

Library Fund:

Carmel Higher Secondary School,

Ramanputhur, Nagercoil, 629 002,

Kanyakumari District, India

Carmel Higher Secondary School has been serving the people of Kanyakumari District since 1922. The school has provided quality education to students of all social, religious and economic backgrounds. Most of the students graduating from that school have become doctors, engineers, Indian civil service members, teachers, Ph.Ds etc. The success of the students is the testimony of the quality of the education they received.

I passed SSLC from that school 27 years ago. In 2004, I had the opportunity to visit the school and my teachers. During the visit, I witnessed the transformation of the school. One issue which touched me was the status of a library. Over the years, they have accumulated lot of books and journals. Even now, Tamil scholars in the district go to the school to look for references. In addition, its former students have contributed to the purchase of expensive books on science, medicine and technology. Although the school does not have a formal library, they use a large class room to keep all the books and allow the students to take the books to class rooms or homes. They have maintained very good documentation of the book usage. My impression was that helping the school to construct a full pledged library will serve the students better.

Upon discussion with my close friend, Dr. Ganesan from Delaware, (supported tsunami widows through GATS) we concluded to pool financial resources to fund the construction of the library. The funding is provided in memory of Mrs. Pushpa Ganesan and my father Mr. Arockiam Vincent. The plan is to build the library on the top of the existing computer lab with dimension 22x44 feet and 10 feet tall. Access to the library will be via a concrete stairs. Expenses including the furnishing will be approximately \$15,000 of \$12,250 is already deposited in GATS account to be restrictively used for the above library. I will provide the rest through GATS or directly to the school for furnishing expenses. The paper work at the municipality level and the detailed plan are being drawn. At this point, we plan to send the money through Lion's Club Trust, with whom we have worked on

three tsunami rehabilitation projects. Lion's club trust is a non profit organization and authorized by Government of India to receive aid from foreign countries. Once the construction starts, a three member committee (Prof. A. Ambrose of Lion's Club, Mr. Stephen Alexander, my father-in-law and the Headmaster of the school) will collectively manage the expenses. On a daily basis, Mr. Stephen Alexander will monitor the daily progress of the work. Mr. Mathusoothanan, District Medical Officer and my classmate will inspect the progress of the work and expenditures once or twice in a week. We plan to open the library when Ganesan and I visit India during this summer. Our vision is to open the library in the presence of religious leaders representing (alphabetically) Christian, Hindu and Islamic faiths to promote religious tolerance and unity.

I hope this will be a model so that people living in the US will contribute whatever they can to bring in educational resources in our villages and hometowns. I hope GATS will enable the construction of this library for which the generations of students who would benefit from our effort will be thankful. If CC, EC or BOT has any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Dr. Martin J. Vincent, Ph.D.

2762 Oak Meadow Lane, Snellville, GA, 30078

Tel: 770 982 9965 (Home) 404 639 4560 (work)

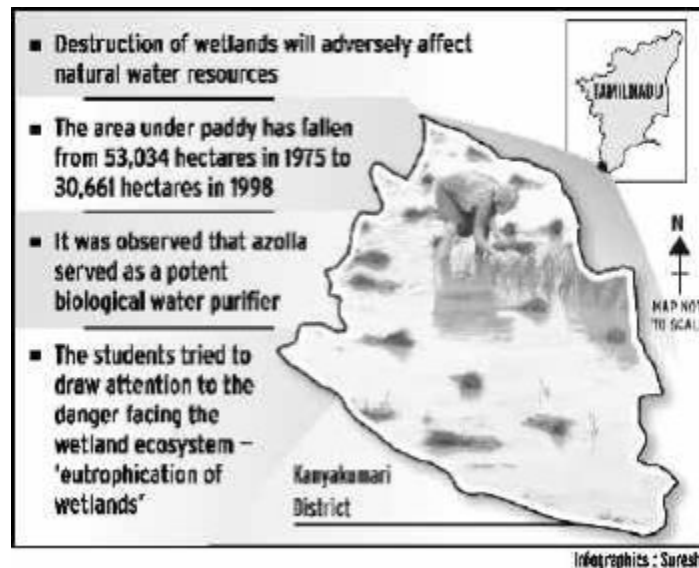
I found the following information in The Hindu daily newspaper. It tells you quality of education the children are receiving; creativity, motivation and environmental awareness.

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/01/21/stories/2006012101470300.htm>

Warm reception to students' project on wetlands

P. S. Suresh Kumar

Their study suggesting water conservation through natural farming was acclaimed as the outstanding scientific work at the 13th National Children's Science Conference-2005 held in Bhubaneswar recently.



Nagercoil : The project on 'Assessment and improvement of wetlands in Kanyakumari district' presented by students of Carmel Higher Secondary School in Nagercoil was acclaimed as the outstanding scientific work from the State, at the 13th National Children's Science Conference-2005 held in Bhubaneswar recently.

Wetlands are open habitats on the land, which are water-logged seasonally or throughout the year. They include lakes, rivers, estuaries and marshes.

Kanyakumari district has a natural heritage of wetlands and eutrophication is the major problem for survival of these wetlands. Water conservation through natural farming would preserve the wetlands in the long term.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the team leader Prinu Dickson said that the destruction of wetlands would adversely affect the natural water resources of the district. Wetlands were the primary ecological system for cultivation of rice, which was the main source of income for the rural population. It was alarming to understand that the area under paddy had fallen from 53,034 hectares in 1975 to 30,661 hectares in 1998. However, the

population of the district has increased from 8 lakh to 15 lakh in the same period. Moreover the ponds have also reduced from 3,500 in 1962 to 2400 in 1988. The reduction in the number of ponds and irrigated areas caused serious concern.

Wetlands were considered the large storage vessels during heavy rainfall and these basins were rich in minerals, fertile soil and biological activities of flora and fauna. The flora was more unique and diverse and was the energy-fixing base for complex food chain.

To highlight the importance of azolla as bio-fertilizer, the physico-chemical analysis of water was done before and after azolla growth in the collected samples of water from the selected ponds. It was also observed that azolla served as a potent biological water purifier.

The students also tried to draw attention to the danger facing the wetland ecosystem — 'eutrophication of wetlands'. The run of water from paddy fields containing the fertilizers used by the farmers is the major reason for the eutrophication.

These chemical fertilizers are rich in soluble nitrates, phosphates and potassium. Nutrient-rich water will promote 'algal bloom' and take away aquatic plants and animals from oxygen.

It can be prevented only by the implementation of integrated community action plan. Though the villagers have been informed by non-governmental organisations through awareness programmes about the future impact of eutrophication, they had not been provided with an alternative safe form of farming methods.

On the other hand they are driven by the short-term economical gain of intensive farming and fail to comprehend the long-term impact on the water resources of the district.

Hence the members of the team J. S. M. Jazim, S. Jehu Villvarayar, J. Ajay Johns and S. P. Mohammed Hisam suggested natural farming or organic farming.