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Printing:

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What would you say if you knew someone who was involved in a gang, or if you yourself were involved in a gang?

What would you say if you knew a young person who had excelled in School, gone on to achieve 1st Class honors in Physics, currently looking to attain their PhD and aspired to become a professor in their field?

What would you say if I told you that you do not know what your child / children / niece / nephew, or whoever it may be wants in life? Tamil kids are being ignored in London and the UK as a whole, we must change and we must hear them!

Did you know that the youth of London Tamils has a voice too?

Welcome to our presentation of selected articles from the Tamil Youth population in London. In this magazine you will find the opinions of those which we tend to forget and ignore, the next generation of our people, the youth of Tamil Britain. And as we are the ones presenting it, you will find a fair amount to do with the football club started and run by youngsters of the Tamil community in South East London. Here we do not care for politics or nationalisation, No body seeks power, but we do focus on fun and competitive sports. Through this we ensure that we stay together, and that discipline as well as team work is recognised to be important to further and achieve in life.

11 Stars Football Club proudly presents

“The Voice of Tamil youth”



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Dear Janagan Srigengatharan

Greetings from Newham

It's an honour and privilege for me to send to 11 stars Football Club and you a good will message and greetings. It's important that the European Tamil community recognise, respect and value the young power. It's also important that our young generation is supported and helped in many ways to achieve their goals in life. The only heritage that I would like to see our young people carry is the Culture, Traditions and Value. I wanted them to be fully integrated and actively taking part in the real citizenship. This is the only way to create a healthy society and role models for our future generations.

11 Stars is a classical example of how young people can take some responsibility and initiatives to organise themselves to help themselves and other young people into sports and other social activities. I had the privilege to meet you and your friend. I understand your real commitment, dedication and passion and wanted to do something meaningful for our community. I am proud to associate and get involved in every activity specially organised by young people like you. It's an important message to our community leaders and other young people who are not yet part of the Golden Vision of the European Tamils.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you and your team for the real effort to bring the young people and the community together today with the gala dinner and dance.

" We pass through this world only once, therefore let us not Defer, Neglect or Ignore any good that we can do or any kindness that we can show to our fellow humans, let us do it now. Let us not Defer, Neglect or Ignore any good or any kindness, because we may not pass through this world again. "

Best wishes and good luck

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Sathianesan". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Cllr D Paul Sathianesan
Deputy Civic Ambassador

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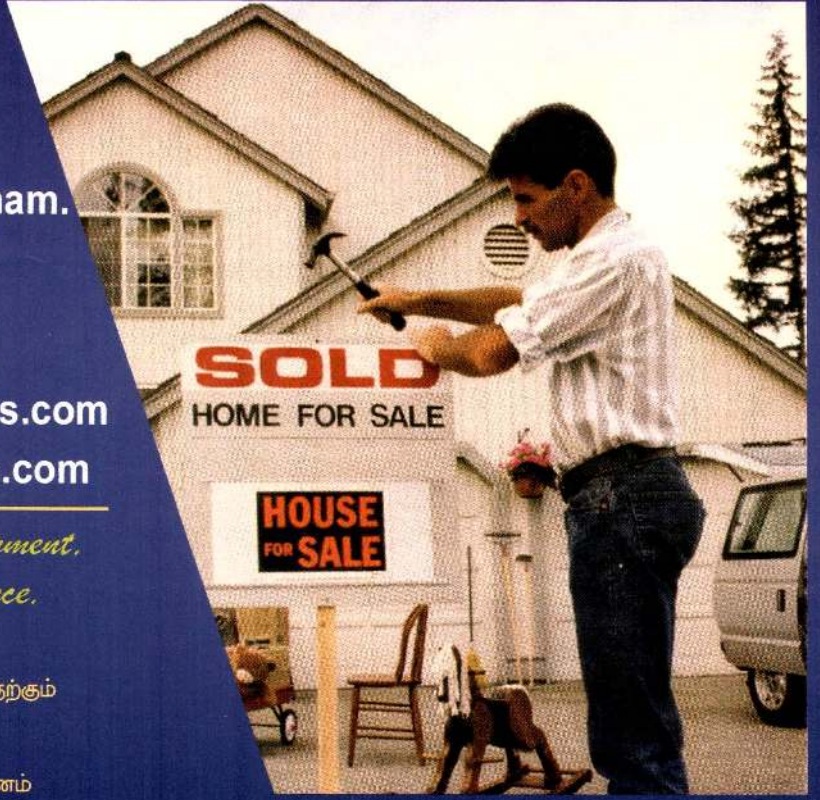
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History of 11 Stars football club

We were a group of three playing football every Sunday, and kicking a ball about with whoever ended up coming to play at the park on those days. On one such day it was decided that we should try and establish a team of some sort, and phone calls were made to known Tamil youngsters in South East London to see if they maybe interested in playing football with us.

As the days rolled on, our pursuit for players proved worthy, and more and more new players turned up. We found ourselves with many who were committed to playing football and interested in joining our club. So on the 5th of November 2006 we held a meeting with six team members to establish a foundation of some sort.

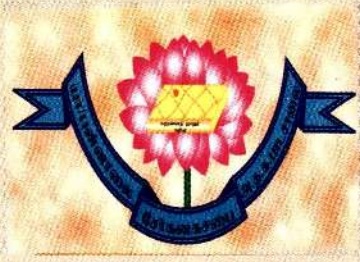
At the beginning of February 2007 the number evolved to eight members, and then we started to organise proper football training, utilising training cones and creating and playing in mini matches. We were no more than a few youngsters who enjoyed football, wanting to play. As the number of players needed was still very low to make a football club, it was decided that we would further our call for help, and ask our friends if they had friends or family members who would want to try out for our team. We had faith in ourselves that there would be more new members to come. Many people were interested but had other duties on a Sunday, which was and is our day for training. One way or another, we eventually managed to create a team of eleven players during the summer of 2007, and at that point (September 2007) the team was aptly named 11 Stars football club.

11 stars were entered to play in the Eelam Tamil Football League that year, which takes place every other Sunday starting at the end of September right the way through to early spring. As 11 Stars were and still are built up of a majority of students, we had great difficulties in finance. We raised monies ourselves, and entered competitions as frequently as we could. We would even help each other with Petrol costs and supplies of water. We immediately recognised a need for funds, simply put we could not continue to grow or continue at all if we did not have secure funds at our reach to participate in tournaments. In the mean time we continued doing the best we can, and asked our parents for help, but mainly donated our own monies to the club. We had a lot of difficulty in finding out how to go about sponsorship, or even being taken seriously at all in being recognised as a football club.

The first ever official football match for 11 Stars football club was on 30th of September 2007. We lost that first game very badly, but we never forget a saying which we often repeated; "Losing is the footstep to victory". With this in mind and a strong mentality we won the following game. Gradually over time, we developed and improved our talents and learnt from our mistakes. At the end of the season we finished 7th in the table out of 10 who participated in our division. On balance it was not a very bad season for 11 Stars as this was the first season for us, and adding to the fact that we included players as young as fourteen. At this stage, our squad of players had grown to 25.

In our first ever seven a side tournament (TSSA), we again lost the first game that we played in. We fought extremely hard and qualified through the group stages, only to be knocked out on penalties. The under 19s had failed to qualify to the knockout stages in their first U19 tournament (Sumens), and then they were stopped on penalties during the following tournament semi finals. Our under 16s have also reached the semi finals in two different tournaments (Sumens and TAB) after failing to qualify to the knockout stages in their first tournament. This season all teams are hoping to pursue their dream of gold in winning titles as a reward to their commitment for their passion.

Nilosananth Nirmalan
Club Founder Member



எங்கள்பாடசாலை

சேர் கனகசபை

அரசினர் தமிழ் கலவன் பாடசாலை
பன்னாலை – தெல்லிப்பழை

இந்தப்பாடசாலை 1855ம் ஆண்டு விழிசிட்டியில் திரு அம்பலவாண உபாத்தியாயரால் ஆரம்பிக்கப்பட்டு திரு அருணாசல உபாத்தியாயரடம் ஒப்படைக்கப்பட்டது

153 வருட கால நீண்ட சரித்திரம் கொண்ட இப்பாடசாலையை பின்னர் பன்னாலை திரு சங்கரநாதர் கனகசபை அவர்கள் பொறுப்பெடுத்து நடாத்தினார். பின்னர் சேர் அம்பலவாணர் கனகசபை அவர்கள் முகாமையாளராகப் பொறுப்பெடுத்தார். இவரின் முகாமைத்துவத்தின் கீழ் பாடசாலை யாழ்மாவட்டத்தில் சைவமும் தமிழும் வளர்த்த சிறந்த வித்தியாலயமாக திகழ்ந்தது.

1869இல் உதவி நன்கொடை பெற்ற முதலாவது சைவப் பாடசாலையாகப் பொறுப்பெடுக்கப்பட்டது. 1960ம் ஆண்டு ஏனைய பாடசாலைகள் போலவே அரசினால் பொறுப்பெடுக்கப்பட்டு அதிபர் நிர்வாகக் கட்டமைப்பின் கீழ் கொண்டுவரப்பட்டது.

1960 முதல் 1986ம் ஆண்டு வரையான காலப்பகுதி இந்த வித்தியாலயத்தின் பொற்காலமாக கருதப்படுகின்றது.

இப்படியான புகழுக்கும் மரியாதைக்கும் உரிய இந்த கல்விநிறுவனத்தின் பழைய மாணவர் சங்க விளையாட்டுக்குழுவாக இந்த மண்ணில் விளையாட்டுக்களில் பங்குகொள்வதில் பெருமைப்படுகின்றோம்.



எங்களின் பங்களிப்பு

வலுவிறந்தோர்

புனர்வாழ்வு நிறுவனம்
வவுனியா மாவட்டம்

யுத்தம் கொட்டிய நெருப்பில் எம் பெற்றாரின் தேசம் நலிந்து கொண்டிருக்கும் இவ்வேளையில் உயிர்களும் உடமைகளும் பேரழிவுக்குள்ளாகிக் கொண்டிருக்கின்றது. இதன் விளைவாக அங்க இழப்புக்களும் ஊனங்களும் மலிந்து கொண்டுருக்கின்றன.

வவுனியா – பண்டாரிக்குளத்தில் கண்பார்வை இழந்தும் சேவை மனப்பான்மையால் உந்தப்பட்டு திரு வெ சுப்பிரமணியம் என்னும் மனிதத் தெய்வத்தால் உருவாக்கப்பட்ட வலுவிறந்தோர் புனர் வாழ்வு நிறுவனம் நிறைந்த சேவையாற்றி வருகின்றது.

இவர்கள் வவுனியாவில் புதுவாழ்வுப் பூங்கா என்னும் வலுவற்றோர் பயிற்சி நிலையத்தை அமைத்து இத்தகைய மழலைகளைப் பராமரித்து அறிவூட்டி வருகின்றார்கள். இவர்களின் இந்த அர்ப்பணிப்பான சேவை எங்கள் மனதை நெருடுகின்றது.

இவர்களின் தொடர்புகளிற்கு:

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இவர்களின் கஷ்டத்தில் நாமும் பங்கு கொள்வதில் நாம் மன நிறைவடைகின்றோம்.



Message from Senior Members

It must be recognised that this football club is independent and run by youngsters only. However we do consider advice of experienced people backing us, mainly the older generation. Here we are a one big family. Our training is well disciplined and we do not accept any form of behaviour that is deemed unacceptable in our society.

Due to the fact that youngsters are the heart and soul of this club, we must be given a chance to find the right balance of football that will enable us to become champions, and bring back some titles to South East London. We believe that we have set the correct measures to justify our aspirations of winning at least two titles this season on top of being promoted. Today 11 Stars football club has reached a total of 45 full time players and are still counting. Our popularity has grown exponentially, and it is our belief that it will do so over the next few years.

With so many of us being so young, it is even harder to take care of those who are younger than us. Our Under 16s aren't always the easiest to look after but we try our best. Our main aim is to ensure they learn, have fun as well as to maintain their safety and discipline. As you can imagine this is a huge responsibility for us, but we tend to enjoy their company.

Funds are extremely difficult to achieve, and so far to date, the senior players who range from 17 to 22 mainly have paid for all costs out of their own pocket. If you consider that most of us do not work ourselves and are in full-time education just like our Under 16s only at a higher level, then you can surely understand just how much of a hole is left in our pockets. We have therefore decided to put our heads together and look for funds from anyone kind enough to support our cause.

Although competing in tournaments and raising funds are important to us, our main commitment is to focus on sportsmanship, and teach individuals that teamwork and hard work pays off.

We regularly face many problems, but we always do our best to overcome them. Our quest for funds has proved a success, and our soon to be annual even 'Natchatram', will prove how successful we have been as individuals and collectively, but mainly as youngsters of Tamil origin coming together to improve our community.

Remember to...

"Always reach for the STARS"

**Nilosanth Nirmalan,
Nirozen Thavarajah, and
Jenarthan Chandranathan**

**11 Stars Football Club
27 Honor Oak Park, London, SE23 1DZ
Mob: 07940 751 680
E-mail: 11.stars.fc@live.co.uk**



Message from Junior Members

We have enjoyed playing for 11 Stars football club, even though we did not have very good results at the beginning. However we will continue to develop our ambitions for success. Even though the funds required proved to be very difficult to achieve, our senior members did take care of us and entered us in as many tournaments as possible. They arranged all the necessary transport and nutritional arrangements that they could.

We also had other difficulties such as attending tuitions, before coming training, so we worked hard to ensure that our education is also maintained. We also learned more new skills that are very important to our daily life, such as team work and communication skills. Our time management skills also developed as most of us had to attend tuition before attending football training sessions every Sunday.

It is without doubt that funds proved to be the main difficulty. As a result our training facilities have not been the greatest. We hope that after our program 'NATCHATRAM', our problem will be resolved, ensuring that we get better at what we do. As well as this we hope to enter the same tournaments as the season gone and possibly more new tournaments. We are hoping to bring news of league promotion success back home to our Mothers and Fathers, at the same time we are also hungry to win tournament trophies. In order to do this we will work hard, as a team to improve our skills and techniques to reach the stars. We are proud of our selves and hope you will also be proud through what we have achieved in this magazine, 'The Voice of Tamil Youth'

Remember to...

"Always reach for the STARS"

**Reshikeshan Sritharan,
Saravanan Easwaravel and
Jethusan Chandranathan**

**11 Stars Football Club
27 Honor Oak Park, London, SE23 1DZ
Mob: 07940 751 680
E-mail: 11.stars.fc@live.co.uk**

11 Stars Football Club / Sir Kanagasabai Vidayala Information (2007/08)

Senior Team Results

British Tamil Eelam League

Date	Teams Played		Result	Achieved
30/09/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Kingston Boys	Lost
07/10/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Nadeswara	Won
14/10/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Friends FC	Lost
28/10/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Harrow Boys	Lost
04/11/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Sri Murugan	Lost
25/11/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Olimpics	Lost
02/12/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Valvai Blues	Won
09/12/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Santos B	Lost
23/12/2007	11 Stars FC	Vs	Thayakam	Won

See end of British Tamil Eelam League Table for final standings

British Tamil Eelam Cup

Date	Teams Played		Result	Achieved
	11 Stars FC	Vs	Thayakam	Lost
	11 Stars FC	Vs	Valvai Blues	Won
	11 Stars FC	Vs	Sri Murugan	Lost

11 Stars FC did not progress past the 2nd Round

Tamil Schools Sports Association (TSSA)

Date	Teams Played		Result	Achieved
	S.K.V	Vs	Unknown	Lost
	S.K.V	Vs	Wembley United	Lost (Via Penalties)

11 Stars FC did not progress past the 1st Round

Sumens Sports Club Tournament (SSC)

Date	Teams Played		Result	Achieved
	11 Stars FC	Vs	Thayakam	Draw
	11 Stars FC	Vs	Harrow Boys	Lost
	11 Stars FC	Vs	Olimpics	Won

11 Stars FC did not progress past the 1st Round

Under 19s Results

Hartley Open Day Tournament

Date	Teams Played		Result	Achieved
	S.K.V	Vs	Hartley College	Draw
	S.K.V	Vs	Valvai Blues	Lost (Via Penalties)

11 Stars FC were knocked out at Semi-Final stage

Under 16s Results

Tamil Schools Sports Association (TSSA)

Date	Teams Played		Result	Achieved
	S.K.V	Vs	Valvai Blues	Draw (Won via Penalties)
	S.K.V	vs.	London Tamil Sch.	Lost

11 Stars FC were knocked out at Quarter-Final stage

Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO)

Date	Teams Played	Result Achieved
	11 Stars FC Vs Waltham Forest	Draw
	11 Stars FC Vs Thayakam	Draw
	11 Stars FC Vs Nadeswara	Lost

11 Stars FC were knocked out at Quarter-Final stage

Sumens Sports Club Tournament (SSC)

Date	Teams Played	Result Achieved
	11 Stars FC Vs Sumens	Won
	11 Stars FC Vs Thayakam	Lost (Via Penalties)

11 Stars FC were knocked out at Semi-Final stage

Tamil Association of Brent Tournament (TAB)

Date	Teams Played	Result Achieved
	11 Stars FC Vs Valvai Blues	Lost
	11 Stars FC Vs Jaffna 11	Won
	11 Stars FC Vs T.A.B	Lost

11 Stars FC were knocked out at Semi-Final stage

Hartley Open Day Tournament

Date	Teams Played	Result Achieved
	S.K.V Vs Valvai Blues	Lost
	S.K.V Vs Hartley College	Lost

11 Stars FC did not progress past the 1st Round

British Tamil Eelam League- Ending League Table

1	Kingston Boys	23	Promoted
2	Friends FC	21	Dissolved
3	Olimpics	20	Promoted
4	Sri Murugan	19	
5	Harrow Boys	18	
6	Santos B	15	
7	11 Stars FC	9	
8	Thayakam	6	
9	Malvern	4	
10	Valvai Blues	4	

11 Stars Football Club Founder Member: Nilosananth Nirmalan

11 Stars Football Club Sub-founder Member

- Jenarthan Chandranathan

11 Stars Football Club Foundation Assistant Supporting Members

- Haarisan Jegatheesan
- Suthanjan Koneswaran
- Charles Ponloganathan
- Janagan Srigengatharan
- Reshikeshan Sritharan
- Nirozen Thavarajah
- Kumanan Udhayakumar

Sir Kanagasabai Vidayala Permanent Executive UK Sports Committee

- Haarisan Jegatheesan
- Janagan Srigengatharan
- Reshikeshan Sritharan
- Nilosanant Nirmalan

Acronyms

S.K.V = Sir Kangasabai Vidayala
T.A.B = Tamil Association of Brent

Football and the New Generation

Jenarthan Chandranathan (20)

In these days of football fanaticism, the game has become what we can consider the World's Best Friend. However, looking back in time through the development of football, there is the strong indication of its importance to the young generation.

The tidings it has brought for the physical, spiritual, mental and physiological well-being of young people around the world can not be overemphasized. With their indulgence in football, young people who are considered the dynamic generation by reason of their emotional obsession are enabled to convert their aggressive character for meaningful social purposes.

With the love of football, so many young people have been able to learn the language of compassion; being enabled to wear the garment of humility; imbibe the spirit of discipline and resilience; and most of all, appreciate the integrity of humanity through the assimilation of sportsmanship.

However, with all these said and done, some may argue all these positive impact can not be said only of football as it is not the only game young people indulge in, but the fact remains that with the inexpensive and easily accessible nature of football, the game has cut in leap and bounds, across a wide scope of humanity to such extent that it is seen as a vital force of unity and sustenance in many countries.

As it is most apparent in football, stereotypes such as race, language, social class, academic status and so on, does not become a question. In this way, football appears to be a good channel of orientation to create a legacy for our young ones so that the world we have all dreamt for could come to be.

In conclusion, the suggestion posits that the dedication to the course of football among the youths by authorities around the world should continue as long as humanity can permit. This dwells on the importance of football as well as other as ideal sports, as an instrument for achieving our goals for humanity as an entity where everyone can feel some sense of belonging.



What are your kids listening to these days?

Thayalan Ravendran (15)

All parents are in suspense when it comes to what their children are listening to in their iPods these days, and are just fed up pulling their ear-phones out or screaming their lungs out to just get their attention. As most of our younger generation are Asian British they tend to listen to both Tamil and English music so that they're not left out when their friends are talking about the latest songs they've heard, nowadays young Tamils are constantly listening to the latest Tamil film songs or the latest Chris Brown or Usher track. But to most of the older generation someone like T-pain is just a man talking in a different accent and the only music worthy to listen to is carnatic music. In most cases carnatic music in concerts is the part where my generation tends to sleep, however this gives us a chance to listen to something different and I admit I also used to as well, but for the past two years I have grown to become a better carnatic performer and have become able to enjoy music to a new beyond. In my opinion us Tamils tend to just listen to music with a catchy base line and disregard any other slower types of music, the world of music has expanded to nearly a thousand genres and is waiting for a chance to be heard.

So next time you ask your son or daughter what they're listening to, they might say

"Amma listen to this, this music is nearly as old as you! Ayoooooooooooo....."



Our Tamil society

By Piraveen Rajaratnam (15)

Do you think the Tamil community is the perfect culture in existence today? Answer, No. Because, "A 'No' uttered from the deepest conviction is better than a 'Yes' merely uttered to please, or worse, to avoid trouble" (words of Mohandas Gandhi) But I can tell you one thing we are the most committed to what we know is right.

Throughout our experience as Tamil youths we have participated in many social events such as TRO and TSSA which endorse the sports football and cricket. This gave us the chance to associate with others, but has been disrupted due to the formation of gangs which was eventually resolved through increase in security in these social events.

We have explored the heritage which has been passed down through many generations such as the musical attributes that we have today i.e. Miruthungam, Barathanatiam, Karanatic music as well as modernised dance and music. The community allows us to present our talents through a variety of concerts which contributes to many charities.

My view as a youth member of the Tamil community is that as it has its downfalls, but I enjoy being a member of it. Recently I joined 11 Stars FC. Being in that environment brings me great confidence and achievement, that's what I have learnt whilst learning the competitive side of sport as well as team work. I also enjoy playing alongside committed players which can be role models for the future generation and I am honoured to be apart of it.



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11 Stars Football Club- Squad for end of British Tamil Eelam League Season, 2007/08
 Back Row (Left to Right): Hussain, Kumanan, Prasanth, Jenarhan, Charles, Saravanan, Janagan and Theepan.
 Front Row (Left to Right): Nirozen, Jethushan, Roger, Haarisan, Sutharnjan, Siva-keerthi and Nilosananth.

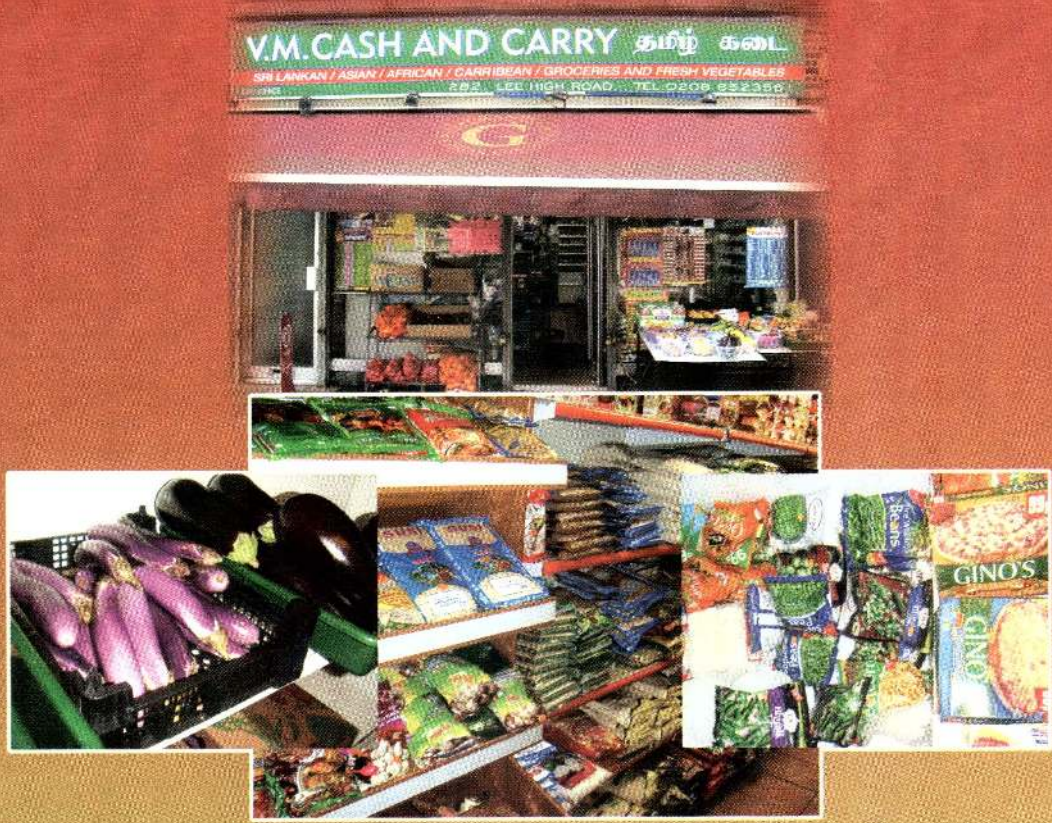


Sir Kanagasabai Vidayala Under 16 Squad for TSSA 2008
 Back Row (Left to Right): Sucain, Saravanan, Arun, Jethushan, Kogilan and Pirintha.
 Front Row (Left to Right): Kevin (Dinesh), Piraveen, Reshi, Thayalan and Nitharshan.
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விற்பனையாகின்றன

கலப்படமற்ற தூய தானியவகைகள்,
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பச்சை நிலையில் பொலிவுறும் இலங்கை, இந்திய,
தாய்லாந்து மரக்கறி வகைகள்,
கார நறுமண உணவுப் பொருட்கள், மதுபான வகைகள்,
வீடியோச் சுருள்கள், தமிழர்களின் பாரம்பரிய பண்டிகைகள்
விழாக்களுக்கான பொருட்கள் அனைத்திற்கும்
நாட வேண்டிய இடம்.

THE VOICE

OF TAMIL

YOUTH

FINALLY YOU CAN GET INSIDE THE HEAD OF YOUR CHILD,

11 STARS FOOTBALL CLUB, HAVE BROUGHT TOGETHER ARTICLES FROM YOUNG TAMILS LIVING IN LONDON. THESE YOUNG PEOPLE, HAVE BRAVELY AGREED TO SHARE THEIR VIEWS, OPINIONS AND STORIES REGARDING VARIOUS ISSUES IN TAMIL AND ASIAN CULTURE, AND WE HAVE DECIDED TO SHARE THEM WITH YOU.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO NOT JUDGE ALL YOUNG PEOPLE ON WHAT YOU READ, OR EVEN JUDGE AT ALL.

AS YOU DO, YOUNG PEOPLE ALSO HAVE A VOICE! WE MUST HEAR THEM, AND WE MUST LISTEN HARD. IT IS TIME WE TOOK NOTICE.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF TAMIL YOUTH . . .

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எமது
தமிழ் இளைய சமூகத்தின்
எழுச்சிக்கும்
உற்சாகத்திற்கும்
காரணமான

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கழகத்தினரை
வாழ்த்துகின்றோம்

தீருமதி தவமணி மார்க்கண்டு

Heroes and Villains

Janagan Srigengatharan (24)

What's so great about us, what's so important about us, what matters, what is the point of life? Welcome to the life of being Tamil. It's confusing, it's manic, and it sure as hell isn't simple.

My name is Janagan Srigengatharan. I am 24 years, 5 months, 14 hours and 4 minutes old at the time of starting this article, and I'm a British born Tamil. I attended private school for the best part of 10 years, and graduated from university with a BSc 2:2 (Hons) in 2005. I love my family very much, I'm getting into my mid 20's, and yet I still feel like a kid. I have dozens of beautiful nieces and nephews and I run my own business. Simply put, I'm your average Tamil guy.

My mum and dad came over to the UK thirty two years ago, for educational purposes as well as to grasp the new world, the opportunities, and the dream of being in an economically rich country. Then a few years down the line in 1984, I was born.

It wasn't easy living in a council flat, in a run down estate, scared of even playing outside after 5pm, and remember this was the 80's, when there weren't many of us Tamils, and definitely no gangs. Life was hard enough, trying to be accepted in London and in school.

Even though I was born here, I still feel to this day that I was the odd one out, not because of my skin colour, but simply because I wasn't able to show off my designer shell suits, and flash trainers like the other kids did. My so called friends wore Nike, Puma, Fila and Adidas, while I wore Hi-Tech, Gola, Marks & Spencers, and clothes which were handed down, you name it, I wore it, basically anything but a brand name. And for this I paid the price of getting bullied and teased.

The truth is, back then when we were barely recognised, and racism was at its worst, my parents stared the devil right in his eyes, and raised me up through hell. In times of need, there was never anyone to turn to. London only had a handful of Tamil families who were situated here, and it was proving to be even harder by not understanding the language. Minimum pay was merely over one pound, and the bus ride was still too expensive for my parents' income even at a mere 12p. My parents were living in a rented room in a run down estate, where crime would eventually see the light of day, and ensure that I would live in the worst crime town in Europe. All of this, having just left a country which was about to endure its own hell, War.

Imagine being a newly wedded couple in your late 20s, in a country where you assumed you would have all your dreams at your finger tips, but in reality the truth was far from this. My Dad would tell me of times when there were no tamil shops, and in order to make his favourite food (String Hoppers) he would buy a bag of red rice, spend an entire day grinding it down on the paving just outside of the house where they rented a room, only to consume the end product in a matter of a few minutes. His Landlord would often ask him, "Genga, why do you spend all day grinding rice if you finish it in only a few minutes", Dad simply replied: "Because it is my favourite food". My mother recalls her first years in London, when they could not afford many things, including heating and rent. From one of the hottest countries on earth, they would struggle in blistering cold winds, with few blankets and sheets for cover and shelter from draft. I can recall sitting by the heat shaft, which was vertically central through the entire tower block when we were living in our council flat, and praying that some heat would enter the building. That day just happened to be the start of the great storm of London (1987), and there was no heat for days on end.

As time ticked by Britain saw Maggie Thatcher hand over her throne to John Major, yet even with this change life still proved difficult for the immigrants. London still needed to change; London still had a long way to go to become the country you live in today. We were still yet to be fully appreciated as British Occupants and my mother and Father still held a Sri Lankan passport, which I was joined to despite being born here.

During the Late 80s and early 90s, my Dad worked night and day to run four Petrol Filling garages in the Midlands, and only came home at the weekends. My Mum would send me to nursery and day crèche, whilst she studied Basic English at normal and evening school. She eventually took her education all the way and graduated in Computer Science from Greenwich University, one of the first Tamils to do so in South East London. All the while both my parents were dealing with the hardships that this country allowed and excused as normal behaviour.

Going into the 90s power shifted yet again in British politics, and Britain saw promise in a young Tony Blair. This time change would prove to be good. My Dad continued working through a number of businesses, and Mum had really shone, she had become a Computer Analyst with a large financial firm in the City, however prejudice

in the office was bigger than ever, and she regularly experienced bullying and indirect racism. This hatred for the coloured person was clear to see by all, but the honest truth was that no one would act, even if they knew there was wrong doing.

From this alone you must be able to see why my parents truly are my heroes. I have heard so many opinions suggesting parents are the root of their off springs problems. The way they raise their children, the choices they make, the lack of trust and freedom they give their children. However there are role models out there for everyone to follow. By no means am I suggesting that my parents are perfect, but to me they are as perfect as perfect can be.

I was never asked to go to Tamil school, or learn how to read or write in Tamil, or even be creative in musical arts. My parents were and are very simple and easy going. They provided me with my freedom, and in return, they became my best friends. They know everything about me, good, bad and the rest. They do their best to advise and look over me, when necessary.

I have been through many tragic circumstances, including the untimely and un-natural deaths of my uncle and two cousin brothers, all on separate occasions, as well as losing a good friend only last year. I have always lived my life for my family, and I cherish every moment I have with them. In 2005 I myself started my professional career, and also endured prejudice in the office from higher powers of one nature or another, but I overcame it. I followed the correct procedures and channels and stood up for myself. I pushed for justice and not revenge. Even though at first it seemed so hard and impossible to be heard, I found the courage to be heard in a multi million pound organisation, where I never thought I would have mattered. Today I am who I am because of everything I have had to endure and go through. The point I am trying to make, is that life is difficult, it was, it is, and it always will be, but you can always be happy and live the life you desire to lead, you just need to find the right balance of work and pleasure.

So many people tend to look at Tamils in two categories. One, the brilliant, the sublime, the excellent natured individuals who persevere through personality and mental/professional endurance; and two, the people who have slit eye brows, wear loud designer clothes, baggy jeans, hold a knife or a gun and generally end up in Prison at the age of 22. This is the extreme side of Tamil life, the side of our community and culture that always gets noticed, regardless of the amount of good we do.

It does not matter what political beliefs we hold, gang violence and violence in general should never be condoned. I know of aunts and uncles, who have been so scared to leave their house because they have received threats of one nature or another. I even know of youngsters, who look to these people as role models and hope to be in their presence and gain support from them. For what reason, I have no idea, there should be no need to require these things, or want to follow in their shoes. It does not make you cool, it simply narrows your choices in life, you should live free of peer pressure, and not feel the need to prove yourself to friends or those who say they are. What would be the point of people such as my parents struggling for so long and so hard to establish a good Tamil community and to provide us with opportunity for both you and me? And believe me when I say this, compared to how life was, we have opportunity and choice where once there was no such privilege, and I for one am grateful for it.

When I see a group of young Tamils on the street, I wonder how many people walk past scared, or how many ladies grab on to their purses and hold on tight, or even how many people walk out of the way to avoid directly walking past them. The media will never help Tamil youngsters or youngsters in general if they are portrayed as the beasts of this nation, and especially if the general public are frightened and persuaded to believe so through the propaganda of both Tamil and English media.

Regardless of stereotyping, our society really does have its severe short falls. The reality is that we are failing as a people to recognise and speak out against actual violence. It is true, and yet I do not blame any of you. Any normal human would be fearful of anything they have heard or seen through media, other people, or with their own eyes. The documentary on Tamil gangs by Ross Kemp on Sky One opened my own eyes as to just how brutal the situation currently is in the UK. I look at youngsters today, and I wonder how much of their choices are really there for them to make, and how much is controlled by their parents and other influential people in our society. I always wonder if I could have made a difference if I kept a closer eye on those youngsters I knew, who have decided to follow the alternate path. I always find myself asking these questions; are we driving a wedge between ourselves and them? Do we even care anymore, or are we just content to hand the problem over to the authorities? What if it was your child who is on the verge of corruption? What if it was one of my nieces, nephews or cousins? How could I or you live with ourselves knowing that we could have made the difference, and will we realise too late when flashbacks run through our mind of the days when we remember raising and nurturing that young person from milk bottles and nappies to gangs, late nights and general mayhem. At what point could we have made a difference. Pondering over these questions will make you think, but actions will always speak louder than words. Speak up! And let us help our people.

Personally my life is made, I don't need to look for trouble, and I'm satisfied with me and my life. I have made mistakes of one sort or another, but I have walked away and tried to become a better person from it. Young people will always make mistakes, small ones, big ones and severe ones. But we must always try to forgive and support them and help one another.

My Dad has always believed in the next generation, and I am always in awe of his following crusade of youngsters, who respect him because of his views and beliefs. Simply put he's a cool Dad, where not to many Tamil youngsters would find parents that cool. My Mum is a fantastic woman. My best friends can still recall her making the best custard and cake when we were young, and nowadays, she still surprises me with her westernised culinary skills, and of course Amma's; Cho-cho, Parapoo curry, Kiire and Kolli curry are the best as well.

If I ever have a problem I can always sit down with my parents and talk to them. They always do their best to advise me, and in general try their best to be good parents. They do the same for all my cousin brothers/sisters and regular cousins. It is an inspiration to see parents acting differently, adapting to this country and finding the right balance of Tamil and British culture to influence on their own children, resulting in a wonderful British Tamil society in their close community. However there are still parents out there and I believe them to be the majority, who think they know what is best for their kids and take up an authoritarian approach, "You will do this" or "you must attend this". Those are the parents who I believe are driving a wedge between themselves and their kids.

For all of you who read this and think that is me or that's my Mum and Dad, ask them to read this, let them use my parents as an example. We should not be continuously worried by what youngsters get up to, we must give them the chance to grow and be accepted by society. Be fair, be good, understand your kids, listen to them and trust them.

To those who are young, remember that your parents will always try and do what they think is right by you, even if you do not understand why. You must always enjoy life and be happy, but be vigilante and cautious. Our community and this society isn't the best at times, but you must remember that this is your life, you make the choices, and if all else fails, ask yourself these questions. What will I tell my children when they ask me what I was like when I was young? What will I tell my children when they ask me, what did I do with my life? What will I say I have achieved in life when I am grey and old? Will my children be proud of me? Follow the right path, even if you do not always make the right choices. Life is about learning from everything, good and bad.

Finally if one day I can be half the parents that my parents have been to me so far, I will count myself lucky. I know I have a lot to live up to, because living in a time where many Tamil parents really do not know their children that well, or what their children want in life, along with the fact that my own parents came from a time when life was a lot harder without the problems that we have created as a people in this country, they have prevailed in being my Heroes.

My name is Janagan Srigengatharan. I am 24 years, 5 months, 16 hours and 22 minutes old at the time of ending this article, and today I hold my own British passport, as I always should have had, and am respected by my friends and colleagues alike. I am Tamil, but I am British. My culture and heritage lies in the paradise that is Sri Lanka, but my home is Britain. Really, I'm just your average Tamil guy.

□□□

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Of our articles
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Arranged marriage and love marriage

Recently I was watching a television biography of a famous female artist who was bulimic. This made me think about arranged and love marriages from a women's perspective.

The usual opinion is that arranged marriages happen only in the east but this was not always so, arranged marriages were happening even in Victorian Europe. With the industrial revolution and the end of the 2 world wars people's attitudes and perceptions started changing as women started to join the workforce and they started to demand for their rights. In England for example; most of the kings and queens had arranged marriages up until King George V, and the present Queen Elizabeth's father broke tradition by marrying a commoner. Besides popular love lore like Soni Mahiwal, Asia always had a long tradition of arranged marriages. With the advent of the British and the subsequent introduction of British education system more Asians got educated. These educated Asians in turn started to send their children to school and tried to educate their wives at home. The cause of women's education and rights were also very much espoused by our social reformers. In spite of this the institution of arranged marriage persisted. Education and exposure to the media, started to make people to think and realise they need not be bound by tradition and they can choose their own marital partners without having to rely on parents, matchmakers, relatives or having to consult astrologers. This gave rise to love marriages. Currently in our country we have arranged as well as love marriages taking place.

Before I launch further into this article, I want to briefly explain bulimia and anorexia nervosa two conditions which afflict mainly women in the west and which form the basis for this article.

Anorexia Nervosa

In this condition teenage girls go on a diet to attain a slim figure. They are inspired by fashion models and long to emulate them. They go to extreme lengths to achieve their ideal to the extent of starving themselves. Anorexics can't seem to get over the feeling that they are big, and eat less and less to achieve their goal. Some anorexics need to be hospitalized and administered intravenous fluids. This is a mental illness, which needs to be treated at both the mental and physical level.

Bulimia

Bulimia is more common among older women. Women suffering from this type of condition have been known to eat and stuff themselves till they get sick and then throw all of that up. This way they feel psychologically satisfied that they have not only satisfied their food cravings but have also avoided putting on unnecessary weight. Bulimics have been known to consume as much as 3 bowls of cereal, 4 bars of chocolate, 3 packs of cookies, 1 steak, 2 bowls of fruit, 3 bars of ice-cream half a gallon of milk in one sitting. One famous example of a bulimic person is the late Princess Diana. This is a more serious condition from anorexia since it involves binge eating and throwing up which is unhealthy.

It is argued that love marriages offer more independence and freedom as compared to arranged marriages where the girl/boy is chosen by the parents so there is pressure to conform to parental expectations like producing a male heir, taking part in family rituals and traditions, putting up with sisters-in-laws, contributing to family expenses etc. One of the usual questions against an arranged marriage is that how can you marry somebody you don't know. Knowing somebody before marriage allows partners to have better respect and understanding for each other's needs and desires. This way they are better adjusted in the marriage when they finally take their wedding vows.

Not all love marriages have happy endings. Sometimes discord arises even in love marriages. In the west girls who are larger than usual find it difficult to find suitable dates. There is pressure on the women to conform to conventional male ideas of beauty where women have to be tall and slim with hourglass figures. These kinds of attitudes and perspectives have not only created the kinds of conditions which I described above but are also responsible for women suffering a lot of pain and rejection. Beauty contests

and the popular Barbie doll with its model of a doll with supermodel's figure have been accused of reinforcing this mindset. These kinds of pressures would just increase as society gets more modern and technology advances. Then, would women who refuse to conform get left behind? This made me wonder for a moment that maybe society should switch back to arranged marriages from love marriages since this pursuit for perfection in beauty would increase as society changes. On the positive side all this has also led to the feminist movements in the west. Women have come out of the closet refusing to be mere sexual objects pandering to male ideas of beauty.

Coming to arranged marriages, they offer more protection, security to the women. There is not much pressure on the women to look like models. Parents employ maturity and wise judgment when choosing suitable spouses for their children. Sometimes it helps to rely on another person's opinion and experience when selecting one's partner especially when the people marrying are young and need guidance and advice in marrying a suitable person.

This does not mean arranged marriages are the ideal sort of marriages. Having an arranged does not mean that the married couple remains happily ever after or that there is harmony in the relationship. Women have been known to stay on in abusive relationships for the sake of family pride, respect in society etc. Even in an arranged marriage there is a different sort of pressure to be fair-skinned and beautiful. In India and Sri Lanka the evil of dowry, caste and community issues and the concept of matching horoscopes, sometimes taken to its extreme levels have contributed much to the argument against arranged marriages.

It becomes difficult therefore to predict the ideal sort of marriage. So ultimately it is up to the individual to decide whether he wants to have a love or an arranged marriage after all it is a question of being happy in love.

Nayan Guru (23)

[Nepalese; talking from an Asian point
of view-directed at Tamils and other Asian cultures]



Heritage, Culture and Tamil life

Sajeev Thevaratnam (17)

I found it hard embracing my Sri Lankan and Tamil heritage growing up in an area where there are hardly any, but predominantly people of black origin. When I left for secondary school, I had to go to an area which was predominantly made of people with white origin. I also found it hard making my own name in these areas, as people started to stereotype me as they themselves have not really been in contact with people of our kind. But by joining into the Tamil community in areas like Lewisham, like by tuition, or clubs like 11 Stars Football, I found the confidence to express my individuality and especially the endless pride for my heritage.



What you should now about Tamil football

Sucane Rajagi (15)

My name's Sucane, I'm 15 and I have been playing for 11 Stars football club for under a year. I decided to join 11 Stars football club a few months ago, and decided to join the club because it opened up many opportunities for my football career.

I was guaranteed a successful spell at the club. However, most parents out there believe that football is a waste of time. Well, think again! Look at those who play football and look at those who don't. For everyone at 11 Stars, football is what makes us. If we didn't have 11 Stars then we'd probably be involved in gangs and other bad influences.

Parents must realize that life goes beyond education and tuition, we must enjoy our childhood, and to be honest through football we can achieve this. We learn many things with proper sport training, such as team work and competitive sportsmanship. Through this, we can achieve and fulfill our dreams.



Immigrant in my country

Mayuran Loganathan (16)

We had to leave our country because we were the minority. This was the reason why many people left their own home country Sri Lanka to come to London. This was the reason why I left Srilanka when I was 9. When I came to London I felt like a stranger among people. I felt like I shouldn't be here.

Now I've been living in London for over 7 years, I know my area very well and the people around me, but deep inside I still feel like an immigrant, I feel like an outsider. It doesn't matter how much or little we change we will always be outsiders. I have a dream of living in my home country one day as a free citizen.

When I arrived In London, I started to realise that football was a big sport in the UK. In Sri Lanka the major sport back then and still today is cricket, but now I had to adapt to the British Tamil mentality and get into football. When I started to watch football matches on TV, I fell in love with the sport and wanted to join a team as soon as possible. One day I went to a football tournament and saw some of my friends playing for 11 stars football club. There and then I decided to join the club and was invited for trials by the club coach. Since then I have been attending training and have been playing in a number of football tournaments. Football enables me to me surrounded by my friends and fellow Tamil youngsters, instead of just feeling like another immigrant.



Away from Home, away from paradise, away from Sri Lanka

Kayandini Kandasamy (23)

After being refused entrance to a Sri Lankan engineering university to pursue my dream studies, I had to make an ultimate decision that tremendously changed my life. Yes that was when I decided to carry on my higher studies in the United Kingdom. Fortunately my parents were able to afford my university tuition fees which would have cost them nothing if I had studied a bit harder to enter into Sri Lankan University. Deep inside me I still regret living a care free life without any motivation. But hey, we all need some lessons to teach us how this complicated life should be. All we have to make sure is that we don't repeat those mistakes.

When I said farewell to my family, I was overwhelmed by the thought of leading a life in Great Britain rather than thinking of missing my family and friends, but then how wrong I was. The moment I stepped into this country I realised that indeed I am very far from Sri Lanka. The familiar polluted air or the non stop bus horn was not there anymore. Everything was so systematic and perfect. My world was so small surrounded by my friends and family. It was so comfortable and I loved every minute of it. But here I have so many relatives and I made more acquaintance and friends. But why do I feel that I am alienated? Everything seems to be under control in my life, but why do I feel that I don't have the grip on it anymore.

Academic wise I believe I have made my parents proud, though I still haven't finished my studies yet. Now I am capable of leading my own life. But still there is something missing in my life which I cannot still identify with. Is it the fact that I am missing my family and my beautiful island? Have I become a victim of a machine life lead by many people here? Of course you may wonder why I shouldn't return back to my paradise. I am not going to use the conflict in Sri Lanka as an excuse as many people here do. Well the answer is simple and straight. I have adapted to this lifestyle here. It has its own pluses as well as minuses, but I am satisfied.

I am still searching for my life path. I am sure that most you out there would be in the same 'life searching' club that I myself has been a member for the past 3 years. The care free girl who just happened to spend her every minute with her family and friends is not there any more. I am still wondering whether this is the hard side of life or the best side of the life.

One powerful decision I made has changed everything including myself. But hey I have learned from yesterday, am living for today, and hoping for tomorrow...



My pride! My community! My Tamil people.

Jethusan Chandranathan (15)

My name is Jethusan and I am a Tamil but I was born in Sweden. I am 15 years old, I am in year 10 and I go to Sedghehill School.

I am proud to be Tamil because of what our people have achieved in this country. I often find myself surrounded by Tamil people, and so have made friends with many of them. My Tamil friends are funny and I like to hang around with them, we often have a laugh and say jokes in Tamil, which most people in Lewisham rarely understand.

I also play football with my friends because I enjoy it and it is fun. Also another reason why I like being Tamil is because of the food. Sri Lankan and South Indian Tamils make the best food in the world, for example Kotu Roti. In addition I enjoy the festivals and occasions like weddings because they are very different from westernised religious cultures. The main reason why I am proud to be a Tamil is because of my religion. I believe the Gods are great to me, and have always taken care of my family. I hope this will always be the case in troubled times. Thank you.



Life as a the Tamil teenager

Kogilan Paramanathan (15)

Life in London is difficult enough, without having to be Tamil as well. Simply put life is hard because of the stereotypical views that people hold, believing most Tamil teenagers to be gangsters, thereby portraying your true image up side down. You could be with a group of friends and as soon as you are seen with them, you are automatically labelled as a gang because you're Tamil and in a group of more than two.

Growing up as a teenager in London is hard enough, as you have to deal with issues such as education, safety on the streets, and keeping parents happy, but it is even harder growing up as a Tamil teenager as you must choose your friends wisely and recognise trouble makers, and keep away from them. You must keep your image clean, once it is damaged; it is for a long time. Tamil people simply do not know how to forgive, forget, or not be judgemental in the first place.

As Tamil parents are so stereotypically anxious about their child's education they happen to forget the difficulties we face in order to keep our image clean, so they tend to keep you away from so called trouble by ensuring your lives are dictated by the education and extra curricular activities that they had planned for you, almost a year before you were even born. My friends are similar people to me, and I wonder if my friend is seen to look like a trouble maker to my parents, then how do I look to all my friends parents.

Some Tamil teenagers do end up in the wrong crowd; this in turn has resulted in the building up of ever growing Tamil stereotypes, gangs. Due to the minority of people our freedom is becoming limited as we are restricted to wear certain clothes, follow a certain style, and act in a certain way.

I am not in a gang, nor am I a gangster, but I am Tamil, I am young and I do want to dress in a certain way and go out with my friends. Does that make me a gangster? I hope not, because if it does, then our people have a lot to learn.



Me Vs Tamil influences

Kevin Dinesh Kathirkamanathan (16)

Hello my name is Kevin AKA Dinesh. What is it like to be Tamil I hear you ask me? Well, there are two sides to every Story and every culture.

Tamil people around Lewisham socialise with each other these days very differently to how it was a few years ago. Nowadays, there are both good and bad Tamils. It's not easy to live around Tamil people in Lewisham, because of the ever growing amount of gangs and for other similar reasons. You need to be respected, and it is hard to increase your rep, if you are not seen to be a gangster or even dress or look like one. That's when you get the most respect from all those who are your age. That is just how it is in Lewisham.

One of the things that I find annoying about being Tamil is the thoughts of some of the parents. Here in England kids from other cultures are treated differently to Tamil kids, simply because they have adapted better. For example you see many different ethnic kids playing around at night with their friends, but it can not be like that for most of us, as Tamil parents are so protective over their kids. They simply think that when you go out on a school night you aren't allowed out for long or at all. You have to be either studying or at tuition. For me the case was like that many, many years ago but I have grown up now and I can be more independent.



The Euro-Tamil Vision

Kumanan Udhayakumar (21)

I am Kumanan Udhayakumar, a 21 year old German citizen studying and living in the UK for almost 3 years. I have recently achieved the highest grade at BTEC National Diploma in Business which allowed me to move onto my next level of progression. According to this I chose to study International Business with Spanish at a high ranked university in London. The main reason for choosing this particular course is that my long term ambition for the future has been to become involved in the business world and I have to admit that the business world today is more complex and that complexity requires more education, and with that in mind, I applied for International Business with modern language (Spanish). Additionally I have been interested and curious to learn diverse languages and their cultures and now I am fluent at my mother tongue Tamil as well as at 2 main world languages; German and English, but also I learnt 3 years French and 1 year Spanish. This experience and knowledge will help me to simplify my study years and expand my knowledge further on to have those in full control.

Apart from my educational background and occupation I have been very active in sport (Football). Playing football on the pitch gives me the opportunity to live life as an aspiring professional footballer and developing and improving my character. In order to achieve those aims and objectives I hardly miss the training sessions, which allows me to gain more skills and experience. My lifelong motto is 'the more you perform, the better you become', wherever at sport or career.

In football, a team exists of 11 players and each individual player has diverse skills and talents. However, once the 11 players are on the pitch they will be one team. As we all know a team works together towards one common goal, which is mostly to succeed or win. As many people define football as time wasting, as 10 players running after the ball and trying to kick the ball into the square box. Football or any other team sport is more than that and will enable each of us to keep fit (health) as well as learning basic life rules, for instance working as a team, solving any disputes within the team and much more.

According to this aspect, it is very difficult to find or encourage Tamil youths in the UK to take part in any kind of sport, whereby many of them are involved in crime and other illegal activities. Compared to other European countries, the UK has a bad reputation within that field and is getting worse year to year. In my opinion, the difference between youths in the UK and Germany is that Tamil people in Germany keep together and are involved in various cultural activities, whereas those in the UK are separating into area groups and building territorial boundaries in our community. However, I won't say that German Tamils are better in any way to those in the UK. It is only that they grow up in very difficult circumstances and the continuation of these problems might pose a big threat to us Tamil people...



Why I love being Tamil

Krishna Rajaratnam (15)

The presence of the Tamil culture are scattered all over Tamil Nadu (Chennai) and Sri Lanka. These are in the form of literature, dance and music. As the world changed vastly through technology and appearances we have passed down these arts and now present them to fellow friends and family to appreciate the value of what we and others before us have achieved. So why am I proud to be Tamil? Because even to be part of this gives me great pride and unity. Being Tamil is a privilege but it does have its downfalls, being Tamil is hard, yet good at the same time. I am who I am because I am Tamil.



Life and times of two different Worlds...

Nilosananth Nirmalan (20)

Due to the ongoing civil war, I was displaced many times. Therefore my daily life and education was interrupted without any warning. At the same time my life was also at risk on a daily basis. Therefore I had no choice but to leave my paradise, friends and family behind. I migrated to the United Kingdom searching for a better quality of life.

London welcomed me with its soggy, rainy and grey British weather. It was a very different experience and far beyond my imagination. I started my education in London at secondary stage, with no basic knowledge of English. However I had learnt new communication skills and further developed my writing skills by speaking with similar migrant students in my school. This improved my language considerably. In the mean time my mother tongue was forced to being silenced, that is if I wanted to improve my English. At the same time more and more immigrants were arriving from Sri Lanka, with family in tow. So I made new friends who helped me pass through all the hurdles that I came across. Eventually I passed all my GCSE and A-Levels and I entered into higher education, which is the stage I am at today.

Back home I played football with bare foot, and sometimes if I was lucky enough I wore bandages as a form of shin guard. When I arrived in London, all the facilities were modern and I felt as if I was in a dreamy world, with so much at my grasp. Simply put I was excited at the prospect of wearing football boots and proper shin guard. I found it very difficult to play with it at the beginning, as it felt strange. However I adapted as everyone else around me did, and played the game how it should be played. After being a member at 11 Stars football club my sports skills further opened up, and at the same time my mother tongue (Tamil) also started to progress, as I was able to communicate on a regular basis with me fellow players. To this day some of their Tamil is pronounced very badly and some is very good. On the whole I tend to find myself laughing at their attempts, but they do try. The long and short of it is that there are many like me, and through 11 Stars football club they have benefited in improving their football skills and aspirations as well as their mother tongue.



Stars in the Hood

Reshikeshan Sritharan (14)

From joining 11 Stars football club I have learnt other aspects of life than football. I learnt that many Tamil youth have a light to shine and they hide that light because people outside have expectation for them to be a doctor or an engineer.

With the young youth coming up from 11 stars being guided by the seniors, there will be a bright future for them and for the name of the Tamil youth in London.

Here we are all stars and those stars has to be shone for the voice to be heard to all the people for them to be noticed. Also many Tamil youth have been noticed for their spectacular talent

such as sportive activities. However that same talent can be shown in different ways.

It will be good for the younger generation to take up an activity and let their light shine to the rest of the world.

You Are The Light Of The World
We Have Your Light Within Us
We Will Not hide It Away
But Let Your Light Shine Out Before Others
So That They May See Our Good Works
And Give Love To You God For These Talents

Express Yourself

Nirozen Thavarajah (19)

"Success is doing what you like and making a living at it"

Standing in a small hall at school selling 10 pence Chupa Chups lollipop for a 20 pence piece is nothing short of what I liked to do at the age of 11. Yet again I was only 11 years of age and all I could think of was generating some profits through customers, essentially school kids. At an age where puberty was still a far away process for me, my mind and body thought and moved like a successful businessman. I thought big then, I think big now and I will always remain to think big as long as I can breathe. As they say the sky is the limit to all your aspirations.

I am Nirozen Thavarajah, a 19 year-old student pursuing a degree in BSc Economics at a top London institution. I chose economics as this is a field which attracts me the most; its practices and methods has affects on each one of us on a day-to-day basis. This is a path I decided to take which fits my image and interests. On top of that I play soccer for 11 Stars, a Tamil soccer team where I have not given up hope of playing soccer. In general, one follows a path that the heart takes you on with some guidance. I believe I am still walking on mine and with my parents' support I can be successful. All parents wish to grow top rankers under their roof, i.e. Doctors and Engineers to name a few, yet we all know success is not measured according to how many passes you achieve at school or how many passes you make to your team mates. Success is doing what you like and making a living at it. Neither am I saying neglect the wishes of your parents or stop kicking a ball. I am encouraging multi-talented individuals to step up. What I am trying to put into words for you is possessing both intellectual qualities combined with social attributes will make one an excelling person, leading you onto many paths in life. So even if we do not consider football to be an area of profession in the Tamil community, simply imagine an outcome of both intellectual brilliance and soccer quality rolled into one. Surely the next step is professional soccer, or tennis, at a prestigious sports institution. All in all, the ball is in your court. Would you make a path and embark upon on a successful journey or end up selling lollipops to kids. Your choice. Think about it, when talent is there, your desire to win triggers you to prevail. Express yourself. Reach out to the sky.



What I like about being Tamil

Ponni & Parithi Srisabesan (10 and 6)

I am 10 and my brother is 6. Together we are the youngest children in my Dad's family. I like this because I have lots of cousins who treat me and my brother, but they can be annoying sometimes.

I like being Tamil because of my big family. There are so many of us, that I can not count them.

I enjoy going to tuition and I like playing football, because all my friends also like it. My brother has started to play football, because one day Dad wants him to join our cousins at 11 Stars Football Club.

One day when I get older, I hope to be a fashion designer, and my brother would like to be a famous footballer. My mum and Dad always look out for us, and encourage us to do what we want. So being Tamil is not that bad, it can actually be good sometimes.



My search for Tamil culture and heritage

Neelan Rasaratnam (19)

I am Tamil but was born in the U.K, as young Tamil person I feel that growing up in the U.K has had a dramatic affect on the way I would respond to everyday activities. I feel that by being born in the U.K have both many advantages and disadvantages, for example not having to fear about your safety when walking outside. Still to this day there is a civil war going on between the government and the liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam. For a person not being born in Srilanka and living in an environment where the Tamil community is not very dominate, knowing about what has been going on in Srilanka and still going on has been difficult. However in the U.K nowadays the amount of gang violence and attacks that have taken place have rapidly increased, which is definitely a major downfall on society today. I think the society in both Srilanka and the U.K both share similar qualities in that sense of their violence.

Being a coloured person living in the U.K has a lot of racial discrimination against ethnic minorities within the workplace. Personally my childhood has been an easy lifestyle, where I didn't need to work for money. However 18 years later, and as I gain greater independence with more responsibilities I learn the value of money and the difficulties that are required to get a job. I feel that by me struggling to find a job now only makes me stronger and more prepared to tackle the continuous difficulties our people face every day.

Education in the U.K is one of the best in the world, and once qualifying with a degree will be well recognised all over the world. An advantage of living in the U.K is that the government pays for home student to graduate through there higher education and provides financial support to people who may need it. Being one of the few Asian people in secondary school who is also Tamil, made it difficult to connect with my roots. Also when growing up not needing to Speak, Read and Write Tamil I grew up without knowing any of these key skills of my background. I did regret not being able to read, write and speak Tamil, I think if I got more involved at a young age with my culture and, grew up with people who spoke of my mother tongue as me would have made a difference with my life at an earlier stage. Today I am very proud to be a Tamil.



Fruits of Life

Ms Girl Z (18)

In life the only thing we have in common is that all individuals strive and have strived to be successful. To succeed means to be a winner - to be at or at least near the top of the heap. But along with winning comes a profound responsibility. A football team that takes the championship is suddenly saddled with a near crushing responsibility to carry on that level of play. A person who is successful in business is expected to continue being successful. Success carries with it an inherent burden.

Success is only achieved through progress, and progress is only achieved through risk. A mushroom never takes a risk. It hides underground until conditions are perfect, and then emerges for only a short while. It never transmutes - never changing - remaining forever a mushroom.

Humans fear risk because it involves dealing with unknown concepts and quantities. We're not sure what will happen if we take action, and that is the frightening concept in and of it.

Unfortunately, when we fear the risk of taking action, we relegate ourselves to remaining underground with the mushrooms - to be waiting forever for perfect conditions. We never change. We never progress. We never become anything other than what we already are. We procrastinate, and attempt to content ourselves with a "someday I will" philosophy of living. However before we all know it, that one day has come and gone.

If anything through life, I have learnt to never underestimate myself or others. No one is better than you – unless you let them be! Success in life is not handed on a plate to anybody – so achieve, work hard and succeed.

Life after Education

Prashana Gengatharan (25)

One thing I have learnt in the last few years is that perseverance and patience go a very long way. I graduated from university with a degree in Computing and Business Management. I was on a sandwich course which allowed me to take a year out after my second year to gain work experience in the industry and therefore making me look more employable on paper. Fortunately I got into a really good placement with a big name attached to it and once I graduated, I had no problem getting into jobs within IT.

However by that time I had different career plans in mind. I wanted to work in Finance. I wanted to work in the City and make a lot of money. It was quite difficult to even get interviews at financial institutions with the technical skills and experience I had. The key thing was to highlight the skills which were transferable and at the very least, believe in myself. I altered my CV to highlight these particular skills accordingly and I was getting more and more interest from the right kind of companies. I have to thank an old friend for this as she sat with me and helped me pick out the relevant bits of my CV and put them on the first page.

Then one day, I was hired by a medium sized investment trust in the city. This was my foot in the door and I began to soak up as much knowledge and experience I could from day one. From a very early stage in my new job I was made aware that the shelf life of a graduate in this type of role was typically 1-2 years. This suited me fine as I ideally wanted to get into a larger organisation as soon as possible.

I have recently started a new job in asset management and I thoroughly enjoy the environment and nurturing aspects of my role. It takes a lot of patience to go through applications and interview stages. You will experience a lot of setbacks and disappointments but do not let that affect your confidence. Be persistent and always believe in yourself.



How we can reduce youth crime among Tamils

Samual Venthakone (16)

Crime is a major problem in many countries around the world. The type of crime that concerns government officials the most is youth crime. It is the belief of many that if young people stop getting involved in crime then other types will easily be reduced. In Britain the government is trying all it can to try and reduce crime after the recent spate of 20 murders since January 2008 in London. The Prime Minister has recently vowed to put youth crime at the top of his priority list and that he will put in billions of pounds for it to happen.

What are the Tamil people doing to fight crime in our community? What are we as Tamils doing to stop Tamil youngsters turning to crime? What are parents doing to stop their children hanging around with criminals? Many young Tamils are in jail after committing crime due to personal problems. What as fellow Tamils can we do to make these people face their problems and believe in themselves?

Many people and I believe that football clubs, youth clubs and other places where Tamil teenagers can make friends under authority can help deter young people from crime. Many scientists across the world also accept this and are the reason why the Prime Minister Gordon Brown has stated that the billions of pounds he has put aside to reduce youth crime is going into building more clubs and activities for young people. The Tamil community is an ethnic minority in Britain and many Tamils fear to mix with the English public. This means most of the aid to reduce crime will not reduce youth crime among Tamils. The only way to reduce crime is through the full cooperation of the Tamil people in Britain. The Tamil people need to unite to focus on introducing more Tamil youth and football clubs like us across the country and should try to support them in as many ways as possible.



The future of Tamil culture in Britain

Silogini Pathmarajah (19)

As Tamils, I believe it is highly important that our roots and heritage are not forgotten however far we may be from our homeland. I also believe that the sole responsibility for ensuring that this happens lies within the hands of every parent.

I am a young Tamil and having lived in the UK for the majority of my life, I have been brought up by my parents to primarily follow the values and beliefs that we Tamils follow. Since I was young, my family have always taught me about our culture and traditions and ensured that I am aware of what is happening back home and the difficulties that our people face. The fact that there are hundreds of our innocent people back home getting killed just makes this more crucial. Some of my fellow Tamil friends are not in touch with their roots as most of us are and when looking at them, I feel privileged. I feel that I have to thank my parents for how they have brought me up to be aware and proud of my heritage. I am sure there are more people out there who give high importance to our culture and heritage and I feel that it is what we all should be doing, or at least trying to do.

Although it is important that we need to be able to survive in this country and so, we need to adapt and conform to the majority values and behaviour, we also at the same time, should remain distinctive and maintain our Tamil culture, also known as integrating. What we don't want to happen is assimilation, where we will gradually adapt to the values and cultures here, and over a period of two or three generations, become part of the culture here.

I feel that it is the responsibility of each of us to make sure that our Tamil heritage is not forgotten throughout the generations. And I want to ask each and every one of you to ensure you play a part in making sure that our Tamil heritage lives forever. *Valka Tamil.*



Hair cuts and Earrings

Suthanjan Koneswaran (21)

This is the 21st century, and the world changes just like how style changes. Sometimes the style stays the same but people's views change. I have often wondered what would be wrong with me growing my hair long or piercing my ears, how would people react to my new image, what would my parents say, how would you react?

During a conversation with my friend he stated that "Asian uncles and aunties look down at you with their brown eyes in disgust, or even suggest a spiting gesture". So you could argue he is sacrificing his background with the elders of the community while he is trying to act cool and impress the younger community and girls. It is human nature to judge by appearance so do we assume the all mighty Shiva has earring to impress? Well I'll let you to decide that...

HAIR CUTS!!! What can I say about that? Well I can write a book about it!! You might have thick hair, straight hair or curly hair. What ever it is you have to style it to look good, impress and to look clean. Am I right? I think so. If you disagree then you can facebook me and we'll see.

The Tamil society has one hair style which is side parting and simple... Who want's to look casual? If you have long hair your mother will be like "Do you live in the jungle, go and get a hair cut", even though all Hindu Gods have long hair. If you have a balled hair cut your mother will be like "Why do you look like a thug, grow you're hair and have a nice side parting". If you have those funky hair cuts e.g. Lines and Mohican then you're also seen to have a "Bad Hair cut".....

So what makes a good Tamil boy? No earring with side parting, maybe? I don't really know but you can ask you're mother.

My Struggle, My Peace, My Life and My Promise

Tharinath Mahenthirarajah (19)

I was born in Sri Lanka, which is an island located off the southern coast of India with a pleasant tropical climate. I was brought up in a beautiful and wonderful village, Mullitivu, Puthukkudiyiruppu, which is close Mullitivu beach. When I was growing up, there was a terrible, violent civil war in the country, which made it hard for me to concentrate on my studies and participate in classes. Since Sri Lanka is still a developing country, my school (Vigneswara) did not have sufficient facilities and resources. This means that I had to buy my own books in Mullitivu, which is quite far from where I lived. In each class there were nearly 30 students; the boys sat on one side and girls on the other. The teachers were especially strict, and we had to conform to the rules; if someone didn't do their homework or did something wrong, they were instantly caned. Myself and other students were hit by teachers several times for not doing work properly and for talking in class; however this arguably improved most of the students' behaviour because it was a deterrent. My parents planned to move to London, so that my education would not be adversely affected. This meant that I had to leave my friends and grandparents behind. I still miss them enormously.

I came to London at the end of September 1999; it was freezing cold. It was difficult for me to join a primary school, since I was late for admission. When I finally joined Deptford Park Primary School I was welcomed very warmly by teachers and other students. But it was terribly difficult for me to understand and get along in group activities. I joined the primary school in year 6, which meant that I had to do my SATS exam while the class was already revising for the SATS exam, so I found studying for this exceptionally difficult: I knew very little of the English language. I found it almost impossible to learn when I started my studies in London, however as time gradually passed I was able to learn English rapidly. At first, I was unable to communicate with other students but I was soon able to make friends fast. Communicating with them helped to improve my English.

I feel I am a determined person. This is because I am able to organise my independent learning and also my domestic responsibilities. I enjoy playing challenging games on the computer and also enjoy watching films from my own cultural background. I cope well with stress and I am able to keep a cool head in a crisis. From an early age, I was enthusiastic about sciences (chemistry and biology) and mathematics. I found the subjects challenging, interesting and exciting. This made me believe that I would be interested in a career in medicine, adding to the fact that it was also my childhood ambition to study medicine in the future.

After meeting all the demanding targets successfully at Deptford Park, my head teacher had applied and reserved a place for me at Deptford Green Secondary School. I was extremely nervous to go there, because I would have to meet new students and new teachers; however after a few days I settled in quickly and was able to make new friends. GCSE was a huge leap from year 6. In Deptford Green the facilities and the teaching style were excellent and manageable, which made me understand the lessons and do my GCSE exams well. I achieved the grades I expected: 3 A's, 6 B's and 3 Cs.

Using my respectable GCSE grades I was fortunately able to join Christ the King Sixth Form College. This is where I felt worthy and respected. All of my teachers and students were particularly friendly. I chose to study A-Level Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Computing. In addition I also retook English in order to improve my grade from a C to a B (or higher). This would help me to study Medicine in future at University. One of my cousins is studying medicine at Kings College, which inspired me to do the same. Also Sri Lanka still has a terrible high mortality rate, due to the lack of doctors and medical help. I would like to help my country and the people there, who are suffering desperately from illness, disease and poverty.

□□□

Tamil Gangs, No Thank You! It's just not worth it!

Ms Girl X (18)

As a Tamil girl, especially living in London, it's not as easy people think it is. Things haven't always been perfect for me, for the simple fact that I am Tamil and nevertheless a Tamil girl! This meant that I had always been restricted with the things I wanted to do in comparison to the rest of my friends. These made me frustrated and made me want to rebel and do things my own way. For example, in year 9 I wasn't really a happy girl and for most of the year and I ended up in Tooting hanging around with my friends. But like a foolish child I ended up making my Mum upset and made my Dad run around looking for me, which I regret but I was fourteen and stupid. I realised how much grief I caused them through me being selfish, although, I never learnt completely.

I guess I was looking for freedom and that was what I got. However, like any other teenager I abused my freedom and ended up losing it. Why because I started hanging around with a "gang" and I got to know people I never thought I would. To the people on the outside, a group of girls and guys hanging out together looked wrong, but to us we were all close and always there for one another. When my mum found out, she wasn't really pleased and wanted me to go to India. I guess after a while my stubbornness got the better of me and regardless of anyone wanting me to stay, I left.

Only in India did I come to my senses, I had no one but just one friend, I didn't know what to think or feel but I guess I had a lot of time to contemplate.

I guess the advice I would give my fellow youngsters, is that you have to go through things for you to grow and evolve and for you to end up being who you are. And another word of advice is it may seem like it's the best thing being in a crew and everyone respecting you but at one point you realise it isn't worth it and that's when you start to grow up. The things that you do in the past and go through, makes you who you are today and in the future. One major thing I have learnt especially when it comes to girls is that it can take a life time for you to make a good name for yourself.



Our People, Our Culture!

Ms Girl Y (18)

Tamil people have spread outside their territory and have now shown their presence in many ways and can be found today. Outside the major Tamil countries, Tamils have been subjected to major foreign influence and today due to these influences; it is difficult to talk about the typical Tamil culture. Today's fashion, food, life style and values are all products of this long history of interaction.

Women seem to be freer and have better opportunities to get education and better jobs. Although they seem more modern in today's society, they are still bound by traditional jobs such as looking after the house, and even keeping their distance from men. This leads onto the next important issue in the Tamil culture, marriage. Marriage is a good example of how tradition and modernity can either go together or can be a source of friction. Marriage is important in anyone's life and even in any society, and it discloses a great deal about the society's attitude to the relationship. Most marriages are likely to be arranged by the parent and the individual's horoscope, to make sure a match is suitable.

Religion is still a major force in Tamil people's lives. It has been observed that there has been an increase in the interest of religion and beliefs. Religious ceremonies are performed by new educated employed people how can be women or men.

There has been a greater sense of social equality and opportunity for a lot of people to express them. With the acceptance of values to the urban society, there is a danger that the Tamil culture will slowly erode. It is important that popular types of expression and ways of life do not spread over the surface of the true essence of Tamil culture.



Sir Kanagasabai Vidayala Squad Senior Squad for TSSA 2008

Back Row (Left to Right): Jenarthan, Janagan, Charles, Kumanan, Nirozen and Vinoth.
 Front Row (Left to Right): Nilosananth, Haarisan, Sajeev, Theepan and Prasanth.



11 Stars Football Club Under 16 Squad for TRO 2008

Back Row (Left to Right): Sucane, Jethushan, Arun and Saravanan.
 Front Row (Left to Right): Samuel, Pirintha, Piraveen, Kogilan and Thayalan.



11 Stars Football Club- Squad for beginning of British Tamil Eelam League Season, 2007/08

Back Row (Left to Right): Dinesh, Jaff, Haarisan, Ujjwal, Danu, Janagan, Charles, Sutharnjan and Jenarthan.
 Front Row (Left to Right): Reshi, Nirozen, Roger, Nilosananth and Siva-keerthi.

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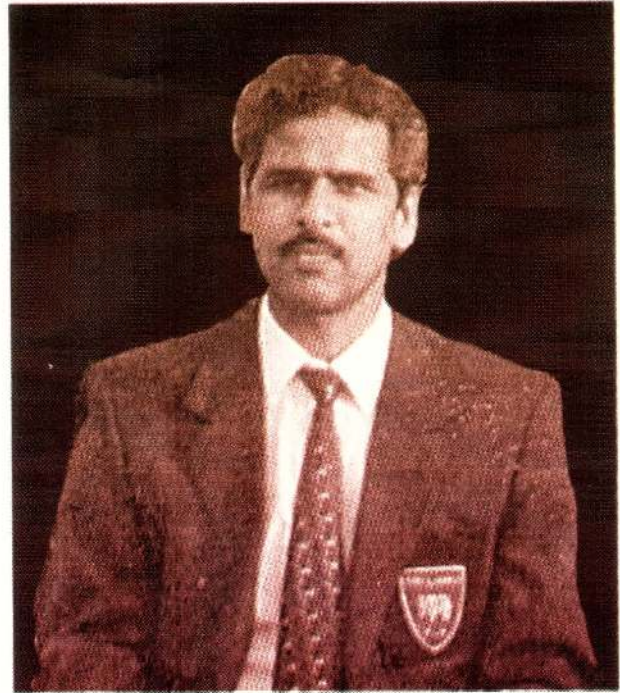
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Our Interview Guests



Mr Mylvagnagam



Mr M Francis
Srilankan Football Captain - 1979



Mr Paul Sathianesan & Nirozen Thavarajah
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Clamp down on Tamil gang violence!

11 Stars football club meets Clr. Paul Sathianesan

During the eighties, hundreds of Sri Lankans fled the country evacuated and victimized by the war. In the year 1985, one of those arrived in the UK with a vision, a mission of sorts that would see his fellow refugees prospering to what fate called upon. The man keeping to his own promises immediately started voluntary work to help his cohorts. Within six months the 6' 2 man found a full time job as an advisor for a Refugee Council and in 1998 he was elected a local councillor of East Ham and has since been climbing steadily to the top of the ladder.

The man with a mission is Paul Sathianesan. The honoured man was born in Urumpirai in Jaffna to a civil servant father and teacher mother. In Colombo he took up a job at a successful printing company. As troubles began brewing he was hounded and accused of aiding insurgents before fleeing the country with the help of his Sinhala boss.

I grasped the opportunity to meet this giant figure of a man whose work in east London has been acknowledged by the East London University with an honourable doctorate although he wishes people to just know him as Paul.

So when I met Paul to have a casual little chat, I took away another interesting piece of editorial from the living legend. The man possesses the intelligence to unlock several questions in just an extensive solitary response – diminishing the time factor meaning that your ears possibly will end up tender. I managed to take down all of what he had to say, with the assist of my swift writing.

How are you Paul?

I am fine thanks.

Tell us a bit about yourself, what is your job, and what do you do?

I am a deputy civic ambassador. Well, heritage is what my job is all about. The heritage for the next generation is culture, identity, tradition and values. Put simply, I am a simple, humble, poor individual but I am rich in love.

What are your views on Tamil youth today?

Through my service, I became the voice of the voiceless for the youth. Parents are not prepared to sit with their children and listen to them. Young people only want love and respect from their parents. Most parents tend to live their dream through their children, and all they think about is study, study, study.

Do you mean children are limited to one option – education?

No! Changing the Tamil thinking from old to new is what I am trying to empower into the community. Creating leaders, role models and heroes is my work. Whatever you want to do is fine with us. The saddest part of our community is that Tamils do not take risks, and are politically driven. I would say that Sri Lankan born English Rapper M.I.A is an example of this.

Tamil gang crime is an issue that you have talked about far and wide, the Ross Kemp documentary on Sky One and UK Lanka Times are a few mediums you have exploited concerning gang epidemic. I ask on behalf of the public, gangs can be reformed yes or no; will they comply with justice yes or no?

Yes on both counts.

Elaborate...

Gang culture will become a cancer in our society. In 2007 20 were murdered by Tamils and until this day we still don't know the right answer as to what pushed them to commit murders. Possibly psychological, we are not sure. I will tell you why they can reform. I was at a Tamil function a few years ago where hundreds of Tamils were inside the hall and no one knew what was happening outside. A group of Tamils with violent instruments stabbed another Tamil boy. This gang would not let the ambulance attend the victim and eventually the police came and sorted matters. A few days later I was at a different place and I saw the same gang in a hall

smoking and drinking. One of them called me over. I don't like smoking and drinking so I expressed that to the boy who called me over, that I would refuse to talk, so I left and said I will be here tomorrow. The next day I saw them and the leader of the gang called me again and insisted on the drinkers and smokers to leave the place. Following that I sat down and asked the boy who are you. The rest of the gang were enraged and the boy who called me cooled them all. The question I asked made the boy think for 15 minutes. He talked to me about his mother and sisters and how he came out of prison. As we talked about his experiences his eyes were red and tears flowed from them slowly. I told him you are crying. He denied it. I said no you are crying and shortly after he fell apart. For the first time I witnessed a human in a gangster. He cried before me. This boy turned his life around, started his own business which unfortunately did not do well but he is still working as we speak. Now he is campaigning against gang violence. He is discouraging gang violence. That tells me gangsters and gangs can comply with justice.

Moving on, do you follow sports?

I sometimes watch cricket. I enjoy sports as I used to be an athlete back home. Sometimes I watch golf to see how long I can sit through a boring game.

How important is social activities such as sports to the community?

Sport is important because it goes beyond religion and politics. It releases you, takes stresses away and gives pride. You are not isolated, you are not on your own, and you have a team. You are a part of something. Now, you cannot be in a gang and play football or cricket at the same time. It is just not possible, because you are surrounded by good people.

If you could base your work ethic and personality with a sport personality which would it be and why would you be that person?

Linford Christie. He was a champion for so long until he was beat. You can run for a certain amount but you cannot run forever. It is not age but motivation as you should hold the capacity of success.

What is your advice to the youth of the Tamil community?

Be a good citizen and try to achieve the best of your ability, and be grateful to god. Everyone has skills and talents. These talents must be recognised, respected and celebrated.

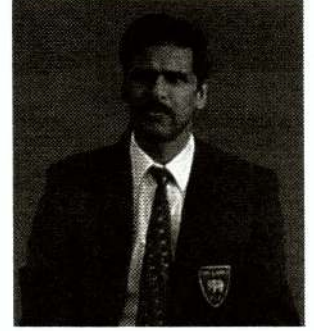
Paul, it was fabulous talking to you and thank you very much for spending some time answering my questions.

For advice and help from Paul Sathianesan contact 11.stars.fc@live.co.uk.

Interviewed by Nirozen Thavarajah
Photos by Janagan Srigengatharan

நேர்காணல்: திரு எம் பிரான்சிஸ்

இலங்கையின் தமிழ்மக்கள் மத்தியில் சாதனை படைத்த விளையாட்டு வீரர்கள் வரிசையில் திரு முடியப்பு பிரான்சிஸ் முன்வரிசையில் குறிப்பிடப்படவேண்டியவர். யாழ்ப்பாணம் பாசையூரைப் பிறப்பிடமாகக் கொண்ட திரு பிரான்சிஸ் அவர்கள் யாழ் சென்ற பற்றிக்ஸ் கல்லூரியின் முன்னணி உதைபந்தாட்ட வீரன். கல்லூரியின் சகல வயதுப் பிரிவுகளிலும் உதைபந்தாட்டக் குழுக்களில் விளையாடியும் தலைமைதாங்கியும் உள்ளார். யாழ் மாவட்ட உதைபந்தாட்டக் குழுக்களில் 1968 முதல் 1971வரை அங்கம் வகித்த இவர் 1969-70ம் வருடங்களில் இலங்கை இளைஞர் தெரிவுக் குழுவில் விளையாடினார். 1971 முதல் 1979வரை இலங்கை தேசிய உதைபந்தாட்டக் குழுவின் அங்கத்தவராகவும் அதன் கப்டனாக 1974இலும் விழங்கினார். இவர் இங்கிலாந்திற்குப் புலம்பெயர்ந்த பின்பாக தகுதி பெற்ற பயிற்ச்சியாளராகவும் மத்தியஸ்த்தராகவும் விழங்குகின்றார்.



இவருடனான சிறிய உரையாடலின் தொகுப்பினை இங்கு பிரசுரம் செய்வதில் மகிழ்வுறுகின்றோம்.

உங்களைப்பற்றி.....

நான் பாசையூரைப் பிறப்பிடமாகக் கொண்டவன். உதைபந்தாட்டம் எங்கள் ஊரவர்களின் வாழ்வின் ஒரு அங்கம். எனது தந்தையார் சென்ற அன்ரனீஸ் விளையாட்டுக் கழகத்திற்காக விளையாடியவர். அவரின் அடிச்சுவட்டில் எனது உதைபந்தாட்டப் பயணம் ஆரம்பமானது.

உதைபந்தாட்டத்தை எந்த வயதில் ஆரம்பத்தீர்கள். என்ன பிரச்சனைகளைச் சந்தித்தீர்கள்

நான் எனது சிறு வயதிலிருந்தே விளையாட ஆரம்பித்தேன். பத்து வயதளவில் மூன்றாம் பிரிவில் விளையாடத் தொடங்கினேன். 15வயதில் 1966ம் ஆண்டு முதலாம் பிரிவுப் போட்டி ஒன்றில் விமானப் படைக்கு எதிராக சென்ற பற்றிக்ஸ் அணிக்காக விளையாடி இருக்கின்றேன். பிரச்சனைகள் என்று குறிப்பிடக்கூடியதாக இல்லை.

உதைபந்தாட்டத்தில் இங்கும் இலங்கைக்கும் என்ன வேறுபாடுகளைக் காண்கின்றீர்கள்

ஆடுகளம் (மைதானம்) முதலாவது. இங்கே இதற்காக நிறையச் செலவு செய்து தயாரித்திருப்பார்கள். ஆனால் இலங்கையில் புற்கள் இல்லாத தனிய கரும் மண் கொண்ட மைதானங்களே அதிகம் இருக்கின்றன. இரண்டாவது பயிற்ச்சியாளர்கள் இங்குபோல் தகுதியானவர்கள் குறைவு. பயிற்ச்சியாளர்களும் அதிகம் இல்லை. தற்போது சில முன்னேற்றங்கள் இவற்றில் ஏற்படுவதாக அறிகின்றேன்.

உதைபந்தாட்ட அளவில் சின்ன நாடுகளான ஜமேக்கா, ஈரான் போன்றவைகள் இப்போது உலகக் கிண்ண இறுதிப் போட்டிகளில் விளையாடுகின்றன. ஆனால் இலங்கை.....

1969இல் ஈரானுடனான ஒரு போட்டியில் நாங்கள் 2-2 என்ற கோல்களைப் பெற்றோம். பின்னர் நான் நினைக்கின்றேன் தொடர்ந்த போர் இந்த முன்னேற்றத்தை தடுத்து உள்ளது என்று. எங்களுடைய காலம் மாதிரி தமிழ்ப் பகுதிகளில் உதைபந்தாட்டம் மட்டுமல்ல எந்த விளையாட்டுமே தொடர்ந்து விளையாட முடிவதில்லை. இது ஒரு பாரிய குறைபாடு. எதிர்காலம் அப்படி இருக்காது என நம்புகின்றேன்.

இங்கே இளைஞர்கள் உதைபந்தாட்டத்தில் உயர்ந்த நிலையை அடையும் வாய்ப்பு உள்ளதா..

நிறையவே உள்ளது. நான் பல இடங்களில் திறமையுள்ள எமது இளைஞர்களைக் கண்டு வருகின்றேன். ஆனாலும் பெற்றார் கல்வியில் காட்டுகின்ற அக்கறை பிள்ளைகளின் தொடர்ந்த விளையாட்டுத்துறை வாய்ப்புக்களைப் பாதிக்கின்றது. ஆனாலும் எதிர்காலம் எமது இளைஞர்களுக்கு நன்றாக உள்ளதாகவே நம்புகின்றேன்.

இங்கே தமிழர் சமூகம் சந்திக்கும் பிரச்சனைகள்.....

எம்மவர் மத்தியிலே ஒற்றுமை இல்லாமை மிகப் பெரிய குறைபாடு. தகுதியானவர்களை இனம்கண்டு ஏற்றுக் கொள்ளும் மனப்பக்குவம் எம்மவர்களுக்கு இன்னமும வரவில்லை. இதுவும் ஒற்றுமையைக் குலைக்கும் காரணிகள். எதிர்காலம் அப்படி இருக்காது என நம்புவோம். நம்பிக்கையுடன் எதிர்பார்ப்போம்

எங்களுடன் செலவு செய்த இந்த இனியவேளைக்கு இளைய சமூகத்தின் நன்றிகள்.

நேர்காணல்: குமணன், நிலோசன்

Love and arranged marriages

Tharsan Raj (19)

Has the modern Tamil society grown to accept love marriages? Is arranged marriage the norm, and is it justified?

People tend to have a typical view about arranged marriages – that is parents forcing an individual to marry someone that they do not know. This really isn't the case anymore, maybe it was many years back home in Sri Lanka but things have certainly changed amongst British Tamils.

Arranged marriage is like 'a global dating system' as quoted by Aishwarya Rai in the film: *Bride and Prejudice*. In this film, it shows parents allowing their kids to mingle freely and dance with the opposite sex in an Indian traditional dance – the Garba. After this date, if the potential bride/grooms like each other, they inform their parents. This is the Indian prospective of arranged marriages. Changes in Tamil arranged marriage is not as radical. However, nowadays the bride/groom is more involved in the whole process. They are given the right to talk and get to know each other before the marriage; and if they don't like each other, the marriage will simply not take place.

Love marriage on the other hand involves the parents at a later stage i.e. when the introduction of each other's family takes place. Love marriage is when the individual chooses the life partner themselves. But is it that simple? And why does the modern Tamil society have trouble accepting this?

Parents have trouble accepting this as they see love marriage as just an infatuation; which can occur during early teens. This is when you think you love someone when you don't really. They see this as a mistake, which can jeopardise the couples' lives!

In my opinion, looking at these problems in love marriage, parents are right in certain ways, which makes me say that arranged marriages seem to be the better option. However, we haven't yet considered true love.

'True love is your soul's recognition of its counterpoint in another' as quoted in David Dobkins film: *Wedding crashers*. If this is found in a relationship, then that's it! This will ultimately be the perfect marriage and no force in nature can break such a strong bond. True love can be found at any stage of life. What is important is that the couples achieve their goals and aspiration in life and when they have achieved their goals they consult their parents about their love for each other.

Overall, with what has been discussed, there's a clear conclusion to be made. Whether its arranged or love marriage is not the issue, as long as it's true love and the couple are committed to each other then we can rule that both these types of marriages are acceptable, and as time goes on, the Tamil society will grow to accept this too.



Why I like being Tamil?

Nitharsan Koneswaran (15)

I like being Tamil because the Tamil community is different from other communities, and our culture is different from other cultures; however there is no difference in Sports, as the rules are the same. And sport plays a big part in our daily life; our sports history shows we are better in cricket than football. However football among the Tamil community is continuing to improve and grow.

During my secondary education, one of my lessons that I had least enjoyed was playing football during Physical education, because when coming to choosing teams I was one of the last player's to be chosen. I believe this is because some did not like the way I looked or the way I played. Even though we are all the same, we don't have the same equal rights.

I want to show that I can live up to high expectations with other people and play professional sport.

That's why I being Tamil will be the hardest yet most exciting challenge I will face in life.



From simple sports man to a respected figure in British Tamil society

11 Stars gets to know Mr Mylvagnagam

Born in Malaysia, but brought up in Achu-veli, He became a prominent cricketer. He represented both Hartley College and the Jaffna district, and in 1964 played for Jaffna District selected XI against a star studded Tamil Nadu (Chennai) cricket team.

Many years later, he has settled in the UK, married and has two children. The first thing you notice about Myla is his smile as well as his attention to meet and greet everyone.

I immediately take in his kindness, humanity, and capability as to how he has adapted to this country. Here we ask Myla to take some time out and answer a few short interview questions with us.



Can you tell us a little bit about your sporting credentials and support to the Tamil sportive community.

Cricket is my game! I was the opening batsman for Northern Province Schools cricket team and for Hartley College. I was a bit of an all-rounder on the pitch and generally kept myself fit by also playing other sports. By bringing people together sport has a vital role to play in helping to promote a sense of community.

You were once president of TSSA, what made you get involved with helping the Tamil community through TSSA?

I benefited from the time and goodwill of others when I was a junior sportsman and wanted to put that back into the community.

How much success have you enjoyed by bringing the Tamil community together through TSSA?

In simple term, we started with twelve OSAs and now we have 60 OSAs involved. Through my experience I have extended my social contacts in the Tamil community and feel that others would benefit in the same way. However, there is still a lot that needs to be done. Much has been achieved but there is always more to be done.

Do you think events hosted by organisations such as TSSA has helped develop Tamil communities in Europe?

Yes. All Tamils are sport loving communities – anywhere. It always helps to have a catalyst to this natural enthusiasm. A bit of grip in the oyster.

What are your views on Tamil teenagers in London today?

The majority of Tamil teenagers, do behave responsibly, respect their elders and enjoy taking part in sports. Although they are of course subject to the same pressure as all teenagers living in London. It is understandably difficult to balance the conflicting values of Eastern and Western community.

Who do think is to blame for these stereotypes who label the average Tamil Teenager a gang member?

I am not sure the Tamil teenagers are stereotyped in this way.

Why do you think most youngsters are labelled gang members?

Media are giving increased emphasis on gang culture

It is so hard to change society today, but what can we do as a voice to end gang violence from our own people, and encourage young people to better their lives?

There is a natural competitive spirit within youngsters which need to be channelled positively and sports are the natural arena for this. No matter what the differences are outside the sporting arena- the only way to better society is to provide healthy rivalry through sports.

What steps did you take to prevent gang violence during you time with TSSA?

Keep people, young and old, occupied in bettering themselves and having true respect for the fellow competitor.

From what I have heard it is obvious that you are a father yourself, what measures do you take to try and look out for your children's best interest, and what message would you give other Tamil parents in the UK.

There is no magic formula. But for me I found that giving infinite love understanding and a sense of independence has, I hope, provided them with a positive outlook on life.

On a lighter note everyone loves football, so which team do you support?

Spurs

Who do you think will win the premier league, the FA Cup, and Champions League this season and why?

Spurs, Spurs, Spurs. Because they are bound to win at least one out of three.

As you have been a part of Tamil sports for a long time, can you say Tamil football has improved since it was introduced to this country?

Tamil football has kept pace with the development of football in general.

Do you think it is possible to have a Sri Lankan national team in the world cup finals in the near future?

Yes of course. If we use the energy of young people to complete we can achieve anything. And besides it only takes eleven good players to make a great team.

What needs to be done to achieve this, and how can we get the first all Tamil superstar striker to rise and be noticed?

If Northern Ireland can produce a player like George Best or more recently David Healy why can't Sri Lankan Tamils? Practice, Practice and more practice.

Which Tamil school or club team do think is the best in the country at the moment and why?

There are so many Tamil Schools or clubs to choose from but the league champions can rightfully call themselves be the champions.

Finally do you have any final words of wisdom for small Tamil sports clubs such as 11 Stars football club going into the future?

Football is a simple game; keep it simple and always pass to someone with the same colour shirt as you.

Interviewed by Kogilan Paramanathan

If you would like to contact Mr Mylvagnagam, or TSSA to participate in future tournaments, then please contact 11.stars.fc@live.co.uk



Expectations!

Karthikeyan Sritharan (19)

Expectations! Coming from a Tamil family, you try never to stray from the lines of your parents expectations. It comes with our heritage. You can never blame your parents for expecting too much from you. Their dream is that one day they could tell their friends and neighbours, and irritating family members that my son is a cardiovascular specialist in other words a doctor. (Though being a doctor is not very appealing to many youths now, considering the blunder of the NHS system and the constant closures of A&E departments). But the blame lies on parents who do not remember being a kid themselves, and acknowledge that once upon a time they had hopes and dreams different from the one that was expected of them by their parents.

A very typical Tamil parent would say my dad wanted me to become a lawyer and now look at me I'm a lawyer. But the truth of the matter is the world is not divided into doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers and the rest of the world. We all have different functions, we all have to play a different role, it's just the way of the universe.

My parents dream for me was to become a doctor, but my dream is to become a teacher. Luckily my parents acknowledge the fact that teaching is my passion and it's what I want to do. Having their support goes a long way, and for that I will always be grateful. This now brings me on to my second point, choice.

It is a wee bit cheesy by saying that everyone has a destiny to fulfil but it's the truth. We read it in books as the morale of the story; we see it in films as the twist at the end. A character has to make a choice between what is right and what is easy. By making those choices, it is how we are seen by others and it's how we are judged. You see we actively shape our own destinies and influence the people around us and this is done by making the right choices.

My final point is the power of imagination. Asking to write an essay on being a Tamil youth, I realised that there is not much difference between me and any other youth from a different background. It all comes down to the same point that each of us is an individual and each of us is different in many ways. Being Tamil may add a bit of character to our life, but we are all different. Going to university has made me realise that we youths have a very special power of our own, the power to change the world for the better.

Though our day is filled with football, drinking, socialising and studying, we accidentally forget that there is more of this world, in which people do not have the same privileges that we here do. There are parts of this world in which hunger and poverty thrives on the helpless. Many of us belong to one of the world's great super power, the United Kingdom! Being a student, we have the power to influence others, a chance to help make a change. And even more, being a British citizen we have the ability to change the way our government works. In the way we vote, the way we protest and the pressure we bring on our government can have an effect far beyond our borders. You see we have all the power inside us to make this work; we have the power to imagine better.

University has helped me understand this more, mainly in the fact that there is good inside each one of us. One voice can easily make a song, but one life can indeed change the world. So by expecting better from ourselves, we can imagine better and make the right choices. You see, who says that there is one destiny for each one of us. Many of us can have the same destiny, and each of us can have many destinies. So make a choice, and do right. We shape the world, so imagine a better world and make it happen!

□□□

A difference in times, life, culture and in being Tamil

Kirishan Sivapalan (16)

As everyone might be well aware, Tamil culture is well known and respected for the way it revolves around ancient times and how it clasps on to its old time traditions. It has become clear to parents, that times are changing and I believe they fear the outcome. It is obvious that they believe their roles as guardians are to look after us and guide us to the right paths in life, however I believe they should not try to control our lives. It belongs to the child, the teenagers, us ourselves. There is also a time that arises where a teenager starts to think for themselves. They should clearly be given the opportunities to decide on certain matters which affect them. There is also no doubt that parents always think the best for their child or children, but surely the child knows more about what he wants than his parents. These things might seem little to our parents, but their actions and decisions affect and restrict us all. Recently I have started to question my self as to why I wasn't allowed to do this or do that. I started to realise that children were more like things, things that parents compare with others. In studies, height and even skin colour.

Studies and school, the only reason we attend is so later our parents can proudly say, his results were this, that's better than your sons, and so on. It's as if though we're theirs to own and compare. Another thing I wish to add is that helping a child to study is totally different to forcing him to learn. At one point it becomes our responsibility as teenagers to organise ourselves and study. We are not objects that are to be compared by parents and being supportive and giving advice is different to deciding what you want for us. Giving options is not the choice of being a doctor or engineer, life goes beyond this, and you must realise this. The subjects a person decides to study should be of their own option, they should decide their future, and after all they themselves are the ones that know best as to what they truly want. Tamil parents are stubborn and arrogant they think that they are always right and these articles would only make them think for seconds. It is clear that they think they know all, they believe they are always right, they believe they alone understand what's happening. Above all they believe they are being perfect parents, when instead you simply have no idea as to what you are doing to some of us.

Finally I wish to add one last thing. Everyone knows about the history of the civil war currently happening in Sri Lanka and how much grief it brings to our people. Everyone also has different views on what freedom is. I think the true meaning of freedom and independence is the right to decide your own fate, to decide how you live your life. How could Tamils want freedom so badly, when we prevent it almost everyday? All I am saying is everyone, including teenagers have the right to decide what and how they want to live their life. Let us live our lives, let us be humans in our own right. Let me just be me.

□□□

Why should we all be the same?

Aravind Satchi (15)

Tamil culture excludes us from the rest of the cultures, as the parents think that socialising at night would soon turn their children into "gangsters". As most of our parents think that we should live a life in which leads us into becoming a doctor, accountant and lawyers. Tamil parents think that their child should be doing better than their cousins or any of their relations this leads them into 24/7 studying. Tamil cultures see the difference in the generations from which they come from and in which we are in now and they fear in which their child will make the wrong choices in this new generation. Parents also think they should make the choices for us to have a decent future, though in my opinion I think that we (teenagers) should start making our own choices into make us true young Tamil adults.

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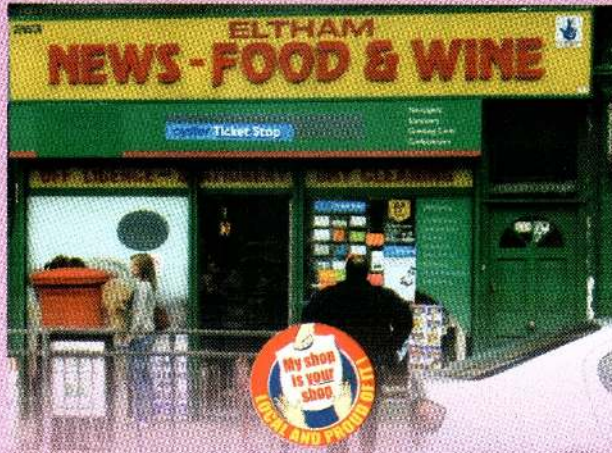
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