

Voice

Thai Pongal Publication 2016
தைப் பொங்கல் வெளியீடு 2016

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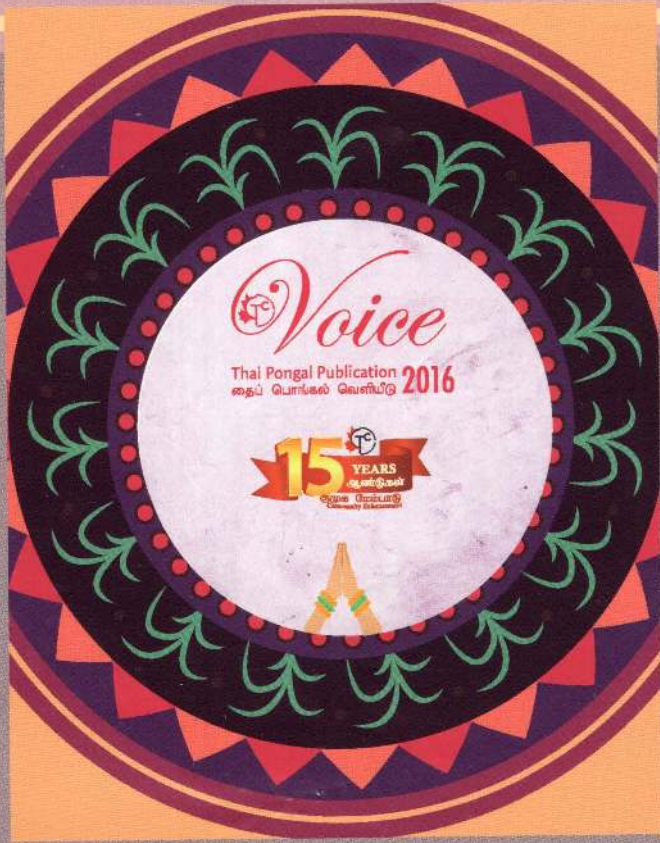
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தைப் பொங்கல் வெளியீடு



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தமிழ்த் தாய் வாழ்த்து

வாழ்க நிரந்தரம் வாழ்க தமிழ்மொழி
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 வான மளந்தனைத்தும் அளந்திடும்
 வண் மொழி வாழியவே
 ஏழ் கடல் வைப்பினுந் தன் மணம் வீசி
 இசை கொண்டு வாழியவே
 எங்கள் தமிழ் மொழி எங்கள் தமிழ் மொழி
 என்றென்றும் வாழியவே
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 துலங்குக வையகமே
 தொல்லை வினைதரு தொல்லை யகன்று
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 வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழி வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழி
 வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழியே
 வானம் அறிந்தனைத்தும் அறிந்து
 வளர் மொழி வாழியவே.

Canadian National Anthem

O Canada!
 Our home and native land!
 True patriot love in all thy sons command.
 With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
 The True North strong and free!
 From far and wide,
 O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
 God keep our land glorious and free!
 O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
 O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

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**A New Reality for the
Tamil People in Sri Lanka?**

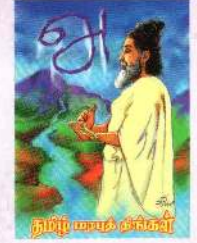
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Harvard Tamil Chair



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**Celebrating Canadian
Kindness
in Newfoundland**





Canadian Tamil Congress
கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை
Congrès Tamoul Canadien
“Voice of Tamil Canadians”

நோக்கம் மற்றும் குறிக்கோள்

கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை ஒரு இலாப நோக்கற்ற, கனடியத் தமிழரின் குரலாய் விளங்கும் அமைப்பாகும். ரொறன்ரோவிற்கு தலைமைப் பணிமனையைக் கொண்ட பேரவை நாடு முழுவதும் உறுப்பினர்களைக் கொண்ட ஒரு தேசிய அமைப்பாக விளங்குவதோடு உறுப்பினரால் தெரிவு செய்யப்பட்ட இயக்குனர் சபையையும் கொண்டதாகும்.

பக்கச் சார்பற்றுச் செயற்படும் கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை கனடியக் குழுக்கள் செயற்பாடுகளில் தமிழரின் பங்கேற்றலை ஊக்குவித்தல், தமிழரின் முக்கிய சிக்கல்களை முதன்மைப்படுத்தல் மற்றும் கனடிய விழுமியங்களைப் பேணுவதுடன் வேற்றினக் குழுக்களும் அரசாங்கங்களும் ஏனைய அமைப்புகளும் தமிழர்களின் குழுக்கள், கலாச்சார மற்றும் அரசியல் சிக்கல்களைப் பேசச் செய்தல் போன்றவற்றை முக்கிய நோக்கங்களாகக் கொண்டதாகும்.

கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவையின் குறிக்கோள்கள் சில கீழ்வருமாறு:

- உள்ளூர், கோட்டம், மாநிலம் மற்றும் நாட்டுக்கு முதன்மை வாய்ந்த செயற்பாடுகளில் கனடியத் தமிழரது பங்கேற்றலை ஊக்குவித்தல்
- கனடியத் தமிழர் தொடர்பான சிக்கல்களை முன்னிலைப்படுத்தித் தீர்வு காண்பதற்குப் பல்வேறு மட்டக் கனடா அரசுகளோடு இணைந்து செயற்படல்
- தாயகத்திலும், உலகெங்கும் வாழும் தமிழரது குழுக்கள், பண்பாட்டு, அரசியல் வேட்கைகளை ஏற்றுப் போற்றுதல்
- மனித உரிமை, பல்பண்பாடு, சமயப்பண்பாட்டுப் பல்வண்மை, பால் ஒப்புமை, பன்மைநெறி, தொண்டுநெறி ஆகிய கனடாவின் விழுமியங்களை மேம்படுத்தல்
- தமிழ்மொழி மற்றும் பண்பாடு பற்றிய ஆய்வு, கல்வி, பயன்பாடு என்பவற்றை மேம்படுத்தல்
- கனடாவின் பிற இனப்பண்பாட்டுக் குழுக்களோடு உறவு பூணுதலும் வளர்த்தலும்
- கனடா மற்றும் பன்னாட்டு அமைப்புகளோடு இணைந்து, உலகளாவிய தமிழ் மக்களின் இன்னல் போக்கலும் மாந்த நேய உதவி வழங்கலும்
- அனைத்து வேறுபாடுகளையும், பொறுதியின்மையையும் ஒழிப்பதற்குப் பாடுபடுதல், அனைத்துக் குழுக்களுக்கும் ஒப்பான உரிமை மற்றும் வாய்ப்பு நாடிப் பாடுபடல், சிறப்பாக பால் ஒப்புமை நாடிப் போராடல்.

Mission and Objectives

The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) is a nonprofit organization which serves as the voice of Tamil Canadians. Headquartered in Toronto, the CTC has chapters across the country and an elected board of directors. The non-partisan organization works as the community's spokesperson on the municipal, provincial, federal and international levels.

- Uphold Canadian values of human rights, multiculturalism, religious and cultural diversity, gender equality, pluralism and volunteerism
- Promote the participation of Tamil Canadians in activities of local, regional, provincial and national importance
- Work with various levels of Governments in Canada to highlight and resolve issues impacting Tamil Canadians
- Cooperate with Canadian and international organizations in alleviating the suffering and provide humanitarian assistance to Tamils worldwide
- Champion for equality, equality rights and equal opportunity for all diverse groups, in particular gender equality, by working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination and intolerance
- Recognize and support the social, cultural and political aspirations of the Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka and worldwide
- Advance the research, study and usage of the Tamil language and culture
- Develop and enhance working relationships with other ethnocultural groups in Canada

Mission et Objectifs

Le congrès Tamoul canadien (CTC), est un organisme à but non lucratif qui représente la voix des Tamouls canadiens. Le siège social étant à Toronto, le CTC possède chapitres dans l'ensemble du pays ainsi qu'un conseil administratif élu. L'organisme agit comme un porte-parole nonpartisan de la communauté au niveau municipal, provincial, fédéral et international.

- Confirmez les valeurs canadiennes des droits de l'homme, multiculturalisme, diversité religieuse et culturelle, égalité entre les sexes, pluralisme et volontarisme
- Favorisez la participation des canadiens tamoul dans les activités d'importance locale, régionale, provinciale et nationale
- Travaillez avec de divers niveaux des gouvernements au Canada pour accentuer et résoudre des problèmes effectuant les canadiens tamoul
- Coopérez avec des organismes canadiens et internationaux à alléger la douleur et fournissez l'assistance humanitaire aux tamoul dans le monde entier
- Champion pour l'égalité, les droits d'égalité et l'égalité des chances pour tous les groupes divers, en particulier égalité entre les sexes, en travaillant vers l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination et d'intolérance
- Identifiez et soutenez les aspirations sociales, culturelles et politiques des Tamoul sur île du Sri Lanka et dans le monde entier
- Avancez la recherche, l'étude et l'utilisation de la langue et de la culture tamoul
- Développez et augmentez les relations de travail avec d'autres groupes ethnoculturels au Canada



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*Master of Ceremonies
Juanita Nathan*

Message from the President



On behalf of the Canadian Tamil Congress, I am pleased to wish you all a very Happy Thai Pongal and welcome you to our 9th Annual Dinner.

2015 was an incredibly successful year for CTC. We organized the first ever TamilFest—a historic street festival, and the first of its kind outside Asia. Attracting nearly 90,000 people over two days, the event featured Tamil cuisine, performances and street vendors and was a grand accomplishment. Continuing an old tradition, CTC also raised over \$110,000 for the Sampur Resettlement Project to build shelters for 41 women-headed households in Sampur, Sri Lanka. Additionally, 2015 marked the culmination of over six years of tireless efforts by CTC's international advocacy team, with the release of the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner's Report on Sri Lanka, and the passage of another resolution concerning Sri Lanka at the United National Human Rights Council.

We are excited for the year ahead. In 2016, one of our major projects will be the creation of a Tamil Community Center and Economic Development Center. We will also explore new ways to continue our advocacy efforts. A core mandate of CTC is to work with all three levels of government articulating issues affecting Tamils in Canada and around the world. CTC will continue to persist towards a meaningful solution to the Tamil national question in Sri Lanka.

It bears repeating—the work we do at the Canadian Tamil Congress would not be possible without your generous support. We extend our gratitude to the volunteers who give countless hours, our members and well-wishers who fund our daily operations, the sponsors and advertisers who grace our Gala, and the sponsors who make large donations for various special projects.

The new year brings with it many opportunities and challenges. If you are a member, we thank you. If you are not a member, please join us—together, we will continue to take the community to new heights.

May the year 2016 be the best one yet, with lots of health and happiness here in Canada and for our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka.

Best wishes,

Raj Thavaratnasingham
President, Canadian Tamil Congress





மிகச்சிறந்த
தமிழ் பொழுதுபோக்கு
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Thai Pongal

The Thanksgiving Festival of Tamils



Thai Pongal is a harvest festival equivalent to Thanksgiving Day and it is celebrated by Tamils across the world. Considered to be one of the oldest harvest festivals, Pongal is said to have originated in the pre-Christian era in Tamil Nadu. In the Tamil language, pongal literally means “boiling over” or “spill over”. The boiling of milk in a clay pot until it spills over is symbolic of the heart’s desire for abundance and prosperity. Celebrated at harvest time, Thai Pongal is traditionally intended to thank the Sun God and farmstead livestock that help create the material abundance.

The Pongal festival falls on the first day of the month of Thai of the Tamil calendar (14th or 15th of January according to the Gregorian calendar) and is enveloped by a sense of newness. Celebrated traditionally at harvest time, it is a festival signifying the wealth of food and prosperity associated with the wish for a bountiful

harvest. By thanking the rain, sun and the farm animals that contribute to the production of rice, the most staple food of the Tamils, this festival expresses that harmony and inter-dependence between all created realities that make this planet a great place to live and grow.

Pongal is celebrated by the Indian state of Tamil Nadu as well as Tamils worldwide, including those in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Mauritius, South Africa, England, USA, Singapore and Canada. Transcending any religious differences, Pongal is celebrated by Tamils of all religious persuasions: During this special time, the household is often filled with excitement and preparation.

A flat square pitch is made and decorated with kolam drawings and it is exposed to direct sunlight. Coloured rice flour is used to draw the kolam and it defines the sacred area where the pongal

is prepared. A hearth made of natural firewood is set up using three bricks. The cooking begins by placing a clay pot with water on the hearth. A senior member of the family will begin the cooking and the rest of the family dutifully assists him or her.

The climax is when the Pongal spills over when cooking. The spill over of milk is a propitious symbol of abundance and good omen and is accompanied by the shouting of “Pongalo Pongal”. A member of the family will then ceremoniously put three handfuls of new rice inside the boiling pot.

Other ingredients of this special dish are chakkarai (brown sugar) or katkandu (sugar candy), milk (cow’s milk or coconut milk), payaru (roasted green gram), raisins and cashew nuts. When the meal is ready, it is first served on a banana leaf and the family prays for a few minutes to thank the sun, nature and farmers. The pongal is then served with fruits to family, relatives, friends and neighbours.

The richness of Tamil culture and historical traditions is symbolized in the Tamil New Year and Thai Pongal festival. By celebrating this festival, the Tamil Diaspora helps perpetuate our rich culture and traditions. It also gives an emotional link to our kith and kin at home or scattered across the globe.

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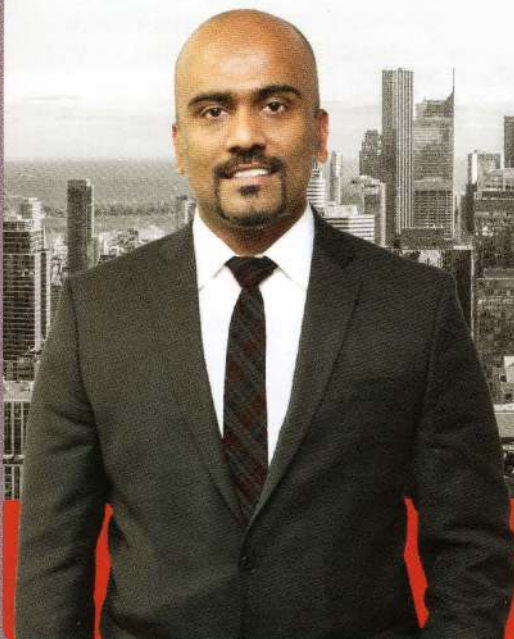
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WISHING YOU A VERY

Happy Pongal

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PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE



Canadian Tamil Congress' 9th Annual Gala Dinner

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the Markham Suites Conference Centre in Toronto for the Canadian Tamil Congress' 9th Annual Thai Pongal Dinner.

Since its establishment, the Canadian Tamil Congress has worked to strengthen Canada's multicultural fabric by encouraging Tamil-Canadians to be active participants in their community's social activities. Today's traditional Thai Pongal festival allows Tamil-Canadians to gather together with family and friends to give thanks and celebrate the arrival of the new harvest, while recognizing the significant contributions they have made, and continue to make, to Canada's landscape.

Going forward, it is essential to have events such as today's Annual Thai Pongal Dinner; events which allow Tamil-Canadians to connect with their roots and share their history with all Canadians.

Please accept my best wishes for a memorable evening.

Ottawa
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Premier of Ontario - Première ministre de l'Ontario



January 16, 2016

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am pleased to extend warm greetings to everyone attending the ninth Annual Gala Dinner of the Canadian Tamil Congress.

Tonight, you gather to celebrate Thai Pongal, the beautiful and ancient Tamil harvest festival. This is a time of great joy — a chance to get together with family, friends and neighbours to give thanks for blessings received.

This is indeed a fitting occasion to celebrate the many achievements of our Tamil Canadian community — and its contributions to Ontario's multicultural success story.

I thank the Canadian Tamil Congress for its commitment to strengthening Tamil Canadian culture, and to representing the issues that matter most to Tamil Canadians.

I also extend my sincere congratulations to everyone being honoured tonight. Know that you have helped make Ontario a stronger province and a better place for everyone.

Have a wonderful evening and a joyous Thai Pongal! May you enjoy good health, happiness and prosperity in the year ahead.

Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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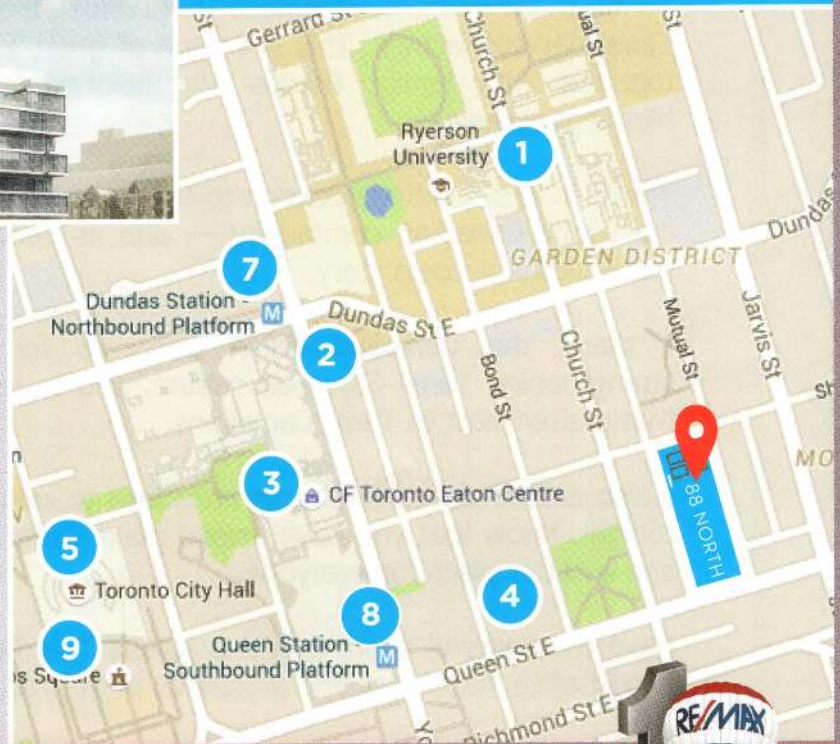
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January 16, 2016

**Greetings from Gary Anandasangaree
Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Rouge Park**

Dear Friends,

I am proud to bring you greetings for the first time as the Member of Parliament for the riding of Scarborough-Rouge Park. As a past member, and long-time supporter of the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) and its work, it goes without saying that the CTC has given me many opportunities over the years to partake in important community initiatives. My involvement, and work, with CTC remains one of my proudest achievements, and, as I take my seat in Parliament, I am constantly reminded that there are hundreds and thousands of volunteers in organizations like CTC that do great work – work for which they are seldom recognized. I want to salute the volunteers, Board, and staff for their dedication and unrelenting advocacy on issues that matter to the Tamil-Canadian Community.

As our new government, under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, takes shape over the coming weeks and months, we are witnessing the shift back to the Canada we have all come know and cherish. We are a country of refugees and immigrants; we are the country of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the country that respects and values human rights, dignity and peace around the world, and we are the country that seeks to attain a just society. Our task is now to put these words into meaningful action. In a few short months, considerable work has already taken place relating to welcoming and hosting Syrian Refugees; and we are, also, turning the page on our engagement with the First Nations, Inuit and Metis people of this land. Our Prime Minister has unequivocally acknowledged that future dealings with our First Nations People will be on a nation-to-nation basis. Considerable works lies ahead for our government, but luckily, we share these tasks with enthusiastic Canadians across this country who, either on their own, or through organizations like CTC will do their part to make our country stronger.

This past year has also brought a new government in Sri Lanka – one that has allowed some space to be created for civil society to advocate and develop. This is a welcomed change from the Rajapakse government. Sadly, peace and meaningful devolution still remains elusive on the island. The task ahead for all of us is to ensure that there is a just peace on the island – one that recognizes the needs and aspirations of the Tamil nation, while ensuring accountability for international crimes. I look forward to doing my part in advancing peace and justice in Sri Lanka, along with my colleagues on all sides of the House of Commons.

Today is about celebrating our collective achievements, both in Canada and around the world. The community can be proud of many advances this year. This summer marks the 30th Anniversary of the first Tamil-refugee boat that arrived in Newfoundland on August 11, 1986. I very much look forward to celebrating this event, and commemorating the progress and success of the Tamil-Canadian community, and hope you can join us in the historical festivities.

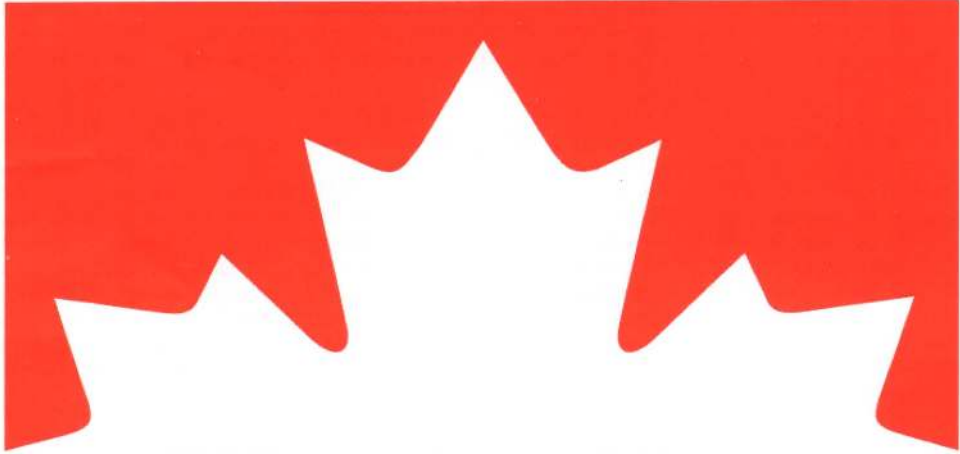
On a personal note, I want to sincerely thank you for your continued support given to Harini and I in the past, and wish to extend my Pongal and New Year wishes to you and your family as you celebrate new beginnings.

Yours very truly,

Gary Anandasangaree
Member of Parliament
Scarborough-Rouge Park

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PATRICK BROWN

MPP - Simcoe North
Leader of the Official Opposition



Greetings from the Leader of the Official Opposition, Patrick Brown, to the Canadian Tamil Congress Thai Pongal

January 16, 2016

I would like to extend my warmest wishes to the Canadian Tamil Congress and all Ontarians of Tamil heritage celebrating Thai Pongal this month.

During the month of January, recognized as Tamil Heritage Month, we join together to celebrate Thai Pongal. On this special day we take the opportunity to thank the sun, the farmers, and livestock for providing us with another bountiful harvest. This is also a great opportunity to thank the Tamil community for their incredible contributions. This is reflected across Ontario in our economic, political, social, and cultural life.

I would also like to thank the Canadian Tamil Congress and all attendees for making this event a success. Your commitment and dedication has created an excellent opportunity for Ontario to learn about the unique Tamil culture.

On behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Caucus, I offer my best wishes to the Canadian Tamil Congress on their Thai Pongal celebration.

Pongalo Pongal!

Kindest Regards,



Patrick Brown
MPP – Simcoe North
Leader of the Official Opposition



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Andrea Horwath

Leader of the Ontario NDP

To the Canadian Tamil Congress:

It is with great pleasure that I join in celebrating January as Tamil Heritage Month.

New Democrats are proud to have worked alongside community to recognize and honour the important contributions that people of Tamil heritage make to our province.

We recognize the extraordinary strength of members of the Tamil community to overcome hardship, struggle for justice, and prosper.

In doing so, setting an example for all Ontarians to support neighbours, care for all members of the community, empower young people and actively engage in the expression of democratic rights.

Ontario is better, and more vibrant, for all these inspiring efforts.

This month includes the important occasion of Thai Pongal, the harvest festival. It is a celebration that brings together friends and family to share in a traditional meal, music and festivities. It is a chance for reflection and to give thanks for good fortune and opportunities to come.

Iniya Pongal Nalvazhthukkal!

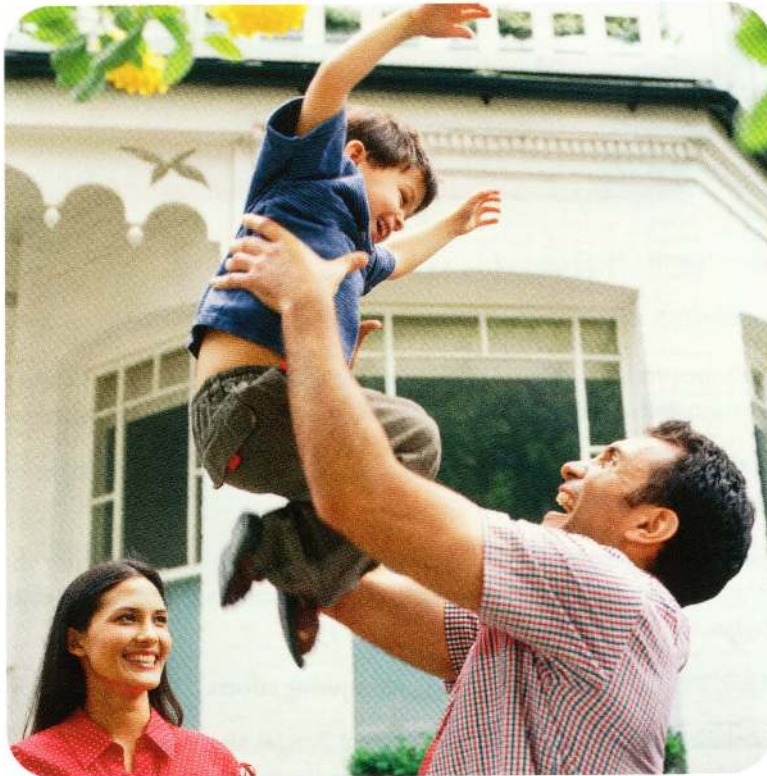
I look forward to continuing to work with members of the Tamil community for a better province, where we all succeed.

On behalf of Ontario's New Democrats, a happy Thai Pongal to all celebrating and Tamil Heritage Month!

Andrea Horwath,
Leader of the Ontario NDP



Getting involved rewards us all.



We are proud to support the **Canadian Tamil Congress** and are committed towards helping the Tamil Community achieve success and prosperity.

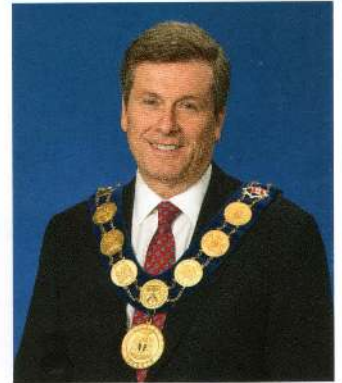
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Message from the Mayor

It gives me pleasure to extend a warm welcome to everyone attending the Tamil "Thai Pongal" Festival and Annual Gala Dinner hosted by the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC).

The "Thai Pongal" Festival is celebrated by the Tamil community around the world. It is a time to give thanks to nature for providing a rich harvest and celebrate the optimism of new beginnings.

Established in 2000, the CTC is a non-profit organization that advocates for the needs of Tamil Canadians, by interacting with all levels of government on their behalf.

Toronto is one of the world's most multicultural cities and home to people from all over the world. Festivals such as these celebrate the rich cultures and traditions that make our city so unique.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable festival and continued success.

Yours truly,



Mayor John Tory
City of Toronto

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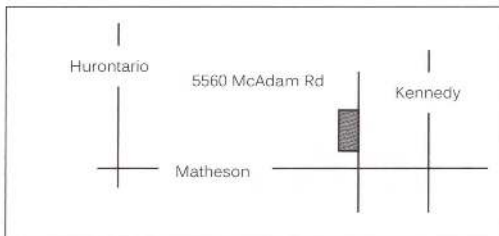
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A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of the residents and Council of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to everyone attending the Canadian Tamil Congress Annual Gala Dinner and Thai Pongal Festival.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville prides itself on being an ethno-culturally diverse community within the wider Greater Toronto Area.

Tamil Canadians represent a strong and vibrant group within our multicultural mosaic.

This gala dinner showcases Tamil Canadian arts and culture as well as achievements and contributions that make our communities great places to live, work and play for all citizens.

I would also like to acknowledge the dedication and tireless effort of the many organizers and volunteers for making this annual gala possible.

Please accept my congratulations on your continued success and best wishes for an enjoyable evening.

Justin Altmann



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CTC Board of Directores



President
Raj Thavaratnasingham

Mr. Raj Thavaratnasingham is a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones for over 15 years, a graduate of the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS, Pilani) in India. Raj has strong interest in advocating for volunteerism and political engagement; his many volunteer positions include serving in the Planned Giving Committee for the Rouge Valley Health System Foundation, Program Advisory Committee Member – Centennial College’s Progress Campus School of Business Administration; and a board member of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada. Raj has also received the Ontario Volunteer Service Award for 10 years of volunteerism and in 2011 was awarded the “Urban Hero” award in Health & Science for his work with the hospital by the Scarborough Mirror. In 2012 he was also the recipient of Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in Canada.



Vice President
Dr. Vadivelu Santhakumar

Dr. V. Santhakumar is the lead family Physician at his Center City Medical Clinic which is a multi service primary care clinic in Mississauga. He is the Founder, past president, current Director of the Canadian Tamil Medical Association (CTMA), previously known as CMDDA, a registered charity in Canada. Dr. Santhakumar has participated in many fundraising activities for this organization to provide medical humanitarian assistance to the developing countries, and organized many health education seminars for new immigrant community, published health care magazine with the aim of educating the new immigrants in healthcare issues and conducted and participated in community health education in Radio and Television shows. Dr. Santhakumar is the recipient of Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee award given to him in appreciation of his volunteer service with the community. Dr. Santhakumar is also part of the clinical teaching staff at the Mississauga campus University of Toronto School of Medicine.

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Greetings and Best Wishes
on the occasion of the
Thai Pongal Celebration

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Secretary
Christeen Seevaratnam

Christeen Seevaratnam is Host Facilitator/Settlement Worker at Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and also a Funeral Counsellor at Chapel Ridge Funeral Home. She has a great passion towards volunteerism and helping everyone in need. She has served Tamil Catholic Community of Toronto (TCCT) as its secretary for many years and currently serves as its President. Christeen has co-chaired several of the annual Tamil Canadian walk-a-thons, including the one in aid of Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation, which raised over \$65,000 in 2013. She has also coordinated the annual Thai Pongal Gala Dinner's hosted by CTC for many years. Christeen has also received the Ontario Volunteer Service Award for 5 years of volunteerism in 2012.



Treasurer
Suresh Muthiah

Mr. Suresh Muththafah is a Senior Manager at CIBC Mellon and has been working in the investment industry for nearly three decades. As an avid community worker, Suresh has been involved with many different community organisations in Toronto dedicating himself promoting youth development and Tamil Culture. Suresh played an instrumental role in bringing the largest Tamil Convention in North America, FeTNA Convention, to Toronto for the very first time in July 2013. Suresh is also very good at playing chess and was a formidable member of his school team.



Board of Director
Siva Velupillai

Mr. Siva Velupillai holds a Diploma in computer studies and works for Bell Canada Communication as a member of its Regional Resolution Team for the last sixteen years. In addition, he owns and operates a very successful Real Estate Agency business in Brampton. He is also CTC's representative Board of Director of the Federation of Tamils of North America (FeTNA - an organization that connects members all across USA and Canada) and was in the committee that recently held a very successful Tamil conference in USA. As an old student of RKM Shivananda Vidyalaya Batticaloa and as the president of the Alumni Association of Shivanandians in Canada, he works very closely with organizations and groups that provide rehabilitation assistance in Sri Lanka. He was one of the leaders in 1977 that handled the resettlement and rehabilitation affairs of the people who were displaced by the communal disturbances in Sri Lanka. One interesting hobby of Siva is to



தள்ளா விளையுளும் தக்காரும் தாழ்விலாச்
செல்வரும் சேர்வது நாடு.



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update his Face Book daily with a stanza of the Tamil Thirukkural, under the caption "Thirukkural Arakkattalai Maiyam" accompanied by an English translation by Rev. Dr. G.U. Pope, providing an elucidation of the stanza.



Board of Director
Raveena Rajasingham

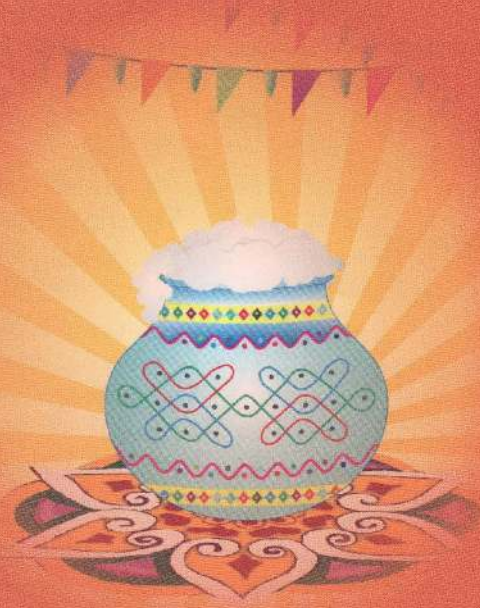
Mrs. Raveena Rajasingham is a National Cardiology clinical and product specialist for Spacelabs Healthcare and is currently pursuing her PhD in Hypertension Measurement and Management. She is a part time ECG instructor at CJ College. Raveena has more than 15 years of history of social justice change, and community development work, she is passionate and proactive in her approach to promoting diversity in its broadest sense. Currently she is a board member of Pickering Royal Canadian Legion and Chair of Youth Education. She also serves as a chair of Durham Diversity Society. Raveena was selected to be on the Ajax Pan Am Host Committee from 2013-2015. She is also the community expert and consultant for Ajax and Pickering Public Library Science Fair. She has initiated and conducted numerous Tamil events with town, city and school board in Durham region including introducing Tamil Reading Circle at Ajax Public Library. Her contribution to the community was recognized by Town of Ajax and Pickering. She received Cultural Diversity Award from City of Pickering, Diversity and Community Engagement Award and Education award from Town of Ajax. In addition Raveena has been very active board member in many Tamil associations.



Board of Director
Rajkumar Gunaratnam

Mr. Raj Gunaratnam is a Computer Science graduate from University of Toronto Scarborough Campus and currently works as Device Realization Team Lead at Telus. He is a community activist, a long time volunteer and a community leader. He is a strong advocate for youth engagement and empowerment. During his time at the University, he served as President of the Tamil Student Association, and one year as President of the University Students' Union. Some of his accomplishment includes, starting Tamil classes at the University, serving as the Public Relation coordinator for the Tamil Studies Coordinating Committee and a co-chair for the Tamil Heritage Month Committee at its inauguration year.

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With best compliments from
Dr. Nathan Yoganathan and Kala Yoganathan



CTC IN REWIND 2015

Thai Pongal Celebrated at City Hall

January 13, 2015
City Hall, Toronto

The year started with the first ever Thai Pongal Celebration at Toronto City Hall. Mayor John Tory of Toronto declared January 2015 as Tamil Heritage Month in front of a large number of supporters, on behalf of the City of Toronto and Toronto City Council. He also presented the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) with a signed proclamation. Following the adjoining municipalities and the province of Ontario in recognizing January as Tamil Heritage month, it was a great honour to obtain the proclamation from the largest city in Canada and to celebrate Thai Pongal at City Hall with the Mayor, Councillors and a large number of CTC members, supporters and well-wishers.





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Tamil Canadian Community Celebrates 8th Annual Thai Pongal Dinner

January 17, 2015

Sheraton Parkway North, Richmond Hill, GTA

CTC's 8th annual Pongal Dinner was celebrated on January 17, 2015 at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill. Attended by almost 1,000 people, the event showcased Tamil arts, culture and highlighted CTC's impressive achievements in 2014.

The dinner was attended by several politicians, public officials and community leaders including then Federal Citizenship and Immigration Minister Hon. Chris Alexander, then Parliamentary Assistant to the Prime Minister M.P. Paul Calandra, then Federal Liberal Leader and current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Ontario Minister Tracy MacCharles, Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie, City of Toronto Deputy Mayor Denzil Minnan-Wong, Stouffville Mayor Justin Altman, then Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Rouge River Rathika Sitsabaiesan, York Region Police Chief Eric Jolliffe, City of Toronto Deputy Police Chief Peter Soly, then leadership candidate and current Conservative Party of Ontario leader Patrick Brown, Consul General for India in Toronto Mr. Akhilesh Mishra, Chief of Political and Economic Affairs of US Consulate, Ms. Andrea Gorog, as well as numerous other MPs, MPPs, Councillors, academics, professionals, members of law enforcement, media, business, and community leaders.

Greetings from the Canadian government, Ontario government, City of Toronto, City of Mississauga, City of Markham and the host town Richmond Hill were also presented at the event.

In keeping with tradition, two awards were presented. The 2015 "Service Excellence Award" was awarded to Dr. Shan Chandrasekar, President and CEO of Asian television Network (ATN). The award recognizes an organization or an individual's compassion, dedication and support towards community building efforts.

The Leaders for Change Award was presented to Mr. Bernie M. Farber, former CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress. This award honours the unique contribution of an individual who, through his or her exceptional vision, perseverance and commitment, has redefined or strengthened our society.





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CTC Strategic Plan Session

February 13-14, 2015

Four Points by Sheraton, Mississauga

We should never rest on our laurels. In order to ensure we are continuously moving forward, CTC organized a strategic planning session in February 2015 that aimed to chart our course for the next five years. Attended by over 50 supporters and friends, the two day event was hugely successful. The ten major topics discussed included: Vision, Values and National Engagement; Lasting Solution for Tamils in Sri Lanka; Human Rights; Language and Culture; Social Issues and Women's Empowerment; Youth Engagement and Empowerment; Membership, Community Engagement, Communication, and Office Resources; Community Centre Project; and Supporting Entrepreneurship. Two key note speeches were delivered by Omar Alghabra (currently a Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs)) and John Cartwright (President of the Toronto & York Region Labor Council).



Round Table discussion with Ontario Minister of Youth Services, the Honourable Tracy MacCharles, MPP

February 24, 2015

CTC Office, Scarborough

On behalf of Hon. Tracy MacCharles, Minister of Children & Youth Services and the Canadian Tamil Congress, CTC hosted many Tamil organizations for an important community round-table discussion on matters related to children and youth in the Tamil community. Attendees discussed topics such as increasing high school graduation rates and entrance to post-secondary education, services and programs that support families and children, steps to decreasing youth violence and youth crime, and opportunities for skills training and employment. The event was hugely successful and attended by over twenty five Tamil community leaders from various social services organizations.



CTC Global Advocacy

February/April/May/November, 2015

London-Singapore-London-New Jersey

As the country organization for the Global Tamil Forum (GTF), CTC was actively engaged in working together with various international





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groups with an aim to resolving the issues faced by the Tamils in Sri Lanka so that they can live with dignity, equality, freedom, justice and peace. To this end, CTC, under the auspicious of the GTF, met with various stakeholders in various cities to discuss topics including promoting reconciliation and the settling of the longstanding Tamil problems in Sri Lanka. CTC also participated in the United States Tamil Political Action Committee's (USTPAC) and Tamil Sangam's AGM/Strategic sessions in New Jersey in November relating to the same issues.

CTC Local Advocacy

February/June/December, 2015
Ottawa

As part of CTC local advocacy efforts, CTC periodically visits with various government officials and departments in Ottawa to provide them with information on issues affecting the Tamil community here, as well as Tamils in Sri Lanka. The most recent meeting was held in December 2015 after the new government was formed.

Milestones - Youth Leadership Program Completes Another Successful Term

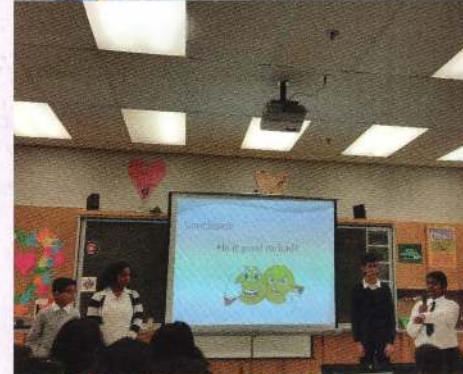
June 7 & December 13, 2015
Markham, GTA

Centre for Leadership and Innovation, hosted end of term celebratory events for their Youth Leadership Program on June 7th and December 13, 2015. The fun filled events were chaired and run by youth and included speeches, presentations and debates. Dr. Siva Sivananthan, White House Champion of Change and Mr. Gary Annadasangaree, Member of Parliament for Scarborough Rouge Park were the keynote speakers at the June and December Milestones event respectively. About 200 youth are enrolled in this program.

FeTNA Convention

July 3-5 2015
San Jose, California, USA

As part of the commitment to the Federation of Tamils of North America (FeTNA), CTC participated in the FeTNA convention in San Jose, California. Many CTC members also attended this event and about 20 delegates proudly carried the CTC banner to the Convention stage. As part of a competition, FeTNA-San Jose invited all youth



Benjamin Moore



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in the USA and Canada to take part in a "Thirukural" competition. CTC obtained sponsorship for the winner of the Canadian competition to travel to San Jose. The Canadian representative then went on to win the finals in San Jose, beating out all competitors in his category. CTC hosted FeTNA's 26th convention at the Sony Centre in Toronto in 2013.



Youth Leadership Program's YDocs Gala Dinner

July 24, 2015
Markham, GTA

Centre for Leadership and Innovation hosted its third annual YDocs Gala Event. The dinner was attended by over 500 supporters, friends and family members who helped build youth empowerment and leadership. Documentaries produced for the Youth Documentary Competition were screened along with an awards presentation and a dinner & dance. 14 short films documentaries were showcased during the event, of which 10 films which were chosen for screening at the Toronto South Asian Film Festival. 2015 Ydocs program was also supported by the Government of Ontario.



YRoots

August 12 to August 16, 2015
Markham, GTA

Centre for Leadership and Innovation launched a new program in August 2015 which is designed to create awareness about Tamil language, history and literature among Tamil youth. This 5 day program was facilitated by Tamil scholars and provided an opportunity for youth to learn about the rich Tamil history and literature.



TamilFest – Toronto's first ever Street Festival

August 29 & 30, 2015
Morningside Avenue, Scarborough

After an event launch on June 17, 2015 including Mayor John Tory, and video greetings from Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, the two



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Simple Solution in a Critical Situation

day TamilFest held at the end of August was a roaring success. Scarborough Mirror headline read: "Tamil Fest in Scarborough a smashing success, drawing about 90,000 people". CTC had wanted TamilFest to introduce the Tamil community and its culture to the Greater Toronto mainstream, and judging from the non-Tamil faces in the crowd, this was a grand success. TamilFest included various food stands and local vendors, including many businesses, traditional street entertainers, popular acts on stage, and a museum chronicling the Canadian Tamil community's rapid growth and successes. Various Ministers and other dignitaries attended the event, including then-candidate and current Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, who walked the entire length of the Street Festival greeting people and stood at one stall making "Kothu Rotti".



CTC Walks for Sampur (Sri Lanka) War Widows

September 13, 2015
Thompson Park, Scarborough

On Sunday, September 13th, 2015, the Canadian Tamil Congress organized their 7th annual walk-a-thon at Thomson Memorial Park in Scarborough. With the support of walkers and hundreds of donations, the Tamil Canadian Walk was able to raise more than \$110,000. Many of the supporters pledged the full amount of \$2500 required to provide a home for one family. CTC members and supporters together with other Tamil Canadians from the affected area (Trincomalee Welfare Association -TWA) decided to raise money to help 41 woman headed families have a temporary house erected as soon as possible. The work has already started and the project is under way.



CTC's Reception for Dheepan Movie Screening at TIFF

September 13, 2015
Michael's on Simcoe, Toronto

In September, CTC hosted a reception to honor the director, Jacques Audiard, and lead actor, Antonythasan Jesuthasan (Shoba Sakthi) of the French film Dheepan following its screening at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). Winner of the prestigious Palme D'Or at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, Dheepan is the story of a Sri Lankan Tamil freedom fighter who flees the civil war in Sri Lanka and ends up working as a caretaker outside Paris. CTC welcomed





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the Director and the actors to Toronto and hosted a private intimate reception at a prestigious Toronto venue, attended by CTC members, supporters and Canadian Tamil film industry members.



CTC spearheads a meeting of Tamil Seniors with Ministry responsible for Seniors care

September 28, 2015
Queen's Park, Toronto

A community round-table was led by Canadian Tamil Congress in an effort to address the growing challenges faced by Tamil seniors. Over 25 members of the Tamil Canadian community participated in a round-table with Provincial elected officials Hon. Mario Sergio, Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs and Hon. Deepika Damerla, Associate Minister of Health and Long Term Care, and Indira Naidoo-Harris, MPP. The meeting included leaders of various Tamil seniors organizations across the Greater Toronto Area as well as agency staff who support seniors through variety of programs and services.



CTC Advocacy Team at the United Nations Human Rights Council

September 14 to October 2, 2015
Geneva, Switzerland

Members of CTC's International Team attended the 30th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. 2015 marked the culmination of over six years of hard work by CTC's international advocacy team at the UN. At the 30th session CTC worked closely with the elected Tamil Representatives in Sri Lanka, the TNA, in wording the resolution in a fashion acceptable to all nations that were spearheading the resolution's passage. We also played an important role in organizing the post-resolution press conference attended by TNA, GTF, USTPAC, British Tamil Forum and CTC.



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CTC in action in Tamil Nadu, India Flood Relief

December, 2015
 India

Through the Rotary Club of Jaffna, CTC was able to organize the setting up of a tent to provide relief to many people affected by the devastating floods in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. This humanitarian assistance provided medical treatment, as well as relief to victims by helping purchase emergency supplies like food, water and medicine. CTC also appealed to its members to donate to FeTNA who were also instrumental in providing relief.



Conclusion

This is a taste of some major efforts in which CTC was engaged throughout the year. In addition, CTC also took part in various dialogues and activities with individuals and organizations both within and outside Canada relating to issues affecting Tamils. We hope that in 2016 you will join us as we work for the Tamil and Canadian community, and for human rights and civic engagement throughout the world.

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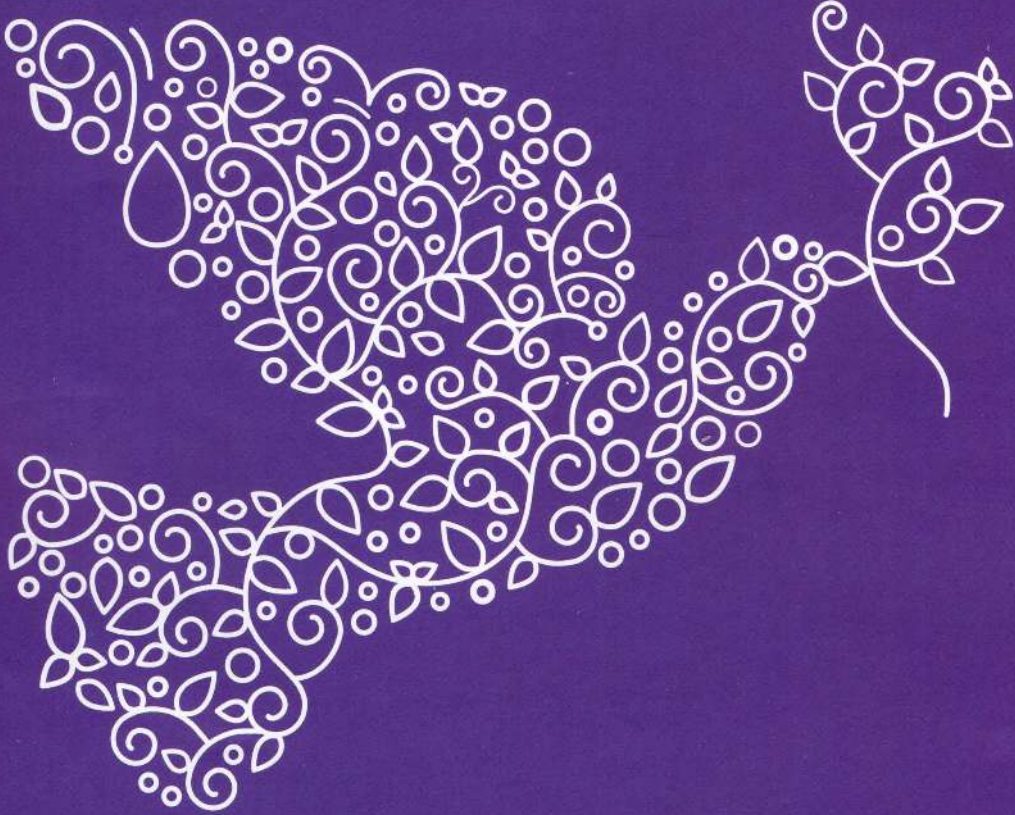
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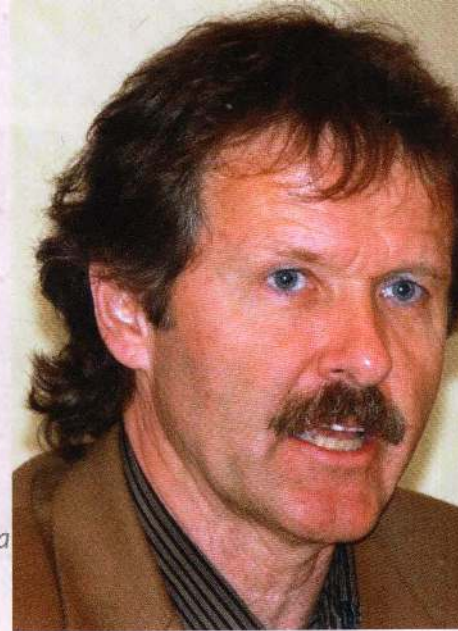


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Leaders for Change

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2016 Award Recipient:

John Cartwright

John Cartwright is the President of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, representing 205,000 union members in Canada's largest urban centre. A carpenter by trade, he was formerly the Business Manager of the Construction Trades Council and co-chair of the Metro Jobstart Coalition. John has served on the Boards of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, the United Way Toronto, the Toronto 2008 Olympic Bid, and the Labour Education Centre.

Over the years he has helped develop the Campaign for Public Education, Public Transit for the Public Good, and the Toronto Waterwatch campaign to defend vital public services in Toronto. John has been deeply involved in apprenticeship and training issues, as well as crafting the "Green Jobs Strategy" for the Canadian Labour Congress. In 2007 he led the successful \$10 Minimum Wage campaign in Ontario, and went on to initiate the Good Jobs for All Coalition and the subsequent conference on Good Green Jobs for All. Since becoming Labour Council President, John has worked with affiliated unions to craft an aggressive equity agenda for Toronto's labour movement. The Council initiated ground-breaking Aboriginal/Workers of Colour (AWOC) Conferences, and has the most diverse leadership of any central labour body in the country. It commissioned the video "Breaking Barriers, Linking Struggles" to highlight labour's involvement in the struggle against discrimination and racism.

In 1997 John received the City of Toronto Award of Merit for his ground-breaking work in employment equity in the construction industry. Two decades later he is still pursuing those goals as Co-Chair of the Toronto Community Benefits Network, which has crafted an agreement with Metrolinx for career opportunities for racialized communities on major transit projects. He has also been awarded the Canada 125 Medal and the Queen's Jubilee Medal, and a Public Service Award from the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada.

Under his leadership, the Labour Council partnered with the Canadian Tamil Congress to sponsor major fundraising efforts after the tsunami of 2004. In 2009 he co-founded "Canadians Concerned About Sri Lanka" in response to the human and civil rights crisis that the Tamil people were experiencing. The group included unions, the CTC and other Tamil-Canadian community groups, faith leaders, academics, and refugee and human rights organizations. It organized relentlessly to focus on the humanitarian crisis, war crimes and human rights in Sri Lanka. As well it lobbied the Canadian government to expedite refugee and family re-unification processes, and organized multiple rallies to bring public attention to the plight of Tamil people. John currently serves on the National Board of the Council of Canadians - Canada's leading social action organization that advocates for clean water, fair trade, green energy, public health care, and a vibrant democracy. He is married to City Councillor Paula Fletcher and has three grown children.

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Service Excellence Award

As part of our ongoing commitment to volunteerism and promoting community involvement, the Canadian Tamil Congress will honour the contribution of an individual or organization that has supported the Tamil people. The recipient of this award will be an organization that has demonstrated compassion, dedication and support to community-building efforts. This award will recognize the organization's long-term support, commitment and significant contribution to the Tamil community at large.



2016 Award Recipient:

Yoganathan Ratheesan

Yoganathan Ratheesan (Ratheesan) is the co-owner of Lebara, having founded the company in 2001 with two friends at the age of 25. They had a clear aim of transforming the international calling market by providing ethnic and migrant communities with high quality, low cost solutions to keep in touch with family and friends.

In 2015, with some 6 million active customers and over 1,000 employees, the Lebara Group has built a trusted and established telecoms business with operations in eight countries. Offering inclusive and accessible products and services that make migrants' lives easier – from communications, to entertainment and financial services – is the guiding principle behind Lebara's continued expansion. Lebara has been recognised for its innovation and business successes, as well as its diverse workforce and best-in-class customer service, with numerous industry awards.

Lebara also supports disadvantaged children across the world through the Lebara Foundation, an initiative very close to Ratheesan's heart and a personal highlight of his career. The aim is to provide housing, healthcare, food, clean water and schooling for displaced communities around the world in partnership with other organisations. In just over three years the founders have donated over \$15 million to help protect and educate more than 200,000 disadvantaged children in 11 countries across the world.

Ratheesan holds a BSC in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Kingston. In 2012, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Kingston Business University and named Ernst & Young 'London & South' Entrepreneur of the Year 2012. He is a Young Global Leader at the World Economic Forum.

Lebara's vision is to be the brand of choice for 1 billion people around the world by 2020, helping people unite across borders, generations and cultures.

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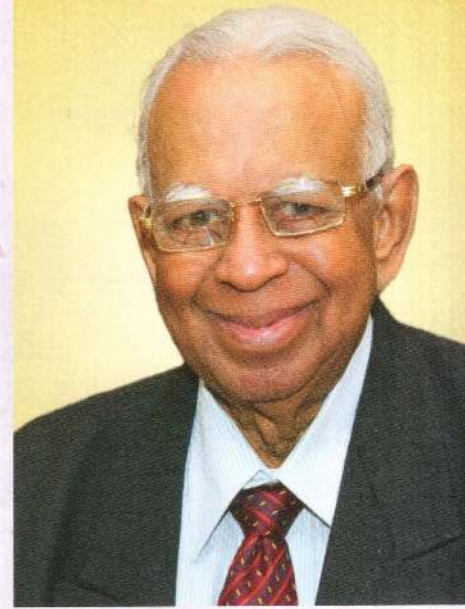
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Living Hero Award



As part of our commitment to recognizing the work of heroic individuals for their selfless work in bettering the lives of others, the Canadian Tamil Congress has introduced the Living Hero Award. The award will be given annually to a person of Tamil origin who has demonstrated exemplary leadership, courage, empathy and services in challenging circumstances. The Living Hero Award will recognize the contribution of a dedicated individual whose selfless work has helped change the lives of others.

2016 Award Recipient:

TNA Leader Rajavarothayam Sampanthan, MP

Rajavarothayam Sampanthan was born on 05 February, 1933. Sampanthan was educated at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna, St. Anne's College, Kurunegala, St. Joseph's College, Trincomalee and St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa. His education took him through a large part of the country. He then joined the Ceylon Law College, graduating as an attorney at law. After qualifying, Sampanthan practised law in Trincomalee.

Sampanthan joined the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK), the predominant Tamil party, in 1956. ITAK leader S. J. V. Chelvanayakam offered Sampanthan nomination in 1963 and 1970, but Sampanthan declined. In 1972, all three major Tamil parties united to form the Tamil United Front, later renamed TULF in 1976. In 1977, Sampanthan contested Trincomalee on the TULF's platform and won. Sampanthan and all other TULF MPs boycotted Parliament from the middle of 1983 after refusing to take an oath of office under the 6th Amendment, which they felt interfered with their fundamental rights. After three months of absence, Sampanthan forfeited his seat in Parliament. He re-entered parliament in 1997 following the assassination of a sitting MP.

In 2001, the current major Tamil party, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), was formed and Sampanthan became its leader. He contested the 2001 parliamentary election on the TNA platform and won. He was re-elected in 2004, 2010 and 2015. After TNA's resounding victory in August 2015, Sampanthan was elected as the Leader of the Opposition in the Sri Lankan parliament on 3rd September 2015.

Sampanthan played a key role in change of government in the last presidential election in January 2015 and the parliamentary election in August 2015, with the hope that the new government will restore democracy, annul the 18th Amendment, abolish the Executive Presidency, reinstate the Rule of Law and settle the Tamil National question. Tamil people accepted his leadership and gave his party a resounding victory in August 2015, and he has shown his determination to work with the international community and the current government, to bring justice to the Tamil people and settle the long outstanding issues of all people in Sri Lanka.

Sampanthan, who is a senior parliamentarian, is a forceful advocate championing and defending the rights of Tamil people. He has good command of all three languages, Tamil, Sinhalese and English and his speeches and interviews are widely respected and read by those interested in politics. He has traveled widely and met with many leaders of nations, dignitaries and important organizations including UN in his endeavor to bring justice to the people he serves.

We are deeply honoured to confer him with the "Living Hero Award" in recognition of his unflinching dedication, commitment, foresight, determination and outstanding services to the Tamil community and the entire people of Sri Lanka.



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A New Reality for the Tamil People in Sri Lanka?

Future Directions and Responsibilities of the Tamil Diaspora

Sri Lanka appears to be a country in transition. Some amongst us question the sincerity of the government or the impact these purported changes will have on the Tamil community; how far and deep these changes are to address the long-standing Tamil national question? Considering the historic trust deficit the Tamil community has on the governments or even the State of Sri Lanka, such questions are absolutely reasonable. But an objective analysis of the present reality in Sri Lanka shows that the nucleus of change, or even the mindset driving them, cannot simply be ignored. Equally important, the perception of the International Community has markedly changed, and it has embarked upon high-level initiatives to encourage and consolidate the nascent transformation. A community that depends heavily on its international leverage as a political tool needs to be cognizant of this reality. Timing too is critical as some crucial decisions regarding accountability and constitutional reforms are about to be made in 2016.

The Tamil Diaspora – a significant proportion being directly affected by the conflict and compelled to leave the country, and has continuing intimate links to people of their areas of origin – is a legitimate stakeholder in successfully resolving key aspects of the decades-long national conflict.

So, what should the Tamil Diaspora do at this stage? What are our future directions and responsibilities? Should we wait as observers, without contributing, with the hope that the changes will succeed? Or sit on the fence until new endeavours fail, and will there be realistic options following failure to advance the interests of our community? Or, knowing well that Sri Lanka and the Tamil community have a history of missed opportunities, should we embark upon proactive initiatives to consolidate this opportunity? Will such involvement confer pre-mature recognition on Sri Lanka and weaken the strength of the Diaspora factor for the Tamil cause? Should the entire Tamil Diaspora take a unified position? Or, is it preferable for sections that are actively involved in diplomatic engagement to pursue that path, while others to wait cautiously, in case failure eventuates, so they may remain relevant at that time?

While there are no simple answers to these questions, recognising that our community does not have the luxury of time on its side to

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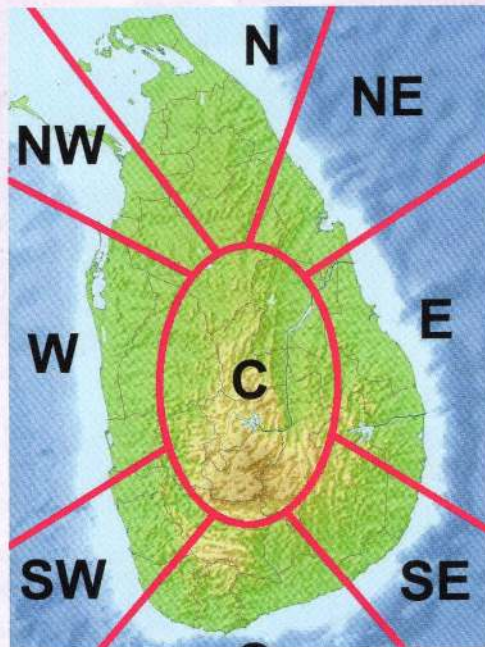
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strengthen its presence in Sri Lanka, the Tamil Diaspora has a historic opportunity and role to play at this juncture. The three most important and immediate priorities to the Tamil people in Sri Lanka are – a political resolution to the Tamil problem, genuine accounting of war time violations, and economic advancement that will consolidate Tamil existence. In every one of these areas, the Tamil Diaspora has been playing a commendable role. For those involved in diplomatic engagement, the most basic and crucial function has been and will continue to be, to do everything possible to keep the International Community actively involved in the emerging judicial, political and economic empowerment processes and also to directly contribute to these in collaboration with the elected representatives of the Tamil people.



in the contemporary world. The Tamil Diaspora can constructively contribute to the evolution of a political consensus in Sri Lanka that could make such an outcome a possibility. However, political empowerment alone will not be sufficient to re-establish a thriving Tamil community. The cultural, technical and economic advancement are equally important to promote a confident and proud Tamil community, not just in the North and East but also in the Up-country area as well as in other parts of Sri Lanka. The Tamil Diaspora with its experiences and wealth can bring capacity and capability to promote such advancement, and in doing so, immensely

contribute to the development of a positive Tamil nationalistic narrative that is lacking in Sri Lanka.

While not wavering on these fundamentals, can the Tamil Diaspora create opportunities to expand its contributions even further? Can our experiences in the Western liberal democracies and our economic strength play a bigger and meaningful role, and even impart new thinking, in achieving reconciliation and prosperity for all the peoples of Sri Lanka?

The crucial factors that underpin the national conflict in Sri Lanka – the inequality, lack of political empowerment and insecurity of the Tamil people with respect to protecting and promoting their identity and prosperity in the country, particularly in the regions where they have been living as the predominant community for centuries; and the fear of the Sinhala community that such regional dominance will ultimately harm its national interests – could possibly be addressed through several constitutional and governance models available

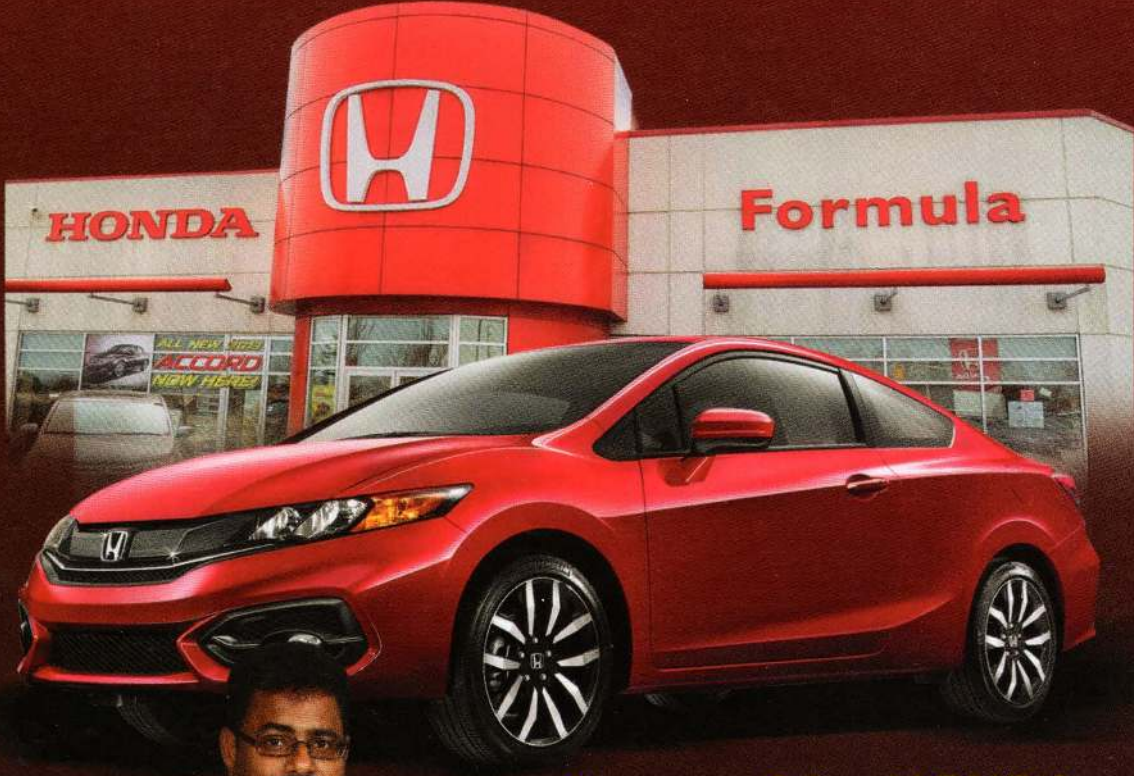
It is proposed here that time is right for the Tamil Diaspora to take additional initiatives in partnership with the governments of our adopted countries, the elected Parliamentary and other representatives of all Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka, as well as the representatives of the Government of Sri Lanka, to play a more crucial and meaningful role. The level and extent of engagement could be tied to achieving tangible progress on issues such as prisoner and land release, demilitarisation and setting up of 'trustworthy' accountability, political and reconciliation mechanisms. Timing of such engagement is critical and should reflect and contribute to the optimism among all the peoples of Sri Lanka. Such staged progress and rising optimism will be keys to cultivating a conducive environment where more difficult decisions could be made in the future.

While being fully conscious of the possibility of failure, acting with courage and conviction is a must, to not let go a unique window of opportunity to promote peace and prosperity for our long-suffering brethren in Sri Lanka. In all honesty, an alternative pathway is not apparent.



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The path towards accountability, reconciliation and justice in Sri Lanka:

looking forward from the September 2015 UN Human Rights Council Session

This past September saw a historic session at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on the road towards accountability and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The session witnessed two critical moments:

- First, the release of a damning report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on its Investigation on Sri Lanka; the culmination of a year-long credible and comprehensive investigation into mass atrocities on the island that, for many Tamil victims, represented an important acknowledgment of the horrific suffering and crimes they endured.
- Second, and equally important, was the adoption of a resolution co-sponsored by the United States, Sri Lanka, Canada, and others, to begin the process of accountability, reconciliation and devolution of power on the island. Among other things, the resolution calls on the Government to uphold its commitments: to develop a credible judicial process including international actors; to implement the recommendations of the OHCHR's report; to introduce effective security sector reform; and to take necessary constitutional measures to reach a political settlement. While the resolution fell short of the language Tamil diaspora groups, civil society and politicians were pushing for, it represents an important and positive step in the right direction.

Following the September session, this year represents a critical juncture in the fight for accountability, justice and rights in Sri Lanka. Under the current administration, which is concerned with repairing its international reputation and is taking certain steps towards reconciliation, there exists a small but important window of opportunity to see Tamil grievances and rights finally addressed. However, there remains significant work to be done by the Government to earn the trust and support of Tamil victims and war-affected communities.

To start, the Sri Lankan government must prioritize addressing ongoing human rights violations. For instance, militarization of the North-East is undoubtedly the largest hurdle towards developing any meaningful and credible accountability and reconciliation processes in Sri Lanka. Numerous reports have documented how the pervasive military presence in the North-East affects every

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Dharsha Jegatheeswaran

Dharsha Jegatheeswaran holds a J.D. from the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law. She is passionate about Tamil rights in Sri Lanka and refugees - issues on which she spends most of her spare time working. She is currently completing her articles at a litigation boutique in Toronto after graduating in June 2015.

Vani Selvarajah.

Vani Selvarajah is a member of CTC's international human rights team. She was called to the Ontario Bar in 2012 and is currently practicing corporate and commercial law at a firm in Mississauga.

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aspect of Tamil civilians' lives there. According to the Oakland Institute, as of 2014, there were approximately 160,000, largely Sinhalese, soldiers stationed in the North-East among a population of only 1 million, predominantly Tamil civilians. This amounts to approximately 1 soldier for every 6 civilians.

Recently, reports published by the International Truth and Justice Project and Freedom for Torture, revealed documentation of over 25 incidents of torture and/or rape of Tamil men and women by security forces in Sri Lanka, perpetrated in the last year after the current administration came to power. As the ITJP report states:

“These cases not only reveal that torture and repression continue in Sri Lanka but that they remain widespread and systematic. They are the work of a well-organised machine which continues to thrive within the Sri Lankan police and military fuelled by extortion. It is responsible for terrorising and oppressing Tamils. This is therefore not a question of a few rotten apples in the system, as the new government so often suggests, but rather the result of structures that have been corrupted”

Meaningful security-sector reform must therefore precede any judicial mechanism, alongside robust witness protection legislation.

Further to this, the government should undertake meaningful confidence-building measures to demonstrate their genuine will to address Tamil grievances, and to earn the trust of Tamil victims and communities. Particularly in light of conflicting statements provided by members of the government domestically versus internationally, mere rhetoric will not suffice.

One such urgently needed confidence-building measure is for the government to address the situation of Tamil political prisoners. The number of Tamil political prisoners, even by the most conservative estimate, is at least 200, some of whom have been detained without charge for more than a decade. In mid-November, responding to an ongoing hunger strike by Tamil political prisoners and a hartal organized by Tamil political parties,

the Sri Lankan government promised political prisoners that their cases would at least be reviewed by December 15. While the government has made certain statements regarding political prisoners in the interim, December 15 has come and gone and the Sri Lankan government has yet to follow through on this promise in any concrete manner or present a clear plan on how they intend to address this issue.

The release of political prisoners would represent a clear commitment by the Sri Lankan government towards the fulfillment of the UNHRC resolution, and towards meaningful accountability and reconciliation.

In addition to demonstrating its commitment towards accountability, it is important that the Sri Lankan government similarly make clear that the process of constitutional reform it has started intends to meaningfully address Tamil grievances. This can only originate from broad and meaningful consultations with the Tamil community (particularly vulnerable and war-affected groups), politicians and civil society, as well as the Tamil diaspora, which will play a key role in rebuilding and developing the North-East in coming years.

2016 is a make or break year for Sri Lanka as the world, and particularly countries like the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, South Africa, India, and Australia, watch to see whether Sri Lanka will fulfill its commitments under the UNHRC resolution. While there does appear to be small window of opportunity, that window will only remain open with continued pressure placed on Sri Lanka by the international community. Ultimately, the driving force behind any transitional justice process in Sri Lanka must be the voices of the victims, who have suffered far too much for far too long at the hands of those who still act with impunity. The continued critical engagement of countries like Canada will be more important than ever this year.

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Regime Change Brings Hope for Self-Rule by Thamil Speaking People

Year 2015 was unprecedented in the annals of Sri Lanka since independence. There were two elections within a span of eight months and both of them resulted in seismic changes in the way the country is governed.

The presidential election held on January 8th saw the unexpected defeat of the incumbent president Mahinda Rajapaksa. The announcement by Rajapaksa in November 2015 that he would seek a third term took everyone by surprise since he had two more years left to complete his term. Rajapaksa thought he could win a third term with ease depending on the Sinhala - Buddhist votes. His calculation went awry when the Sinhala - Buddhist votes almost divided right down the middle.

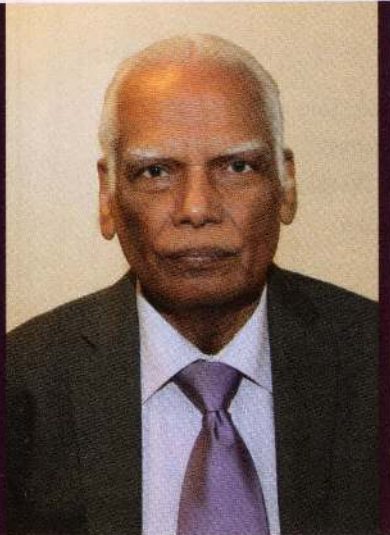
In January 2010, Rajapaksa won with a majority of 1,842,749 votes. He polled 9,015,934 (57.88%) compared to 4,173,185 (40.15%) to Sarath Fonseka. Though, Sarath Fonseka was the war hero, Sinhalese people credited Rajapaksa for his unflinching determination to finish off the LTTE and bring the 30 years military conflict to an end.

In 2015, quite unexpectedly Maithripala Sirisena, Health Minister in the UPFA cabinet, defected at the last minute to become the common opposition candidate to contest Rajapaksa.

After a bitterly fought election campaign Sirisena won with a majority of 449,072 votes after wiping out Rajapaksa's majority of 1,842,749 in the 2010 presidential elections. Rajapaksa blamed the Thamil people's vote bank for his defeat. The five Thamil dominated electoral districts in the Northeast voted overwhelmingly (74.35%) for Sirisena. In addition, Nuwara Eliya district also voted (63.88%) for Sirisena. Out of 22 electoral districts Sirisena won twelve and Rajapaksa ten.

Although Rajapaksa had a lead of 332,705 votes in 16 Sinhala majority electoral districts, this was more than offset by Sirisena by the votes he polled in the five districts in the Northeast plus Nuwara Eliya district, totalling 781,777 votes.

Marking the beginning of a new chapter in the contemporary political history of Sri Lanka, the parliament on April 28, 2015



Velupillai Thangavelu

The author is a retired professional Accountant who embraced media full time. He writes regularly on political and social issues both in Thamil and English under the pen-name Nakkeeran. He is also the President of Thamil Creative Writers Association.



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adopted the 19th Constitutional Amendment after two days of debate with 214 members voting in favour. The 16 member TNA also supported the Bill. The legislation envisages the dilution of many executive powers the president had since 1978, such as setting a term limit of 2 each of 5 years. This Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment and restored the Constitutional Council and Independent Commissions (as in the 17th Amendment).

Undaunted and refusing to accept defeat Mahinda Rajapaksa contested the parliamentary elections held on August 17, 2015. Though President Sirisena was the president of the SLFP, Rajapaksa had strong support within the party. When the election results were announced Rajapaksa tasted defeat for the second time. The result was as follows:

2015				2010		
Party	Votes	Seats	%	Votes	Seats	%
UNFGG	5,098,916	105	45.66	2,357,057	60	29.34
UPFA	4,732,664	95	42.38	4,846,388	144	60.33

The UNP and UPFA (Sirisena) formed a National Government with Ranil Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister and President Sirisena having the Defence portfolio. R.Sampanthan, leader of the TNA/ITAK was appointed the Leader of the Opposition. The jumbo cabinet consists of 51 Ministers, 19 State Ministers and 24 Deputy Ministers—far higher than the promise to restrict the Ministers to 30 and Deputy Ministers to 25.

Following the change of regime, democratic space has increased in the Northeast, although Tamil people still face daunting problems that remain unresolved. Foremost is the return of lands grabbed by the army during and after the war ended. Although 3359.5 acres of land in the Northeast have been released, there are still 11,543 of acres of private land occupied by the

army. The army is resisting the resettlement efforts of the government and there is reluctance on its part to vacate occupied lands.

As of December 30, 2015, about 6,373 acres of land belonging to 10,495 families are occupied by the army in Jaffna district. The displaced people are living in 31 welfare centres, with relations and friends, for over 25 years.

In Mullaitheevu district 12,785 acres of state land plus 702 acres of private land totalling 13,487 acres are still under occupation by the army. Likewise, 501 acres of private land in Kilinochchi and 4,000 acres of land in Mannar and Vavuniya are under army occupation. Thus, 11,576 acres of private land is still occupied by the armed forces in the North. This does not include several thousand acres of privately owned paddy lands and

lands belonging to government departments occupied by the armed forces. The process is slow, but the government is moving in the right direction.

In the east, 818 acres of private land belonging to 1,500 families occupied by the army has been released to the owners. A further 237 acres occupied by the Navy and

owned by 634 families will be released soon. The Navy is shifting the base out of Sampur.

Both President Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe have just announced that all private lands occupied by the army in the North and east will be released within the next 6 months. This is good news indeed.

On January 9th Prime Minister Wickremesinghe will move a draft resolution in parliament to coincide with the first anniversary of Sirisena's presidency to convert parliament into a Constitution Assembly to draft a new constitution. The draft constitution needs to be passed by a two-thirds majority in parliament and also voted on in a referendum by the people. If successful, it will be the 4th constitution within a span of just 69 years!

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Parliament is now in a position to unscramble all of the bad constitutional scrambling that has been going on since independence. Lack of good governance has led to insurgencies, riots, war, and dilution of rule of law.

TNA leader R. Sampanthan has assured the Tamil people that there will be a reasonable, workable and a durable political solution within the framework of a united, undivided Sri Lanka in 2016.

He wants recognition of Northeast provinces as the historical habitat of the Tamil speaking people and an entitlement for Tamils to the right of self-determination and shared sovereignty over land, law and order so as to ensure the safety and security and their socio-economic development.

Year 2016 provides the last chance for settling the divisive ethnic question satisfactorily to all three communities and to take Sri Lanka on the road to prosperity and lasting peace.

விடு, வியாபாரம், காணி வாங்கவும் விற்கவும் மற்றும் ஆலோசனைகளுக்கும் நம்பிக்கையுடன் அறையுங்கள்

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Repairing Canada's refugee law

*...you have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land...*

- Warsan Shire

Throughout the latter part of the 20th century, Canada was seen by the world as an open and tolerant nation—a country that used humanitarian and compassionate principles in the development and application of a welcoming migration system. The system was not perfect and certainly not immune from racism and discrimination, but was generally a better system than most.

It was because of the pervasiveness of these principles that many Tamils sought refuge here after fleeing horrific persecution in Sri Lanka. These refugees rebuilt their lives in places like Scarborough and St. James Park, where many now hold integral roles in the community as business owners, professionals and politicians, among others. While recognizing the difficulties many Tamil refugees faced and continue to face, it is a testament to the values of this country that the GTA now hosts the largest Sri Lankan Tamil community outside of the island.

Unfortunately, over the past 10 years we have witnessed a rapid erosion of that system. Legislation was passed that saw, among other things: cuts to refugee healthcare, the creation of a second tier of citizenship, the detention of asylum-seekers suspected to be involved in smuggling, and caps on family reunification. Many of these changes were instituted after the MV Ocean Lady and MV Sun Sea arrived on the shores of Vancouver carrying hundreds of Tamil refugees who had suffered enormous persecution and harm during and after the war in Sri Lanka. Instead of applying our principles as we have done in the past, the government labeled them "bogus" refugees and then proceeded to create a nightmarish legal process for them to get through. Many of the refugees were detained for months, and in some cases even up to a year.

Thankfully, the last federal election saw several political parties campaign on platforms to shift the discourse away from 'bogus refugees', and back to values of inclusion and compassion. Canadians chose overwhelmingly to vote for that human rights based approach. Since coming into power, the new Liberal government



Dharsha Jegatheeswaran

Dharsha Jegatheeswaran holds a J.D. from the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law. She is passionate about Tamil rights in Sri Lanka and refugees - issues on which she spends most of her spare time working. She is currently completing her articles at a litigation boutique in Toronto after graduating in June 2015.

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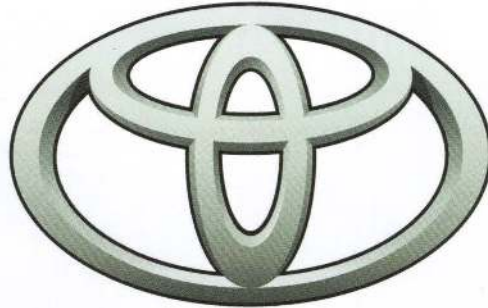


has already instituted several positive changes including restoring full healthcare for refugees and putting resources into bringing Syrian refugees to Canada, as well as expediting the process to do so. They have further made commitments to repeal and fix many of the legislative changes that created a harsh and anti-refugee legal system. In parallel, the Supreme Court of Canada recently handed down two historic rulings on refugee cases that will create a more compassionate and humane legal system. Both rulings pertained to Tamil refugees who arrived on the boats in 2009 and 2010, and recognized the need for a broader understanding of who constitutes a refugee under the law.

We still have a long way to go towards fixing the system, and not all of its problems originate in the last decade alone, but it is significant that the new government and this country as a whole have voiced their recognition that refugees and immigrants deserve to be welcomed and not shunned, to be valued and not discriminated against. It signals a shift back towards the kind of country that welcomed a different boat of Tamil refugees only 30 years ago.

Perhaps not as well known as the MV Sun Sea and MV Ocean Lady, in August 1986, two life-boats carrying 155 Tamil refugees landed on the shores of Newfoundland after being rescued by the captain of a local fishing boat. These refugees had been forced off of a German cargo ship far off the coast, and had been stuck on the boats for days in horrendous conditions when the captain spotted them. As a true example of the determination and perseverance that refugees possess, these men, women and children who arrived with nothing, are now important contributing members of Canadian society. It is equally as much a story about the kind of values that Canadians seek to hold dear. The values that ensure that refugees and immigrants not only find refuge in Canada, but also grow to form and shape the fabric of the communities they join and build.

At a time when much of the West is growing more xenophobic and adopting discriminatory and racist anti-migration policies, the election of a government that campaigned strongly on positive reform to the refugee legal system is a powerful symbol not only here, but to the rest of the world.



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Harvard Tamil Chair

*Implausible Dream of One;
no, Four;
nay, Everybody!*

“ஈன்ற பொழுதின் பெரிது உவக்கும் -தன்மகனைச்
சான்றோன் எனக்கேட்ட தாய்.”

Dreams are part and parcel of our life. Actually, dreams are what we are made up of. Yesterday's dream becomes today's reality. Sangam Tamil chair is quite a story that must be told and retold. It is a culmination of implausible dreams by many, starting with one, who is none other, than mother Tamil.

Dream of One:

After sending a sizable number of her children all across the globe, mother Tamil had dreamt of her successful children exposing and showcasing her lyrical beauty, the literary riches and intricate eloquence of philosophical works for the world to learn and prosper. There won't be Tamils without Tamil. Tamil will not exist without Tamils. The Tamil diaspora has the calling and the duty to honor their mother (tongue) and celebrate her extraordinary longevity and legacy with rest of our kith and kin of this world.

Dream of four:

The story gets very interesting now.

Maybe all the following events were determined by our thoughtful Tamil Annai. Who and how can one explain this sequence of events evolving at such a fast pace?

A European scholar at Harvard was anxiously dreaming for someone to knock at his door for securing a Chair for his love, Tamil . A self-educated, madly yet adorably driven Tamil woman, at Hawaii, was dreaming day and night for finding someone to take on the task of securing an endowed Chair at the peerless Harvard University. A tireless, committed cardiologist from Altoona, PA was longing and dreaming to find someone to guide him to honor his adorable love, Tamil Annai. The time was ripe and Tamil Annai is ready to move all the essential pieces to fulfill her prophecy by bringing



S. Thirugnanaambantham

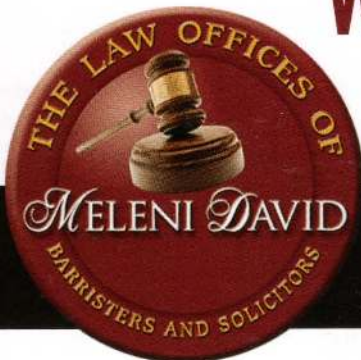
S. Thirugnanaambantham is a medical doctor specializing in Medical Oncology. He was born and raised in Thirukkudanthai, Tamilnadu well known as Temple City. He is from a humble Tamil loving family.

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those three driven souls to settle the score to win the Chair at Harvard.

Dr. Janakiraman, the Cardiologist from Altoona, aided by both Ms. Vaidehi from Hawaii and the European Professor from Harvard were getting closer to nailing the Chair.

At this time, for an unexplainable reason, I was stricken to suffer a stroke with twenty different blood clots lodged in my brain. Being a true, caring and loving friend, Dr. Janakiraman came to visit me. He, after appropriate enquiry, explained to me about his Harvard dream and also the dream of the other two good souls. My wife, Vijayalakshmi had her own dream(!!) also, hence, she challenged me to join and help with Dr. Janakiraman to fulfill those three noble souls' dreams to become a reality. I jumped into the foray as guided by her worthy dream. Harvard saw the greatness of Tamil and its treasures, and gave us the green signal to mobilize Six million Dollars to solidify the deal.

The move is on!

Dreams of all world Tamils:

“மக்கள் தாய்க்காற்றும் உதவி, இவர்கள் தாய் என்னோற்றாள் கொள்ளும் சொல்”

பேராசான் வள்ளுவர் மன்னிப்பாராக!

Life is full of choices for all of us except for three most precious gifts that we are endowed to start this worldly journey. Our parents, our mother tongue and our mother land along with our inner and outer attire to carry on our human (experiment) expedition are summarily given without seeking for our wishes or preferences. No wonder(!), we adore and try to please and honor our mother and father, our fabulous mother tongue and revered motherland. I have no doubt that each and every Tamil in this world has dreamt somewhere along in time, to beautify, to glorify and to sanctify our dear Mother, Tamil.

Please join us in bringing out the accumulated, time tested Wisdom, hidden in our (Tamil's) minds over many centuries, which had been in store for significant length of time to enrich the whole humanity.

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“ஐயந் திரிபின் றளந்து உத்தியில்தெளிந்து மெய்யுணர்ச்சிக் கண்விழிப்பத் தூங்குவார் தம்முளே காண்பதே காட்சி கனவு நனவாகப் பூண்பதே தீர்ந்த பொருள்.”

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Climate Change: Why Should I Care?

As 2015 came to a close, so did the world's hottest year on record to date. This past year saw some of the highest global temperatures in recorded human history, proving to be a wake up call to nations all around the world. Despite the sweltering heat of this past summer, many of us living in and around Toronto find this warmer winter more preferable. However, looking at the bigger picture, these rising temperatures are leading us towards an unstable, unpredictable and dangerous new future. Although there are several factors contributing to climate change, human activity is definitely a key player.

Why should we care?

Climate change affects us all. Some may say they prefer the warmer weather anyway, so why should they care about the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere? Well, one major reason is that these warmer temperatures do not come without major consequences. Natural disasters are steadily becoming more frequent all around the world, as millions of people flee their homes every year. Not only do disasters such as floods and landslides temporarily displace populations, but also rising sea levels are gradually consuming large areas of coastal regions, causing permanent displacement. According to the UN Refugee Agency, at the current rate of destruction, we can expect the displacement of almost 250 million people globally by 2050. The year 2050 is only 34 years away, which means that this can and will occur within our lifetime, or our children's lifetime.

Up to 54 million people will be exposed to flood conditions by 2030, almost three times the current amount of 21 million. In other words, the number of people affected by flooding will triple in size in just 14 years. Flooding will affect those in both developing and developed nations, and would be severely detrimental to our economies by raising costs of aid and repairs by the billions. As temperatures continue to rise, countries with drier climates will continue experiencing severe droughts, destroying crops and making agriculture nearly impossible. Diminishing levels of available fresh water is a growing concern due to overexploitation of resources and altered precipitation patterns resulting from hotter climates. As water becomes scarce, populations may starve to death due to shortages in food production. Based on these facts, one can



Asvini Ravindran

Asvini Ravindran is a recent Geography and Environmental Studies graduate from McMaster University. She has a strong passion towards wildlife and nature, and strives to create awareness about issues pertaining to the natural world.



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argue that climate change is an issue of humanity itself. Is this really the world you want to leave for your children?

What is being done?

On November 30th, world leaders joined forces at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, the United Nation's 21st climate conference, in Paris, France, to address the impacts of rising global temperatures. Their goal was to discuss methods to decrease their respective emission levels of greenhouse gases, and come up with a strategy to mitigate the inevitable rising temperatures.

Global temperatures have increased by 0.8°C since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, causing climate related issues all around the world. As a result, a consensus was established on Dec 12th, 2015 between the 190 nations in attendance at the conference: to restrict any further warming to below a 2°C limit. This consensus, hereby known as "The Paris Agreement", will act as a legally binding framework within which all nations in participation will work towards reducing carbon emissions. This agreement will hold all parties involved accountable for their own emission levels and will encourage more sustainable practices on a global scale.

Why is this necessary?

The effects of the warming have been steadily on the rise since the 1950s, affecting populations all over the world. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in the last decade alone global sea levels have risen twice as much than they have in all of the 20th century combined. They estimate a 19cm rise in sea levels since 1901, primarily due to the melting of ice sheets and glaciers. In addition to this, the acidity levels of our oceans are 26% higher than they were prior to industrialization, which makes them the most acidic they have been in the last 300,000 years.

Greenhouse gas levels in our atmosphere are also the highest they have ever been. The current estimate for the rise of global temperatures by the year 2100 ranges between 2°C and 6°C. A rise to 2°C may not seem like much, but it will

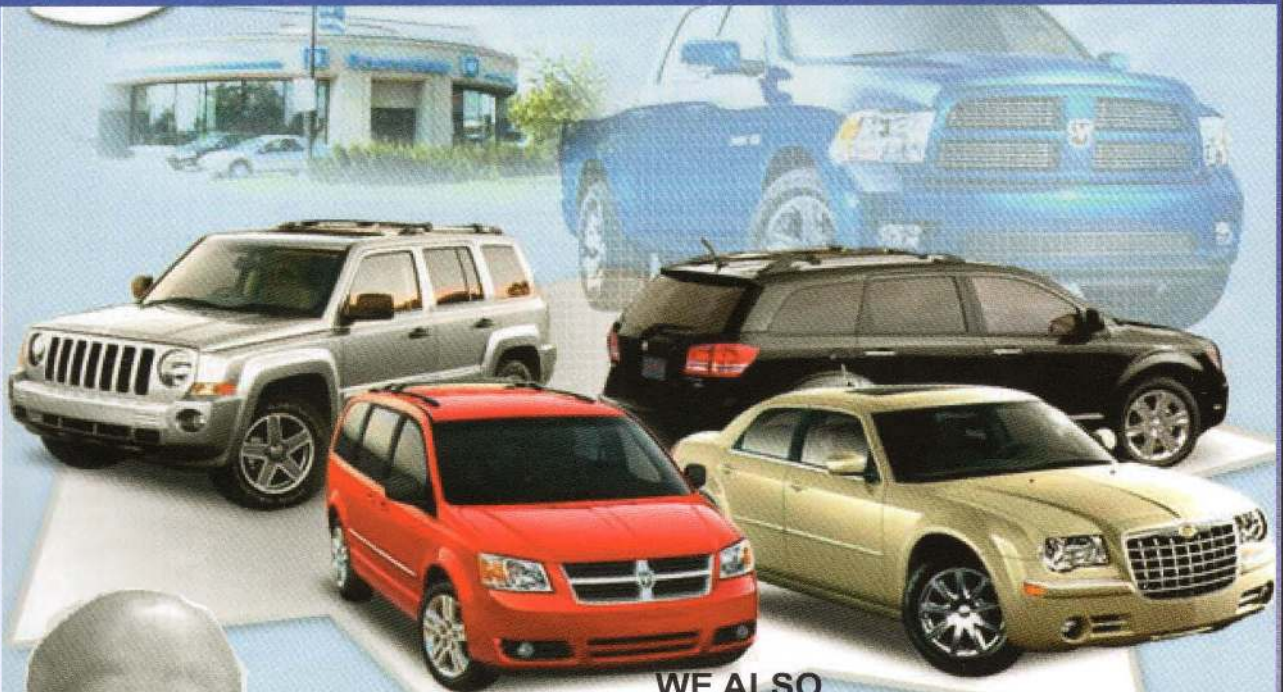
alter climate patterns to an extent that will intensify future natural disasters. Wildfires, hurricanes, tropical storms, floods and others will worsen in extremity, causing severe destruction and increasing mortality rates around the world. In addition to this, warmer climates can interfere with the natural order of ecosystems and food chains, causing mass extinctions of species and a great loss in biodiversity. With global catastrophes already at such alarming levels, one can only imagine the amount of damage and destruction that will surface if we continue at our current rate of consumption.

Currently, it takes 1.6 Earths, metaphorically speaking, to support our demand for resources. In 2015, our rate of resource consumption exceeded Earth's resource production rate by August, meaning that the planet itself could not keep up with our rate of resource depletion. The major players, which are the US, the UK, China, Germany and Japan, are already consuming resources twice as fast as they produce them. Consuming resources at this rate would mean that, by the year 2030, we would be using two Earth's worth of resources. This is simply not sustainable.

So, who is responsible?

The Paris Agreement is undeniably a huge step in the right direction, but it will not be enough to solve the problem indefinitely. The outcome of this agreement will depend entirely on the commitment of all those involved, from world leaders, to intergovernmental groups, to environmentalists, and to the general public itself. Implementation is key, and we must all commit to working with our governments and our neighboring nations to collectively decrease our carbon footprint. Simple changes in everyday lifestyles will contribute to reaching this goal, such as carpooling to work, avoiding purchasing bottled water, reusing used items, etc. All of our actions have consequences, each of which will be passed on to future generations. As a result, we should all take responsibility for our own actions and work together towards building a better future for ourselves, and for all generations to come.

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திருகோணமலை மாவட்டத்தின் மூதூர் பிரதேசச் செயலாளர் பிரிவில் உள்ள சம்பூர் மேற்கு, சம்பூர் கிழக்கு, கடற்கரைச் சேனை, கூனித்தீவு, நவரத்தினபுரம் ஆகிய கிராம சேவையாளர் பிரிவுகளை உள்ளடக்கிய 24 சதுரக்கிலோமீற்றர் பரப்பளவைக் கொண்ட பகுதி பொதுவாகச் சம்பூர் என்ற பெயரால் கட்டப்படுகின்றது.

‘சம்பூர்’ எனக் சுட்டப்படும் மேற்படி பகுதியில் 2006ஆம் ஆண்டில் 1853 குடும்பங்களைச் சேர்ந்த 7046 மக்கள் வாழ்ந்து வாழ்ந்து வந்தனர் எனத் திருகோணமலை மாவட்டச் செயலகப் புள்ளி விவரங்கள் கூறுகின்றன. 2006 சித்திரைத் திங்களில் மாவிலாற்றில் தொடங்கி நடைபெற்ற போரின் விளைவாக முன்கூறிய 1853 குடும்பங்களும் இடம்பெயர வேண்டிய சூழ்நிலை ஏற்பட்டது. மேற்படி மக்கள் முதலில் வெருகலுக்கும் அடுத்து வாகரைக்கும் இறுதியாக மட்டக்களப்புக்கும் இடம் பெயர்ந்தனர். இவர்கள் மட்டக்களப்பு மாவட்டத்தில் உள்ள 17 நலன்புரி முகாம்களில் தங்க வைக்கப்பட்டிருந்தனர். மூன்று ஆண்டு காலம் மட்டக்களப்பு மாவட்டத்தில் தங்கியிருந்த பின்பு 2010 தையில் இவர்கள் திருகோணமலை மாவட்டத்துக்கு அழைத்து வரப்பட்டு சம்பூருக்கு அண்மையில் உள்ள கிளிவெட்டி, பட்டித்திடல், மணற்சேனை, கட்டைப்பறிச்சான் ஆகிய ஊர்களில் அமைக்கப்பட்ட முகாம்களில் தங்க வைக்கப்பட்டனர்.



Kathiravelu Kugathasan

2010 ஆம் ஆண்டில் கடற்கரைச்சேனை கிராம சேவையாளர் பிரிவில் ஒரு பகுதியிலும் 2013ஆம் ஆண்டில் கூனித்தீவிலும் நவரத்தினபுரத்திலும் மக்கள் மீள்குடியேற்றம் செய்யப்பட்டனர். எனினும், முதலீட்டு ஊக்குவிப்பு வலயம், உயர் பாதுகாப்பு வலயம் ஆகியவற்றைக் காரணமாகக் காட்டிச் சம்பூர் மேற்கு, சம்பூர் கிழக்கு, கடற்கரைச் சேனை ஒரு பகுதி ஆகியவற்றில் வாழ்ந்து வந்த 825 குடும்பங்களைச் சேர்ந்த 2598 மக்கள் மீள்குடியேற ஒப்புதல் அளிக்கப்படவில்லை. இவர்கள் முற்கூறிய கிளிவெட்டி, பட்டித்திடல், மணற்சேனை, கட்டைப்பறிச்சான் ஆகிய இடங்களில் உள்ள முகாம்களில் தொடர்ந்து வசித்து வந்தனர்.

2015 தைத் திங்களில் இலங்கையில் ஏற்பட்ட ஆட்சிமாற்றத்தின் பின்பு புதிதாக வந்த அரசு இக்காணிகளை விட முனைந்தாலும், முதலீட்டு ஊக்குவிப்பு வலயக் குத்தகைக்கு எடுத்த ‘கேர்வே’ என்ற நிறுவனம் பல்வேறு தடைகளை ஏற்படுத்திக் கொண்டிருந்தது. தமிழ்த் தேசியக் கூட்டமைப்பு நாடாளுமன்ற உறுப்பினர் திரு.எம்.ஏ. சுமந்திரன், மாண்புமிகு இரா சம்பந்தன் ஆகியோர் நீதி மன்றம் சென்று இத்தடைகளை அகற்றிய பின்பு முதலீட்டு ஊக்குவிப்பு வலயத்திற்கென ஒதுக்கப்பட்ட 818 ஏக்கர் நிலம் 2015



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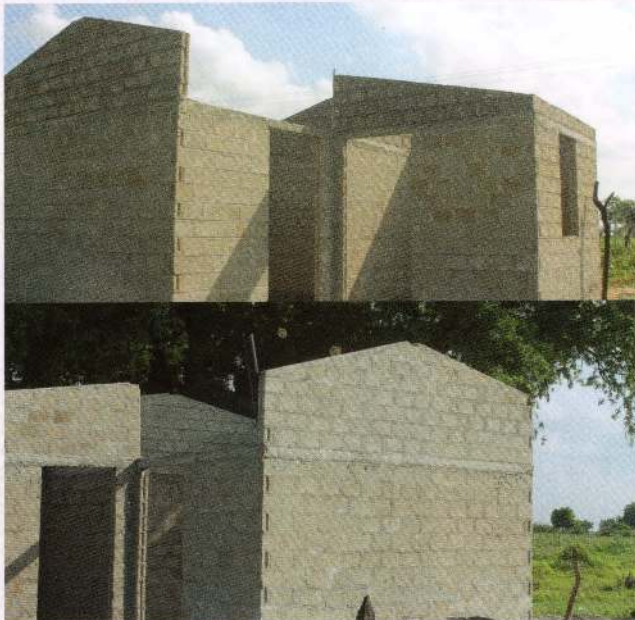


ஆவணி 22ஆம் நாளன்று விடுவிக்கப்பட்டு 367 குடும்பங்கள் மீள்குடியமர ஒப்புதல் அளிக்கப்பட்டது. இந்த 367 குடும்பங்களில் 41 குடும்பங்கள் பெண்கள் தலைமை தாங்கும் குடும்பங்களாகும்.

இந்த 41 குடும்பங்களுக்கும் வீடமைக்கும் பணியைத் திருகோணமலை நலன்புரிச் சங்கத்தின் ஊடாகச் செய்யக் கனடியத் தமிழர் பேரவை பொறுப்பேற்றது. இதற்கு நிதிசேகரிக்கும் பொருட்டாக 2015 புரட்டாதி 13ஆம் நாள் நாம் ஒரு நிதிசேர் நடையை மேற்கொண்டோம். திருகோணமலை நலன்புரிச் சங்கம் இதில் பங்காளராக இணைந்திருந்தது. தமிழ்த் தேசியக் கூட்டமைப்பு நாடாளுமன்ற உறுப்பினர் திரு. ஈ. சரவணபவன் சிறப்பு விருந்தினராகக் கலந்து கொண்டார். இந்த நிகழ்ச்சியின் வாயிலாக 41 வீடுகளையும் அமைப்பதற்காக ஓர் இலட்சம் டொலர் நிதியைத்

திரட்டினோம். இப்பொழுது வீடமைப்புப் பணிகள் நடைபெற்று வருகின்றன.

இந்தப் பணிகளை மேற்கொள்வதற்காக ஒரு பொறியியலாளர், இரண்டு தொழில்நுட்ப வியலாளர்கள், 10 கொத்தனார்கள் கொண்ட குழுவொன்று அமைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. திருகோணமலை நலன்புரிச் சங்கச் செயலாளர் திரு இ. கைலைவாசன் இணைப்பாளராகப் பணிபுரிகின்றார். திருகோணமலை மாவட்ட நாடாளுமன்ற உறுப்பினர் க. துரைரத்தினசிங்கம், கிழக்கு மாகாண மறுவாழ்வு அமைச்சர் சி. தண்டாயுதபாணி ஆகியோர் இக்குழுவின் மதியுரைஞர்களாகச் செயற்பட்டு வருகின்றனர். வீடமைப்புத் திட்டத் தொடக்கவிழா 2015.11.09 அன்று நடைபெற்றது. வீடமைப்புப் பணிகள் தொடர்ந்து நடைபெற்றுவருகின்றன. இது தொடர்பான படங்களை இங்கே காணலாம். இத்திட்டத்தை 2015 மார்ச்சு 31 ஆம் நாளுக்கு முன் முடிக்கத் திட்டமிட்டு இருந்தோம். எனினும் வழமைக்கு மாறாகப் பெய்துவரும் கடும்காரணமாகத் திட்டமிட்டவாறு முடிக்க இயலவில்லை. எவ்வாறாயினும், இப்பணிகளை மிகவிரைவில் முடித்து விடலாமென நம்புகிறோம்.



சம்பூர் பகுதியில் இன்னும் 237 ஏக்கர் நிலப்பரப்பு இலங்கைக் கடற்படையின் கட்டுப்பாட்டில் உள்ளது. இந்த இடத்தில் வசித்து வந்த 621 குடும்பங்கள் தொடர்ந்தும் முகாங்களில் வாழ்ந்து வருகின்றன. கடற்படைத் தளத்தை வேறு இடத்திற்கு மாற்றும் நடவடிக்கைகள் மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்டு வருகின்றன. விரைவில் மேற்படி குடும்பங்கள் குடியேற ஒப்புதல் வழங்கப்படும். இவர்களிலும் பல கைம்பெண்கள் உள்ளனர். இவர்களுக்கும் வீடமைப்பு உள்ளிட்ட பல்வேறு உதவிகள் செய்ய வேண்டிய கடப்பாடு எமக்கு உண்டு.

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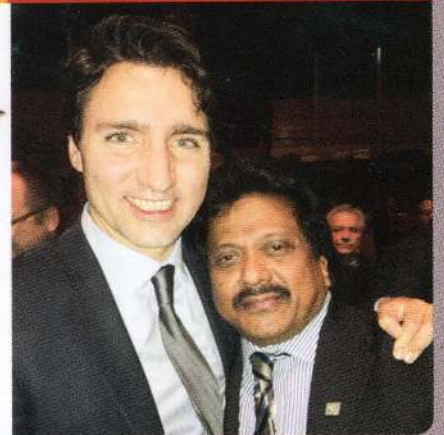
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Tamil Fest 2015

Lebara's Tamil Fest, Powered by Ideal Developments and hosted by the Canadian Tamil Congress, was a historic event. This highly talked about street festival was held on the last weekend of August on Morningside Avenue between Neilson Road and Finch Avenue.

According to City officials, over 100 000 were estimated to be in attendance. These numbers officially break any previous attendance records anywhere for any first year street festival held in Ontario.

During the Festival's press launch, Mayor John Tory eloquently stated that this festival was a "natural evolution for the Canadian Tamil community." A festival of this nature had never been seen on any Western state's streets. Tamil is spoken by close to 1% of the world's population and a street festival dedicated to the Tamil culture was integral for raising the community's profile and showcasing its ancient history. Other communities within the Greater Toronto Area have long-standing traditions of showcasing and highlighting their unique stories through the platform of street festivals. A few popular examples include the Taste of Danforth, Little Italy Festival and the Portuguese Fest.

The large numbers in attendance made Tamil Fest the largest Canadian Tamil event in the community's history. Many who were present commented that Tamil Fest invoked feelings of being present at Northeast Sri Lankan Chariot Festivals (Ther Thiruvila).

The festival had two stages that continuously drew large audiences including a mobile stage and the popular red-carpeted street level performance stage. Traditional Tamil dances including classical dance, Kolattam, Karagattam, Kummi, Poikkal Kuthirai Aattam (False Horse Dance), Villu Pattu, Theru Koothu, Peacock dance, Silampattam, Thappu were featured with during the opening ceremonies and during the duration of the Festival.

Some of the most anticipated programs included local popular artists from Agnic, Miruthanga Sheshthiram, Bharradhi Arts, Super Sons and Basement Crew. Dance performances by students of Gaana Groove, Prima Dance Group, Starz Dance Group, Aizen Academy Dance and Niro Dance Creations.



**Prashanth
Srichandramohan**

Prashanth Srichandramohan is the manager for Tamil Fest 2015 and the past chair of the Canadian Tamil Professional Association.

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The festival engaged over eighty local vendors selling various products and services. A popular attraction was the many food vendors selling traditional Sri Lankan ice cream, savouries and sweets. To keep children entertained, a fully mechanical amusement ride section was also present, drawing thousands of children.

created. Engaging over one hundred youth volunteers and future leaders, working with the local community and businesses, highlighting our local talent and working with City Officials - all with the vision to raise the profile and the amazing accomplishments and unique attributes of the Canadian Tamil community.

One of the most important features of the Festival was the Canadian Tamil Mobile Museum chronicling the community's unique story for the last 50 years. This museum chronicled an evolving story, one that talked about the amazing accomplishments of a growing and thriving community.

Tamil Fest started with the goal of becoming a platform to raise awareness, to showcase talent and highlight our community's unique story. It is up to all of us now, to nurture this excitement and collectively build towards its successful future.

As Festival Manager, the most rewarding part was the community engagement vehicle this festival

A time will come, not too far from now, where over one million attendees at Tamil Fest will be the norm.





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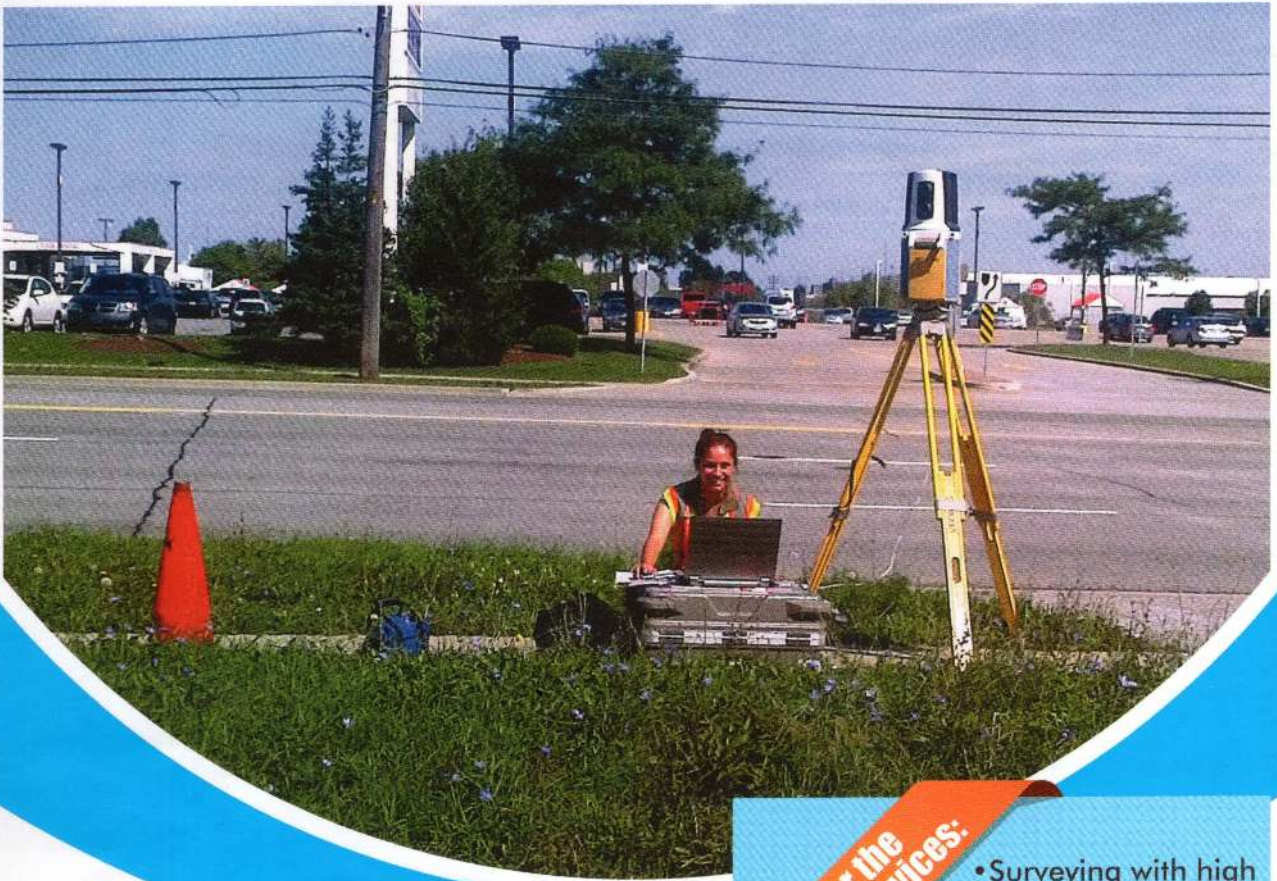
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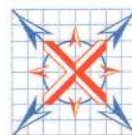
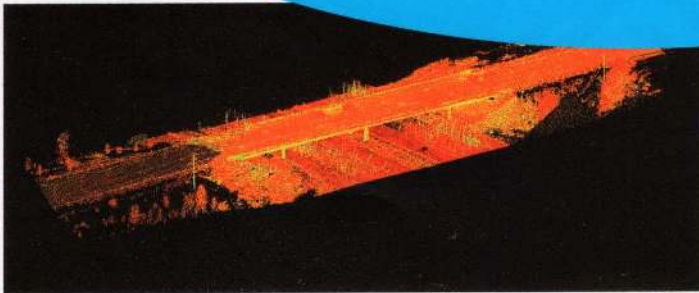
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Sex Education is About Much More Than Sex

Nothing is more important than a child's health and safety. In 2015, Ontario's sex education curriculum became a topic of discussion in Ontario politics as parents, educators and policy makers debated the changes introduced to the curriculum. But sex education is not about the act of learning intercourse. Sexual education is part of learning about healthy lifestyle choices and various issues surrounding topics such as mental health, smoking, alcohol consumption, pregnancy and other issues relevant for children.

Many Tamil parents, and parents of all backgrounds, have difficulty in directly speaking about the topic of sex with their children. Hence, it becomes the schools' responsibility to appropriately educate students. The reality is that in the current world, children are exposed to more sexual topics at a younger age than ever before, due in part to the digitization of information. The Ontario Sexual Education Curriculum was last updated in 1998, the same year Bill Clinton denied having "sexual relations" with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Many notable technological advancement were made in 1998 such as the founding of Google, the release of Microsoft's Windows 98 version and the unveiling of Apple's iMac. Since then we have seen the rise and fall of the dot com bubble and the advent of smartphones, and social media has become a huge part of daily life. This has cultivated new ways for information to be shared and retrieved. Children will either learn about sex from unfiltered sources that may be harmful to their psyche or learn directly from a safe source such as a loving parent or an informed teacher.

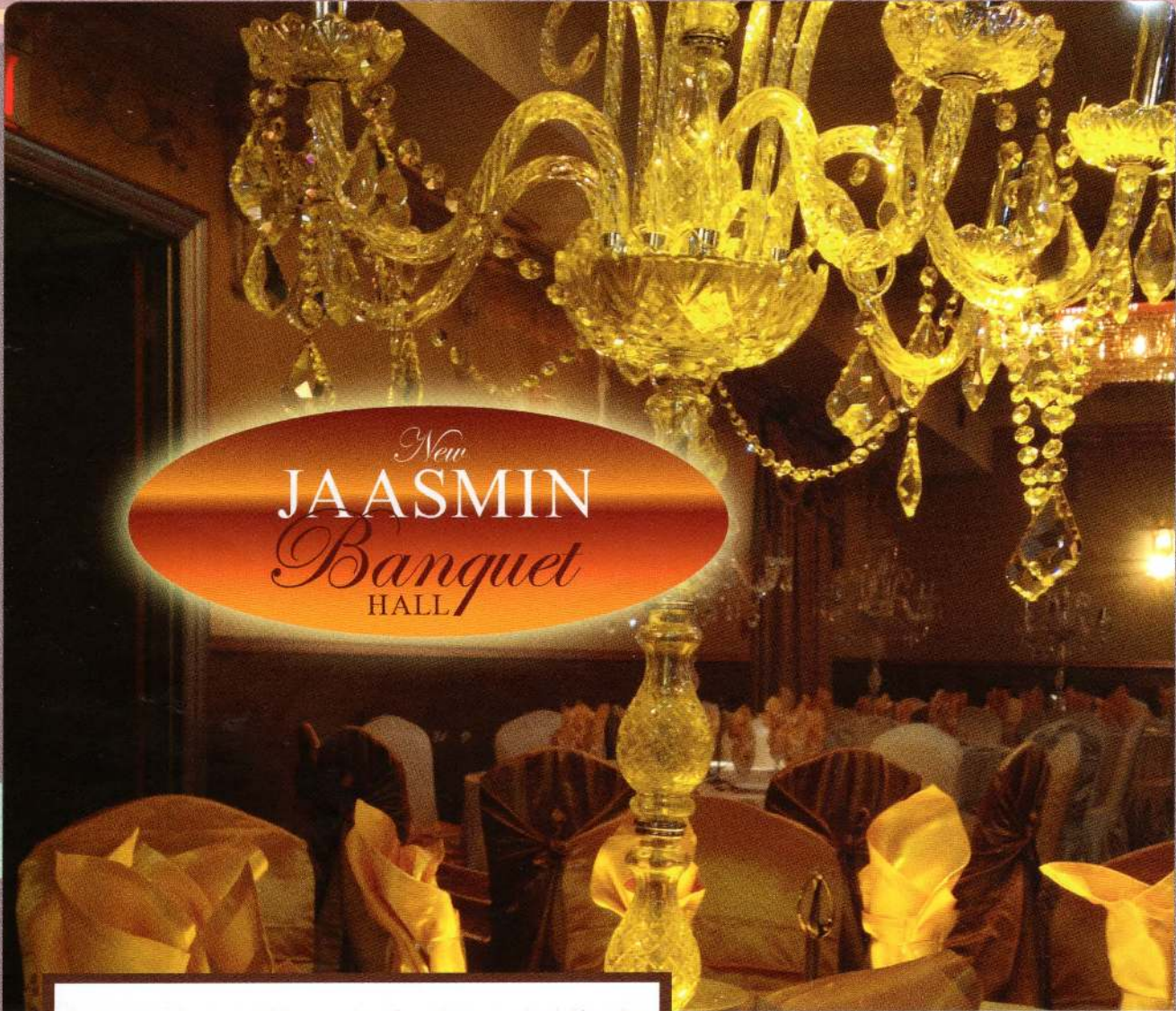


Rukshan Para

Profession by Banking Consultant who has been actively working with kids and parents for more than 10 years in Markham. He is an active member of various non-for profit organization in Markham, including Youth & Parents Association of Markham. On his free time he enjoys hockey.

This is the first time in seventeen years that the Ontario curriculum in Physical & Health education has been updated. This topic is not new; former Premier Dalton McGuinty proposed a similar policy in 2010. However, due to strong opposition from community and religious groups, Premier McGuinty temporarily shelved the policy, and its current form was introduced by the new government.

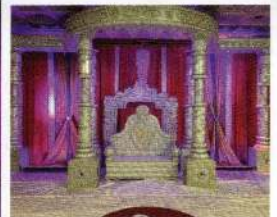
Now, in Grade 1, students will learn about anatomy, personal hygiene (e.g. hand washing), and how to interact respectfully with their peers, along with the proper names for body parts. Young children need to be able to identify the correct names for their body parts in order to communicate clearly and get help if needed in case of abuse, illness or injury. They start to learn about ex-



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pressing their romantic feelings in Grade 5, and only start to learn about sex in Grade 7. While the concept of masturbation is included in Grade 6 curriculum, it is only mentioned in an optional prompt. It is there to support teachers in responding to student questions that may arise. Teachers have repeatedly stated that students often ask questions on this topic, and they need guidance on how to answer in a factual and consistent manner. This is no mandatory learning expectation.

In Grade 7, the curriculum expects students to identify ways of preventing STIs and/or unintended pregnancy. It talks about delaying intercourse and other sexual activities until a person is older, and using condoms consistently if, and when, they become sexually active. Oral and anal sex are included as topics for discussion to ensure all students are aware of the risks associated with any form of sexual behaviour.

It is certainly important to understand the religious concerns and how different cultures are comfortable teaching children about sex. For example, some Catholic belief systems advise against the use of contraceptive devices and birth control. Yet Catholic school teachers are expected to teach this to their students. How different cultures treat sexuality has not been taken into consideration. It is important to have adequate consultation with different cultural groups. However, the new curriculum content reflects Ontario's diversity, and teaches students to appreciate and respect the visible and invisible differences between people. Regardless of race, gender, religion or sexual orientation, all students have the right to a safe and positive learning environment. It is worrying to note that a Canadian survey reported that almost two thirds of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students, and 61% of students with LGBT parents reported feeling unsafe at their high school.

Some people think that the new curriculum will make children more prone to having sex. In fact it is exactly the opposite. Research conducted by the World Health Organization and the United Nations looking at data from jurisdictions around

the world shows that when young people are provided with a comprehensive sexual health education program they are more likely to wait longer before—and be safer when—becoming sexually active. While Ontario's teen pregnancy rate decreased by more than 50% between 1995 and 2005, a study involving students in Grades 9 and 10 found that 22% of students admitted to having had sexual intercourse by that age. Further, Public Health Agency of Canada data show that rates of chlamydia and gonorrhoea have been increasing since the late 1990s and mostly affect teenagers and young adults. From 2002 to 2011 in Ontario, the chlamydia rate has increased by 81% while the gonorrhoea rate has increased by more than 20%. Additionally, in Ontario, 46% of girls in secondary school have reported to being at the receiving end of unwanted sexual comments or gestures. Furthermore, 27% of girls in Grades 9-11 reported to have been pressured into doing something sexual that they did not want to do. A strong sexual education curriculum should encompass and teach students about issues of consent and sexual harassment and assault—a very important topic for both young girls and boys.

This curriculum will not replace the role of parents in educating their children on sexuality and sexual health, but rather will supplement it. Ontario's education system is built on parents and schools working together for the betterment of their students. Parents play an integral role in their children's education, especially in educating children on sexuality and sexual health. Schools address these topics to ensure all students have access to factual, accurate information about their health and well-being. Parents are responsible for sharing their values, morals, cultural and religious beliefs with their children.



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தமிழ் மரபுத் திங்கள்

தை பிறந்தால் வழி பிறக்கும் என்பது நம் முன்னோர் வாக்கு. தை பிறந்தால் கனடாத் தமிழர் நெஞ்சில் பெருமிதமும் பிறக்கும். உலகின் பலநாடுகளில் தமிழர் வாழ்கின்றார்கள், எனினும், தைத்திங்களைத் தமிழ் மரபுத் திங்களாகக் கொண்டுவந்த பெருமை கனடா வாழ்த் தமிழரைத் தானே சாரும்.

தைத்திங்கள் தமிழருக்கு மிகவும் உன்னதமான திங்களாகும். தைத்திங்களில் இடம்பெறும் தைப்பொங்கல் உலகெங்கும் வாழும் தமிழர் அனைவராலும் பரவலாக எவ்வித பேதமும் இன்றி கொண்டாடப்படும் விழா. உழவர்கள் ஆடியில் தேடி விதைத்த விதை தையில் அறுவடையாகின்றது. தமது விளைச்சலுக்கு உதவிய கதிரவனுக்கும், கால் நடைகளுக்கு நன்றி செலுத்தும் பொருட்டு உழவர்கள் தைப்பொங்கலைக் கொண்டாடுகின்றார்கள். உலக சுழற்சிக்கு கதிரவனதும், உழவரதும் இன்றியமையாமையை உணர்ந்த ஏனைய தமிழரும் நன்றி செலுத்தும் பொருட்டுத் தைப்பொங்கலைக் கொண்டாடுகின்றார்கள்.



Raj Gunaratnam

Raj Gunaratnam is a Computer Science graduate from University of Toronto Scarborough Campus and currently works as Device Realization Team Lead at Telus. He is a Board of Director of Canadian Tamil Congress.

இத்தைப்பொங்கல் கொண்டாட்ட மரபு இன்று நேற்றுத் தொடங்கியது அல்ல, தொன்று தொட்டு கொண்டாடப்பட்டு வருகின்றது. சங்க காலத்திலேயே தைத்திங்கள் சிறப்பான திங்களாகக் கருதப்பட்டு வந்த செய்திகள் நிறையவே சங்ககால இலக்கியங்களில் இருக்கின்றன. 'பொங்கல் பண்டிகையானது ஐந்து நாட்களாக நடைபெறும் வழக்கம் உண்டு. தைத்திங்கள் தொடங்க முன் பழையன போக்கி போகிப் பொங்கல் அடுத்த நாள் கதிரவனுக்கும் உழவருக்கு நன்றி செலுத்தக் கொண்டாடும் பெரும்பொங்கல், அடுத்த நாள் உழவுக்கு உதவி புரிந்த கால்நடைகளை மகிழ்வித்து நன்றி செலுத்தும் பட்டிப் பொங்கல். இதுவே திருவள்ளூர் நாளாகவும் கொண்டாடப்படுகின்றது. அதற்கு அடுத்த நாள் பல்வேறு போட்டிகளோடு, உற்றார் உறவினரை உறவைக் கொண்டாடும் காணும் போங்கல். அடுத்தநாள் சிறுவர் மகிழ்ச்சியைக் ஊக்குவிக்கும் சிற்றில் பொங்கல். இன்றைய எந்திர உலகில் பண்டிகைகள் அனைத்தும் காலத்தால் குறுகி விட்டான. இன்று பொங்கலும் ஓரிரண்டு நாள் கொண்டாட்டமாகக் குறுகிவிட்டது.

தைத்திங்களானது தமிழர் வாழ்வில் நம்பிக்கையூட்டும் திங்களாகவும், நன்றி செலுத்தும் திங்களாகவும், தமிழர் கலை, பண்பாடுகளைக் கொண்டாடும் திங்களாகவும், எதிர்காலச் சந்ததிக்கும் எமது மரபுகளை புகுத்தும் திங்களாகவும் திகழ்கிறது. அத்தோடு, 1921 ஆம் ஆண்டு, தமிழ்க்கடல் தவத்திரு மறைமலையடிகள் தலைமையில் 500 தமிழ் அறிஞர்கள் கலந்துகொண்ட

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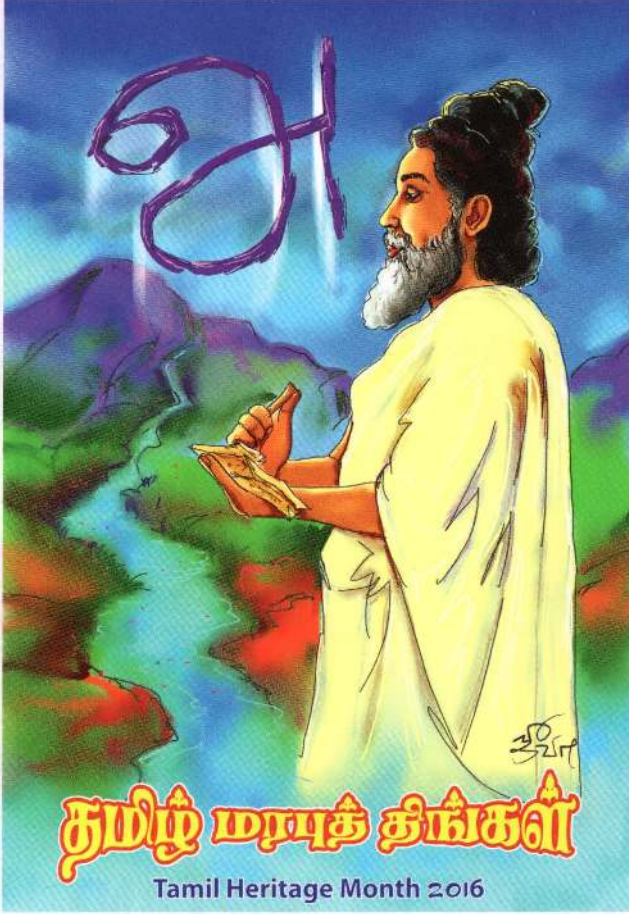
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விழாவில் திருவள்ளூர் பெயரில் தமிழாண்டைப் பின்பற்றுவது என்றும் திருவள்ளூர் ஆண்டைத் தைத்திங்களிலேயே தொடங்குவது என்றும் முடிவு எடுக்கப்பட்டது. எல்லாத் திங்கள்களும் சிறப்பான திங்கள் தான் என்றாலும், தமிழ் மரபைக் கொண்டாடச் சிறந்த திங்கள் தைத்திங்களே.

தமிழ் மரபுத் திங்களானது தமிழ் மொழியின் இலக்கண, இலக்கிய மேன்மையைக் கொண்டாடவும் தமிழர் மரபுகள், கலைகள், மற்றும் பண்பாடுகளைக் கொண்டாடவும் தமிழர் மற்றும் தமிழரல்லாதவர், தமிழ் மொழியைக் தமிழர் மரபு, மற்றும் வரலாற்றைப் பற்றி அறியச் செய்யவும் கற்பதற்கு வழி செய்யவும் தமிழர் நிகழ்த்திய சாதனைகளைச் சிறப்பிக்கவும் உலக அரங்கில் தமிழரை வளர்ச்சிக்கும் மேன்மைக்கும் அணியமாக்கவும் வேண்டுமென்ற நோக்கோடு 2010ஆம் ஆண்டு முதல் கனடாவின் பல்வேறு நகரங்களில் கொண்டாடப்பட்டு வருகின்றது. இன்று பலமட்ட அரசுகளாலும், அமைப்புகளாலும் ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளப்பட்டு ஆறாவது ஆண்டில்

அடியெடுத்து வைத்துள்ளது.

இதுவரை,

மார்க்கம் மற்றும் பிக்கரிங் நகர்கள் 2012 ஆம் ஆண்டும் ஏஜாக்ஸ், விற்பி, மற்றும் ஓசாவா நகர்கள் 2013 ஆம் ஆண்டும் ஒன்ராறியோ மாகாணம் ஒட்டாவா நகர் 2014 ஆம் ஆண்டும் ரோறன்ரோ மற்றும் கோர்ன்வால் நகர்கள் 2015 ஆம் ஆண்டும் இந்த ஆண்டு (2016) ஸ்ரோவில் நகரும் தமிழ் மரபுத் திங்களை ஏற்றுக்கொண்டுள்ளன.

மெல்லத் தமிழ் இனிச் சாகும்
மேற்கு மொழிகள் புவி மிசை ஓங்கும்
என்றந்தப் பேதை உரைத்தான் - ஆ
இந்த வசை எனக்கு எய்திடலாமோ?

என்று தமிழ்த் தாயின் முறைப்பாட்டைப் பார-
தியார் கூறியுள்ளார். தமிழ்த் தாய்க்கு இந்நிலை
வந்து சேர விடலாமா? இது பேதையின் உரையாக
வேண்டாமா?

தேவநேயப்பாவாணர் கூறியது போல, தொன்மை,
முன்மை, நுண்மை, திண்மை, எண்மை, ஒண்மை,
இனிமை, தனிமை, இளமை, வளமை, தாய்மை,
தூய்மை, மும்மை, செம்மை, இயன்மை, வியன்மை
என செம்மொழிக்கான அனைத்துத் தகுதிகளும்
கொண்ட மொழி எமது தாய் மொழியான தமிழ்
மொழி. இற்றைக்கு இரண்டாயிரம்
ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன் தமிழ் மொழிக்கு
மட்டுமல்லாது தமிழர் வாழ்வியலுக்கும் இலக்கணம்
தொகுத்த நூலான ஒல்கப் புகழ் தொல்காப்பியம்
கொண்ட மொழி.

முப்பாலும் திரட்டி குறுகத்
தறித்து காலம் கடந்தும் நிற்கும் திருக்குறள் தந்த
மொழி, தமிழர் பண்பாட்டின்
பெட்டகமாகத் திகழும் சிலப்பதிகாரத்தால் தமிழ்
அரசுகளை இணைத்த மொழி, கவிக்கோ
கம்பரால் இராமாயணத்தைச் சிறப்பித்த
மொழி, வீரத்தைக் கூற புறநானூறும், காதலைக்
கூற அகநானூறும், இனியவை நாற்பதும், இன்னா
நாற்பதும் இன்னும் பலவும் கொண்ட மொழி.
இத்தகை பெருமை வாய்ந்த எம் தாய் மொழியின்
மேன்மையை, தமிழர் கலைகளை, பண்பாட்டை,
வரலாற்றை, வாழ்வியலை கொண்டாட கிடைத்த
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Canadian Landmark cases involving Tamil in Sri Lanka

In the past year, two very important decisions relating to Sri Lankan Tamils were decided by the Highest Court in Canada, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC). B010¹ and Kanthasamy² are landmark cases in Immigration and Refugee law.

The case of B010 v. Canada analyzes circumstances in which an individual can be found inadmissible to Canada in the context of "human smuggling". Human smuggling, in the traditional sense, is considered to be organized criminality. Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), Section 37(1)(b) states:

37 (1) A permanent resident or a foreign national is inadmissible on grounds of organized criminality for

(b) engaging, in the context of transnational crime, in activities such as people smuggling, trafficking in persons or laundering of money or other proceeds of crime.³

The Minister argued that this section of the IRPA should be interpreted broadly, thereby including anyone who assisted a person to enter a country illegally. The foreign nationals, who made refugee claims upon arriving, argued that the section should be narrowly interpreted.

Chief Justice McLachlin, on behalf of the SCC, clarified this matter, stating that based on historical research and international law "[a] migrant who aids in his own illegal entry or the illegal entry of other refugees or asylum-seekers in their collective flight to safety is not inadmissible under s. 37(1)(b)".⁴ In this case, Sri Lankan Tamils and Cubans who took leadership roles on their respective boats and assisted in the travels of all the refugees, including themselves, were not found to have engaged in organized criminal smuggling, since their active roles on the boats were in the course of their collective flight to safety.

The Kanthasamy case is and will be influential on all applications for permanent residency based on humanitarian and compassion-

1 B010 v. Canada (Citizenship and Immigration), 2015 SCC 58

2 Kanthasamy v. Canada (Citizenship and Immigration), 2015 SCC 61

3 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, S.C. 2001, c.27, s. 37

4 B010, Supra note 1, at para 76



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Dushahi Sriavan is an experienced immigration and wills and power of attorney lawyer in Toronto. She is an active member in the community and believes in being the voice for those unheard.

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ate considerations. This case analyzes how officers assess “unusual and underserved” or “disproportionate” hardship for relief. The SCC found that in *Kanthisamy*, the Officer limited her analysis of the hardship the Applicant would face if returned to Sri Lanka.

Jeyakannan Kanthisamy arrived in Canada at the age of 16, a minor, from Sri Lanka in April 2010 after being detained and questioned by the Sri Lankan army and police. Based on his fear for his safety, his family sent him to live with his uncle in Canada where he made a refugee claim. A psychological report revealed that he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression originating from his experiences in Sri Lanka, and further revealed that his mental health would worsen if returned to Sri Lanka.

Writing for the majority, Justice Abella stated that officers must consider and weigh all relevant facts and factors in determining if an applicant’s circumstances warrant humanitarian and compassionate relief. The SCC went further and indicated that the manual is a guideline and the descriptors “unusual and undeserved or disproportionate hardship” should be treated as only a guideline. The SCC stated that an officer should “consider and give weight to all relevant humanitarian and com-

passionate consideration in a particular case”⁵.

The court found that the officer did not reasonably assess Jeyakannan’s circumstances when she failed to take factors like his age, mental health, and the treatment he will receive if returned to Sri Lanka into consideration. The Guidelines indicate that the best interest of a child must be considered. In this case, Jeyakannan was the child “directly affected” and his own experiences should be considered in determining that he would continue to suffer hardship if returned to Sri Lanka. [C]hildren may experience greater hardship than adults faced with a comparable situation, circumstances which may not warrant humanitarian and compassionate relief when applied to an adult, may nonetheless entitle a child to relief⁶ (emphasis added).

Both cases have drastically changed the way officers and members of the immigration bar interpret the applicable sections of the IRPA. The tests that will be applied in these situations will be assessed differently, properly, and in accordance with jurisprudence summarized above, which recognize the importance of analyzing a case on its particular facts and individual factors.

⁵ *Kanthisamy*, *Supra* note 2, at para 33

⁶ *Ibid*, at para 41

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Tamil Studies in North America

The establishment of Tamil Studies programs in North America is at a critical juncture. With the largest Tamil population outside of South Asia, the Greater Toronto Area should be at the center of that movement.

The first Tamil Chair in North America was established at U.C. Berkeley, in 1997, through the extensive fundraising efforts of local Tamil communities. Almost two decades later, it remains the only university in North America to house a Chair in Tamil Studies. That could change with the announcement of a proposed Tamil Chair at Harvard University. Making this proposal a reality requires the community to raise sufficient funds.

There is some momentum to enhance the Tamil Studies programming across North America. However Toronto—home to the largest Tamil Diaspora, with a significant number of Tamil undergraduate and graduate students attending its three major universities—we have collectively failed to establish a comprehensive Tamil Studies program. This includes both linguistic and interdisciplinary substantive courses.

This is not a result of lack of effort on the part of the Tamil community to establish such programming. As a result of advocacy efforts, Tamil instructional language courses have been offered at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus and York University at times. In addition, Seneca College is now offering a beginner Tamil language course. Courses in Tamil Studies that examine history, culture, and Diaspora have also been offered by University of Toronto St. George campus in the past, and are currently offered at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. These courses, when offered, attract significant student interest and enrollment of both Tamil and non-Tamil students.

In addition to course offerings, since 2006, Toronto has also been host to the annual Tamil Studies Conference, held at the University of Toronto. The Tamil Studies Conference attracts academics, artists, writers and poets from across the globe to exchange ideas and share their research in Tamil Studies. In 2015, York University held its first Tamil Studies Symposium and planning is underway for the second Symposium to be held in May 2016. Also in 2015, York University established, the first graduate award in Tamil Studies



Harini Sivalingam

Harini Sivalingam is a PhD Student in Socio-Legal Studies at York University, and a Graduate Associate at the York Center for Asian Research.



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in Canada, with an endowment from my family with matching funds from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, in memory of my late father, Nagaratnam Sivalingam as well as the launch of the first annual N. Sivalingam Memorial Lecture in Tamil Studies.

Through its Tamil Studies programming, spear-headed by Arun Nedra Rodrigo, York University has made plans to establish Tamil Resources @ York (TR@Y), on the sixth floor of the Kaneff tower. TR@Y is intended to hold collections of Tamil research and archival materials, beginning with donations of private collections. It will be a resource made available through the YCAR hub for community and high school research projects as well as graduate and undergraduate research. TR@Y is also currently engaged in a partnership project with the Markham Public Libraries to house a special Tamil collection at the South East branch.

These are promising endeavors that show a commitment to Tamil Studies and academic and research based programming at the post-secondary level. While individual undergraduate course offerings are a significant step, the Tamil community in Toronto should strive to achieve a comprehensive Tamil Studies program that offers a wide range of interdisciplinary undergraduate, and graduate course offerings, both linguistic and substantive, as well as opportunities, support and spaces for graduate research and supervision. This of course requires core funding from the universities, and significant fundraising support from the Tamil community.

At a time when Area Studies in general at universities are under threat, it is critical that the Tamil community come together to advocate, promote and fund a substantive and comprehensive Tamil studies program at the university level. With proclamations for Tamil Heritage Month in the month of January being made in several cities across Canada, it is imperative that we, as a community, move forward to ensure that there is sustainable Tamil Studies programming at the post-secondary level available for future generations of Tamil scholars, academics, artists and activists.

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Celebrating Canadian Kindness in Newfoundland

On August 11, 1986, Tamil-Canadian history became intertwined with that of the generous people of St. Mary's Bay, of the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland.

Over 150 Tamil men, women and children, all refugees from Sri Lanka, got onto a Merchant Vessel, the Regina Maris, with hopes and aspirations to make a new life in Canada. They're dreams were not unique – thousands of boats have set sail in search of Canada before. Unique though is that they attempted to do this in 1986, one of the first times since the end of World War II.

The passengers were ill prepared. After being at sea for several weeks, they were asked to get off the Regina Maris on August 9, 1986, onto two 35 foot life boats. Everyone on board were given an insufficient ration of bread, water, blankets, life jackets, and a compass – and were told that they were very close to Canada. These men and women, knowing very little about the Ocean headed on the last leg of their voyage to Canada.

They were not prepared for what laid ahead of them.

They were at sea for 3 days, and were running out of food, there were no basic facilities, and they all feared for their lives. Some even thought about committing suicide. They were desperate, the only thing they could do was pray – and hope that someone would find them – before the overcrowded life boats ran out of gas or even worse, sink.

On the afternoon of August 11, 1986, Captain Gus Dalton and his crew were raking in their nets filled with a stellar catch. Fisherman typically worked several weeks out of the year. Their entire annual income came from these several weeks of work. The annualized incomes of fishermen were amongst the lowest in the country. They would go out and place fishing nets. Several days later, they would return to pick them up.

Little did Captain Gus realize that fate had a different catch in mind this time...

On August 11th, the Atlantic Reaper was almost full of fish, and they were about to return to their home in St. Mary's Bay when



Sarujan Kanapathipillai

Sarujan is an IT professional focused on account management and business development. He accumulated his broad experience through Fortune 100 companies. Sarujan earned an Applied Science degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from the University of Waterloo. Sarujan also volunteers with community based organizations including CTC and CFLI.

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Captain Gus spotted the two life boats.

He took the lead, called for backup, and three other fishing boats came to help. They all dumped their catch and got the Tamils onto their boats. They emptied their supply shelves and their beds to make way for those who needed to rest. The Canadian Navy dispatched the Leonard Crawley (for the layman, explain what this is), and soon, these men, women, and children were en route to be settled in Montreal and Toronto.

Gus returned to shore to be welcomed by the RCMP. The Mounties questioned Gus for several hours and then released him. He was also out of supplies, and several thousand dollars in lost revenue. Expenses for which he was never reimbursed.

Gus was certainly not the only person involved in the rescue – there were three other Captains, and a dozen crewmen. On shore, the generous men and women of Newfoundland took in the Tamil refugees into their own homes and gave them shelter.

However, it was Gus' incredible leadership that ensured the safety of the Tamil refugees. Many have observed this rescue to be one of the greatest in recent marine history. A country does not gain an international reputation as a leader – it earns it when leaders like Gus, from communities small and large – demonstrate this quality unassumingly, and with humility. Captain Gus and his Crew espouse the generosity and humility by which the world views Canada. Yet for all the pride

that Canadians ought to have towards Captain Gus and his Crew – none of the crewmen were honoured with an Award from any government.

In 2011, to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the boat landing, CTC organized a dinner to honor Captain Gus and his crew in Newfoundland. The dinner was attended by families of the crewmen, two Tamil survivors of the 1986 boat and their families as well as Senator Fabian Manning. At the CTC Annual Gala in 2012, CTC honored Captain Gus with the Leaders for Change Award.

To commemorate the 30th year anniversary of the boat landing and celebrate the lives of the incredible heroes that saved the Tamil refugees in 1986, CTC will be organizing a multi-day trip to Newfoundland. Join us to celebrate these heroes, show our gratitude, enjoy the feasts and see the beautiful coastlines of Newfoundland.



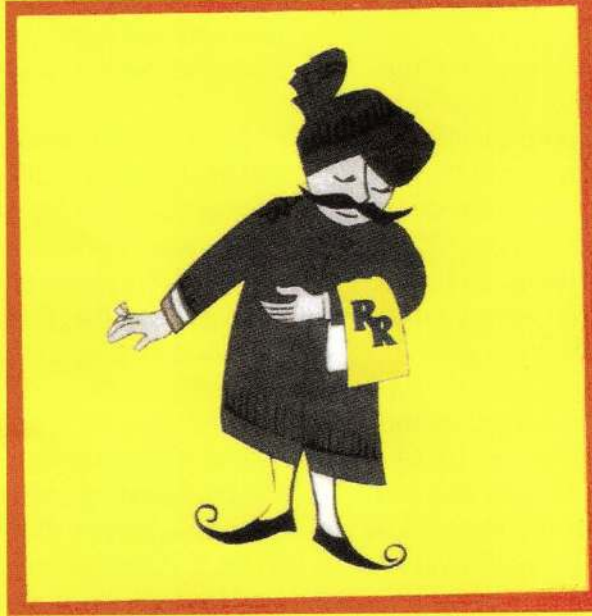
In addition to the celebrations in Newfoundland, the 30th year commemoration will include transcription of the refugee stories, an exhibit, a play, a book and a documentary. To learn more or be involved in organizing the event, please contact us at info@caniantamilcongress.ca

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Why Tamil Heritage?

This past August, just before I stepped onto a plane to Europe for a family wedding, I posted on Facebook the then breaking news that Google had chosen a Tamil guy, Sundararajan Pichai, to become its new CEO. Upon finding free wi-fi in our layover at Heathrow, I was surprised to see how viral the news had become in our community. However, in retrospect, it is easy to understand why it instilled such pride in us to see him take the mantle of leadership of the one of the world's biggest, most valuable and innovative companies in the world. Such feelings were not easy growing up as part of the 2nd generation in the diaspora. As children and youth coming of age in the 90s, depictions of our community in the media were not positive and we didn't see ourselves in the mainstream, while we were taught European history as civilization in our schools.

Thus, it was in this light, that it was a pleasure and a personal privilege for me to pass the motion to recognize January as Tamil Heritage Month at the Toronto District School Board. It may be a surprise, but after English, Tamil is our 2nd biggest language group in the TDSB, with 12,272 students of Tamil Heritage, roughly 5.5% of our total student body. As many of us are aware, Tamil is one of the longest surviving classical languages in the world with a rich literature, history and identity going back over 2000 years. With significant presences in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, we have now planted roots in major cities in the West. The recognition of this month will not only allow students of Tamil Heritage, but provide all students an opportunity to understand Tamil heritage, history, and culture.

For example, our students can learn how brilliant scientists like CV Raman and Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar have been recognized with Nobel prizes for their work in the sciences. Srinivas Ramanujan has been heralded by mathematicians as a phenomenal genius without peer. Vishwanathan Anand reigned as the World Chess Champion from 2007-2013. Near home, we have seen the rise of Kamala Harris, Kamala is the Attorney General of California, with a strong opportunity to become the first U.S. Senator of Tamil heritage in 2016. In Hollywood, comedians Aziz Ansari, and Mindy Kaling, as well as director M Night Shyamalan continue to entertain us. In the music scene, the artist MIA, is renowned for her edgy and ground breaking music. In the business world, Tamil-American Indra Nooyi in 2006 became the 5th CEO in Pepsi's 44 year history



Parthi Kandavel

Parthi Kandavel is a Trustee on the Toronto District School Board. He is a teacher at the Sathya Sai School of Canada and holds a Masters in Education."

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Lastly, when we discuss these layered and multi-faceted ideas such as identity and culture, I am reminded of when former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi addressed the UN Assembly in 1980. She reached back 2000 years ago to quote a couplet from a Tamil poem: Yaadhum Oore, Yaavarum Kelir. Which translates as "To us all towns are one, all people our kin." This I believe captures the right spirit towards these notions of heritage, that each [identity] belongs to all, that we are all informed by each other's culture and thus, stronger for it.

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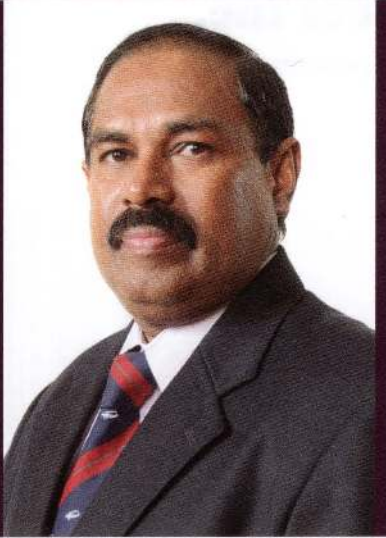
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எம்மிடம் நேரடியாகப் பெற்றுக்கொள்ளலாம்.

கனடாவின் பழங்குடி மக்கள் Indigenous People of Canada

இயற்கை அன்னையை நேசித்து, அதன் இயல்புக்கு ஏற்ப, இசைவாக்கத்தோடு இன்பமாய் வாழ்ந்தவர்கள் கனடாவின் பழங்குடி மக்கள் ஆவர். இன்று பல இன்னல்களைத் தாண்டி, தங்கள் சுதந்திரத்தை இழந்து இயற்கையின் இயல்புகளுக்கு அப்பால் வாழத் தள்ளப்பட்டுள்ளனர். உலகெங்கும் பரந்து வாழும் பூர்வீகக்குடிமக்கள் அனைவரது இன்றைய வாழ்வியல் முறை இதுவாகத்தான் இருப்பதனைக் காண முடிகின்றது. மாந்தர்கள் தோன்றிய ஆப்பிரிக்க கண்டம் முதல் அவுஸ்திரேலியா வரை அனைத்துக் கண்டங்களிலும் வாழுகின்ற பூர்வீகக்குடிகளின் அவல நிலையைப் பல செய்திகள் மூலம் அறியமுடிகின்றது. இவர்களுக்கு ஒரு நல்ல செய்தியை இன்றைய கனடிய லிபரல் அரசு அறிவித்துச் செயல்பட முனைந்துள்ளது. மனித நேயம் கொண்டவர்களால் இந்த முன்னெடுப்பு பெரிதும் வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றது. இந்தச் செயற்பாடு தொடர்ந்தும் ஆரோக்கியமானதாக அமையவேண்டும்.

இந்த மக்கள் யார்? எங்கிருந்து வந்தவர்கள்? இவர்களது வாழ்வியல் பூர்வீக முறை என்ன? என்பதனையும் அறியவேண்டும். முதலில் பழங்குடியினர் என்றால் கனடாவின் வடதுருவ குளிர் பிரதேசங்களில் வசித்த எஸ்கிமோவர் என்று அழைக்கப்பட்டனர். இவர்கள் நதிக்கரைகளிலும், சமவெளிகளிலும் இயற்கையோடு இயைந்து வாழ்ந்த இனக்குழுமங்களாகும். அவர்களனைவரும் முதற்குடி மக்கள்(First Nation) ஆவர். இவர்களில் பனிப்பிரதேசங்களில் வாழ்ந்தவர்கள் இனியூட்(Inuit) என்றும் மற்றவர்களை மெயிற்றிஸ்(Métis) என்றும் அழைப்பர்.

பத்தாயிரம் ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன், ஆதிவாசிகளாகிய, முதற்குடிகள் (First Nation) ஒன்றாயினாலும், பிரிட்டிஷ் கொலம்பியாவிலும் அதிகமாக வாழ்ந்து வந்தனர். இவர்களுள் அதிகமானவர்கள் தங்களுக்குரிய கலாசார விழுமியங்களானும், அவர்களது மொழி வளத்துடனும், பண்பாட்டுடனும் அவர்களது சொந்த இறை வழிபாட்டையும் கொண்டு வாழ்ந்து வந்துள்ளமை வரலாறாகும். இவர்களது வாழ்க்கை துன்பம் நிறைந்ததாக இருந்த போதிலும் திடகாத்திரமான வாழ்வினை வாழ்ந்துகொண்டு இருந்தனர். இவர்களது வாழ்வியல் இயற்கையோடு இயைந்து அதன் வளத்தினை மாசுபடுத்தா வண்ணமும், விலங்குகளையோ அல்லது வனத்தையோ முற்றாக அழித்தொழிக்கா வண்ணமும், ஒரு கட்டுக்கோப்பான முறையில் வாழ்ந்து வந்தார்கள் என்பதனை வரலாறு பகர்கின்றது. இவர்களுடைய வாழ்வியலுக்கு ஆதாரமாக வேட்டையாடுதல், மீன்பிடித்தல், சிறு தானிய விவசாயத்தினையும் கொண்டதாக இருந்தது. காலத்துக்குக் காலம் இவர்கள் மேற்கொண்ட இடமாற்றங்கள், உணவின் பொருட்டே அமைந்திருந்தது. உணவுகள் கிடைக்கும் இடங்களைப் பொறுத்து இடமாற்றங்கள் நடைபெற்றன. உணவைத் தேடிய பயணங்கள் ஒரு புனித வளையமாகவே கருதப்பட்டது.



சிவா வேலுப்பிள்ளை

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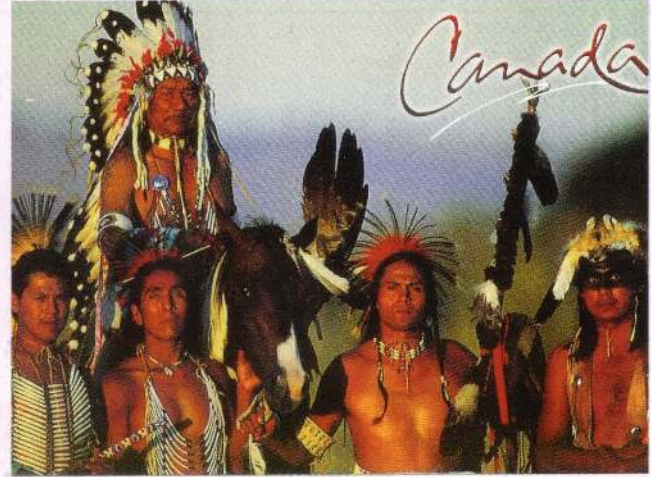
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இவர்களது வாழ்வாதாரத்திற்குத் தேவையானவற்றை வாழ்விடச் சூழலின் மூலமே பெற்றனர். இவர்களின் ஒவ்வொரு கூட்டுக் குழுக்களுக்கும் (Band) தனித்தனியான வீடுகள் அமைக்கும் முறை, பாவனைப் பொருட்கள், ஆயுதக்கருவிகள், சமயச் சடங்குகள் என்று ஒவ்வொன்றுமே மற்றைய குழுமங்களிடமிருந்து வேறுபட்டிருந்தன. இயற்கை மூலிகைகளையே மருந்தாகப் பாவித்தனர். இன்று கனடியர்களின் பாவனையிலுள்ள மருந்துகள் சில இவர்களிடமிருந்தே பெறப்பட்டவையாகும். இவர்களது பரம்பரையான வரலாறுகள் அனைத்தும் கதைகளாகவே ஒரு சந்ததியினரிடமிருந்து, இளைய சந்ததியினருக்கு வாய் வழியாகவும் செவி வழியாகவும் பரிமாற்றம் செய்யப்பட்டு வந்துள்ளது. அண்மைக் காலமாக இவர்கள் இவ்வகையான பரம்பரைக்கதைகள் யாவற்றையும் ஒன்று சேர்த்து, புதிய தொழில்நுட்ப வடிவங்களில் ஆவணப் படுத்தப்பட்டு வருகின்றன.

கனேடிய நாடு உலகில் இயற்கை வளம் செழித்த செல்வச் சிறப்புமிக்க நாடுகளில் ஒன்றாகும். இங்குத் தங்கம், செப்பு, காரீயம், மசகு எண்ணெய் போன்ற பல கிடைக்கின்றன. ஐரோப்பியரின் வருகைக்கு முன்னர், இந்த அரிய பொக்கிசங்களின் அருமை பெருமைகள் பற்றிய அறிவு இங்கு வாழ்ந்த முதற் குடிமக்களுக்குப் பெரிய அளவில் தெரிந்திருக்க வாய்ப்பில்லை. கனடிய பழங்குடிமக்கள் அரசியல் அமைப்புச் சட்டத்தில் பின்வரும் வகைகளாக இனங்காணப்படுகின்றனர் இண்டியன்ஸ், இனியூட்ஸ்(Inuit), மெயிற்றிஸ்(Métis). இவர்கள் இனம், மொழி, பண்பாடு, வாழ்வியல், புவியியல் நோக்கில் பல வகைப்பட்டவர்கள். இப் பெரும் பிரிவினில் பல இனக்குழுமங்கள் உள்ளடக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. இவர்கள் மத்தியில் பல மொழிகள் பேசப்படுகின்றன. அவைகள் பற்றிய பட்டியலைக் கனடிய குடிசனத்தொகை இணையத்தில் காணலாம். முதற்குடிமக்களிடையே ஏறத்தாழ அறுபத்திமூன்று வகை இனக் குழுமங்களும் அதேயளவான மொழிகளும் உள்ளன. அவற்றில் சில மொழிகள்தான் அதிகமாக இம் மக்களால் பேசப்படுகின்றது.

அதிகமானவர்களால் பேசப்படுவது Cree, Ojibwe ஆகிய மொழிகளேயாகும். இவ்விரு மொழிகளும் அல்கொன்குவின் (Algonquian Family) குடும்ப மக்களால் பரந்துபட்டுப் பேசப்படுவதாகும். 2011ம் ஆண்டில் நடைபெற்ற சர்வசன வாக்கெடுப்பின் மூலம் முதற்குடியில் அதிகமானவர்கள் 67.8% ஆங்கிலத்தையும், 5.8% பிரெஞ்சு மொழியையும் தாய் மொழியாக வீடுகளில் பேசுகின்றார்கள்.

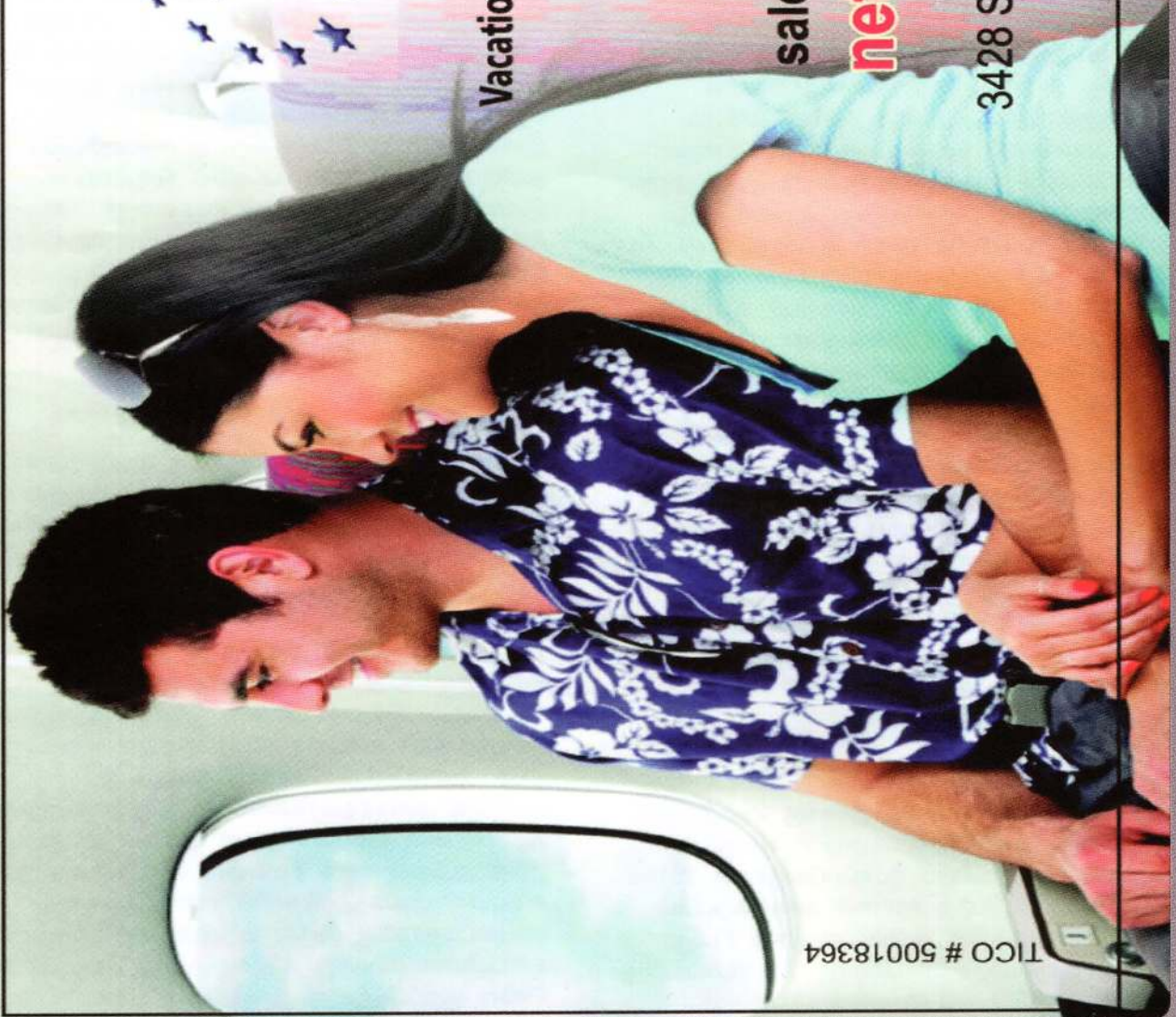


இம்மக்கள் எதிர்கொண்ட சட்ட அடக்குமுறைகள் (Indian Act) பலவாகும். மதமாற்றம், பாரம்பரியமாக நடத்திவரும் நடனமாட தடை, மதுவருந்த தடை, இயந்திரங்களைப் பாவித்து விவசாயம் செய்யத் தடை, மதுக்கடைகளில் முதற்குடி மக்களுக்கு மது விற்கத் தடை, தேர்தலில் வாக்களிக்கத் தடை, வதிவிட பாடசாலைகளில் மத மொழி மாற்றம், இளம் சிறார்கள் பெண்களிடையான பாலியல் துன்புறுத்தல்கள், எனப் பட்டியல் நீளுகின்றது. இதனை அறிகின்ற போது பல் கலாசார மண்ணிலா இந்த நிலை? என்று அருவருக்க தோன்றுகின்றது. இவற்றிற்கு முத்தாய்ப்பாக இப்புதிய லிபரல் அரசு கொண்டுவந்த சட்ட சீர்திருத்தங்களை மேற்கொண்டு பார்ப்போம்.

The Band - 'பான்ட்'

முதற் குடியினரைக் குறிப்பிடும் பொழுது, "பான்ட்" (Band) (பஞ்சாயத்து முறை போன்றது) என்னும் பதம் பாவிக்கப்படுகின்றது. இந்த பான்ட் எனும் பதமானது, முதற் சமூகத்தினை அல்லது ஒரு கூட்டத்தினைக் குறிப்பதாகும்.

இந்த பான்ட் எனும் அமைப்பின் நடைமுறைகளைக் கண் காணிப்பது (Indian Act) என்னும் இந்தியன் சட்டமாகும். இந்த சட்டம்தான், "இந்தியன்" என்றால் யார் என்பதை வரையறுத்துக் கூறுகின்றது. இந்த அமைப்பைக் கொண்டு நடத்துவது முதற்குடி அங்கத்தவர்களால் தேர்ந்தெடுக்கப்படும் ஆலோசனை சபையும் அதன் தலைவரும் ஆகும். இந்த ஆலோசனைச் சபையின் எண்ணிக்கை இச் சபையின் அங்கத்தவர்களின் எண்ணிக்கைக்கு ஏற்புடையதாகவே இருக்கும். இந்த ஆலோசனைச் சபையினை எவ்வாறு உருவாக்குவது என்பதனை மேலே குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள இந்தியன் சட்டமே (Indian Act)



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வரையறுத்துக்கூறும். இந்த பாண்ட் எனும் அமைப்பே இவர்களை ஆளுகின்ற அடிப்படை அரசியல் கூறாகும்.

1820ம் ஆண்டு முதல் முதற்குடியினரின் பிள்ளைகளை மதம் மாற்றவும் அவர்களை தங்களின் நாகரிக நடைமுறைக்கு ஏற்ப மாற்றவும் பல கிறிஸ்தவ தேவாலயங்களையும் கைத்தொழில் பேட்டைகளையும் பல தங்குமிட பாடசாலைகளையும் உருவாக்கினர். பின்னர் முதற்குடிச் சிறுவர்களை வலிந்து இழுத்து வந்து விடுதியில் தங்க வைத்து கல்வி பயிற்றுவித்தனர். இந்தக் காலகட்டத்தில் இப்பாடசாலைச் சிறுவர்கள் பலர் துஷ்பிரயோகத்திற்கு இலக்காகினர் என்பது வரலாறு. இதன் தாக்கத்தினால் இச் சிறுவர்கள் தங்கள் மொழி, கலாசார விழுமியங்கள், இறை வழிபாடு, அவர்களுடைய பாரம்பரிய வாழ்வியல் முறைகளைப் படிப்படியாக இழக்க நிர்பந்திக்கப்பட்டனர்.

1927 ஆம் ஆண்டு கொண்டுவரப்பட்ட அரசியல் சட்டம் ஒன்று இந்த மக்கள் தங்களுக்கென ஒரு அரசியல் அமைப்பினையோ அல்லது ஒரு சமய ஆராதனைக் கூட்டம் ஒன்றினையோ அல்லது அரசின் அனுமதியின்றி, பணமுதலீடுகள் செய்தல் போன்ற கருமங்களையும் தடுத்து நிறுத்தியது. இவ்விதமான தடைகளை விதித்த அரசு முதற்குடி மக்கள் மேற்கொண்ட பலவித போராட்ட முன்னெடுப்புகளின் விளைவாக 1951 ஆம் ஆண்டு இந்த இன மக்கள் கொண்டாடுவதற்குரிய தடைச்சட்டத்தினை நீக்கியது மட்டுமன்றி, 1960 ஆம் ஆண்டு இவர்கள் தேர்தலில் வாக்களிக்கும் உரிமைகளையும் வழங்கியது. இதன் தொடர்ச்சியாக 1982 ஆம் ஆண்டு இம்மக்களின் பூமிக்குரிய உரிமையையும் அதற்குரிய உடன்படிக்கையையும் ஒன்றிணைத்து சட்டப்படி வழங்கியது.

இந்த கிறிஸ்தவ பாடசாலைகளின் நிர்வாகத்தினர் இழைத்த கொடுமைகளையும் பாவச் செயல்களையும் ஒப்புக்கொண்ட றோயல் கொமிசன் அதன் ஆணையின்படி கடைசியாக பிரிட்டிஷ் கொலம்பியாவில் இயங்கிய வதிவிடப் பாடசாலையானது, 1996 ஆம் ஆண்டு மூடப்பட்டதுடன், ஒரு நாகரிகமான உலகம் வெட்கம் அடையக்கூடிய ஒரு பண்டைய அப்பாவி இனத்தின் ஒரு அத்தியாயம் ஒரு நல்ல தீர்வை எட்டியது.

இந்த அப்பாவி மக்களுக்குச் சொந்தமான அசையாச் சொத்துக்களைப் பறித்தெடுப்பதற்காக அவர்கள் மேல் தொடுக்கப்பட்ட கண்ணியமற்ற செயல்கள் பல அதிர்ச்சியூட்டும் விளைவுகளைத் தோற்றுவித்துள்ளன. ஒரு சமூகம் தங்கள் குழந்தைகளை இழந்தது. பலர் மதுவிற்கு அடிமையாக்கப்பட்டனர். ஆயிரக்கணக்கானோர் ஏழைகளாக்கப்பட்டு தங்கள் வாழ்வாதாரங்களையும் இழந்து மாண்டனர். குடும்பங்கள் துண்டாடப்பட்டுச் சிதறடிக்கப்பட்டு, அவர்கள் மொழியையும் கலாசார பண்பாட்டு விழுமியங்களையும் இழந்து நிர்மூலமாக்கப்பட்டனர். இன்று உயிருடன் வாழுகின்ற ஒரு இலட்சத்திற்கும் மேற்பட்டோர் இத்தகைய வதிவிடப்பாடசாலைகளில் பயின்ற காரணத்தால் குற்றமுள்ள மனப்பாங்குடனும் சமூகத்திற்கு முகம் கொடுத்து வாழமுடியாத ஒரு வித தாழ்வு மனப்பாங்குடனும் காணப்படுகின்றனர். மனித நேயமும், மனிதாபிமானமுமான மக்கள் இன்று இவர்களுக்கு ஏற்பட்ட மனக்காயங்களைக் குணப்படுத்தும் நோக்குடன் இயங்கினாலும், இப்பாதிக்கப்பட்ட மக்களைப் பொது மக்களின் நீரோட்டத்தில் இணைத்துக் கொள்வது ஒரு எளிதான காரியம் இல்லை என்றே கருதுகின்றனர்.

இது விடயமாக கனடிய லிபரல் அரசு அண்மையில் வெளியிட்ட அறிக்கையின் சாரம் பின்வருமாறு: டிசம்பர் 16, 2015 அன்று கௌரவ அமைச்சர் கரோலின் பெனட் (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs) மற்றும் கௌரவ அமைச்சரும் சட்டமா அதிபருமான வில்சன் நேவூட் (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) ஆகியோருடன் கௌரவ அமைச்சர் பற்றி ஹஜ்டு (Minister of Status of Woman) அவர்களும் இணைந்து வெளியிட்ட அறிக்கை.

காணாமற்போன பெண்கள், கொலை செய்யப்பட்ட பெண்கள் ஆகியோரின், இன்று உயிர் தப்பி வாழும் அவர்களின் குடும்பத்தினர்களையும் அவர்களின் பாசத்திற்குரியவர் களையும் நாங்கள் நேரில் கண்டு இவர்களின் உறவுகள் எவ்வாறு கொடுமையாகவும் இரக்கமற்ற முறையிலும் கொல்லப்பட்டார்கள்



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என்ற சோகமான துயரக் கதைகளைக் கேட்டு, தலைகுனிந்து நின்றோம். இவ்வாறான கொடுமைகள் மேற்கொண்டு யாருக்கும் நடைபெறா வண்ணம் காப்பதோடு முதற்குடிமக்களின் நல்லெண்ணத்தையும் நல்வாழ்வையும் மீளக்கட்டி எழுப்பும் முகமாக, இக்கொடூர செயலினை ஆராய்ந்து நல்ல இணக்கப்பாட்டினை உருவாக்க ஏற்பாடுகள் செய்துள்ளோம். எங்கள் பணிவான நன்றியறிதலைத் தெரிவித்துக்கொண்டதோடு எங்கள் மன்னிப்பையும் கேட்டுக் கொண்டோம் என்று தெரிவிக்கப்பட்டது. இந்த அறிக்கையைத் தொடர்ந்து டிசம்பர் 18, 2015 அன்று மந்திரிகளான கௌரவ அமைச்சர் கரோலின் பெனட் அவர்கள் முதற் குடிகளின் நிதிவழங்கல் சம்பந்தமான வெளிப்படையான அறிக்கையை வெளியிட்டார். (First Nations Financial Transparency Act).

இதுவரை நடைமுறையில் இருந்துவந்த பாகுபாடான நிதிவழங்கலை நிறுத்திவிட்டு, இடை நிறுத்தி வைக்கப்பட்டிருந்த நிதி வழங்கலைத் தொடருமாறும் அவரது அலுவலகத்தைப் பணித்துள்ளார். அதற்கேற்ப முதற்குடிகளின் நம்பிக்கையையும் நல்லெண்ணத்தையும் பேணி வளர்க்கும் பொருட்டு இந்த வெளிப்படையான நிதிநிலை சட்டத்தின் கீழ் தொடரப்பட்ட அனைத்து வழக்குகளையும் அரசு நிறுத்திவிடும் என்றும் கூறப்பட்டது. எவ்வகையான அரசுகளின் உள்ளூர், மாகாண, மத்திய வகையான அரசு செயற்பாடுகளாயினும் சரி அவை முக்கியமானதாகவும், வெளிப்படைத்தன்மை கொண்டதாகவும் அமைந்திருந்தல் அவசியமாகும். இத்தகையான அரசு செயல்பாட்டினை மூத்தகுடி தலைவர்களும் அமைப்புக்களும் அரசுகளுடன் சேர்ந்து பங்களிக்காளாக செயற்பட்டால் மட்டும் தான் பூரண தீர்வை எட்டமுடியும்.

கனடிய முதற்குடிகளின் உரிமைகளையும் தேவைகளையும் கனடிய அரசியலமைப்புக்கும் சர்வதேச சட்டங்களுக்கும் ஏற்புடையதாக மாற்றி அமைக்க முதற்குடிகளின் தலைவர்கள் மற்றும் சபைகளுடனும் கலந்து பேசி, சட்டத்திருத்தம் செய்து முற்றாக்கி, மற்றைய நீதி நிர்வாக சட்ட அமைச்சர்களுடனும் இணைந்து உறுதியான சட்டத்தினை ஆக்கி நிறைவேற்றும்படி லிபரல்

அரசினால் கேட்கப்பட்டுள்ளேன் என்றும் கூறினார். மக்களுடன் மக்களுக்கான சமத்துவத்தையும், வெளிப்படையானதும் பொறுப்புடையதுமான ஓர் உறவை ஏற்படுத்திக் கொள்வதற்கும் அவர்களின் மனித உரிமைகளையும் மரியாதை, மற்றும் ஒத்துழைப்பு ஆகியவற்றையும் இந்த மூத்தகுடிகளுடன் மேம்படுத்திக் கொள்வதற்கு இந்த ஆரம்ப முயற்சிகள் மிகவும் பயனுள்ளதாக அமையும் எனவும் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது.

டிசம்பர் மாதம் 15, 2015 ஆம் நாள் நடைபெற்ற உண்மை அறியும் மற்றும் நல்லிணக்க சபையின் இறுதி அறிக்கை வெளியிட்டின் போது கனடிய பிரதம மந்திரி ஜஸ்டின் றூடோ அவர்கள் அறிக்கையைப் பெற்றுக்கொண்டு ஆற்றிய உரையின் சாரம் கீழ்க்காணும் விதமாக அமைந்திருந்தது. பழங்குடியினரின், வதிவிடப் பாடசாலைகளின் மூலம் நடைமுறைப்படுத்தப்பட்ட அருவருக்கத்தக்க செயற்பாடுகளால் ஏற்பட்ட கலாசார பாரம்பரிய பாண்பாட்டு மொழி சீரழிப்புகளும் மற்றும் வழிபாடுகளுக்கும் ஏற்பட்ட இழப்புக்களும் பாதிப்புக்களும் கனடிய சரித்திரத்தில் ஒரு இருண்ட அத்தியாயமாகும். அதற்காக கனடிய அரசினதும் மக்களினதும் சார்பாக எங்கள் ஆழ்ந்த வேதனையைத் தெரிவிப்பதோடு மன்னிப்பையும் கேட்டுக்கொள்கின்றேன்.

முன்னைநாள் வதிவிட பாடசாலை மாணவர்கள் அசாத்திய துணிச்சலுடன் தன்முனைப்புடனும் முன்வந்து தங்களது வேதனையான அந்த நாட்களின் சோகக் கதையை சொல்லியதைப் பாராட்டுகின்றேன். நீங்கள் முன்வந்து சொல்லியதனால்தான் கனடிய மக்களுக்கும் இந்த உண்மை புரிந்தது. இந்த நேரம் நல்லதொரு சரியான நேரமாகும், கனேடிய மக்களுக்கும் பழங்குடிகளுக்குமான நட்புப்பாலமாக இச்செயல்பாடுகள் எதிகாலத்தில் அமையும் என எதிர் பார்க்கின்றேன். காணாமல் போன, கொலைசெய்யப்பட்ட பெண்கள், கற்பழிக்கப்பட்ட பெண்கள் பற்றிய விசாரணைகள் தேசிய மட்டத்தில் முன்னெடுக்கப்பட்டு வருகின்றது.

முதற்குடி மக்களுக்கு அரசு சார்பாகவும், ஐக்கிய நாடுகள் சபையின் மனித உரிமைகள் சாசனத்திற்கும் ஏற்ப இந்த விசாரணையின் தீர்ப்புக்கள் சுதந்திரமானவையாகவும் நீதியாகவும் இடம்பெறும் என நம்புகின்றேன் என்றும் கூறினார். எதிர்காலம் கனேடிய பழங்குடி மக்களுக்கு நல்வாழ்வையும் மனமகிழ்ச்சியையும் வழங்கட்டும். இயற்கை அன்னை நல்வாழ்வு அளித்து அரவணைப்பாள் என்று வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவோம்.

CFLI Continues to Make an Impact Developing Leaders of Tomorrow

Leaders aren't born, they are nurtured and developed. This is the driving force behind the Centre for Leadership and Innovation (CFLI), a non-profit organization based in Toronto.

Since its founding less than four years ago, the growth of CFLI has been transformational. CFLI first launched its Youth Leadership Program (YLP) initiative, a public speaking forum for youth aged 10-18, in April 2012, with just 20 members. The response from parents and the youth participants was tremendous. Currently, there are about 200 youth enrolled in this program in 12 different classes. These classes are facilitated by 23 talented, passionate and dedicated volunteers – successful professionals from diverse fields including accounting, actuarial, finance, human resources, information technology, legal, medical and marketing. Thus far, we have collectively invested over 8,000 hours in the development of our youth.

CFLI's vision is to build and promote leadership and innovation amongst Tamil Canadian and other multicultural communities. It provides an inspiring and supportive learning environment that fosters these skills amongst its youth members.

Significant Achievements to date:

- Jul 2012 - First YLP talent showcase event in front of 100 parents and guests.
- Jan 2013 - Youth shared their leadership aspirations with 750 people at the CTC Gala.
- Jul 2013 - Youth Documentary Challenge (YDocs) Gala Event, attended by 225 people.
- Jan 2014 - Members performed a Mandela Tribute at the CTC Gala in front of 950 people.
- Apr 2014 - Members showcased the growth of the Tamil Community in Canada at the CTCC Awards Gala in front of 800 people.
- May 2014 - YLP Milestones end of term event with 250 parents and guests.
- Jul 2014 - Second annual YDocs Gala Event attended by 400 people. Showcased 10 short films, 2 of which were chosen for screening at the Toronto South Asian Film Festival.
- Oct 2014 - Successful launch of "Centre Stage", a forum for adults to hone their public speaking skills.
- Dec 2014 - YLP Milestones end of term event with 350 parents



CFLI Founders

Kumar Ratnam
Sivan Ilangko
Umesh Vallipuram



and guests, in collaboration with York Regional School Board.

- Jan 2015: Members highlighted some aspects of Tamil heritage with 950 people at the CTC Gala.
- Jun 2015: YLP Milestones end of term event with 400 parents and youth.
- Jul 2015: Third annual YDocs Gala Event attended by over 500 people. Showcased 14 short films, 10 of which were chosen for screening at the Toronto South Asian Film Festival.
- Aug 2015: Introduced YRoots program, designed to create awareness of Tamil history and literature among youth.
- Dec 2015: YLP Milestones end of term event with 500 parents and youth.

Performances at Community Events

YLP members were given numerous opportunities to showcase their public speaking skills at community events. Most recently, youth members performed at the 2015 CTC Thai Pongal gala, the South Asian Humanitarian Association dinner, IMHO dinner, Ninaivugal Annual Gala, York Regional School Board Multicultural Night, Anpuneri annual dinner, and Karaveddy Ontrium holiday gathering. Providing the youth members with the opportunity to perform in these public events certainly gave them valuable experience in developing their public speaking and leadership skills, and further helped build their confidence. The performances of the youth members were one of the highlights at these events and have certainly been inspiring.

Youth Documentary Challenge

YDocs is an exciting and innovative initiative which started in the summer of 2013. Participants identify social causes that they are passionate about and produce 5 minute documentaries. Part of

CFLI's efforts to encourage youth engagement in larger society, the YDocs helps develop individual leadership and team building skills by engaging members in project based activities. The 2015 YDocs Gala also marked the first time CFLI received funding from the Government of Ontario in support of our program. The YDocs gala event was a huge success with the audience raving about the talent and creativity displayed by members as young as 10 years old. Additionally, ten of the documentaries were screened at this year's Toronto South Asian Film Festival.

Summer Internship

As part of CFLI's continued expansion of scope for YLP, two YLP members had one-month internships at Connex Telecommunications during the summer of 2015. To build on this success, one of the goals in 2016 is to identify and provide more summer internship opportunities for youth members. This will give them valuable work experience and will better prepare them for when they enter the workforce.

YRoots

In August 2015, CFLI launched YRoots, a program designed to create awareness of Tamil history and literature for youth. This 5 day program was facilitated by Tamil scholars and provided an opportunity for youth to learn about the rich Tamil history and literature.

Path Forward

2015 has been a phenomenal year for CFLI. Enrolment in the YLP and Youth Documentary Competition increased significantly. The Milestones and YDocs events were great successes and the number of participants continues to increase each term. With a dedicated and passionate team of volunteers, the future of CFLI looks very promising.

Availability of Energy



Energy is used constantly in everyday society, be it toasters, lights, cars or heating. We use energy every day. Ever since the beginning of the industrial revolution, many applications require a certain amount of energy, in particular fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and natural gas. The abundance and versatility of such resources was noticeable to many in the previous centuries, and was used over and over again, in the energy industry and for other uses.

However, because of this overuse of our precious resources, the fossil fuels found around the world are being depleted at an alarming rate, as the fossil fuels aren't sustainable. Oil, coal and natural gas take many millions of years to create, using pressure and heat to transform dead plants and animals into precious reserves of these resources. However, because humans are using this resource at an exponentially greater rate than the resource can replenish, we will eventually have a small amount of energy available to the public. This means that many people will not have the energy needed to power many of their applications, such as toasters and cars. Not only that, but what few resources remain would be fought over by nations in a "resource war" to control the amount of fossil fuels still left.

That said, there are solutions that we can take today to help prevent such a disaster from occurring. As the sustainability of the resource is impacted directly by our use of the resource, it would be a great improvement if everyone could cut down on their power use every day. This means turning off the lights when you're not using it, or walking instead of taking a car to the store down the street. Also, in terms of the bigger picture, governments can cut back funding for acquiring the little amount of fossil fuels still left and instead invest that funding into alternative sources of energy. This includes clean energy such as solar, hydro and wind power, as well as nuclear energy. If we take steps today towards sustainability, we can provide a "brighter" future for all.



Parathan Vakeesan

Parathan V lives in Markham and is studying at Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy in the tenth grade. I am currently in my third year at YLP.

Leading by Example

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau



On November 4th, 2015 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau unveiled his diverse, gender-equal cabinet to the country by strolling to Rideau Hall with his family and chosen ministers, amid the waving hands of thousands of Canadians. The faces of the 31-member cabinet not only reflected the future of federal politics, but also represented the people in its truest form.

You may be wondering why this is important or even wondering what a cabinet is in the first place. The Cabinet of Canada includes the Ministers of the Crown. Each member of cabinet, or minister, is responsible for a specific federal department. The cabinet has a lot of decision-making power and play an important role.

Justin Trudeau's Cabinet of Canada is one of the most balanced in terms of gender. World wide, Canada is now 4th in terms of female representation in the cabinet. This is a significant improvement because Canada was previously ranked 20th in the world. What was the Prime Minister's approach in selecting his cabinet? Trudeau simply said that he wanted equal representation of women and men on his team to provide balanced perspectives.

To this accomplishment Justin Trudeau has said that it is, "incredible pleasure to see a cabinet that looks like Canada." When asked by reporters why it was important to give half those positions to women, Trudeau simply replied "because it's 2015".

Hats off to the new Prime Minister of Canada for leading by example.



Jeroni Rajakanthan

Jeroni is in grade 7 at Seneca Trail Public School. She enjoys reading and creative expression through dance. She has an interest in community development, government administration, and politics. She likes keeping active through sports especially volleyball.

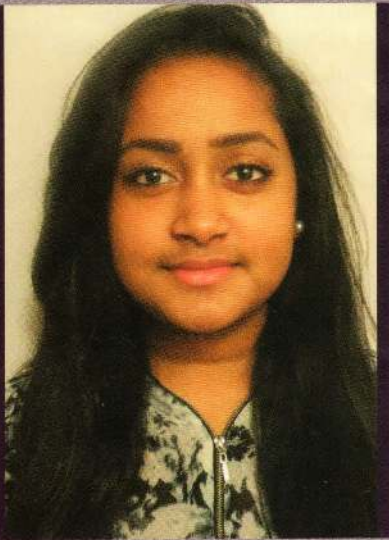
Leadership and its Importance in our Society



Sometimes we wonder how people become the leaders they are today. We constantly ask ourselves whether they were natural-born leaders or if they became great leaders along the way. Did Martin Luther King, Jr. always talk about his dream of putting barriers on racial discrimination, or did he just believe that someday, someone had to put an end to the unethical segregations? Unlike managing, leadership cannot be taught; it is learned through experiences, lessons and most importantly, failures.

Leadership is one of the hardest words to define not because it is difficult to comprehend, but because it means different things to different people. According to the Oxford Dictionary, leadership defines, "The action of leading a group of people or an organization." However, leadership does not only define leading something and/or someone. It is the act of helping him/herself and others by setting the right direction, leading an inspiring vision and lastly, innovating the idea. A great example of an extraordinary leader is Craig Kielburger, who is a social entrepreneur and the co-founder of Free the Children. Without his leadership and determination, many developing countries around the world would still not have the basic necessities such as clean water or sustainable housings. We all need someone who is able to step up in a time of crisis and is able to create an effective solution to solve a problem.

As John Maxwell once said, "Leaders become great, not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others." It takes just one innovator to come up with a new idea, but it takes a team of leaders to bring that idea into fruition and create something new and spectacular. Therefore, leadership is essential in our society because being successful is not necessarily measured by whether you win or lose in the situation. In fact, in the end it does not matter how much was achieved by leading yourself, but instead, how much was achieved by leading your team.



Gheerthika Sri

Gheerthika Sri is in grade 10 and attends Milliken Mills High School in Markham, Ontario. She enjoys writing about many different topics and participates in a variety of extra-curricular activities that involve being a great leader!

Artist Profiles

Instrumental music during reception

Nathaswara Vithvan

Balakrishnan Sekar

Nathaswara Vithvan

Rajarathnam Sivasamy

Thavil Vithuvan

Jeganathan Kumar

Thavil Vithuvan

Suntharamoorthy Theesan

Canadian National anthem

Ian Amirthanathan

and

Centre For Leadership and Innovation - CFLI

Youth Members

Tamil Thai Valthu

Madumai Prabhakaran

Athirai Sivaseelan

Arthi Selvadurai

Artist Profiles

Invocation Dance Sange Muzhangu

Smt Nirothini Pararajasingam's Niro dance Creations presents "Sange Muzhangu". This Invocation dance showcases the intricacy of Bharathanatyam as it praises our Tamil Language and culture, and the unity of Tamil people.

Participants are:

Abina Nimalraj
Swetha Pararajasingam
Piramyra Sriskanthanathan
Vaisnavi Raveendran
Aarathy Premachandran
Shalini Manivannan

Artistic Director & Choreographer

Smt Nirothini Pararajasingam



Smt. Nirothini Pararajasingam, President and CEO of Nirthya Kalanjali Academy of Fine Arts and Niro Dance Creations is well known to all through her dedication of promoting Indian Classical Dances and other contemporary fusion dances among the younger generation for the past 25 years. Nirthya Kalanjali Academy of Fine Arts and Niro Dance Creations promote self-discipline, culture and arts for youth within the South Asian Community. Nirothini has choreographed numerous dance drama, and solo and group Bharathanatyam performances for various community celebrations and mentoring to build skills that can be applied in real life through Bharathanatyam, which in turn inculcates among the students self-discipline for prosperity. Overall, she is a creative choreographer who has successfully produced several programs and received numerous awards.

Her ambition and scope is to establish a separate Icon for dance in university with recognition and affiliation with the Toronto University Fine Arts Department, to introduce a style of Indian fusion, incorporating Indian Classical Dance with western styles of dance, which could benefit all ethnic groups to strengthen the unity among diversity to value the importance of Bharathanatyam.



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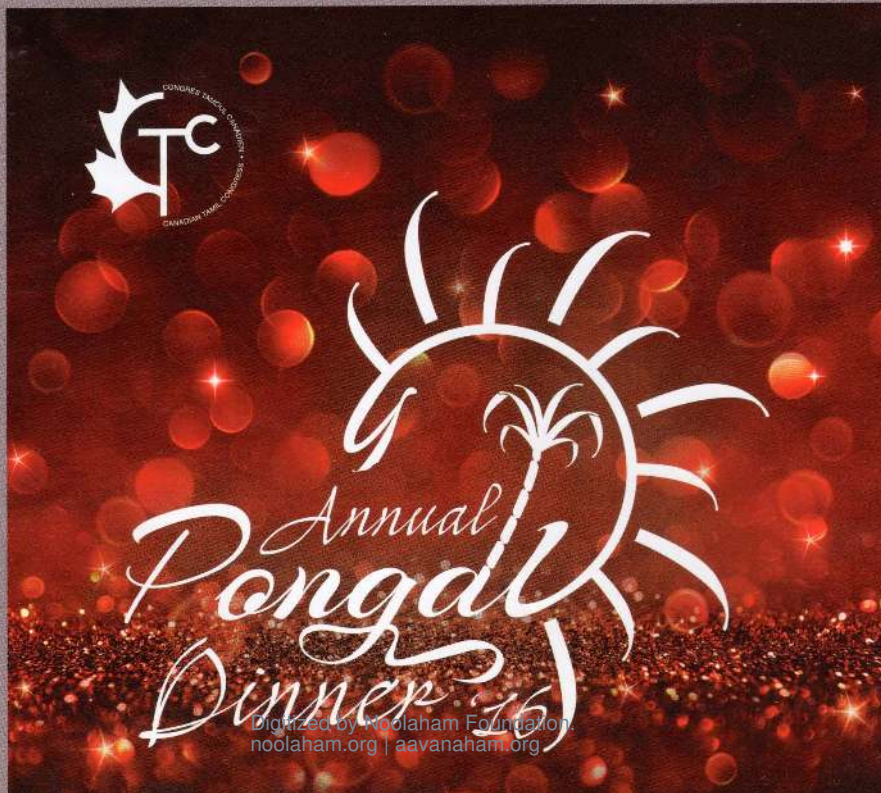
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The Law Offices of Yaso Sinnadurai

நன்றி

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