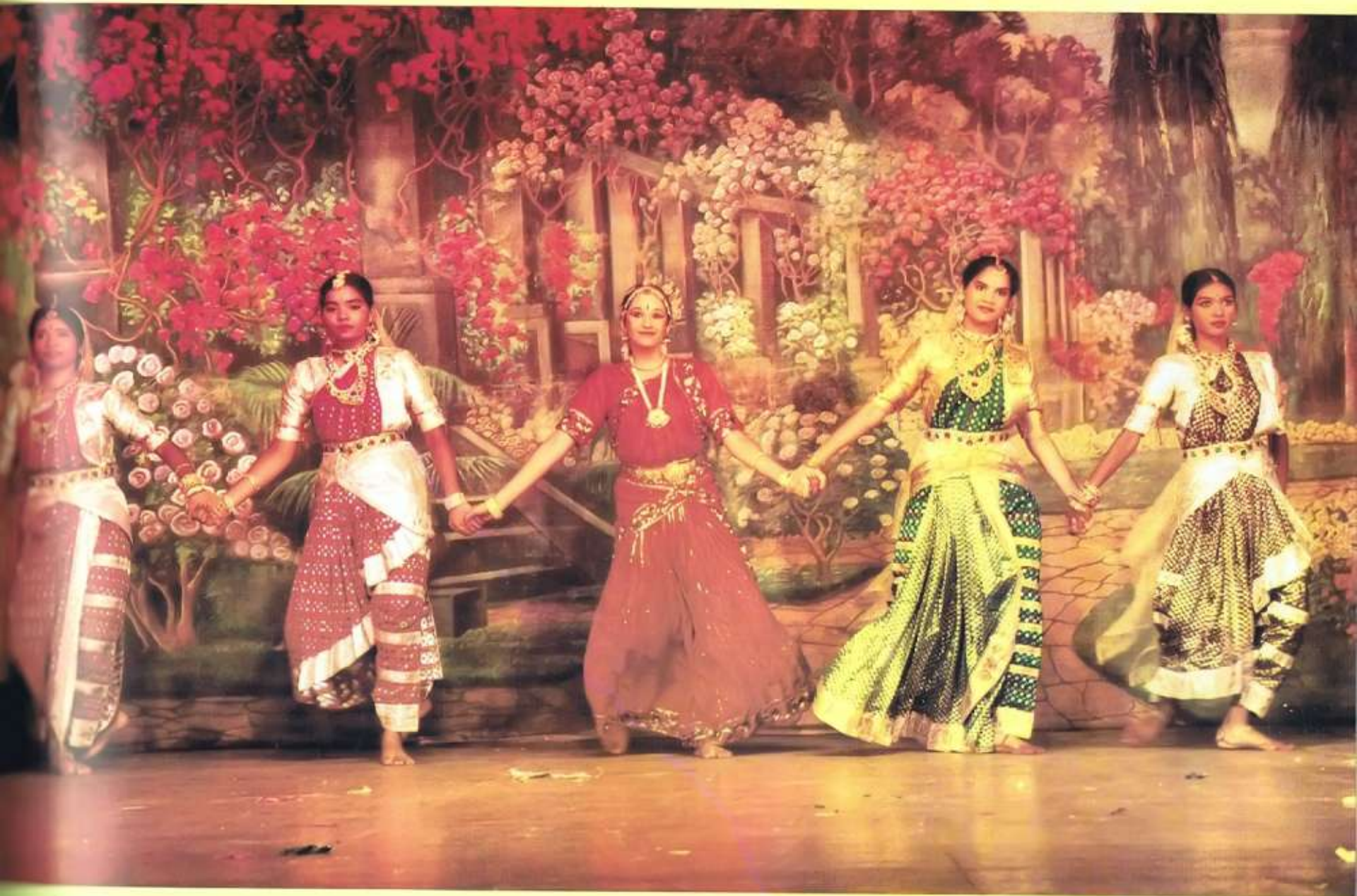


Creativity was encouraged through project-based learning, exhibitions, radio programs, theatre, dance dramas, music and numerous scouts and guides camps. Musical and dance dramas, like *Thyagaraja* and *Thoti*, brought together 60 little children. Through the years, music and dance are an integral part of the school, encouraging creativity with discipline, and ensuring that knowledge of India's ancient arts are passed on to each new generation.



Slowly, the old thatched huts were replaced and as the school grew around the much loved yellow brick façade of our main building, with its traditional tiled window gables and green shutters. The building stands witness to most of our history-witness to countless children, teachers and visitors who have passed through our doors.

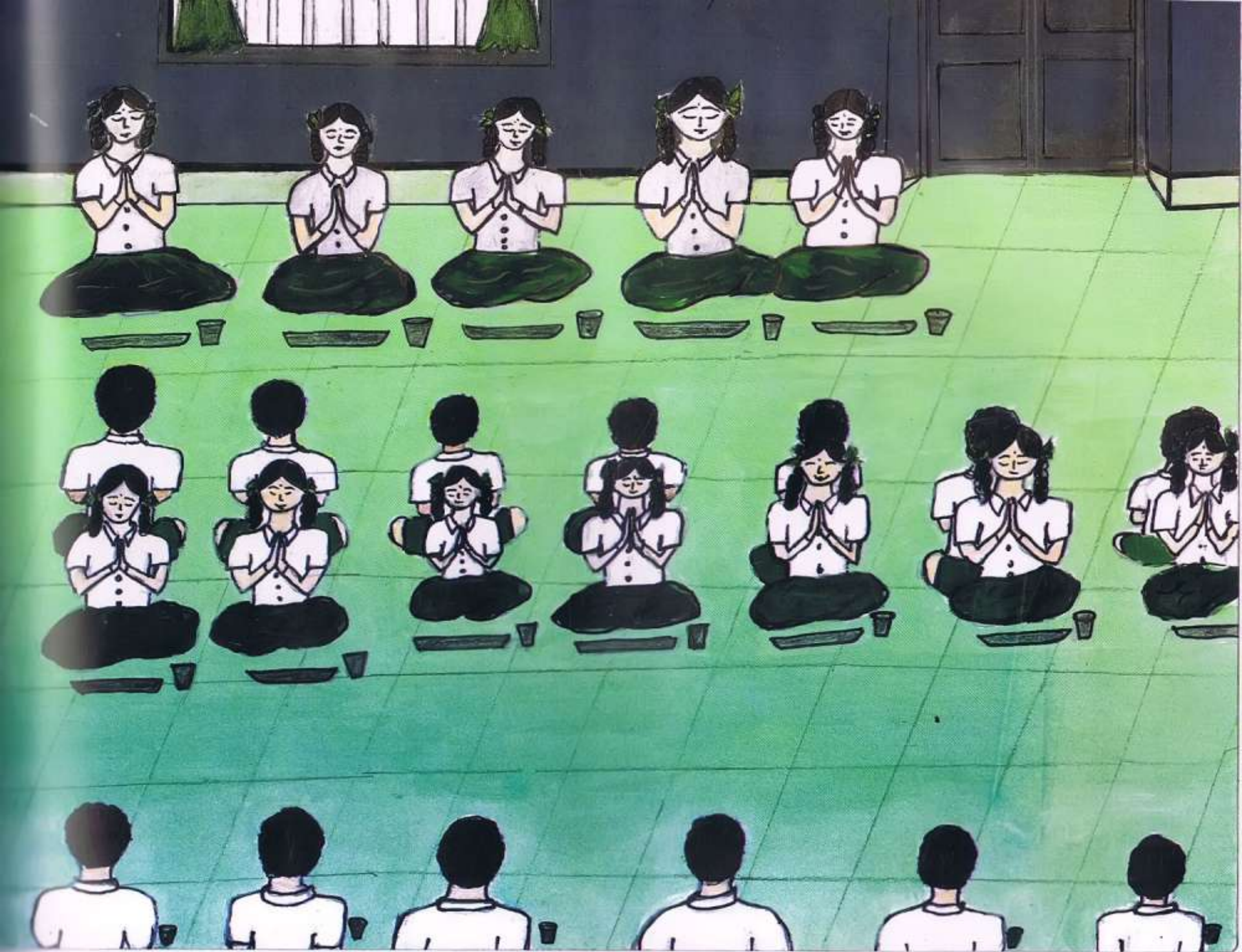
The Sheltering Tree



The Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1962 were grand, with 200 participating children, inaugural functions with Swami Kailasnandiji and Sir Lakshmanswami Mudaliar, the Vice Chancellor of Madras University presiding over the same. 25 oil lamps were lit. During the year, visitors like Mrs. Luebke, wife of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mrs. Birla and many others visited us. As the strength increased, the school was upgraded to a High School in 1967, and the first batch of students appeared for the SSLC Examination in April 1970. An additional block with two floors was constructed for accommodating classes. In 1972, Mrs. Ellen Sharma was awarded the prestigious Order of Merit, the highest award of the Federal Republic of Germany.



The school has the credit of starting the first crèche in Mylapore in 1973 for children of our teachers and later of working mothers. A Crèche Training Course was also started. Today, we have around 125 babies, with an excellent staff. We have advised numerous institutions and companies in establishing crèches all over Tamil Nadu.



In 1963, a new dining room was donated by the FAO. 1965, the Pestallozi Centre was inaugurated, on the occasion of which, Dr. Edgar H. Reichel, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany said, "... Since my arrival in Madras, it has given me particular satisfaction to observe the excellent work being done by Dr., Mrs. and Miss Sharma, their distinguished staff, the members of the Committee of Management and the Children's Garden School Society, in providing a fine education to India's citizens of tomorrow in accordance with most modern and progressive methods" (CGHS Annual Report 1966). This centre aimed at dispensing greater aid in the form of mid-day meals, care for underprivileged hostel children and day scholars.



Gradually the school grew in size developing into a full High School. The management wrestled with administrative problems in opening this section, but were successful and on our 30th anniversary the new High School was inaugurated. An SOS published in the Souvenir in 1970, called for donors to aid in funding the Kindergarten and Training sections, furniture and equipment and to build proper classrooms...an appeal that has as much validity today as it did so many years ago.

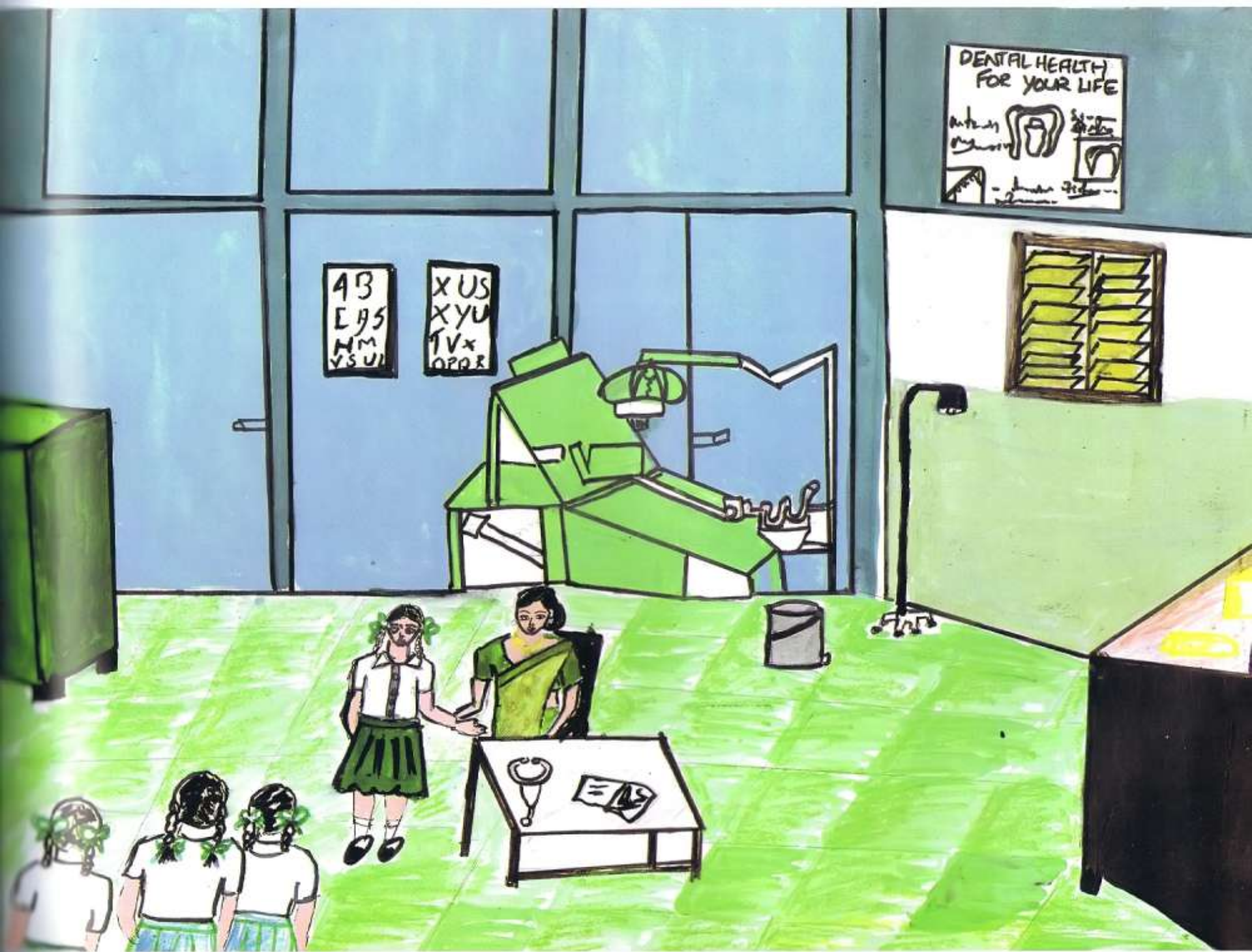


Dancing to the Rhythms of School Life!

Health Care and More...



Health care efforts were always implemented in our school. A pioneering effort of the school was the establishment of a dental centre in 1973. A separate building for the school clinic arose in 1974, under the excellent care of Drs. Kannappan and Jeyanthillangovan, followed by Drs. Kamala and Raghavachari. Dr. Ambuja Devi continues to see to the welfare of our children.



Time to see the dentist!



By the early 1970's, the school welcomed the first set of Tibetan refugee children. Over the years, we have provided education, food, accommodation and shelter to numerous Tibetan children, supporting teachers to train them in their own language and beliefs. The Mrs. Ellen Sharma Memorial Nursery and Primary school was started in 1976. In 1977, residential students were accommodated in a separate hostel building. Today, all our hostel children are located in the spacious campus of the Ellen Sharma Memorial Matriculation and Higher Secondary School, Sholinganallore. A Higher Secondary section was introduced in 1979.



'A very humble person, Mrs. Sharma never sought comforts and conveniences for herself. She lived in a portion of the school premises unmindful of noise or privacy and always concerned with the well-being of the school....Mrs. Sharma's genuine interest and attention and concern enabled a very large number of orphan and very poor children to get valuable education....The Children's Garden School is the most appropriate memorial to Mrs. Ellen Sharma's services in the cause of children's education in this part of the world. ...the world of children to which Mrs. Sharma belonged all her life will for ever remember her as a mother-figure who lived and dreamt and toiled hard for them in a manner equaled by very few' (K.S.Ramanujam, Correspondent, Hindustan Times, CGHS Annual Report 1979).

These words are echoed by many grief stricken students, teachers, friends and observers, when Mrs. Ellen Sharma passed away on 9th June, 1978. Our school family pulled through the difficult years, through the effort and determination of her daughters, Ms. Sakunthala Sharma who ran the school, and Ms. Gita Sharma who worked tirelessly to raise funds, and through the dedication and selfless service of our teachers, staff, Committee members and other well-wishers.



Beyond Text Books...

We have always believed in learning through play and projects; bringing books alive through interactive approaches. In addition to the great emphasis we place on music, dance, drama, art and craft, we have a number of clubs in which our children actively participate. The Interact was started in the 1973, and won numerous awards over the years.



Through the years, we have added to our clubs and today we have the Road Safety Patrol, Junior Red Cross, Karuna Club, Nature Club, National Green Corps and the Eco Club, National Service Scheme, INTACH, Heritage and Literary clubs, all of which have brought in numerous accolades and awards.



The atmosphere in our school emphasizes 'learning without fear'. A rare article written by Mrs. Ellen Sharma on the topic of 'Physical Cruelty', brought alive topics related to guiding a child through love and discipline and not through verbal or physical cruelty. She wrote ..'...Modern education lays stress on the education of the parent and the teacher rather than that of the child. The parents must be helped to understand the child and the teacher must be shown how to study a child if the child should grow up happy, strong, self-reliant, responsible, truthful' (CGHS Annual report 1980).



Through the years, we have developed teaching methods involving project-based learning. From the Kindergarten to the High School, our children learn through practical hands-on approaches giving free reign to their creativity and imagination.

The Roots Spread Wide



New beginnings in self-sufficiency began with development of our vegetable farm and small dairy in the farmlands at Karaipakkam and Sholinganallore. With growing local demand, crèches were started at these villages, which have now grown into a primary school and a high school respectively. Women's welfare schemes now grew to include rural women and others who were trained in numerous life skills and taught to be economically self-reliant. Our Root-zone waste water treatment plant and use of solar energy, aid in conservation of our natural resources.



Dr. V.N.Sharma passed away on 23rd April, 1986, in Kodaikanal, whilst peacefully listening to his favourite music. He left behind a huge intellectual void. Passionate about reading, writing and music, he built up a wonderful library of books for both children and adults.

The Dr. V.N.Sharma library carries his legacy in the school with over 30,000 books. In addition to being a noted scholar with interests in history, mythology and archaeology, he was renowned as a translator of books from Telugu to German, his monumental work being the translation of the Norse myth 'The Edda' into Telugu.

The interest of both Dr. V.N. Sharma and Mrs. Ellen Sharma in Indian heritage and archaeology is commemorated in the establishment of the Sharma Centre for Heritage Education, dedicated to fulfilling their love for these subjects.



Expressing ourselves through art!



In the 1982 Annual Report, we could state that '...experiments and the experimental approach certainly do not any longer belong only to laboratory subjects'. Today, our junior and senior science laboratories for physics, chemistry, botany and zoology, foster in our children a sense of wonder in the laws of nature and a curiosity to explore the world around them.



Through the years our school has won numerous awards –in art, craft, music, dance, literary or sports competitions and in the field of academics. Our performance on the occasion of the Republic Day Parade has won numerous awards through the years, with our dances showcasing the multicultural and secular values of our school.



By the late 1990's, computers entered our school and since then, we have established both junior and senior computer laboratories for all our schools. With an interactive smart class, LCD's and extensive use of electronic teaching aids, we are now set to enter the new decade, where changes in technology will dominate our lifestyles.

A Golden Era



In 1987, we celebrated our Golden Jubilee. The President of India, late Shri R. Venkataraman, presided over this grand occasion, and in a letter dated August 29th, 1987, he wrote, 'The Children's Garden School, Madras, lives upto its name. Having spent 50 years in the care of children, it is now regarded as one of the most distinguished institutions of our country. I have great pleasure in extending my best wishes for the flowering of many a blossom in this Garden School in the years to come'. Mr. P.C.Alexander, Governor of Tamil Nadu, also graced the occasion.



Recognising the phenomenal teaching and leadership skills of Ms. Sakunthala Sharma, the Government of Tamil Nadu awarded her the prestigious Dr. Radhakrishnan Award in the year 1990. She was also awarded the National Award of Indian Council of Child Education, New Delhi in 1987. The Rotary Club of Madras presented her with the "For the Sake of Honour" Award. The Kailaimagal Award was presented to her by the Saraswathi Ammal Education Society in 1986. She was the first recipient of the Lady Kalyani Best Teacher Award by the National Boys and Girls Society.

Founders Day... through the years !



Our Annual Founder's Day has been celebrated in many different ways through the years. Many dignitaries have graced these events and their words of encouragement have given us enormous self-confidence to forge ahead.

Ever Forward



When Ms. Sakunthala Sharma retired, Ms. Lalitha Natarajan took over as headmistress, followed by Mrs. Saraswathi Raghunathan and at present Mrs. R. M. Karpagambal:-leading our school to new heights. We soon started a one year diploma in Teachers' Training. The Primary Section, Kindergarten and crèche were consolidated into a separate school building by 2002, under the able governance of Mrs. Rukmini Pappu.



"Our Yoga Class" - by one of our special children



A new phase of inclusive education for challenged 'special' children now began. Although 'inclusion' was practiced from early days, it was taken to new heights with development of our own educational programs for challenged children, training of special educators, in-house speech therapy, physiotherapy and counseling. This is a great success and our happiest moments are to see our challenged children learn to become self-reliant and to lead independent and happy lives.



Helping others has been the strongest motivation of our school family. Whether it be helping victims of natural disasters, such as the tsunami, raising our voices on social issues, helping younger children, training in handling crisis situations, or just helping out by serving meals to one's classmates.....we are there for society.



NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME
THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN
MT. SFC SCHOOL
APR 1961

Expanding and
improving the

STATEMENT (b)
OF

Topic

Little Diamonds



For us, each child has the potential to shine like a diamond in their own way. With this vision in mind, we celebrated our Diamond Jubilee in 1997, honoured by the presence of Mr. C. Subramaniam, former Governor of Maharashtra and other dignitaries.



With well-stocked libraries in our primary and middle and high school, our children explore the world of books. With over 30,000 books, magazines, dictionaries, encyclopoedia's and DVD's, we ensure that our children do not neglect the art of reading for fun, and to awaken their creativity and imagination.



Exploring the world of books!



Competitions & prizes: apart of our life!



70 Years and Forward

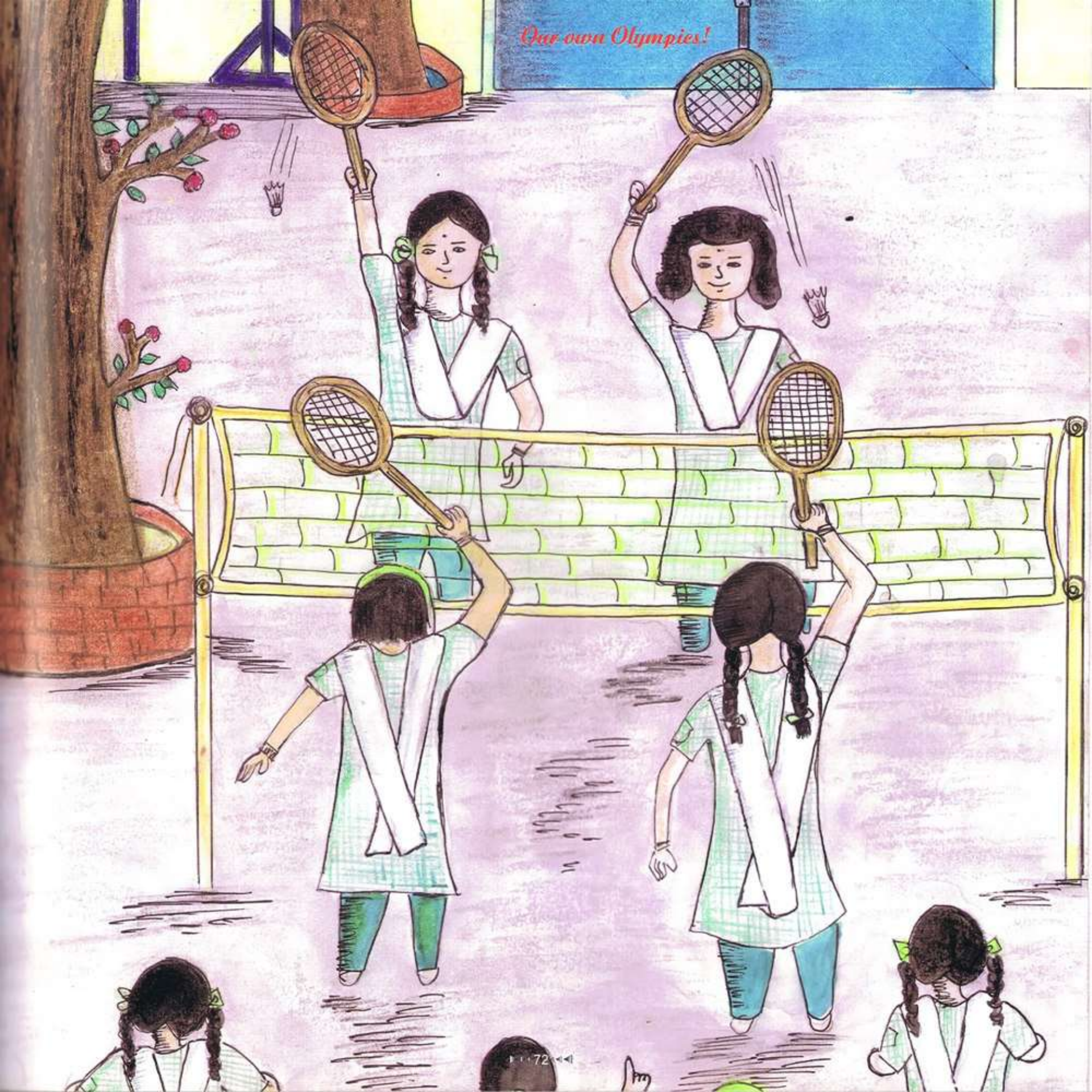


We celebrated our 70th Anniversary in the presence of eminent personalities - Chief Justice Karpagavinayagam, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Dr. Umamahaheswari. Mr. A.V.M. Saravanan, our committee member, helped us produce an excellent documentary on the history of the school. We brought out a beautiful illustrated volume on the history of our 70 year long journey.



Participating is more fun than winning!

Our own Olympics!



The Eternal Banyan ...



These 75 years have witnessed joys and sorrows, times of great success and those of immense financial stress. These years have seen our growth from a small family of 7 children to an ever-expanding garden of over 3000 children, teachers and staff. With new projects, programs of 'integrated' education, sports, a children's museum, the Dr. V.N.Sharma library, art, craft, music and dance classes, a range of educational clubs and groups, teacher's refresher courses and educational development, women's welfare and more.....our branches take root in all aspects of the sphere of children's education and care. Children who have passed through our school are now scattered all over the world-yet they carry wonderful memories of their days with us. They are the future of India and it is through their vision and dreams that our country can change for the better, adapting to future challenges, uniting all irrespective of social or religious barriers, and living in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance. It is upto them to spread our values of helping those who are less fortunate, of giving another child an opportunity to be educated; and to pass on the positive values imbibed in our school.



Serving the girl child has been a vital part of our school ethos. In the face of long-standing marginalization of women in our society, our school has been a pioneer in the field of educating girls. Our girls evolve into confident young women, capable of obtaining equality and self-respect in society.



Designing our lives ...

A colorful illustration featuring a large tree with a thick brown trunk and a full green canopy. A white rectangular sign with a brown border is attached to the trunk. On either side of the tree are purple window frames with white panes. In the foreground, a yellow scroll with the word 'LETTER'S' in a dark red, stylized font is unrolled. The background is a light yellow wall, and the floor is made of green and grey tiles.

LETTER'S

MY REMINISCENCES

I develop nostalgic memories when I think of our school. It was a Wednesday in the second quarter of 1976. I don't remember the date or month. I was working in a reputed Publishing firm and my children were studying in the Children's Garden School. Bright and brilliant, the principal Mrs. Ellen Sharma called me and informed me about the demise of a committee member, Sri .P. Rajagopalan and her decision to induct me in his place in the committee of Management. The following Wednesday she called me up again and informed me of the Parent – Teacher Association. She suggested that I take it up and run the Association. I was stunned, but I accepted the invitation. I was made the first president of the P.T.A and with her blessings and along with other members I could successfully run the Association for well over eleven years when I left it for others to continue. The open-heartedness, broad-mindedness and vision of Mrs. Ellen Sharma impressed me very much. Besides, her occidental qualities like sense of duty and punctuality together with other qualities of calmness, patience and faith in humans made me take up the responsibility. Mrs. Ellen Sharma was a great administrator besides a great educationist from whom all of us have learnt much and will continue to learn. I pay my tributes to her with my respectful PRANAMS.

**Mr. J. Lakshminarayanan,
Committee Member**

EXPERIENCES – STEPPING STONES TO SUCCESS

The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri said, "Blessed are they that enter the profession of teaching and feel its joy." Is there a joy at all in teaching? Yes, there is, provided a teacher has the right attitude

towards the profession. The thrill in sharing the knowledge and wisdom one gained with those who wish to gain cannot be described. Such is the greatness of the profession that I chose forty-five years ago when I stepped into the Garden School as a young and fresh graduate from college. Nervously I entered the Headmistress room and all my answers were only monosyllabic. That was the year when the school was upgraded as a High School. Besides Maths, English and Social Science, I was allotted Hindi, Arts and Crafts. Poor as I am at drawing I had a bleak look on my face. 'Make use of the charts' was the answer I got. Then I realized that a teacher should not only have mastery over the subjects she teaches but also in other co-curricular activities. A week later, I submitted my lesson plan in Maths (Std-IX). My friend and I took all the pains to write 30 pages for 30 days of the month. What a good laugh Akka had! An unforgettable incident in my career! Once I was given an opportunity to present a cultural programme in the International Geography Conference held at Kalaivanar Arangam. A tableau on the 'Five Elements' presented at that juncture won the applause of the audience. A skit on 'Uncle Podger Hangs a Picture' during an inspection stunned the inspectress so much that she wondered whether it was so difficult to hang a picture. 'The Bishop's Candlestick' enacted on the stage in the Annual Variety Entertainment moved the hearts of everyone, for the bishop and the thief performed their roles so exquisitely that I learnt the importance of role play that uses the imagination and takes learners out of themselves. Visuals always have a greater impact on the students; hence projects played a vital role in the Garden School. When the tenth standard students exhibited a project on 'Mediterranean lands', Akka came to the class but none of the girls opened their mouths. Angrily she said 'Repeat it' and left the place. On the other hand, when a group of teachers from Japan visited the school, a project on 'Italy' won the praise of all. On another occasion, while I was teaching seriously, a girl was busy copying the designs seen on my sari. I wasn't angry with the girl but understood that it is incumbent on the part of the

teacher to set a good example in all respects, including her dress and appearance. A class adjacent to the headmistress's room is not a welcome one, for you are always being observed. The bitter experience of being called for after a dictation class in Std-VI enlightened me on the importance of preparing before hand to make your class impressive and effective.

Another memorable episode in my career was an excursion to Chengee. Due to some unforeseen circumstances we returned very late in the night and got a good scolding from Akka. Since the school is the second home to the children, greater responsibility lies in the hands of the teachers and we felt the need for the safety and security of the children. In-service courses stimulate a teacher and assist in her career advancement. I attended more than thirty in-service courses which enriched my professional knowledge. I had the unique opportunity of attending the three months special training in ELT at the Regional Institute of English at Bangalore. The teacher who is also a life-long learner is the teaching profession's most valuable asset.

The Garden School, where a homely atmosphere prevails encourages a teacher to enjoy her teaching with a feeling of supreme satisfaction and to gain a mastery over what she has to teach and also the skills of teaching. In conclusion, we can say that when a teacher enjoys teaching, students enjoy learning. The more a teacher gives the more she gains. She chooses to remain a ladder upon which her students can climb and scale new heights far beyond the reach of their preceptors. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, 'Not gold but only teachers can make a people great and strong'. The Garden School trains any one who enters the profession to master the art of teaching and feels the joy of it.

Dr. N. Lalitha,
Retd. Headmistress,
Children's Garden School Society

MY REMINISCENCE OF THE GREAT ALMA MATER

Memories crowd my mind when I think of the days I spent at the Children's Garden school, not one or two years but a full 36 years, which have become part of myself. The green trees, the fresh air, the jungle gym, the slide near the entrance and the smiling Mrs. Ellen Sharma, who took me into the office room the day I joined the school as a teacher are fresh in my memory.

I consider this as a great school, not because of its number; the school is big to me not because of its size. I know that the school has great reputation not because of the achievements over the years, but all these attributes are because of the lofty ideals, with which it was established prior to our independence by the great Sharma's. The school is still going strong without an iota of deviation from these ideals. This has made a great impression in the minds of all the stakeholders-the pupils, parents, society and teacher.

Identifying individual's worth and facilitating the development of the individual in their own capacity had paved way for many of the students to what they are today.' Teachers need not teach; as learning should occur in the individual from within' - is the message that is delivered in the teacher development program today; but this was in practice right from the inception of the school. In this school, the children are never judged on the grade they obtain, but are respected for the talent they have; and children classified wrongly by others as being 'dull students' are not branded so but are given opportunity to develop themselves with their own ability. Producing cent percent results continuously for decades is not considered to be the mission of the school and has not been highlighted as one of the accomplishments of the school, but enabling each individual to blossom out in their own way, is the accomplishment that stands out. It is for this reason our alumni are eager to come back to reveal what they are today.

As a fresher from the training college when I joined the school, in 1975, I was confused to teach a child with hearing impairment in the class who was also not able to speak. I came to Mrs. Sharma, and asked her, how I would teach that student all lessons. Mrs. Sharma told me 'look at the eyes of the child and teach what you have to teach and repeat it to the whole class; the child would follow your lip movement and to make the child repeat what you have taught keep the child's hands on your cheek to make her feel the vibration so that she would try to reproduce the sound!' This was the only school at that time to have 'inclusion' so naturally blended with the mainstream!

I recall the day when I had my first "Project" in geography with the VI class students. When Mrs. Sharma and Dr. Sharma visited the class to see the project, I was awaiting to get a great appreciation from them. They visited class, listened to every child and turned to the students who were quietly sitting and asked me why they have not been given any chance. I said that these children were not so good in explaining the project. Both of them called the children and made them stand near the exhibit and made them say a few words; they told me to give opportunity to all the children irrespective of their capability and made me understand the disappointment of those students who were not given chance. This enabled me to involve all the students in all the activities according to their capacity.

Another moment which I can never forget is the opportunity given to me on the very first year of my service, to hoist the flag on the Republic Day! When Mrs. Sharma called me and asked whether I would hoist the flag on 26th January 1976, I was overwhelmed to accept it and in my own foolish way, assumed myself to be the chief guest and thought that I should be present as a guest at the exact time only to hoist the flag. I arrived at exactly 8.00 am and Mrs. Sharma and Ms. Sakunthala Sharma were waiting for me at the gate. Mrs. Sharma welcomed me and took me

in, while the whole school was watching. I became too small before her nobility! Later on, my mentors in the school chided me saying that I should have come earlier like other teachers!

I can vouch say that no school would have given opportunity to the junior most teacher to act as guest! I am moulded by the school in ever so many ways.

Dr. Saraswathi Raghunathan
Retd. Headmistress,
Children's Garden School Society

HUMBLE AND REVERENTIAL OBEISANCES TO THE NOBLEST OF SOULS.

"Entharo mahanubhavulu andbariki vandanamulu" sang Saint Thyagaraja in his monumental pancharatna krithi. It eludes me if the bard of Thiruvaiyaru has included in his directory of mahanubhavulu such erudite scholar-educationists like Dr. Sharma and Mrs. Ellen Sharma. If only the saint were amongst us today, he would, without a second thought, have done so.

My mind goes back to a salubrious January morning in the year 1971, January 4 to be precise. My mother took me to this school – our school, to meet Mrs. Sharma. What a pleasant surprise I had! Mrs. Sharma welcomed me with open arms and the broadest of affectionate smiles. I had gone there with some trepidation to put my two daughters in the school, and this meeting was astounding. Mrs. Sharma with the least hesitancy took in my daughters in the second and third standards.

What was beyond belief was that Mrs. Sharma offered to take me in as a teacher from the ensuing academic year! She, thus, showered two boons on me. She had the great heart and magnanimity to look upon me as one of her daughters.

Thus started the teaching journey of this nondescript person. The blessings, guidance, well wishes and the drive of our akkas paved the way for me to scale academic heights steadily rung by rung. I owe what I am today to Mrs. Sharma and our akkas.

I venture to delve into the visions and vistas of the Sharmas in the sphere of schooling and education. "Every child should have access to schooling and education." This was the base on which they raised the edifice of education. The Fundamental Right to Education came 74 years later! Their ideology was that "there should be no disparity in consistence with social status, economic background or religion, and most importantly the ability or the lack of it." The seeds of "inclusive education" were sown by the Sharmas 75 years ago. Their methodologies were neither entirely play-oriented nor unbending classroom teaching. Theirs was a judicious and concrete blend of these. Their methodologies were child-centric, child friendly and play-way. They passed on these methodologies and the baton to our akkas under whom the shoot has spread out into a huge banyan tree. Our akkas taking up the cue from where Mrs. Sharma left off have made our school a temple of knowledge and wisdom. It is not merely a place of teaching and learning. High moral values take precedence over studies. Its goal is to groom the icons of tomorrow. I imbibed these methodologies from our akkas.

Led by the guiding spirit of Mrs. Sharma our akkas went a step ahead, and brought in "the integrated system of education" decades ago. Few schools in Tamil Nadu and India have such a system of education as ours. I am firmly convinced that our school is a torchbearer, forerunner, and front-runner in this unique sphere.

Our akkas are the doers, and I happily lend a helping shoulder. To serve all the children our akkas motivated me to do M.Phil. in 'special education'.

Forty-one years have gone by, and looking back, I feel I have learnt in full caring for all the children. I feel gratified to care for the

children in whom I see the Sharmas. May the noble souls of the mahanubhavulu bless me to continue to serve our school and the children.

Saroja Balasubramanian M.A., M.Ed., M.Phil
Principal, Mrs. Ellen Sharma Memorial Nursery and Primary School (The Children's Garden School Society)

LOOKING BACK.....

It is always a pleasure to recall one's happy days especially the best part of life between 30 and 60 years where in you can give back to Society something as a token of gratitude. Two professions will always compete with each other towards this goal. One is a doctor and the other is a teacher; while the former moulds the healthy life, the later develops (desirable knowledge) healthy mind.

My association with the school started in 1985-86 as a teacher trainee; just ahead of the Golden Jubilee and by God's grace still continues this day – the year of Platinum Jubilee. Both as a student and as a KG teacher, each day presented a different experience – Rewarding always and enjoyable at the end though we had some taxing times in between. Starting the day with the morning prayer with the smiling kids, neatly dressed coupled with their characteristic individual mannerisms, I longed every Monday to look at their beaming faces. The first few days in June will rejuvenate me with enthusiasm because I had to play the role of an affectionate mother, reliable friend and of course respected teacher all at one time.

I recall many instances when some challenged (special) children refused to go to higher classes or change the school because they did not like to leave my class. Many children who have grown up into charming girls introduce themselves even now when I

chance to meet them at social functions and recall the happy days and enquire about other teachers individually which is really gratifying and satisfying.

No teacher can ever forget the come September days (7th and 8th). The Founder's and Annual Day celebration. The festive and electrifying atmosphere makes every one alert, full of energy and enthusiasm for the cultural performance of our kids at the auditorium. The visits of VIP at such functions, regular visits of foreigners in the same profession and of course the Government officials always keep us on our toes in our effort to reach the zenith.

While the National days, 15th August and 26th January were always celebrated fittingly With due respect they deserve, who can forget the special functions on 15th Nov., Mrs. Ellen Sharma's birthday celebrated in style and the solemn observance on 23rd April commemorating Dr. V. N. Sharma. Beginning with a special soulful rendering of Classical music/bhajans by an eminent artists followed by lunch it heralded the closure of the school for summer vacation.

The visits to various branches of our school at Sholinganallore and Karapakkam gave us a refreshing experience. Here, teaching kids exposed to different social strata, under more serene and lush green atmosphere was enthralling. It was a unique opportunity to be felt and experienced rather than being told or heard. Attending workshops at other venues like Bala Mandir, Madhuram Narayanan Centre, Vidhya Sagar school, Clarke school, The spastic Society of India etc., as a representative of the school, vested more responsibility and provided a good exposure to activities in similar schools; contact with personalities who have been doing excellent service in teaching profession and provided opportunities to implement the same wherever feasible.

Apart from the children and the excellent hospitality, the best atmosphere which I recall in our school is the un-paralled ambience of the computer corner gifted by The Promise

Foundation, Bangalore. It is a pleasure to be there in the Kid Smart Centre.

Every time I found that the children were reluctant to leave the computer centre after the time is over. I was equally reluctant to lock the Kidsmart centre to signal the closure of their bustling activity. Any visitor to this centre will be amazed to see how the atmosphere changes the kids into fully active children. They enjoy every second and they are fully transformed.

I have only highlighted what it came to my mind. This and many other happy incidents will come back to my memory to make my retirement days more enjoyable in retrospect. And to think that I took the training course and the teaching profession more out of self interest to relieve me of my boredom during early years of my marriage, it is becoming the best part of my life makes me feel that I am indeed blessed.

Vijayalakshmi Ganesan

**MRS. ELLEN SHARMA AND DR. V.N.
SHARMA-GURU DEVO BHAVA**

In 1937, on Vijayadasami day, my sister Kasturi and myself were taken to the sylvan atmosphere of the Children's Garden School at Dwarka Colony, by my working mother and grandfather. There, we met our mentors, Mrs. Ellen Sharma and Dr. V.N. Sharma. This was the first step into the voyage of learning the three 'R's. My mother wanted a safe place for her girls to grow and learn to meet life with self sufficiency and dignity. She requested the Sharma teachers to admit us as boarders and attend school. Mrs. Sharma in her own unique way welcomed us saying, 'Children, meet your friends, Gita and Rukku'. This marked a novel entry to study the three R's. The school was an open playground, with umbrella of green trees and fresh air, appearing like a gurukula. The simple and unique toys and small games were given to us to play and learn the fundamentals of numbers, reading and writing. My mother, visiting after a month, said that it was God's blessing, that brought us to the Sharma teachers and their school. Unfortunately, World War II, broke our sojourn with the school in 1940, as we had to evacuate from the city and travel to the outskirts. During the break period, we were made to attend a neighbouring school. This shocked and shattered me and I became an inattentive and problematic child.

Destiny had a surprise one day. I met Dr. Sharma with his shoulder bag, waiting at the bus stop at Edward Elliots Road. I rushed to him with my sister and told him I would like to come back to the Garden School. He smiled and took us both immediately to Mrs. Sharma in the present premises. We met once again our dear friends, Gita and Rukku, with the surprise of another baby Chakku. That same day, my mother visited the Sharma teachers and admitted us as boarders at the Brindavan hostel and pupils of the Children's Garden School. Now let me share the hostel life first. There were more than a dozen students of all faiths and languages. It was a miniature world where in addition to learning the three R's, we learnt the art of harmonious living with different cultures and faiths and ways of life. This helped us gain humanistic

values irrespective of colour, caste or creed.

At the hostel we celebrated Diwali, Dussehra and Christmas with joy and enthusiasm. At the school, the 'Winter Festivities' were organized like a community fair where the teachers and students came together to display their handicrafts, cooking, games and had great fun. Christmas was unique as Mrs. Ellen Sharma on Christmas eve, would narrate the birth of Jesus, comparing it with the birth of Krishna. The hostel would be a hum of activities as every one of us would prepare a gift for the others and share it in our Christmas display.

Next, it is my personal journey and my relationship with my mentors that I would like to share. The small break-away period at my early schooling stage had left me so badly hurt, that I became a loner and rebellious, studying the subject I liked and neglecting others. The acid test of this venture came, when I had to go another school from the 9th standard onwards. Mrs. Ellen Sharma was called to the school and told to take me away. Sharma teacher smiled and said that she would take me home. To me she said, 'Don't worry. You'll study and do well'. She put me at the Sister Subbakakshmi tuition centre to coach me for the matriculation exam. This changed my behavior. I wish to thank Mrs. Sharma who made me, an ugly duckling, change for the better and I finished with a rank in my matriculation exams. Mrs. Sharma's trust in me and her encouragement and kindness made me train as a medical doctor.

The Sharmas once again gave me an entry into the school as the school doctor. Mrs. Sharma also made me train Kindergarten teachers. Their deeds prove to me the value of the school motto:- 'Let none be like another, yet each be like the highest. How can that be? Let each be perfect in himself'.

Mrs. Ellen Sharma was an example of a true spirit sent to help all and to be compassionate forever. Dr. Sharma, the philosopher, laid the foundation for us to accept that learning is a continuous process to reach eternal perfection. My salutation to these revered teachers.

Dr.K.R. Ambuja

My name is Balaji; I am now 72 years old. My school, Children's Garden School is completing its' 75th year, and I travel back in my memories to my 'baby class', that is how it was known as in those days, now it is better known as LKG and UKG. I studied up to the 4th class in my school. I remember Dr. Sharma and Mrs. Ellen Sharma, that wonderful couple who created this beautiful school. I also remember Ms. Sundari who looked after the hostel and also the regular classes. I remember Mr. Sriramulu who looked after the administration. Ms. Santhalakshmi was well versed in conducting the annual day celebrations with dramas and dances choreographed professionally. She used to come to our house which was just opposite our school to have a cup of coffee made by my mother, Mrs. Kanakavalli Gopalan and they would discuss drama and music.

Our respected Chakku Akka was two or three years junior to me, she was studying in the same school at that time. Later, the school conducted its Annual day celebrations in the Music Academy. I still remember, how, during the drama when children make noise Ms Ellen Sharma would come on stage and say 'Children!'; you could see that the next moment the whole auditorium would have pin-drop silence, such was the respect she commanded. Our chakku akka also commands the same respect, she need only to say 'Children', and the entire auditorium, including parents obeys her commands. Today, I am a triple graduate and a retired official from a reputed airline; this is only because of the high quality education and discipline I received from the great institution CHILDREN'S GARDEN SCHOOL.

Balaji

I am Nithya, an 'all-round product' of the school. I am a High School Science teacher today. I am extremely grateful to my Headmistress Chakku Akka, and my beloved teachers for moulding me into an all-rounder. I was the school pupil leader, guides captain and sports captain which gave me the ability to face challenges in life and all credit goes to my school. I was a happy child always in that evergreen campus. It was a pleasure to be in school. I feel proud that my school is celebrating the 75th year.

Nithya

MY DAYS AT THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN SCHOOL

My first impression was the friendly atmosphere of the school with all its trees and cleanliness. Akka welcomed me with a smile. It is as if everything happened yesterday. All these years have passed in a flash. It was not at any particular moment that I decided I would be a teacher. But when I started to teach at CGHS, I realized that there was a vocation waiting for me, suited to my temperament and training and not just a job. It was an important discovery, a life-changing awareness.

Teachers have a decisive role to play in advancement of the society and the individual student. Teachers have to understand this role, believe in it and be proactive in accepting and living this role.

I was given space to be creative, freedom to experiment, which made teaching experience for me a joy rather than a chore. The school's ideal was to treat each child as an individual. Given the diversity of environment from which children come, this ideal expressed itself in bringing out the best in a child, be it academics, sports, performing arts or any other activity. This ideal appealed to me. I was encouraged to come up with ideas and given freedom to try them out. A teacher must be willing to motivate and care for the student, not only the child who studies well, but each and every student. To get to this stage of maturity took some time for me. It was an enriching process of growth as a teacher and as a person.

Many teachers who were teaching at the school at the time I entered were legendary for their skills, teachers I could emulate. I was fortunate to be here when stalwarts were present to guide me, to help set goals, to be supportive to me at time of doubt and crisis. There was hard work, disappointments and frustration; there was also joy and satisfaction, Closeness of a family among the teachers with Akka as the Mother figure. It has been a long and fulfilling

journey. As a biology teacher, I was given every facility to improve my skills and function efficiently. Computers and other teaching aids were freely available. I was sent to seminars and orientation courses to learn new skills and concepts.

Children taught me a few things as well. They responded positively to my teaching, shared their moments of enthusiasm with me. They overwhelmed me with love and affection. Many of them came back to the school years later, with stories of success and happiness in their lives, sought me out to tell me that they remembered me with good feeling in their heart.

My most productive work in the school was in the area of environmental education. Working for better awareness of the environment among children and teachers, designing projects and participating in implementing them, cooperating with NGOs on tree planting campaigns and anti-pollution rallies, spending time with students in organising various activities, camping on our school farm – bird watching, studying insects, observing plants, enjoying the breeze – all these have made my life as a teacher rewarding.

When I retired. I left the school with wonderful memories and strong relationships with students, colleagues and my superiors.

**C. R. Vijayalakshmi,
Biology Teacher and Headmistress (retired)**

MY LIFE AT SCHOOL

My memory lingers gracefully and gratefully when I look upon my institution trumpeting its way through 75 years.

I entered into the school premises as a student trainee in 1970 and was highly privileged to serve as a Kindergarten teacher till 1988 and then as a Headmistress in the KG Section for nearly 33 years.

During my tenure here with the utmost care and guidance of our founders Mrs. Ellen Sharma and Akka, I had the opportunity to mature into a wholesome teacher. It helped me and enabled me to achieve the capacity to manage the KG section. Everything seemed to be a learning experience for me in the beginning. The goal and objective of childhood development which involved all round total integrated and balanced development of the child in the kindergarten level (2 1/2 to 6 years) was well understood as years rolled by. The children who had special needs were given special attention by our caring teachers. We took care to develop each domain by giving each child a wide variety of play based activities (almost every week in all the subjects)

Our founder believed that freedom is a very important element in the education of the child. Strict discipline is harmful for the creativity of children. All my teachers in KG were very considerate, co-operative and extended their full support during my tenure in the school. I also had occasions to conduct seminars, workshops for KG teachers and be a part of a faculty with the Training Section. The various programmes conducted in KG section helped me to know my potential which was brought to light by our dear founder and akka. One can never forget the grand Celebration of KG Annual Sports Day where all the children of KG (LKG to Std.II) where nearly 800 would participate in various events. Each child would be presented with gifts thereby

avoiding the feeling of discrimination among them. Likewise, our KG Projects, puppetry, story-telling, music and dance shows were colourful, innovative and child oriented. As per our Founders' wish, it had the participation of each and every child in a class. We involved parents too in our activity and avoided unnecessary burden on the child. I pleasantly observed how the children would proudly narrate their parts when their parents visited their events. The art and craft classes were considered as the most effective medium which allowed creative expression for children to express themselves and experience the joy in doing so. I could recall how the children were thrilled to see their works of art in the walls of their classrooms and craft items neatly arranged in the display boards/ tables.

It was a great privilege bestowed upon me by dear akka to present a paper on "Play and child Development" at the Malaysian International Conference on Child Development in 2000 (Sept.5-8). The encouragement rendered by Akka enabled me to write and publish LKG, UKG Text books by Macmillan publishers in 2004. Thus my day would start in the school with the beautiful smiles of the children and end with their contented laughter. I cherish the sweet memories of my stay in the school forever.

My humble pranams to the great founders of our school whose vision has expanded to this level and I pray for the school to witness many more centenary celebrations.

Geetha Kannan
(ex) KG Headmistress

I record humbly and with lot of respect, my experience with Children's Garden School here. The school's role is very valuable in my life and carry lots of sweet memories which are unforgettable. My career spanning more than thirty years was no doubt a turning point in my life because I started my career when my son was one month old. i.e., June 1973. I joined the Kindergarten Teachers' Training and under the guidance of our Founder Mrs. Ellen Sharma I could successfully complete the course. I was influenced by her encouragement and appreciation and soon I was appointed as a KG teacher in the prestigious school. With the help of eminent teachers in the KG section I groomed myself as a dedicated and sincere one among them. In due course I was promoted to training section as a Teacher Educator and during that period I was awarded Best and Creative teacher for my performance. My school has deputed me for many workshops and educational seminars in and around the country and abroad too to share the valuable ideas of the Play way method of Kindergarten. At present I am a sub committee member in Tamil Nadu Open University and a faculty for the KG methods for the Diploma Course for teachers. I feel proud and honoured to say that I have trained about 400 teachers and taught 5000 children in my tenure of service in Children's Garden School. I have also been recommended by Ms Sakunthala Sharma and Mrs Rukku Pappu, our beloved correspondents to guide many schools in Tamilnadu to start a Kindergarten with play way method. I conclude my article with heartfelt greetings and best wishes. I thank once again the management for giving me an opportunity to serve the school.

Mrs. Hema Sridhar
1973-2009

MY EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOL

Introduction:

I am Hemamalini Balaji. I have been studying in 'The Children's Garden Higher Secondary School from third standard. It appears to me as though I had entered the wide gates only now; but years had rolled by and it is 10 years since I had entered this wonderful temple.

All the school teachers and students do not wear slippers inside the classrooms for we consider our classrooms as temples. This is a unique feature of our school.

My association with this school is for four decades. Yes, my mother studied in this school and I am the second generation member from my family to be a part of this sacred school.

A Good start:

In our school, we start our day with group prayer. We also have silent prayer everyday which makes both our body and mind fresh. All our mornings began well with pleasant thoughts.

Teachers – best sculptors:

I was a bare rock when I entered into the school in Std 3. Right from the gates everyone of them in this school, especially our teachers had made me into a beautiful well mannered and educated citizen.

Learning – an experience:

All my teachers from Primary till Higher Secondary were so kind and friendly which made my school life a wonderful learning experience. In my school learning is not merely memorizing, it is made a real experience.

Strength and support:

I was only a normally studying student when I entered this school but now I had scored state 6th in 10th Std., with a total of 490. This was possible because of the great strength and support

provided by my school. This achievement is completely attributed to all my teachers who had spent day and night for our progress.

Motto:

My school is also responsible for establishing my leadership capacity. It had helped me a lot in shaping my character. Now I can say proudly that I can move friendly with any one and as a team.

Our school motto:

*"Let none be like another
Yet each be like the highest
How can that be
Let each be perfect in himself"*

Our motto was absolutely followed and taught to every one of us. We were motivated to excel in the field what we are good at.

A home away from home:

I would like to share an incident in my school which really proved again that my school is a home away from home. On the first day of my public examination, I was very nervous. All of us were revising. My hands were shivering in tension. I was scared of the exams. and I was almost crying.

My teachers and our Correspondent akka saw me and they sat with me for a while and made me relax. Holding my hands one of my teacher said "Everything is good; we believe in you!; be confident, you can do anything and everything". Those words really proved to be magical that they brought me back my confidence. At that moment, I realized the motherly care of my school and tears welled my eyes.

Teachers – great inspiration:

It is said that, "A great teacher is the one who inspires the students". In our school, I had many such great teachers who inspired me. We are taught here not only the curriculum but also manners and humanity.

Moral values – We are provided importance and recognition in our school. Everyone is given a chance of leadership at different levels. We are taught the rich ethical and moral value of our Indian culture. We are encouraged and supported by our respected Headmistress and Management to participate in all types of competitions, sports and cultural activities.

Lovely relationship:

In our school – pupil relationship, there lies an invisible umbilical chord. Having enjoyed such a wonderful learning, I assure to send my future generation to study under the care of this vast Banyan Tree!

Conclusion:

My school had withstood all my success and shortcomings and have always pepped me up. The support provided by my school was tremendous. It is not an exaggeration if I say that our school not only produces doctors, engineers, lawyers etc., but creates true human beings and sincere citizens to this country.

For I am always going to be judged on the first count, only because of my alma mater. I say with pride that I am also going to stand as a strong little branch of this vast and wide Spread Banyan Tree!!!

Hemamalini Balaji

MY SCHOOL

Hello! I am K. R. Ilavenil. I studied in the Children's Garden School from crèche to standard V.

I am very proud of my school and I would like to start this essay by thanking my teachers. In my school days I had many friends. They taught me many skills in the school like music, dance, drama, painting, games, etc. My teachers did not merely stop at teaching in the class hours, but they took extra interest in slow learners like I was, and spent time after school hours with us. I remember, that with all their help, I could score cent percent in English! It is very interesting to note that many of my family members were associated with our school. My grandmother, Mrs. Swarnalatha Akilan, retired as a maths teacher, my mother, my aunt and two of my uncles also studied in our school. Our school is very eco friendly and it can be rightly compared with its symbol banyan tree.

The roots can be compared with the aim with which the school was started. The trunk which gives strength is our Principal and branches are the teachers where birds like us come rest and gain knowledge and fly and spread their fragrance.

I am sure that the next generation from our family would also join this school.

K. R. Ilavenil

THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN SCHOOL

The institution founded by Dr. V. N. Sharma and Mrs. Ellen Sharma is a well known institution for children. As the name denotes it is like a garden for children, full of happiness and joy. I was lucky to have had an appointment as a teacher and was given the place of one in charge of the Kindergarten Training Section – a two year course. I have never seen a school where teachers are given concession and friendly treatment as in this one. Owing to my late mentally challenged son, I found it difficult to reach the school in time and at times, was more than 2 hours late. They were still happy to see me attending. You can never see a lady like Mrs. Sharma who was so kind and understanding, that I was able to work there for more than 25 years. All the teachers in the school including the clerical staff were friendly and nice there. I was only too happy to go to school where I could spend a peaceful happy time. My students too have been very nice to me and I had a pleasant time there. The results of the trainees were good and I was happy with that.

I wish the school will flourish more and more and may God bless Gita Sharma, Rukmini and Sakunthala Sharma for their kind hearted life and service in their teaching profession.

R. James

ABODE OF LEARNING

School is a temple of learning; but for me it is a home away from home.

The minute we passed through the school gate our enjoyment started. The teachers taught us values of life along with the syllabus. Ms. Sakunthala Sharma (Chakku akka as we call her) was our role model. Her English drama class was a treat to our eyes and ears. Once in her class, all of a sudden she asked all of us to stand up and turn to right; not knowing our mistake we followed. We saw all the Kindergarten kids swaying in a rhythmic way to the rhymes. Then we learnt that "our happiness lies in seeing others being happy". Her teaching made geography an interesting and easy subject.

Being a shy student, Chakku akka encouraged me to take part in English Oratorical Competition. She made me feel like a star with the consolation prize I got; this taught me that "you are a star for your teacher". Christopher teacher brought home-made bottle gourd sweets for us and taught us "sharing is caring". Mischief was always there in the class, but the entire class took the blame— "unity in diversity". The winter festival was an occasion to show our knowledge through projects. With knowledge and satisfaction we came out of the school gate looking forward for another beautiful day. The teachers moulded us in such a way that it helped me to be a good lecturer.

I salute all my teachers for what I am today – a human being in real sense.

K. Jyothirmayi

MY REMINISCENCES OF A GREAT SCHOOL

I am proud to say that I am a former student of The Children's Garden School. I did my primary level and high school level schooling at this school. I owe what I am today to the constructive and positive education I had at this school, my school. A great school does not rest content with imparting education. It goes much beyond, and moulds the students' character, behavior, and discipline. My period of study at my school has shown me the way how to run a school. I take care to run the school I have the privilege to head on the same methods of my school. I humbly salute my school.

The principles of Continuous Comprehensive Plan's co-curricular activities now being enforced were followed by my school— even when I was in the V standard at my school. I remember very well even today a project on modes of transport we did. The great Mrs. Ellen Sharma was thrilled at this project work. Mrs. Sharma personally took the visitors around. Sakku Akka used to take English language classes and social studies for the X standard. I still keep Akka's classes in my mind. I try to emulate Akka when I give directions to the teachers of my school. These are moments for me to cherish. I shall always carry the fond memories. I salute this school again.

Vidya Muralidharan M.Sc., B.Ed. M.B.A
Principal Army Public School,
Artillery Centre, Golconda, Hyderabad-31.

MY ASSOCIATION WITH THE CGHS

*Let none be like another
Yet each be like the highest
How can that be?*

Let each be perfect in himself - Goethe

This is not just the school motto – it is a living, breathing value practiced by the school.

My association with the school days goes way back to the early years of the school as my husband is an old student of the school. My brothers-in-law studied here too and it has certainly been a home away from home for our clan. My first physical association with the school started when I admitted my daughter in Class I. In many ways it was a starting point of many independent decisions I was to take in the coming years.

My craving to be a working woman could not be satiated initially due to various personal constraints. The school came to my help, when I chose to do my KG Training here. That training transformed me and empowered me as an individual. Soon after I took courage in my hands and met Sakku Akka on the infamous black steps near the office room and made a literal plea to be given a chance to work in the school. The sum and substance of the interview: 'Yes you can join us' laid the first stone in my career path.

I was a middle school teacher and then there was no looking back. Instead of being in the sidelines as wife and mother, I plunged into the mainstream of my association with CGHS. As I grew in my professionalism, I also had the inspiration to equip myself further. So I did my M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., and B.L.I.S. programmes. I am grateful to the school because the management gave me recognition for every qualification and I started handling students from Class VI to XII. I was also given an added responsibility of being the school librarian which task I fondly

remember and cherish to this day. Along with Ms. Saradamba teacher I classified and catalogued the books in the library and enriched myself as an individual along the way.

When I wanted to do my doctorate, what else could have been a topic other than the school and its Founder? This was my only way of paying homage to the school that has given me a new lease of life. My continual association to this day with the school extends to the extended family, the Sholinganallore branch where I contributed my might as a historian along with Dr. Shanti Pappu. My retirement days of long emptiness are made brighter, thanks to my memory of the school.

'Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man' – Swami Vivekananda I humbly bow my head in the presence of this institution which has brought forth the Individual the woman, the historian, the librarian, the friend in me.

Dr. Lakshmi Viswanathan

My greetings and congratulations to the seventy fifth anniversary of our school. It is no wonder to say that the Almighty is also showering blessings and wishes for the anniversary and also wishes us to achieve to the heights of education. Now I feel proud to scribble a few lines, to bring out the best and special souvenir of our Children's Garden Higher Secondary School. I really wonder how our beloved, great founders Mrs. Ellen Sharma and Dr. Sharma chose the name of the school and its logo the Banyan tree. What can one say—Is it their divinity or intuition? I would like to quote here from Bhagavad Gita "The power of God is with you at all times through the activities of mind, senses, breathing and emotions; and is constantly doing all the work using you as mere instruments". This is not a creation or discovery but divine emerging or bringing something new from the situation or environment from our dear founders minds to select the name of the school—Children's Garden School and the emblem the Banyan Tree.

Now let us see the divinity of the 'Banyan tree'. It is a divine tree and symbolizes our school's growth. Of the eternal Akshaya Vada Vruksham of the trees that the Siddhas hold in great esteem, two are particularly important. These are the Banyan tree and the Peepul tree. In Sanskrit Akshaya Vruksham is the Banyan tree which symbolizes the eternal regeneration of the universe. The scriptures often cite Banyan tree as a symbol of creation. Shiva in his manifestation as the teacher of the universe (Dakshina Moorthi) remains seated under the Banyan tree; thus symbolizing Lordship over all of creation. Thus the Banyan tree is unique in that it starts out growing upward like any other tree but then it sends out aerial roots from its branches downwards the ground and the cycle continues.

So this Banyan tree that is "Akshaya Vruksham" is one who is indestructible and ever lasting. It is an attribute of divinity.

Lord Krishna says he is Akshaya and he is the everlasting divinity in Chapter 10 of the Gita. As far as the popular divine concept of the term "Akshaya Vruksham", the Banyan Tree yearns eternally to do good and to grow endlessly.

May "Akshaya Vruksham" be true to his name and flow to each and every one to develop health, wealth and to reach the goal of our school.

Om Sri Poorana Akshaya Vada Vrukshaya Namaha!
Om Sri Poorana Akshaya Vada Vrukshame Potri!

Going back to my memories in this school, my golden period of 34 years, I have taught pre-primary and primary classes in the school with a committed group of teachers, and under the able guidance of Mrs. Ellen Sharma and her three daughters, Ms. Gita Sharma, Mrs. Rukmini Pappu and Ms. Sakunthala Sharma, our beloved Akkas. I feel proud to say after taking voluntary retirement from my dear school which is my second home, I still implement the methods that I learnt in other international schools in Bengaluru, which great educationists and the ministers in Karnataka recognize and appreciate. I dedicate all my academic credits to Dr. and Mrs. Sharma and to my dear Akkas. I am fascinated by the growth of the school hope that this continues as the years go by, just like the Banyan Tree. I am not doing justice if I don't mention Dr. Shanti who is sharing the burdens of our school and created the Museum in Archaeology.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, nor touched but are felt in the heart.

Mrs. Malathi Varadharajan

Ever since the receipt of invitation for our school's successful completion of 75 years, we went down memory lane with fond memories of the school. We the class of 1972 (who were the third batch of SSLC) take this golden opportunity to pay respects to all our dedicated teachers who taught us, inspired and disciplined us. We have warm recollections of the school where along with academics, our culture, compassion towards the less fortunate, belief in God, patriotic songs and communications skills were also taught. Special mention should be made of Chakku akka's (as everyone fondly calls her) English classes which gave us command on the language and we are proud to say that some of us are English teachers in schools today. We also remember celebrating Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanthi and other festivals.

Last but not the least we cannot forget the love, devotion, affection and warmth Mrs. Ellen Sharma showered to all of us. We remember once during our school annual day she said that all the children of LKG should be made to go on stage as every parent would like to see their child perform. She would stand in a corner and watch them with overwhelming emotion and pride. We are grateful that the seeds of knowledge were sown into us under this huge banyan tree.

T.K. Rajalakshmi	Mahalakshmi
Maya Devi	Meenakshi
Jayashree Barathan	Kalpakam
Jayashree Hariharan	Banumathi
B. Srimathi	Beaula Mary
Kausalya	V.N.Viji
Jayanthi Balasubramanian	Dr. Seethalakshmi
C.G. Mahalakshmi	Geetha Venkatraman

"EDUCATION IS AN ART THAT SOFTENS, ENERGIZES AND MOULDS A CHARACTER IN A MAN"

It couldn't have been put in a better way when it comes to my school – The Children's Garden Higher Secondary School. The place where my tiny feet trotted in with a green and white uniform and a slate bag back in 1990, and walked out confidently with flying colours, as an adolescent set to conquer my dreams in 2004. Education the reason you say: school a very vital reason I say! We aren't Socrates' or Aristotle's to learn on our own – at least that's the case for the most of us. Knowledge needs to be imparted and this knowledge doesn't just pertain to texts and books alone; it's not just about scores and ranks alone. It is about the wholesome development of the child and its behavior. The willingness to learn, the willingness to help, one's attitude towards life... One may argue that this is what parents are for, aren't they? Yes, of course, but with changing lifestyles and working parents, children get to spend quality time in day cares and schools and hence teachers share an equal burden of guiding children in the right path.

With money and marks oriented schools around, it is tough to find one with the above qualities. One that leads you to light; one that lets you be what you are; and I was lucky enough to find myself in such a school!

My school always lived up to its motto –
 "Let none be like another, Let each be like the highest.
 How can that be, Let each be perfect in himself" – Goethe
 What did I not have here?
 Where had I not participated?
 Why did other school kids envy me?
 How much of a good time and fun have I had?
 When would I get such an opportunity again?!

- Sanskrit recitation of Shlokas and The Bhagavad Gita
- Music, Dance, Theatre participation
- Drawing, Painting and Hobby Craft classes (now there are Yoga classes too, free of cost)
- Inter and Intra School Quiz and Debate contests
- Event organizing and Event management including Hosting the events, Welcome Address and Vote of Thanks rendering (so both back stage and centre stage experience)
- Sports and after school games
- Bulbuls (Guides & Scouts for elementary school), Red Cross, road Safety Patrol and the Interact Club (a wing of the Rotary Club for schools)

The list is unending and I have had the opportunity to be part of each and every one of them. Did your school have these? Do your kinds get them free of cost?

Never I was reprimanded for err.....bunking (or should I say not attending?!) a few classes owing to these extra-curricular activities. Now you may think— "Oh! She must have been in the bottom most rankings of the class." A very wrong notion! I may not be a state topper but have always been a topper in my class with an aggregate never falling below 90 till class XII. The reason? Encouragement. My school and my parents encouraged me to excel in life and not just in academics. Apart from what came through y genes, all other qualities are what I learnt from them.

"A good teacher is equal to a million books". A teacher brings interest to even the driest of subjects and encourages inquisitiveness and discourages mugging. This precisely what my teachers did. They triggered free flowing of thoughts and creativity. My school's play-way method of teaching is one among the best in the country. We played, we drew, we enacted and we learnt. And hence we remembered. We have had classes outdoors in the

playgrounds under the shade of trees. We have been one with nature playing with the dum-dum flower as a drum beater, using the gulmohar flower as fingernails and growing mustard shoots in the classrooms. I made life's best set of friends here. I have found life's best set of mentors here. My life would have been incomplete with a gaping hole if not for this ever encouraging school and would have sorely missed the fun of school days.

In the initial days of my office, after a day's of successful event management my colleagues used to ask "Which college?" my reply, "not college, I picked them up at school".

Pavithra Bhatt

THE SCHOOL, A SPECIAL PLACE

My earliest memory of The Children's Garden School is feeling very special because I was being held and carried around by Mrs. Ellen Sharma, the then Principal. A child of three years, I was crying perhaps because I did not feel secure in the class room and Mrs. Sharma, to pacify me, picked me up and walked around as she visited the various class rooms in the school.

Such was the care taken by Mrs. Sharma of the pupils in the School. A great educationist she was, but it was her heart that made the school such a wonderful place. The name and the logo of the school with the banyan tree are most befitting of the place that it was and is. As I grew up with the school, a familiar sight was of Dr. Sharma and Mrs. Sharma walking around the school. They never made themselves unavailable to those who needed their help. They will always be fondly remembered by all.

To me and many of my extended family members, the school was a home away from home. My parents, grandfather, aunts and uncles lived on what was then Edward Elliots Road and now Radhakrishnan Salai, just a stone's throw from the School. My cousins and I would run to school and run back home for lunch.

My elder sister was one of the first students of the School when it was operating out of a house in Brindavan Street, I have been told. When I went to Kindergarten, the School was already in its' present location. For our whole family, school meant The Children's Garden School. In our minds there were no other choices when it came to early education. In those days, the school only had classes upto Form 3, the present 8th Standard.

Long after I had completed education, the School was still a very special place for me because my parents had an exclusive relationship with the School, Dr. Sharma, Mrs. Sharma, Ms. Sakunthala Sharma and even the staff and children. My father,

T. B. Balagopal, was the President of the Society for many years. His involvement with the school was not just in his official capacity. He had an emotional connect with the children and there was immeasurable joy on his face as he stood and watched the children every morning until they disbursed after their assembly. This happened day after day, until a few months before he passed away.

Pride welled up in me as an alumnus of the School when I heard that it was completing 75 years of existence. While respect for Mrs. Sharma for her initial enthusiasm and work remains, one cannot but have unbounded appreciation for the work carried on by Ms. Sakunthala Sharma in making it acclaimed as a school of great repute. Mrs Ellen Sharma's vision was admirable and making her dream come true was no mean achievement.

I congratulate the School, its management and staff on this singular and laudable accomplishment and pray for its growth from strength to strength in the future.

Mrs. Sarala Panchapekesan

UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTFUL EXPERIENCES

My teaching experience commenced in this school in the year 1974. I was given the post of a teacher to handle the primary school (standards 1 to 5) as there was no vacancy existed in the high school. At Calcutta prior to coming to this school, I was teaching higher classes for six years. So this was a new experience to handle children in the age group 5 to 8 years and also an impetus to understand the nature of the children studying in those classes. The learning experience I gained also helped me to share with the candidates who underwent Kindergarten and Primary Training Courses in the same institution at a later stage where I was posted as a teacher educator. After a gap of 4 years, to my surprise I was shifted to the Training centre. My job was then to train the candidates (above 18 years) who after completion are to be employed in the kindergarten and primary classes existing in many of the schools in and around Chennai.

Our Training Centre constituted the following programmes:

- *Kindergarten Training Programme recognized by the Government of Tamilnadu for two years.*
- *Creche and Pre-school Training Programme sponsored by Social Welfare Board and Slum Clearance Board for 1 year.*
- *Diploma Training Programme for graduates to be employed in the Kindergarten and Primary classes in the management schools.*
- *Three months refresher course for the existing employed teachers in the private schools.*
- *A 5 week refresher course for teachers employed in the crèches sponsored by Social Welfare Board.*

Our Kindergarten system of training known as the 'Mrs. Sharma's Method' is a unique one which is implemented in our institution since 1937 and is still continuing till today. Also it has become so prevalent in every corner of our country due to the continuous effort put forth by our Correspondent. We, the faculty members were 5 in number each entrusted to handle the above training programmes. The period during 1981 to 1991 was a golden one in the sense we the staff enjoyed the most handling the trainees in a more coordinated and cooperative spirit. We never failed to help each other, as also to discuss and clarify our doubts in the methodology we adopted to train the candidates, to ensure that the trainees were in a position to take up the task of educating the child to the best of their knowledge.

We have trained larger number of candidates, who are employed in the Creches, Kindergarten and Primary schools at Tamil Nadu, neighbouring states and even abroad. At our own institution also, we can find teachers serving in the Creche, Kindergarten and Primary school. Some of the trainees have started Creches, Kindergarten and Primary schools of their own. Our Kindergarten and Training Centre is frequently visited by many scholars and delegates to get to know about the unique feature of 'Mrs. Sharma's method' and those people are quite thrilled that it has not only reached the urban areas but also to the rural and slum areas in our country. The faculty members were encouraged to conduct projects, attend seminars and conferences organized by Indian Association for Pre-school Education helping us to become more assertive and competitive.

I was asked to qualify myself by doing the training in the Montessori Course held at Calcutta and also to complete the post graduate course in M.A., Psychology and Master of Education. I feel a great honour for I have never dreamt of doing these courses. These helped me to enrich my knowledge and skills. Along with

another staff member, I was invited by NCERT Delhi to participate in the curriculum framing. As a person, I was submissive when I initially joined the school. In due course, after my association with the persons of varied personalities, I have become so much assertive, a quality which transformed me to become more vociferous and confident. This is an impetus which helped me develop innovative ideas during the curriculum framing and also whenever I meet strangers. I have conducted workshops for teachers employed in the kindergarten sections at different schools located in and around Chennai. Even within the institution I was given an opportunity to be a consultant to the teachers in our main school at Karapakkam and Sholinganallore. Thereby, I became a well known person to one and all serving the school.

Besides being a teacher educator I also had the opportunity to handle high and higher secondary classes for five years after which I retired from the regular service in the year 2002. Though I had twists and turns during my career span of 37 years in the same institution, yet I am very grateful to my Correspondent who continuously motivated and encouraged me. But for her, I would not have become an enlightened personality. I consider her not only as my boss but also like my own elder sister. After retirement, I was given an extension to serve the school in a varied manner. This is still continuing till today; taking classes for the trainees who are sponsored by the Tamil Nadu Open University. Even now, during my leisure time at home I cherish all my pleasurable moments that took place in the school. I feel that I have benefitted a lot through my association with my colleagues and children; these are boundless which I find difficult to express at length!

Mrs. T. S. Saraswathy
Training Centre

I am Sathya Murali working as a Kindergarten teacher in Trivandrum. I feel proud to talk about my school. My parents sent me to the school as raw gold; my school, principal (Chakku Akka) and the teachers moulded and polished me into a 24 carat jewel. I learnt dance, music and sports under their guidance which paved a way for me in my career as a teacher. Last year I had the golden opportunity to meet my loving principal Chakku Akka after probably 25 years along with my husband. I felt excited and also took a photograph along with her. Nostalgic memories were triggered when I strolled along my classes, right from KG to Standard XII. My school days were the best in my life. In fact I am living through those moments again as a KG teacher. My salute to all the teachers and especially to Anitha teacher (my KG teacher) who is also my mentor.

Sathya Murali

OUR SCHOOL

When I joined in school, I was 3 1/2 years old. As I could speak and communicate well, I was admitted to the first standard, along with my elder brother who felt bad about that. They taught us the alphabets first in mother tongue (Telugu). Along with alphabets they taught us how to pronounce small words and sentences; they taught us numbers. There was a games period to play. The school had a jungle gym, one small slide near the gate, and another elsewhere. In the ground we used to have a prayer meet every morning, we used to sit on the ground and have our lunch there. We had water in our school, so I don't remember that we carried our water bottle. In those days we used to go by rickshaw (pulled by a person). The traffic is almost nil in those years nearly 5 1/2 decades ago. Our Principals and Founders, Dr. V. N. Sharma and Mrs. Ellen Sharma were very nice to each and every child. Madam Sharma was graceful with a beautiful smile on her pink face; never seen before, a lady of foreign origin. I used to wonder about her pink complexion. We had small picnics to Mahabalipuram, Thirukazhukundram, Ennore salt quarters; and every year they used to take us to Zoo and Museum and showed us some films.

After coming to the 5th Standard, we used to enjoy cooking classes demonstrations; when I tasted my fruit jelly for the first time it slipped from my palm and was dark red in colour. We did not know about the caste, status of parents, rich or poor – nothing. School teachers treated all children in the same way. The foundation days of education was so good as even after 55 years, I remember many moments in our school days and about our school premises.

There was a cool thatched shed on the top floor with a library where Dr. Sharma used to stay for long hours with a

friendly smile. He used to say read books and keep them safely in the same place. . . Actually when Chandamama magazine came; they asked us to purchase it and read it for stories for morals and epics.

For cookery classes, the cookery book writer and story writer, novelist Mrs. Malathi Chendur used to come; she came to the picnics also with us. Her sister, Ms. Saradamba teacher was a favourite teacher for almost every students. Strict at the same time simple and understanding. Music and dance was taught by Mrs. Santhalakshmi, and other teachers were Sri Shanthi Vardhan, and the Hindi teacher was Mrs. Pushpa.

After growing up, when we visited the Kindergarten we were very jealous to see the colourful glass and wooden beads, blocks etc., which we had missed as we joined directly in 1st Std. One big Najamallee creeper with lots of fragrant flowers grew along the side of the school. Whenever we wanted to sharp our pencils we used to go to office room where there was a sharpener fixed to a table (imported). If we lost our pencil, our school used to provide pencils too free of cost; as also ink in an emergency. After coming to the 6th standard, they taught us palm leaf mat making, cane baskets, baking and knitting sweaters (I still have my yellow sweater). Pot painting was taught by Mrs. K. Ramalakshmi (wife of the famous writer Aarudhra). From All India Radio music department, Mr. Mallikarjuna Raogar and Mrs. Virajanuri Lakshmi used to come to teach us patriotic songs. We had annual day celebrations in our school. In those days, they gave milk to all people free of cost.

After that, I admitted my daughter (after 25 years) in 2nd Standard. As I loved the school environment so much, we used to drop her daily from IIT Adyar campus and pick her up in the evening. During that period they used to provide a small snack for children (sundal, or ground net jaggery sweets, etc.). There was no school uniform or shoes, so we used to wear chappals and leave them

on the stairs in front of the school building. There was a green school bus to bring children from afar. There was a hostel also for girls and boys. No strict punishment was given to any student.

I should thank heartily who taught us as they used to train us in oral calculations without book and pencil; punctuation of poems and sentences. We used to enjoy our games, gunny bag race, frog (sitting like a frog) race, skipping etc. I should admit from those days we had a heroine worship to admire Rukku Akka and Shakku Akka too! Last but not least I am proud to say all of us sisters and brothers (eight of us) studied there till 8th class. My daughter, nephews and niece also studied here. We are looking forward to the Alumini day to meet our (old) class mates and respected teachers.

JAI HIND

Mrs. V. Seetha Mahalakshmi

A SCHOOL TO REMEMBER

I was eight years old when my parents admitted me in Children's Garden Higher Secondary School. My father was a Government employee with frequent with frequent transfers. That interfered with our studies. My mother came across an article in a Telugu magazine that described the glory and greatness of this school by a prominent writer Mrs. MalathiChendur. Without any hesitation they admitted me and my sister barely six years in Brindavan Hostel, attached to this school. Words cannot be described about the love and affection showered on us by the warden and Mrs. Sharma and Ms. Sakunthala. Even now though many decades have gone by our respect for this school is very high.

There are two unforgettable incidents that I like to share with the readers. One day I was sick and could not attend the classes. That night my class teacher by name Ms. Kusuma Kumari visited me in the hostel and enquired about my health and taught the days lessons so that I did not lag behind my classmates. Even now I wonder whether she was a teacher or any angel! That dedication to a teaching profession inspired me to take up medical profession. Unfortunately that teacher is no more now. My younger sister did not like to return home even during weekends and preferred staying in hostel. Such was the homely comfort we enjoyed those days. Subsequently my younger brothers also joined, and studied in this school. Even today my old parents and I along with my siblings meet our school teachers and thank them for the foundation laid by them for our brilliant educational careers. Each one of us chose different careers. I am a doctor, my sister is a teacher, one brother is a veterinary research fellow and another brother an electrical engineer working with a medical equipment manufacturing company in Colorado, USA.

I offer thousand pranams at the feet of Divine Couple Mrs. Ellen Sharma and Dr. V. N. Sharma.

Dr. V. Seethalakshmi Sreedhar

MY SHORT NOTE ON MY STINT AT CGS

As a 6 year old boy, the concept of going to school on a regular basis is a punishment from home so that the parents and the grand parents can recharge themselves to face the kids again. I always felt that I should not be growing up at all and never have to go to school like what neighbour's kid did. I could not voice it but felt how nice would world be if I don't have to grow up and need not go to school. When I asked why should I go to school, I often got a reply that you have to learn and earn in that sequence. I remember thinking that if I did not grow up and there is no need for money, then I would not be required to learn if earning is the effect with learning as the driver or cause.

The day I set foot in Children's Garden School in Edward Elliot's Road then and currently Dr.Radbhakrishnan's Road, I felt the difference. We were staying in a parallel road called Lloyds Road and it was a five minutes walk through to the school.

I did not feel that the school was something alien but a home away from home. Teachers were not set of monsters who whack the kids but kind members of an extended family. The surrounding was sylvan and no pressure but fun. I recall playing with coloured clay in the late 1950's and playing to heart's content. Most of the time, comparing one student with the other and hard ranking takes the fun out of learning. All of us are different by way of body, mind and intellect, but the school must let you discover what you are good at by giving you the opportunity to discover that yourself. Or that is the first stage of learning about oneself apart from learning about the world.

My stint with the school ended as I completed by 5th Std., and had to move out to a boy's School. Moving from this lovely unconventional school to a conventional school was the tough transition for me and I cried thinking of having got to leave the school rather than getting into this lovely school.

I am glad to see that the school has grown in strength and my recent visit early in 2012 confirmed that the underlying kindness with which students are handled continues unabated.

Best wishes for many more laurels to the school.

Dr. Siddhan

BLESSED WITH TWO "MOTHERS"

While The Children's Garden School is celebrating its Platinum Jubilee, I am reflecting on the Golden Jubilee of my association with the school. In doing so I am overwhelmed with the profound influence and experiences that have shaped my personal development and career. I appreciate how fortunate I have been especially to be blessed by God with two mothers who are great visionaries each in their own respective ways.

Firstly, my natural mother who was totally illiterate but very observant and longed for her 5 daughters to reach great heights and appreciated the value of a good education as a means to achieve this goal. This was due to the "child labour" that she was fated to do among her rich relatives as she herself was one of several daughters from a very poor family. She toiled endlessly with the cooking, cleaning, caring for sick relatives and getting her cousins of similar age ready to go to school each day from a very tender age until marriage. Luckily she made the best use of it by absorbing the good values and turning it into a positive life skill.

Therefore she was overzealous to find the best school for us in Madras where she had moved from her village life after marriage and was overjoyed in post independence era to find a new school that was run by a "foreigner" with novel teaching methods within her neighbourhood. Hence promptly she sent my elder sister and me there as soon as we reached 5 years of age. However my younger sister joined us while she was only 3 years old in the nursery section and our mother was very proud of us having a more privileged schooling and talking in English!

This joy was shaken very badly as the family underwent a serious financial crisis with the loss of my father's job. Little had they kept us with the dynamic world, being narrowly confined to the extended family as was common and not realizing the effect of less employment opportunities for my minimally educated father by

migrating to a bigger city. Therefore with great shock it was decided that my mother should relocate to the village with all of us until my father could find another job.

Not surprisingly it was the schooling that was the major problem with this decision. Not only my mother but my elder sister resented very much the lack of good school in the village and therefore she threatened the family and confided her fears with her teacher at school. What a brave and wise decision it turned out to be for all of us as this is how I came to know of my second beloved mother Mrs. Sharma in a different dimension.

Although we had encountered her as the School Principal and teacher we didn't know all the benevolent socio-economic and educational philanthropies and revolutions that she was aspiring to transform the New India into. Having listened to the family situation she offered to take my elder sister in the hostel for free education with a scholarship which was something that we had unheard of. So my elder sister was left under the care of Sharmas and I was packed with my mother and other 2 younger sisters to the village. I was too young just being 10 years old to realize all these changes and was only aware of the emotional turmoil among the family members and decided that I would be the least troublesome to all.

Hence to my great surprise I was recalled by Mrs. Sharma the next year to join my elder sister in the hostel and school and was also offered a scholarship as she was very keen on reuniting my lonely sister with at least one other member of the family. Having tested the difference in education systems and lifestyle between a city and village for one year I rejoined my old school with great pleasure. From then on it has been a glorious forward march in my life all the way till date but what is most memorable is the sensitive and gentle care and nurturing by all the Sharmas throughout my crucial adolescent and young adult life with the offer of the best

opportunities both academically and non academically as I shared my next 15 years or so until my marriage closely with all of them. Within this time at some point my mother had returned to Madras as but without any family financial betterment and only the addition of my youngest sister. So we continued to be under the patronage of the Sharmas with my other 2 younger sisters following on as well to the hostel later on.

I was very fortunate to have been associated with the fast expansion and development of the School and hostel during these years as it transformed from a Middle school to a High school/ Higher secondary school with the addition of the Medical/ Dental centre, crèche, the two farms, dairy, bakery, fabric painting and the ever so popular and unique teacher and crèche training courses. I must mention perhaps here possibly the best and important thing for us was of course when Mrs. Sharma had to make the difficult but right choice of continuing with the "Girls High School" being a visionary to perceive the social injustice of that time towards female education and empowerment

I was constantly in a happy and challenging environment enjoying the good company of numerous friends under one roof and the school became my main family home under the able guidance of Mrs. Sharma being my "Mother" and the watchful eyes of Sakku Akka particularly to thank for.

The school had a good balance of academic and various extra curricular activities for both boys and girls of different abilities like drawing and painting, hand work, word work, games, music, dance, drama and the teaching methods were novel with no corporal punishment being allowed. While the school was enriching me to reach my academic potentials, the hostel was developing my personality with social and interactive skills. . In the early years of my hostel life I was only amazed at the best variety of food on offer, clean and good environment including water and electricity

supply, caring staff and the endless assistance we got for having our clothes washed dried and ironed, personal hygiene checks such as for washing hair and checking for lice, cleaning teeth and cutting nails etc., In addition we had the privilege of learning other arts like dance, instrumental and vocal music, yoga and enjoying multitude of various religious festivals being celebrated with great enthusiasm.

It was not until a few years later some responsibilities were entrusted to us by means of daily, weekly or monthly 'duties' and I thoroughly enjoyed them all such as vegetable cutting, serving the food of which I became an expert especially for the equal distribution of vegetables, mentoring one younger child and taking care of their personal hygiene, tuition, Kolam making, room, bathroom and terrace cleaning, As I progressed to being one of the "college girls", I was gradually entrusted with some money management, accounting and financing. I can still remember the day when Mrs. Sharma decided to give us some pocket money instead of supplying us with the tooth paste or personal care products as she questioned us whether any one of us know their price or that of a cup of coffee. I can proudly say that this question has instilled in me forever the careful budgeting habit and never encountering any serious debt in my life so far that I could not repay.

Higher education and career beyond school for each and every one of us was very carefully planned by Sakku Akka with lots of forward thinking. She took into account the academic merit, family needs and the personal characteristics of each child and matched it with not only the available traditional degrees but with best and newly introduced vocations of that time.

Accordingly I was chosen to train as a dentist and during the summer holidays of this 5 year Course as the other hostel children went back to the suburban areas I was entrusted with a list of their names and college/ training applications to be followed

upon. This gave me the window of opportunity to get acquainted with various courses, their eligibility criteria and application procedures. In addition I was left with some money to pay for them by means of demand draft or so and thus developed my reliability and time management in a very sensible way.

When I finished my dental training I was certain that I could still continue within this sheltered zone as a dentist in the school clinic but did not realize that Sakku Akka had other plans for me. Hence it came as a crude shock when she encouraged me to apply for a job at JIPMER Hospital, Pondicherry and this was later followed by a job at Coimbatore. However this pathway to adulthood made a beautiful butterfly instead of the caterpillar that I was and prepared me gradually very well to adjust to life.

I have been living in England for the past 14 years as a single parent since my husband's death and going through the turbulent time of bringing up my son and guiding him through his teenage years in a multicultural and more challenging society on my own. Each time I have a dilemma I always fall back on what The Sharmas would have expected of me and arrive at a suitable solution. I also think how difficult it must have been for Mrs. Sharma to have adapted to the strange India and still achieve all the greatest for the good of others. But for the education and support that they gave me how I could have gained the confidence and independence to do this basic job of raising my own family whereas they selflessly gave their entire life for the service of others coming from very disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds while Mrs. Sharma herself departed from her comfort zone and glorious Motherland? I count all the "House Mothers" that they supported and how better are their children now?

Upon reflection I can say that Mrs. Sharma can be very proud that her ambition of educating female children in India has borne great victories to many families. The flowers from the

Children's Garden have flourished far and wide with better future just as she had expected and her beacon is being ably carried forward by all her daughters even now. . I am ever so grateful for my mother to have come across Mrs. Sharma and to have passed me onto her care at an essential period of my life. I wish I could be of some small help in the future to someone who is more disadvantaged and vulnerable in the society as a measure of showing my gratitude to what I have gained from the Sharmas. My humble thoughts are dedicated to the school right now as it reaches the milestone of Platinum Jubilee and wishing it many more happy returns.

Dr. Sivakami Ramaraj

MEMORIES OF ANOTHER DAY

All I remember is that I was put in Children's Garden School when I was really young. This was many decades ago. I am told that I was very happy to go to school. That's how I remember my school. The thoughts of my years in CGS unfailingly bring a smile to my face. Several weeks ago two of my classmates and I decided to catch up after many many years. They have both set up successful businesses and I became a journalist. Our conversation centered around CGS and we were happily nostalgic recalling our school days.

According to my family folklore, when I was in the Kindergarten class, I wandered over to class 1 as I liked what they were doing. I refused to go back to my class. The legendary founder of the school, Mrs. Ellen Sharma, happened to be walking by and she let me stay on in that class! Those were the days when this kind of flexibility must have been possible. All I remember of that golden childhood was that classes were mostly under the trees and we were all encouraged to pursue what we wanted, read, scribble, play dance or sing.

One of the blogs on the school says that the school aimed at bringing the play-way method of education to India, through the novel way of combining western ideas on pedagogy with the values of an Indian gurukul. This is how school was when we were there. I don't remember struggling to learn anything, nor the teachers being harsh. It certainly was not all work and no play. I remember we had singing and dancing class, art class, library class and needlework class. The boys probably had carpentry or some such thing. I can't recall. But for school, I would never have learnt many basic skills like sewing a button.

While studies were never neglected, extracurricular activities played a major role in our lives. We were all given lessons

in singing. A major influence on our lives was Santhlakshmi teacher. With her powerful personality, she made sure that all of us were familiar with the performing arts. I remember asking Kamala teacher again and again to explain the 'Bharathiar' songs taught. She did so with full unfailing patience. My love for Bharathiar's writings of course had it's origin in CGS. Incidentally, Kamala teacher was much adored, called Kamala Akka and she broke our hearts by getting married and going to another city.

At the end of the year, the school put up a cultural show which was the highlight of our lives. Not all got the opportunity to perform. It was a major tragedy if we were not selected. When we were in the primary section, it was all group performances. As we came to middle school, our ambition was to get a role in Santhanalakshmi teacher's annual dance drama which was the finale of the evening. After doing minor characters for a couple of years, I was given the lead role of Siva in the final year. I remember burning up Manmadha and I don't quite know how the teacher pulled it off with sparks flying from me. I also remember playing the lead in the annual Tamil Play, in one year. My head must have been in the clouds. It never struck me then that some of my friends were truly happy to be spectators. There was Meenakshi teacher, Pushpalatha teacher, Sitarama Sir and many others who taught us, scolded us, laughed with us and made us what we are today. They pushed us into studying without us even recognizing it. My love for history, languages and literature were all developed in my early years in school. We were encouraged to participate in debates, inter school competitions and such activities. I remember being taken with a bunch of others to participate in the children's programme in the AIR. Every day brought a different kind of excitement in school.

The school attracted a lot of visitors, many from abroad.

One of the distinguished visitors(I don't quite know which year) was the wife of the President of West Germany, Karl Heinrich Lübke. I was one of the kids standing at the entrance to welcome the lady. We were all dressed up in traditional South Indian silk pavadais and with lots of flowers on our hair. Why I remember this incident so well is because our photo appeared on the newspaper the next day. There must have been many more who were encouraged to mix with the children. The school was also considerably smaller till the mid 60's. It had classes only upto 8th Standard.

One of the classmates I met the other day was telling me how good I was in Maths in CGS. I listened to him with a sense of wonder. After I left CGS, I never did well in Maths. It was a subject I learnt to totally dislike. Obviously whoever taught me Maths in CGS must have done a great job. All of us who did our early years in CGS, consider ourselves privileged. Dr. and Mrs. Sharma were always a benign presence. If one gets good value based grounding in one's formative years, it is going to help you get through rest of your life with comparative ease. For me personally, the school instilled a lot of confidence, the ability to adapt, the desire always to learn.

Times change. The world has become more competitive. The school has grown far beyond the small institution one went to. But I am sure today's students too love the school as we did. Philosopher Plato said centuries ago, "Do not train children to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each." It is almost as though he was talking about the Children's Garden School and its founders.

Sushila Ravindranath

என் நினைவு அலைகள்

நாற்பத்தைந்து ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன் சிறுவர் தோட்டப்பள்ளியில் காலெடுத்து வைத்த பொழுது, எதிரில் கண்டது ஒருநடமாடும் தெய்வம். அவர்தான் திருமதி எலன்சர்மா.

அவர்களின் அன்பு உள்ளத்தில் நுழைந்து, வேலை பெற்று நேர்மையாகவும், திறமையாகவும் கடமைகளைச் செய்து வந்தேன். அவர்கள் நம் முகத்தைப் பார்த்தே நம் உள்ளத்தை அளவிட்டு குறையை நீக்கிடும் செயல்கண்டு வியந்தேன்.

பள்ளி எனக்கு பொறுமையைக் கற்பித்தது. தனக்கென வாழாமல் பிறர்க்கென வாழும் நிலையை ஏற்படுத்தியது. அந்தந்த நம்பிக்கையும், ஒழுங்குமுறையையும் வளப்படுத்தியது. பிறர் பாராட்ட செயல்படாநிலையை உருவாக்கியது.

தொடக்க நாளில் எனக்கு வழிகாட்டியாக திருமதி அன்னபூரணி டீச்சர் வாய்க்கப் பெற்று, அவரது பாதையில் நடந்து மேன்மையுற்றேன்.

பள்ளிப்படிப்பு, கல்வியும், கலைகளும் நிறைந்து வளர்ந்தது. இவை அனைத்துக்கும் உறுதுணையாக இருந்து ஊக்குவித்தவர் உயர்திரு.சகுந்தலாசர்மா அவர்கள். அவர்களுடன் நெருங்கிப்பழகும் வாய்ப்புக் கிட்டியது. வாய்ப்பை நான் பயன்படுத்திக் கொள்ளும் வகையில் அக்கா அவர்கள் என்னை ஈடுபடுத்தி ஒரு முழுமையான ஆசிரியையாக உருவாக்கினார்கள்.

பள்ளி விதிமுறைகளில் மிகவும் முக்கியமானது 'பூஜ்யம்' போட்டு அடைப்புக்குள் மாணவர்களை நிறுத்தக் கூடாது. நீங்கள் கிழமைதேர்வு நடத்தக் கூடாது போன்றவை.....

நான் பாடம் கற்பிக்கும் போது அம்மா அவர்கள் மறைந்திருந்து மாணவிகளை கவனித்துப் பாராட்டுவார்கள்.

அது எனக்குப் பெருமையாக இருக்கும். கடினப்பகுதியை எளிமையான முறையில் விளக்குவதால் மாணவிகள் வகுப்பில் அமைதி காத்து என்னையும் காப்பர். ஒரு நாள் திருப்பதல் வகுப்பில் அமைதி குலைந்தது. நான், மறுநாள் விடுப்பு எடுத்தேன். அடுத்த நாள், என்னிடம் அக்கா 'பசங்க ஒழுங்கா இல்லையா? என்று வினவி சிரித்தார்கள். எனக்கு தூக்கிவாரிப் போட்டது. இது போன்று பல நிகழ்ச்சிகள் உண்டு.

எனக்கு பக்க பலமாகத் திகழ்ந்தவர்கள் பலர். அவர்களில் ஒருவர் திருமதி. செலினா டீச்சர். இருவரும் இணைந்தே செயல்படுவோம். முப்பதாண்டு அனுபவம் கொஞ்சமா? நஞ்சமா? இவற்றுள் எதை எழுதுவது எதை விடுவது என்று தெரியாமல் இத்துடன் முடித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

வ.நீலாம்பாள்
தமிழாசிரியை

எங்கள் பள்ளி

1945-52 என்ற கால கட்டத்தில், சிறுவர் தோட்டப் பள்ளியில் மாணவியாகக் கல்வி பயின்றேன்.

தலைமை ஆசிரியர் டாக்டர் சர்மா, தலைமை ஆசிரியை திருமதி. எலன் சர்மா தம்பதியர் மாணவ, மாணவியர்க்கு முன்னுதாரணமாக, வழிகாட்டியாக வாழ்ந்து காட்டினார்கள். இத்தனை ஆண்டுகளுக்குப் பின்னும் ஆசிரிய, ஆசிரியைகளின் பெயரும், உருவமும், பாடம் நடத்திய திறனும் நினைவில் அழியா முத்திரை பதித்திருக்கின்றன. அந்த நாளில் மாணவ, மாணவியரின் எண்ணிக்கை குறைவு. 20 லிருந்து அதிக பட்சம் 25. ஆசிரியர்களுக்கு அக்கறை காட்ட, தனிப்பட்ட முறையில் கவனம் செலுத்த வசதி இருந்தது. உறுதியான அஸ்திவாரம் அமைத்து உயர்ந்த, தரமான, முழுமையான கல்வியைப் பள்ளி எங்களுக்கு வழங்கியது.

புத்தகப் படிப்பு மட்டுமல்லாது பாட்டு, நடனம், தையல், வரைதல், ஓவியம் தீட்டல், விளையாட்டு எனப் பல்வேறு துறைகளில் மாணவ, மாணவியர் ஈடுபட பள்ளி வாய்ப்பும், ஊக்கமும் அளித்தது. ஒரு முழுமையான பள்ளி வாழ்வு வாழ்ந்தோம் என்ற நிறைவடைந்தோம்.

நிலைத் தந்த நாகலிங்க மரத்தின் அடிவாரம் இடைவேளையின் பொழுது எங்கள் விளையாட்டு மைதானமாயிருந்தது. உதிர்ந்த மகிழ்மூக்களைப் போட்டிப் போட்டுக் கொண்டு கோர்த்து மகிழ்ந்திருக்கிறோம்.

பள்ளியில் படித்த ஆண்டுகளில் ஒரு நாளில் கூட 'இன்று பள்ளிக்கு போக வேண்டுமே என்ற அலுப்போ, சலிப்போ, அச்சமோ மனதில் எட்டிப் பார்த்ததில்லை.

ஆண்டுதோறும் வகுப்பு மாணவ, மாணவியர் அனைவரும் ஆசிரியைகளுடன் மகாபலிபுரம், எண்ணூர், பூண்டி போன்ற இடங்களுக்குச் சுற்றுலாப்பயணம் சென்றிருக்கிறோம். குதூகலமான அனுபவம்.

விரைவில் 75 ஆண்டு நிறைவு நாளை நெருங்கும் பள்ளி நூற்றாண்டினைக் கோலாகலமாகக் கொண்டாடி பல நூற்றாண்டுகள் தழைத்துச் செழித்து எதிர்கால மாணவ உலகம் பயன்பெற வளர்ந்து கொண்டே இருக்க மனமார்ந்த நல்வாழ்த்துக்கள்.

சென்னை
07.03.2012

நன்றியுடன்,
(ஜெயா புர்ரி)

1937 ல் செப்டம்பரில் துவங்கப்பட்டது. பிரபல பள்ளிக்கூடங்களில் ஒன்றான சில்ரன் கார்டன் பள்ளிக்கூடத்தின் சின்னம் பெரிய ஆலமரம். அதன்கீழ் குழந்தைகள். 7 குழந்தைகளுடன் ஆரம்பித்தது. இன்று மூவாயிரத்துக்கும் அதிகமான மாணவ, மாணவிகள் படிக்கும் பிரம்மாண்டமான ஆலமரமாக வளர்ந்திருக்கிறது என்பதைப் பார்க்கும் போது அந்தப் பள்ளிக்கூடத்தின் பழைய மாணவன் என்கிற முறையில் எனக்கு மிகவும் பெருமையாகவும் சந்தோஷமாகவும் இருக்கிறது.

தினத்தந்தி பத்திரிகை உரிமையாளரான சிவந்தி ஆதித்தனார் அவர்கள், ஆனந்தவிகடன் உரிமையாளர் எஸ். பாலசுப்பிரமணியன் அவர்கள், அவரது சகோதரியும், முன்னாள் குடியரசுத் தலைவர்களான உயர்திரு. ஆர். வெங்கட்ராமன், உயர்திரு. சஞ்ஜீவரெட்டி ஆகியோரின் பெண்கள், தொழிலதிபர் சிவசைலம், அவரது மனைவியும் சகோதரிகளும் இப்பள்ளியின் பல்லாயிரக்கணக்கான பழைய மாணவர்களில் எனக்கு தெரிந்த சிலர்.

எலன் சர்மா அவர்கள் பள்ளிக்கூட வளாகத்தில் வளைய வருவதே தனித்தன்மையுடன் இருக்கும். கையில் புல்லாங்குழல் போல ஒரு இன்ஸ்ட்ருமெண்ட்; மணி அடித்ததும் அதை ஊதியபடியே வகுப்புகளை ஒட்டி நடந்து வருவார். யாராவது மாணவ, மாணவிகள் சுற்றிக் கொண்டிருப்பதைப் பார்த்து விட்டால் அந்த இசைக்கருவியைப் பிரம்பாக மாற்றி ஒரு தட்டுத் தட்டுவார். நான் கூட ஒரு தடவை அந்த தட்டைப் பெற்றிருக்கிறேன்.

எலன் சர்மா ரொம்ப இளகிய மனம் உடையவர். ஏழை மாணவர்கள் மதிய உணவு கொண்டு வராமல் பசித்திருந்தால் உடனே ஹாஸ்டலுக்கு அவர்களை அழைத்துப் போய் உணவு கொடுத்து பசியைப் போக்குவார். கட்டாயப்படுத்தி டொனேஷன் வாங்க மாட்டார். பள்ளிக்கூடத்தில் வசூலிக்கப்படும் குறைந்த கட்டணத்தைக்கூட மாணவர்கள் கட்டவில்லை என்பதற்காக அவர்களை பள்ளியில் இருந்து நீக்க வேண்டும் என்று சொன்னால், அந்த குழந்தையின் அப்பா பீஸ் கட்டவில்லை என்பதற்காக குழந்தைகளை தண்டிப்பது எப்படி நியாயமாகும்? என்று சொல்லுவார்.

சிக்கனம் என்றால் எலன் சர்மாவிடம் கற்றுக் கொள்ள வேண்டும். ஒரு பக்கம் மட்டும் எழுதிய காகிதங்களை டீச்சரிடம் கொடுத்து சின்னக்குழந்தைகள் படம் வரைந்து சந்தோஷப்பட்டும் என்பார். இந்திய மாணவர்களுக்கு ஜெர்மன் மொழி கற்பித்து அதில் வரும் வருமானத்தைப் பள்ளிக்குப் பயன்படுத்தினார். எலன் சர்மா 1978 ல் மறைந்தார். சர்மா இறந்தது 1986. ஆனால் அவர்கள் உருவாக்கிய ஆலமரம் இன்று பிரம்மாண்டமாக வேரூன்றி 75 ஆண்டுகளைக் கொண்டாடுகிறது.

மிஸ். சகுந்தலா சர்மா நான் படிக்கும் போதே படித்தார் கல்விக்காகவே வாழ்வை அற்பணித்துக் கொண்டவர். சக்கு என்று அன்போடு அழைக்கப்படுபவர் சகுந்தலா சர்மா அவர்கள். பல்லாயிரக்கணக்கான குழந்தைகளின் கல்விக்காக தங்கள் வாழ்க்கையைத் தியாகம் செய்தவர்கள் சர்மா குடும்பத்தினர் என்றால் அது மிகையாகாது.

எம். சரவணன்

என் சிறுவர் தோட்டப்பள்ளி என்றும் பல்கலைக்கழகம்

அனைவருக்கும் அவரவர் பள்ளி வாழ்க்கை ஒரு புத்தகம் மாதிரி. ஆனால் எனக்கு அது விலையுயர்ந்த ஒரு பொக்கிஷமாகும். நான் தற்பொழுது புதுவை மாநிலத்தில் திருவள்ளுவர் அரசு பெண்கள் மேனிலைப்பள்ளியில் உடற்கல்வி விரிவுரையாளராக பணியாற்றிக் கொண்டிருக்கிறேன். 2012 ஜூலை மாதத்தில் அடுத்த துணை இயக்குநர் விளையாட்டு மற்றும் இளைஞர் பணி பதவிக்கு முதல் பெண்மணியாக பரிந்துரைக்க பெற்றிருக்கிறேன்.

1968 ஆம் ஆண்டு நான்காவது வகுப்பில் படிப்பதற்காக ஒரு பெரிய ஆலமரத்தின் நிழலில் என் சிறுவர் தோட்டப்பள்ளியில் காலடி வைத்தேன். வாழ்க்கை முறைக் கல்வியை அங்குதான் படிப்படியாக கற்றுக் கொண்டேன். கருணை வடிவமே கொண்ட திரு. சர்மா சார், திருமதி எலன் சர்மா அவர்களிடத்தில் அன்பு, அடக்கம், ஆளுமை, இரக்கம், பொறுமை, சகிப்புத்தன்மை மற்றும் சொல்லிலடங்கா நற்குணங்கள் பலவற்றைக் கற்று ஒரு சிலவற்றை இன்றும் நான் கடைப்பிடிக்கின்றேன்.

அவர்கள் ஈன்றெடுத்த கீதா, ருக்கு, சக்கு என்ற மூன்று முத்துக்களும் பள்ளியின் வளர்ச்சிக்கு அயராது உழைத்து இன்று வரை தூண்களாக நின்று செயல்படுகின்றனர். என் மனதில் இன்றும் என்றும் ஆழமாக பதிந்து விட்ட ஒரு வழிகாட்டி முத்து என் அன்பு அக்காசக்கு அக்காதான்.

ஞாபகம் வருதே ஞாபகம் வருதே

1968 - தாத்தையாவிடம் இரவு Dining Hall-லில் ஒப்பித்த ஸ்லோகம் மற்றும் அங்கு இருக்கும் ராதாகிருஷ்ணன் சிலை. தலைப்பா கட்டிய பெரியய்யாவிடம் டியிக்கி கொடுத்து பள்ளி கேட்டிற்கு வெளியில் சென்றது.

1969 - அம்மம்மாவிடம் கையில் வாங்கிய கிள்ளு, வாசிங்மெஷினில் என் துணிகள் ஓடியதை ரசித்தது. பெரிய ஐயரின் பொக்கை வாய் சிரிப்பு.

1970 -காய்கறி நறுக்கும் Duty, கோலம் Duty ராஜியை மி ர ட் டி ப் போடவைத்த கோலம். கொலுவைக்கும் பொழுது Boys உடன் போட்ட சண்டை, கோலியும், கில்லியும் விளையாடியது.

1973 - கிருஷ்ண ஜெயந்தி, விநாயக சதுர்த்தி, கிறிஸ்மஸ், பொங்கல் என்று எல்லா பண்டிகைகளுக்கும் முக்கியத்துவம் கொடுத்துக் கொண்டாடியது. சக்கு அக்கா எனக்கு மட்டும் Boys க்கு கொடுக்கும் வெடிகளை தீபாவளிக்குக் கொடுத்தது.

1974- வராத கணக்கை என் மண்டையில் திணிக்க போராடியப் பங்கஜம் டீச்சரின் பொறுமை. Library Table லில் நோட்புக் நெட்வைத்து ஆடிய Table Tennis.

இப்படி இன்னும் 1980 ஆம் ஆண்டு வரை அடுக்கிக் கொண்டே போகலாம்.

ஒரு பெண்ணின் முழுமையான வளர்ச்சிக்கு என்ன என்ன குணநலன்களெல்லாம் தேவையோ அவற்றையெல்லாம் என் சிறுவர் தோட்டப்பள்ளியில் நான் கற்றுக் கொண்டேன். என் இறுதி மூச்சு உள்ளவரை என் பள்ளியின் நினைவுகள் என்னை விட்டு என்றும் நீங்காது. எம் பள்ளி 75 ஆண்டுகளைப் பூர்த்தி செய்து விட்டது என்ற பெருமை இருக்க இவ்வையகம் இருக்கும் வரை, எம் பள்ளி வானளாவ உயர வேண்டும் என்று எல்லாம் வல்ல இறைவனை என் சிரம் தாழ்த்தி வேண்டிக் கொள்கிறேன்.

பி.சி. சுகுணா,
உடற்கல்வி விரிவுரையாளர்
திருவள்ளுவர் அரசு பெண்கள் மேனிலைப் பள்ளி
இலப்போர்த் வீதி
புதுச்சேரி.

ஆலமரத்தின் நிழலில் வளர்ந்த சிறுசெடிகள்

சரியாக 50 வருடங்களுக்கு முன்னால் 1962-63ல் '8ம் வகுப்பு' முத்துலக்ஷ்மி டீச்சர் வகுப்பில் படித்தவரா நீங்கள்? அப்படியானால் நாள் உங்கள் வகுப்புத் தோழியாக இருந்திருப்பேன். பெயர் விஜயலக்ஷ்மி.

நான் பேபி கிளாஸ் முதல் 8ம் வகுப்பு வரை படித்தது (1954-1963) நம் சிறுவர் தோட்டப் பள்ளியில் தான். அதற்கு மேல் அப்போது வகுப்புகள் இல்லை.

நான் நம் பள்ளிக்கூடத்தை மிகவும் நேசித்தேன் நேசிக்கிறேன். மிகவும் இயற்கையான சூழ்நிலையில், சிறியதும் பெரியதுமான வகுப்பறைகள், விதவிதமான வடிவமைப்புடன் இருக்கும். நான்கு பக்கமும் திறந்திருக்கும். வெளிச்சமும், காற்றோட்டம் நிறைந்திருக்கும். தரையில் தான் உட்கார்ந்து படிக்க வேண்டும். ஆனால் சிறிய மேஜைகளும், அதற்கடியில் புத்தகப்பையை வைத்துக்கொள்ள இடமும் இருக்கும். செருப்புகளைக் கழற்றி வைக்கவும், மதிய உணவு டப்பாக்களை வைக்கவும் தனியிடங்களிருக்கும்.

மதிய உணவுக்கு மணி அடித்ததும் விளையாட்டு மைதானத்தில், சினேகிதிகளுடன், வட்டமாக அமர்ந்து சாப்பிடுவோம். ராவுஜி சார் இரண்டு கைகளையும் பின்புறம் கட்டிக்கொண்டு சுற்றி வருவார். அலுமினியம் அல்லது எவ்ரில்வர் டப்பாக்களில் நாங்கள் சாப்பாடு எடுத்து வருவோம், சிலருக்கு டப்பா திறக்க முடியாவிட்டால் அவர் திறந்து தருவார். எல்லோரும் சாப்பிட்டு முடிக்கும் வரையிலும் எவரும் குறுக்கே ஓடி விளையாடி சாப்பாட்டில் தூசி விழுந்து விடாதபடி கட்டுப்பாட்டில் வைத்திருப்பார். பிறகு டப்பா கழுவ குழாய் வசதியெல்லாம் கிடையாது. தண்ணீர் நிரப்பப்பட்ட தொட்டியின் ஓரத்தில் உட்கார்ந்து கொண்டு, ஒரு பெரியவர் குவளையால் தண்ணீர் எடுத்து ஊற்றுவார். நாம் குனிந்து கழுவிக்கொள்ளவேண்டும். பிறகு 1/2 மணிநேரம் ஓடி விளையாடுவோம். மகிழ்ச்சி ஆரவாரம் தான். நடந்தே பள்ளிக்கூடம் போய் வந்த காலம் அது. அதனால் நல்ல ஆரோக்கியத்துடன் வளர்ந்தோம்.

எங்கள் ஆசிரியைகள் மிகவும் அன்பானவர்கள். அடி வாங்குவது என்பது நாங்கள் அறிந்திராத விஷயம். எனக்கு மிகவும் பிடித்த வகுப்புக்கள் நீதிக்கதை வகுப்பு, பாட்டு, நடனம் மற்றும் கைவேலை, நான் கேட்ட கதைகள், என் மனதில் ஆழமாகப்பதிந்து, என்னை செதுக்கியுள்ளன. கைவேலையில் வண்ண வண்ண ஒலைகளால் பாய் பின்னியது, எல்லாவித கைத்தையல்களைக் கற்றது, இன்று வரை உபயோகமாக உள்ளன. அதுவும் 8ம் வகுப்பு

படிக்கும் போது, சில கிறிஸ்துவ கன்னிகாஸ்தீரீக்கள் (ஆசிரியப்பயிற்சி மாணவிகளாக இருக்கலாம்) நுணுக்கமாகத் தையல் போடக் கற்றுக்கொடுத்தார்கள். தையல் இயந்திரத்தில் தைத்தது போல் இருக்கும். வருட முடிவில் நாங்கள் உருவாக்கிய பொருட்கள் எங்களுக்கே கொடுக்கப்பட்டன. அவற்றை வீட்டில் கொண்டு வந்து எல்லோருக்கும் காண்பித்து பெருமைப்படுவேன்.

அப்பொழுதெல்லாம் சீருடை கிடையாது. ரேங்க் கிடையாது. அதனால் எங்களுக்குள் வகுப்பில் பொறாமை ஏற்பட்டதில்லை. ட்யூஷன், கோச்சிங் போன்ற துன்பங்களை நாங்கள் அனுபவிக்கவில்லை.

தற்போதைய நிர்வாகி செல்வி சகுந்தலா சர்மா அவர்கள் எனக்கு ஆங்கிலப் பாடம் எடுத்திருக்கிறார். அழகான பருத்திப்பூவையுடுத்தி, இரட்டை சடையுடன், வசீகரமான அழகுடன், எங்களைக் கவர்ந்து விடுவார். சக்கு அக்கா என்று தான் அழைப்போம். எங்கள் 8ம் வகுப்பு அறையிலிருந்து வெளிப்படும் போது தினமும் திரு. சர்மா அவர்களையும், திருமதி எலன் சர்மா அவர்களையும் சந்திக்கநேரிடும். பயபக்தியுடன் 'விஷ்' செய்வோம்.

என் வாழ்க்கையில் நான் பின்னர் ஒரு கல்விக்கூடத்தின் செயலாளராகப் பணி செய்து, சுமார் 3000 குழந்தைகளுக்கு மேல் இன்றும் படித்துக் கொண்டிருக்கும் ஒரு பள்ளிக்கூடத்தின் நிர்வாகத்தில் பங்கேற்றதற்கு (ஜாம்ஷெட்டூரில்) என் இந்த குட்டி வயதுப்பள்ளி வாழ்க்கையே அடித்தளமாகும்.

75 அற்புதமான ஆண்டுகளைக் கடந்து இந்தப் பள்ளிக்கூடம் மேன்மேலும் வளரவும், நல்ல இந்தியக் குடிமக்களை உருவாக்கவும் என் மனமார்ந்த வாழ்த்துக்கள்.

விஜயா ராமச்சந்திரன்

From
Vijaya Ramachandran
Reiki Master,
10A, Padmavatiar Road,
Jeypore Colony, Gopalapuram,
Chennai – 600 086.
Phone: 9382707376

நெஞ்சம் மறப்பதில்லை

1967ஆம் ஆண்டு ஜூன் மாதம் பள்ளி முன்பருவ வகுப்பில் (U.K.G) இந்த ஆலமரப் பள்ளியில் என் பெற்றோர் என்னைச் சேர்த்தனர். அந்த நாட்கள் என் நெஞ்சில் பசுமையாகப் பதிந்துள்ளன. ஆசிரியர்களின் அன்பான முகம், எலன் சர்மா அன்னையின் அரவணைப்பு, விளையாடுவதற்கென அளிக்கப்படும் அழகான விளையாட்டுப் பொருட்கள், பொம்மை வீடு, கோர்த்து விளையாடப் பலநிற மணிகள், ஏறி விளையாட சறுக்கு மரம், புரண்டு விளையாட மணல்வெளி, காலை நேரத்தில் பள்ளியில் வழங்கப்படும் சூடான பால் எல்லாவற்றிற்கும் மேலாக கண்டிப்பு அற்ற சூழ்நிலை. இவற்றுக்கு இணையாக உலகில் ஏதும் இல்லை. எனவே தான் பள்ளிக்கு விடுப்பு எடுப்பதை என்றும் நான் விரும்பியது இல்லை.

6, 7, 8 வகுப்புகளில் தமிழில் எனது பேச்சுத்திறமை, மொழித்திறமை மேம்பட உதவியவர் ஆசிரியர் திருமதி ஜானகி அவர்கள். பாரதியார் சங்கம் நடத்திய பேச்சுப் போட்டியில் மாநில அளவில் பரிசு பெற அவரது ஊக்கமே காரணம். ஆங்கிலத்தில் அடிப்படை கருத்துகளைக்கற்பித்த ஆசிரியை திருமதி லட்சுமி அவர்களையும் சகவியல் மற்றும் அறிவியலைக் கற்பித்த ஆசிரியைகளான செல்வி சாந்தா மற்றும் திருமதி. ரத்தினாபாய் என்றும் என் நெஞ்சில் நிற்பவர்கள்.

உயர்நிலை வகுப்புகளில் தமிழாசிரியைகளான திருமதி. நீலாம்பாள், திருமதி. செல்லத் தங்கம் ஆகியோர் என்னைப் பலவாறு ஊக்கப்படுத்திப் பல போட்டிகளுக்கும் அனுப்பி பரிசுகளைப் பெற வைத்தனர். பல பள்ளி நாடகங்களிலும் நான் நடிக்க வைக்கப்பட்டேன். உயர்நிலை வகுப்பு ஆங்கில ஆசிரியையாக இருந்த செல்வி. லலிதா அவர்களே எனது ஆங்கில அறிவிற்குப் பிள்ளையார் சுழி போட்டவர். உலகப்படத்தை என் உள்ளத்தில் வரைந்த ஆசிரியை திருமதி. சரஸ்வதி அவர்கள். திருமதி. சுவர்ணலதா அவர்கள் கணிதத்தை கனிவாகக் கற்பித்த ஆசிரியை. அறிவியல் ஆசிரியையான திருமதி. ஜெயலட்சுமி அவர்கள் அறிவியலின் பல பரிமாணங்களை விளக்கியவர். அவரின் வழிகாட்டுதலால் பல முறை அறிவியல் கண்காட்சிகளில் பங்கு பெறும் பேறு கிட்டியது. முடிவாகக் கூறினால் என் ஆசிரியைகள் அனைவருமே என்னைப் பாடநூலுக்குள் சிறை வைக்காது அதைக் கடந்து சிறகடிக்க வைத்தவர்கள்.

கல்வியின் மேல் எனக்கிருந்த நாட்டம், பள்ளி நிர்வாகம் அளித்த ஊக்கம் இவற்றால் முதுகலை தமிழ் இலக்கியம் மற்றும் இளங்கலை ஆசிரியர் பயிற்சி இவற்றைச் செவ்வனே முடித்து மேல்நிலை வகுப்பு தமிழாசிரியையாகத் திகழ்வதற்குப் பள்ளி அளித்த வாய்ப்பினைப் பயன்படுத்திக் கொண்டுள்ளேன்.

இன்றும் நான் இப்பள்ளியின் மாணவி என்று கூறிக்கொள்வதிலே பெருமை அடைகிறேன். ஒரு ஆசிரியையாகத் தலைசிறந்த மாணவிகளை உருவாக்குவதே என் கடமை என எண்ணுகிறேன். என்வாழ்வு முழுமையுமே இப்பள்ளியுடன் இரண்டறக் கலந்து விட்டது. எனவே என் பள்ளி வாழ்க்கை எல்லோரையும் போன்று பள்ளிப்படிப்புடன் முடியவில்லை. இன்றும் தொடர்கிறது. இதை நான் பெற்ற சிறந்த வரமாகக் கருதுகிறேன்!

வெ. விஜயகுமாரி

சிறுவர் தோட்டப் பள்ளியின் பழைய மாணவி

மூன்று தலை முறைகள் கண்ட வித்தான முத்தான பள்ளி

'எழுத்தறிவித்தவன் இறைவன் ஆவான்' என்ற வாக்குப்படி கல்வியைப் போதிக்கும் கல்விக்கூடம் ஒரு கோவில். 'கோவிலில்லா ஊரில் குடியிருக்க வேண்டாம்' என்ற முதுமொழிக்கிணங்க 75 வருடங்களுக்கு முன் மயிலாப்பூர் வாழ் மக்களுக்காக எழுந்தது அல்ல, இறைவனால் படைக்கப்பட்டது சிறுவர் தோட்டப்பள்ளி என்ற இத்திருக்கோவில். சப்த ஸ்வரங்கள்போல் 7 பிள்ளைகளைக் கொண்டு தொடங்கப்பட்ட இப்பள்ளி வானவில்லின் 7 வர்ணங்களைப்போல் பல 7 நாடுகளில் இத்தோட்டத்தில் மலர்ந்த மாணவ மலர்கள் கசந்த ராகத்தை இசைத்துக் கொண்டு, வண்ண நிறங்களுடன் ஒளிர்கின்றார்கள் என்பதுதான் முத்தாய்ப்பான செய்தியாகும்.

அகத்தின் ஆரோக்கியம் பற்களின் ஆரோக்கியத்தில் தெரியும் என்ற மாபெரும் உண்மையை உணர்ந்து, எனக்குத் தெரிந்தவரை இந்தியாவிலேயே முதன் முதலாகப் பல்மருத்துவமனையை உருவாக்கியது இந்தச் சிறுவர் தோட்டப் பள்ளிதான். அதனை உருவாக்க உதவியவர் முதல் தலைமுறையான என் கணவர் டாக்டர் ஜே.ஜி. கண்ணப்பன் அவர்கள் என்று கூறிக்கொள்வதில் பெருமைப்படுகின்றேன். அந்த பல் மருத்துவமனையை இன்று வரை திறம்பட நடத்திச் செல்கின்ற கல்வி நலத்திருக்கூடம் என்பதுதான் முத்திரைப்பதிக்கும் செய்தியாகும்.

இரண்டாம் தலைமுறைகளான என் மூன்று பிள்ளைகளுக்கும் கேடில் விழுச்செல்வமாய் கல்விக்கு அடித்தளம் அமைக்கப்பட்டது இப்பள்ளியில்தான் என்பதைப் பெரும்பேறாக எண்ணிப் பதிவு செய்ய விரும்புகின்றேன். ஏனெனில் ஏட்டுக் கல்வி கிடைக்கப்பெறலாம். வாழ்க்கைக் கல்வியையும் இணைத்துப் போதிக்கும் கலைக்கூடம் இக்கல்வி நிறுவனம். சொல்லித்தரப்படாத கலைகளோ, பண்புகளோ இல்லை எனக் கூறலாம். அதனால்தான் என் 3 பிள்ளைகளும் அவரவர் நிலைகளிலும், அவரவர் வழியிலும் மிகச் சிறந்து விளங்குகின்றார்கள் என்பதே உன்னத உயர் செய்தியாகும்.

மூன்றாம் தலைமுறையாக என் பேத்தியும் இக்கல்விக்கோவிலில் செதுக்கப்பட்ட நிலைதான், எங்கள் குடும்பத்திற்கும், இப்பள்ளியுடன் கொண்ட உண்மைப் பிணைப்பை உறுதி செய்யும் உண்மைச் செய்தியாகும். இத்தகைய அல்லனவற்றைச் செதுக்கி கல்லை நற்சிலையாக உருவாக்கும். இச்சிற்பக் கூடம் பவளவிழாக் கொண்டாடுகிறது.

இச்சிறுவர் தோட்டப்பள்ளி என்ற திருக்கோவில் எங்கள் குடும்பத்தைப்போல் எத்தனை தலைமுறைகளை உருவாக்கியது! உருவாக்கப்போகிறது! என்ற நிலையில் தலைமுறை, தலைமுறையாகப் பல நூற்றாண்டுகளைக் காண இப்பள்ளியை உருவாக்கிய திருமதி. எலன், திரு.சர்மா இருவரையும் வணங்கி, இன்று தாய்மைப் பண்புடன் வழி நடத்தி வரும் செல்வி சக்கு அக்கா அவர்களையும் வாழ்த்தி நிறைவு பெறுகிறேன்.

முனைவர் வாசுகி கண்ணப்பன், எம்.ஏ., எம்.பில், பி.எச்.டி.

பவளவிழாக்காணும் பள்ளியில் நானறிந்த பண்பு (பேராசிரியர் முனைவர் விஜயலட்சுமி இராமசாமி)

சிறுவர் தோட்ட மேல்நிலைப்பள்ளிக்கு இவ்வாண்டு அகவை 75 பவழவிழாக்காணும் பள்ளி மயிலாப்பூரில் ஆலமரச் சின்னத்தோடு, கல்விப்பணியில் மகத்தாக வளர்ந்து, பீடுநடைபோட்டு வரும் பள்ளி சிறுவர் தோட்ட மேல்நிலைப்பள்ளி.

இப்பள்ளியில் படித்த மாணவச் செல்வங்கள், இன்று உலகெங்கிலும் பலதுறைகளில் பல பதவிகளில் பல இடங்களில் சிறப்போடு பெருமையோடு பணிபுரிந்து கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள் என்பது பள்ளிக்கும் சிறப்பு, படித்த மாணவர்களுக்கும் சிறப்பு.

நான் இப்பள்ளியில் மேல்நிலைத் தமிழாசிரியராக 1979 இல் என் ஆசிரியப்பணியைத் தொடங்கினேன். 2001 வரை பணியில் இருந்தேன். அக்கால கட்டத்தில் பள்ளி ஆசிரியர் முதன் முதலாக முனைவர் பட்டம் பெற்றார் என்ற பெருமையைப் பள்ளி எனக்குத் தந்ததைப் பெருமையாகக் கருதுகிறேன். நான் இன்று பேராசிரியர் முனைவர் விஜயலட்சுமி இராமசாமி என்ற பேரோடு சிறந்த நிலையில் இருப்பதற்குச் சக்கு அக்கா கற்றுக் கொடுத்த பண்புகள் தான் காரணம் என்பதை நன்றியோடு சொல்லி மகிழ்வேன்.

பள்ளியில் மாணவர்கள் படிப்பதும், நல்ல மதிப்பெண்கள் பெறுவதும், தேர்ச்சி பெறுவதும் தான் பள்ளியில் குறிக்கோள் என்றில்லாமல் மனிதநேயத்திற்கும், தமிழ்ப்பண்பாட்டிற்கும், கலைக்கும் முக்கியத்துவம் கொடுக்கும் பள்ளி சென்னையில், சிறுவர் தோட்ட மேல் நிலைப்பள்ளி ஒன்றுதான் என்பதை உறுதியாகச் செல்வேன். உண்மை, வெறும் புகழ்ச்சிக்காகச் சொல்லப்படும் வார்த்தை அல்ல. இத்தகைய பள்ளியில் எனக்குச் சக்கு அக்கா கற்றுக் கொடுத்த நல்ல பண்புகள் 7. (1) காலமறிதல், (2) உண்மை (3) நேர்மை, (4) ஒழுக்கம், (5) தூய்மை, (6) செய்யும் தொழிலே தெய்வம் (7) அனைவரிடத்திலும் அன்பு.

இவற்றை எல்லாம் நான் கற்றுக் கொண்டதும் உண்மை. இளைய சமுதாயத்திற்குச் கற்றுக் கொடுத்ததும், இன்றும் கற்றுக் கொடுப்பதுவும் உண்மை.

7 மாணவர்களோடு, செப்டம்பர் 7 இல் தொடங்கிய பள்ளி 7 நல்ல பண்புகளை மிகப்பெரிய சொத்தாகக் கொடுத்துள்ளது. அவற்றை நானும் பெற்றுள்ளேன் என்றால் இதற்கெல்லாம் அடிப்படைக் காரணம் சக்கு அக்கா தான் (தாளாளர், சகுந்தலா சர்மா) என்பதை மகிழ்வேனும் பெருமையோடும் பதிவு செய்கிறேன்.

நன்றி மலர்கள் சமர்ப்பணம்

பல ஆயிரம் விழுதுகளை ஊன்றி உலகெங்கும் தன்புகழ் பரப்பி நிற்கும் எம் ஆலமர பள்ளிக்கு அருகம்புல்லான என்னால் வாழ்த்துரைக்க இயலுமா? காரிருளின் கடுங்குளிரில் அகல்விளக்கு நான், பள்ளி நிலாவிற்கு வாழ்த்து அனுப்ப இயலுமா? வார்த்தைகளை வானவில்லாக்கி வானத்தை ஒளியூட்ட நினைத்து இதயத்தை இழந்து நிற்கிறேன்! தோற்றாலும் இப்பள்ளி தன் அன்பு கரங்களால் தன்னருமை மாணவியர்க்கு வார்த்து தந்த நல்ல வாழ்க்கையை பார்த்து வியந்து நிற்கிறேன்! அது மொத்த குத்தகையாய் பெற்ற பல ஆசிரிய பெருமக்களின் சேவையைக் கண்டு மலைத்து போய் உன் உள்ளம் விம்முகிறது!

பல மலர்கள் இணைந்து உருவான மாலையைப் போல, பல கற்களை சேர்த்து கட்டிய மாளிகை போல, பல நூலிழைகள் சேர்ந்து நெய்த பட்டு போல, பல ஆசிரியர்களின் தன்னலமற்ற சேவைகளினால் உயர்வு பெற்றது எம்பள்ளி! கருவறையின் இருளிலிருந்து பூமியின் வெளிச்சத்திற்கு என்னைக் கொண்டு வந்தது என் தாயாயினும், அறிவொளி ஏற்றி கல்விக்கண் திறந்தது இப்பள்ளியாலே என்று அறுதியிட்டு உறுதியாக கூறுவேன்! அன்பெனும் விளக்கில் ஆர்வமெனும் நெய் ஊற்றி பண்பெனும் திரி போட்டு கல்வியெனும் ஒளி தந்த எம்பள்ளி மாணவச் செல்வங்களின் அறிவு பெட்டகத்தில் சேமிப்பு நிகழ்த்தியுள்ளது; காட்டுபூவாய் இருந்த பலரின் வாழ்வை தோட்ட மலராக மலரச் செய்துள்ளது! பலரின் வாழ்வில் ஒளி ஊட்டிய இப்பள்ளியில் படித்ததாலேயே என் வாழ்வும் ஒளி பெற்றது! மிகமிக சாதாரணமான என்னை ஊரறிய உயர்த்தி உள்ளது.

அனைத்து ஆசிரியர்களின் அரவணைப்பாலும் உன்னத உழைப்பாலும் உருவாக்கப்பட்ட நான் இன்று அனைவருக்கும் தலை வணங்குகிறேன்!. இதயத்தில் நுழைந்து உணர்வில் கலந்து உயிரோடு இணைந்த இப்பள்ளிக்கு நன்றிகள் பல கோடி என்று சொல் மாலையை சமர்ப்பிக்கின்றேன்!. என்னை சிறப்பாய் செதுக்க பல ஆசிரியர்கள் பல நிலைகளில் பலவிதங்களில் பாடுபட்டுள்ளனர். அனைத்தையும் பட்டியிலிடுவதென்றால் அப்பக்கம் போதாது! அப்பலவற்றில் ஒரு சிலவற்றை ஒளியிட்டு வெளியிட விரும்புகிறேன்!.

1966 லிருந்து 1978 வரை இப்பள்ளியில் படித்த நாட்களில் என் மீது பள்ளி ஏற்படுத்திய தாக்கத்திற்கு காரணமானவர்கள் யார்

என்ற சிந்தனை பிறந்த பொழுது என் மனதில் உடனே தோன்றியவர் திருமதி. கூ.கு. ஜானகி அவர்கள். நான்காம் வகுப்பு முதல் ஏழாம் வகுப்பு வரையில் அவர் நடத்திய தமிழ்பாடங்கள் என் கண் முன்னே திரைப்படமாக ஓடியது, அனைவரையும் விரைவில் வகுப்பு வேலை, நோட்டு புத்தகத்தில் எழுதச் செய்ய அவர் ஒரு யுக்தியைக் கையாள்வார்! 'சீக்கிரமாக எழுதினால் கதை சொல்வேன்' என்று சொல்லி எழுத வைத்து அருமையான புராண கதைகளை கூறுவார். அவராலே எங்களில் பலருக்கு கதை புத்தகங்களை படிப்பதில் ஈடுபாடு ஏற்பட்டது. மேலும், வகுப்பில் தவறில்லாமல் உறக்க படிக்கும் மாணவிக்கு 'தவறு பிறரால் கண்டுபிடிக்கும் வரை படிக்கலாம்' என்ற சலுகையை வழங்குவார். இதனால் போட்டி போட்டுக் கொண்டு அனைவரும் தவறில்லாமல் படிக்க முயற்சி செய்தனர். தக்க மாணவியரை தேர்ந்தெடுத்து நாடகங்களில் நடிக்க வைத்தும், பேச்சுப் போட்டிக்கு தயார் செய்து அனுப்பி வைத்தும், கட்டுரை போட்டிகளில் கலந்து கொள்ள செய்தும் அவர்களுடைய திறமையை மெருகேற்றினார்! அவராலேயே எனக்கு மேடையேறும் அனுபவமும், கட்டுரைகள் எழுதும் திறனும் ஏற்பட்டது. பூகோள பாடங்கள் நடத்தும் பொழுது, புத்தகத்தில் இல்லாத அப்பாடம் தொடர்புடைய செய்திகளை கூறி உலக ஞானத்தை ஏற்படுத்தினார்! சரித்திரப் பாடத்தில் வீர வரலாறுகளை நாடகம் போல் கூறி மெய் மறக்க செய்து குழந்தைகளை தன்பக்கம் ஈர்த்து வைத்து இருந்தார். மதிய வேளை இடைவெளியில் அவரும், பிற ஆசிரியைகளும் சேர்ந்து தெய்வங்களை குறித்த பாடல்களை பயிற்சி செய்வார்கள்! இவற்றை அருகிலிருந்து கவனிக்கும் வாய்ப்பு கிடைத்ததாலேயே இப்பாடங்களில் ஈடுபாடும், தெய்வத்தின் மீது பக்தியும் என்னுள் ஏற்பட்டது. 'ஐந்து முகம் தோன்றில் ... எட்டே போல் முக்தி தா, 'கடகட' என பாடம் தா என்று கணீர் குரலில் அவர் சொல்லித் தந்த பாடல்கள் இன்றும் என் காதில் ஒலிக்கின்றன!

படிப்பு, படிப்பு என்று மட்டுமல்லாமல் தொழிற்சார்ந்த கல்விகளான ரேடியோ, இஞ்சினியரிங் என்ற புதிய பயிற்சியை நம் சக்கு அக்கா அவர்கள் நான் எட்டாம் வகுப்பு படிக்கும் பொழுது ஏற்பாடு செய்தார்கள்! திருமதி. அ.க. ஜானகி அவர்கள் அப்பயிற்சியை அளித்தார்கள். சென்னையில் எப்பள்ளியிலும் இல்லாத அச்சிறந்த பயிற்சியின் பாடத்திட்டமும் செயல்முறை வகுப்புகளும் தான் பிற்காலத்தில் இயற்பியல் தேர்ந்தெடுத்து படிக்க ஒரு காரணமாக அமைந்து என் வாழ்வில் திருப்புமுனையை ஏற்படுத்தியது.

1978 ல் மேல்நிலை வகுப்புகள் நம் பள்ளியில் இல்லாத காரணத்தால் வேறொரு பள்ளிக்கு செல்ல நேர்ந்த பொழுது செல்வி. லலிதா கூறிய சொற்கள் மந்திரக்கோலாய் என்னை வழி நடத்தியது. நீ முதல் ரேங்க் வாங்கிய பின்னரே என்னை வந்து பார்க்க வேண்டும் என்று கூறிய அவர்களை விரைவில் பார்க்க வேண்டும் என்பதற்காகவே பதினொன்றாம் வகுப்பில் ஆங்கில வழியில் அனைவரும் ஆச்சரியப்படும் வகையில் முதல் மதிப்பெண் பெற்றதை மறக்கவே இயலாது. அதற்கு முன்பும் பின்பும் எத்தனையோ முறை முதலிடங்களையும் பரிசுகளையும் பெற்றாலும் அந்த முதலிடம் என் பள்ளி வாழ்வில் சிறப்பிடம் வகிக்கிறது. அன்னைக்கும் மேலாக அன்பு காட்டி அவரவர் தனித்திறமையை வெளிக் கொணர்ந்த அவருக்கு நன்றி கூற விரும்பும் வார்த்தைகளுக்கு வானமே எல்லை!

ஆசிரியையாக பணியேற்ற பின் செல்வி. லலிதா அவர்களிடமிருந்து பல நிர்வாக செயல்பாடுகளில் நேரடி பயிற்சி பெற்றேன். திருமதி. சரஸ்வதி அவர்கள் என்னை ஊக்கப்படுத்தி, திரைமறைவிலிருந்து செயலாற்ற விரும்பும் என்னை மேடையின் ஒளி வட்டத்திற்குள் கொண்டு வந்தார்கள். பல ஆளுமைத்திறன் வளர்க்கும் பயிற்சி வகுப்புகளுக்கும், அறிவியல் மற்றும் கல்வி சம்பந்தமான பணியிடை பயிற்சிகளுக்கும் என்னை ஈடுபடுத்தி, எல்லா விதங்களிலும் முழுமையுடைய முயற்சிகள் மேற்கொண்டார்கள். அவரின் விளக்கத்தினாலும் உற்சாகமும் வார்த்தைகளினாலும் பண்பட்ட நான், அவருக்கு என் நன்றி மலரை காணிக்கையாக்குகின்றேன்.

நம் அக்காவின் அன்பான வார்த்தைகளும் அணுகுமுறையும் என்னை பலமுறை வியப்பையெவத்துள்ளது. கோபத்திலிருந்தாலும், அவரைக் கண்டவுடன் அமைதியாகி விடுவார்கள். சாந்தமான பார்வையும் ஆறுதல் தரும் வார்த்தைகளும் எப்பேர்ப்பட்ட மனிதரையும் பணிவு கொள்ள செய்யும். அவரது மேற்பார்வையில் தலைமைப் பணியாற்றுவது. எனக்கு கிடைத்த வரமாகும். தவமாக அப்பணி புரிவதே நான் அவருக்கு காட்டும் நன்றியாகும்.

மாணவர்கள் வேண்டுவதெல்லாம் அறிந்து அதில் தக்கனவற்றை தந்து, தனிமனித பண்பு வளர்த்து தாங்கள் ஈடுபட்ட துறையில் தனக்கென தனியிடம் பெறக் காரணமாக அமைந்தவர்கள்

இப்பள்ளியின் நிறுவனர்களான சர்மாதம்பதியினர். மயிலையில் ஒரு மைல் கல்லாய் விளங்கும் இப்பள்ளி மேன்மேலும் புகழ் பெற, தோன்றி துணையாக நிற்கும் அவர்களை உளமார வணங்குகின்றேன்.

குருவின் திருமேனி காணல் தெளிவு
குருவின் திருநாமம் செப்புதல் தெளிவு
குருவின் வார்த்தை கேட்டல் தெளிவு
குருவின் திருவுருவம் சிந்தித்தல் தெளிவு தானே!

ஆர்.எம். கற்பகாம்பாள்
1966 1978 வரை மாணவி
1989 முதல் இயற்பியல் ஆசிரியை
2011 நவம்பர் முதல் தலைமையாசிரியை

Towards a wonderful future ...



75 Years of the Children's Garden School Society



This book is a photographic record of 75 years of our service in the field of education. From a small beginning of 7 children, our 'Banyan Tree' of children, teachers, staff, parents and well-wishers now spreads its sheltering roots far and wide. Generations have passed through our school, each adding their own story to our unique history...

*'Let none be like another, yet each be like the highest.
How can that be? Let each be perfect in himself'*

- Goethe

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