

June 2023 • Vol 3

VANAKKAM

South Africa

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

MIL VEDIC SOCIETY



"This issue has been dedicated to Youth Month. Hence the editor and majority of the writers are young people."

- From Editorial Board-



NATAL TAMIL VEDIC SOCIETY TRUST

SA Tamil Centre for Creative Arts & Culture

JUNE
2ND



THAMIZH VAAZHKAI PROGRAM

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN OUR LIFESTYLE PROGRAM CONSISTING OF YOGA, MEDITATION AND BHAJANS.

INSTRUCTORS:

KRITA NAIDOO (YOGA)

KEROLIN GOVENDER (BHAJANS)

TIME: 17:30-19:00

BRING ALONG

- YOGA MAT
- WATER
- COMFORTABLE CLOTHING,
- LIGHT BLANKET



337 Florence Nightingale Road,
Westcliffe, Chatsworth

VANAKKAM



WELCOME JAYSEE MOODLEY

SA Tamil Centre for Creative Arts and Culture in Westcliff, Chatsworth, welcomes volunteer librarian, Jaysee Moodley who takes charge of our Tamil Reference Resource Centre/Library. After 42 years of service, Senior Librarian, Jaysee, bids farewell to customer service at EThekwini Municipal Libraries.

However, this was not the final chapter of her book.

The passion for working with communities and inculcating a love for reading and books was the focal point of her career.

The highlight of her career was serving as the Children's Librarian for ten years, including outreach programmes, and empowering Senior Citizens and Women's groups.

In her retirement, she intends to give back to the community by opening new libraries and re-opening closed libraries at the schools.

THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATAL TAMIL VEDIC SOCIETY TRUST WELCOME JAYSEE AND WISH HER A VERY PLEASANT STAY WITH US AT THE NEW CENTRE.

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Cover Photo: Making waves in the music world is young Ruvashen Munien (14 years old) on the keyboard

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Deeanum Muthulingum
Kiru Naidoo
Juggie Pather
Craig Esbend of SA Suburbs



Handing Over The Baton

Deeanum Muthulingum



June 16th.... A day set aside to celebrate 'Youth'...

Our country has given significant importance to the younger generation by dedicating a Day to them. But why give a 'crazy' bunch of youngsters, with half-baked thoughts, conflicting views and far fetched perspectives, so much importance?

Isn't it a scary thought to release the reins from the old to others, especially those of a younger age than you: green to the world and society at large and oblivious to the pitfalls that surround them, physically, emotionally and mentally?

So why 'Hand Over The Baton'?

Because we have lived in a certain way does not mean it's going to work for the next generation. We have to realize that everything in life has an expiry date, including our mind, body, and soul. As we progress through our journey in life, the latter part of our sojourn should have time to retrospect and prepare for the inward path, rather than live the demanding rat race of our materialistic world. But how do we hand over, with peace of mind, the reins that we held for so long?

The answer is in finding balance, by nurturing, leading by example, mentoring, or adopting the "buddy" system.

Our elders must agree that it is the most fulfilling experience to be in the company of well- rounded, balanced, youngsters who express thought processes steered in the right direction, espousing values, humility, and compassion. To live this experience, elders have to invest in them, not just with formal education but in taking time to mentor them and to mold them into strong individuals who can face most situations in an ever-changing world.

And once the adult brings about positive changes, he or she gracefully moves onto the inward journey as the 'Handing Over the Baton' would have been completed with a peace of mind.

Editorial Note: the above are the independent views of Mrs Deeanum Muthulingum



NATAL TAMIL VEDIC SOCIETY TRUST

SA Tamil Centre for Creative Arts & Culture

OUR VISION | SPORTS FIXTURES | YOUTH PERSPECTIVE | LUNCH

YOUTH DAY

JOIN US

JUNE
16TH

NTVST Centre

11.00-14.00

To register send your name and contact details to:

✉ Deeanum@gmail.com

☎ 073 254 6482

☎ 0737762915

📍 337 Florence Nightingale Road,
Westcliffe, Chatsworth

MORE INFORMATION

Join us for a social gathering to engage young perspective to the operation of our newly formed Cultural Centre!

Activities for the day include:

- Our vision
- Sports Fixture
- Youth Perspective
- Lunch

We hope to join hands with you to secure a bright future for our Heritage!

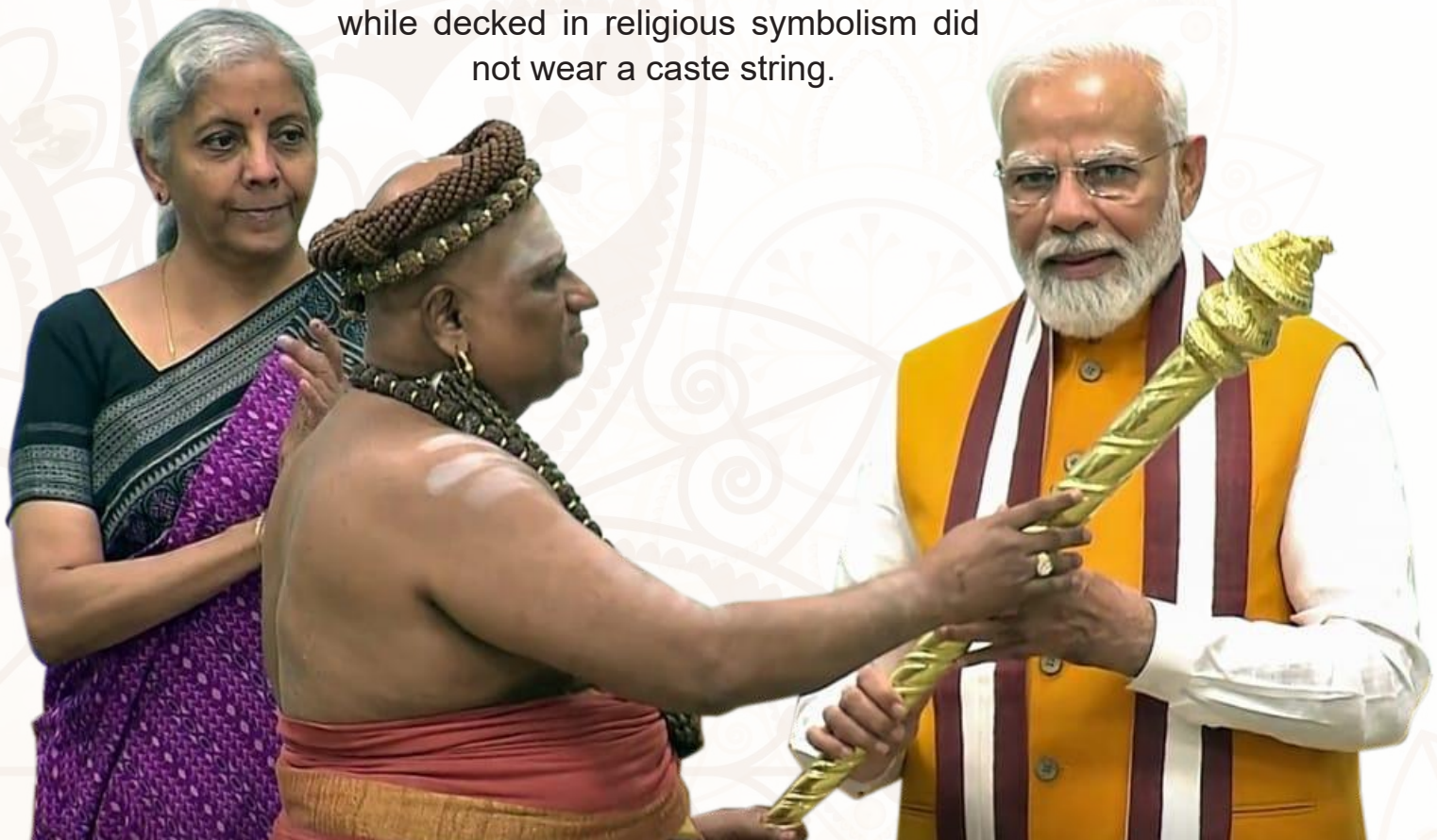


SYMBOLISM & SANCTITY IN INDIA'S TEMPLE OF DEMOCRACY

Kiru Naidoo

An ancient Dravidian symbol of government, the Sengol, was handed to Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, as the country's iconic new parliamentary building was inaugurated on 28 May 2023. Sri Harihara Gnanasambanda Desika Paramacharya, the 293rd pontiff of the Madurai Aadheenam made the presentation.

Madurai is one of the great cities of antiquity famed for its scholarship and trading relations spanning the globe. At its heart is Madurai Meenakshi, the revered and a potent Mother Goddess from pre-Hindu times. The optics of the parliamentary ceremony were quite striking as the Madurai leader while decked in religious symbolism did not wear a caste string.





With Ponniyin Selvan making headlines, it was poignant that the masterfully choreographed event honoured the Chola system of authority and legitimacy. It was also in some way a re-enactment the historic independence ceremony in August 1947 where Prime Minister Nehru also took charge of the Sengol. At the time, King Charles's uncle, Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India asked Nehru if there was any potent symbol that could add to the gravity of the ceremony.

Nehru sought the advice of Governor-General, the learned C. Rajagopalachari who recommended the Chola symbol which even then was sanctified by the Saivite priests. The Governor-General consulted the Madurai Aadheenam where Sri La Sri Ambalavana Desika Swamikal commissioned jeweller Vummidi Banru Chetty, to craft the striking sceptre. Reflecting on the powerful symbolism, Modi gushed: "Delighted to see Sengol being recognized at the inauguration of the new building of the Indian Parliament. Its august presence illustrates how heritage and progress merge beautifully, giving us added inspiration to fulfil people's aspirations."

The building is a fresh leaf in the history of the world's most populous democracy and a rising superpower. Just from the images, it looks an architectural masterpiece using triangular "sacred geometrics" that would have done the Cholas proud. The architectural team was led by Bimal Patel who shepherded the project in record time after construction began in 2022. The distance between Kanyakumari and New Delhi has become a lot shorter now that the Sengol has travelled northward to the seat of democratic power.



BUILD TAMIL PRIDE



**Famous Actor Kamal Hassan
with Saraniya Devan**

Tamil in its spoken form is almost non-existent in South Africa. Unless Spoken Tamil is revived, this ancient classical language faces extinction in this part of the world. Theatre-maker, dance performer, academic and proud Tamilian, SARANYA DEVAN, writes that watching Tamil movies, is one way that can help save spoken Tamil.

At one time Latin, through Roman conquests, was a popular language in parts of Europe. But after the fall of the Roman Empire, Latin was spoken less and less. Officially, a language is declared extinct when the last native speakers of the said language die. For Latin, this happened many centuries ago. I am afraid a similar fate awaits Tamil in South Africa. It is not being spoken in this part of the world – and will soon disappear unless drastic measures are taken. There was a time when Tamil was the most spoken language among Indians in this country. Most indentured workers were of Tamil-speaking origin – and they knew no other language.

But as the indentured folk soon realized that English was the language required in job situations, Tamil decreased in prominence as a spoken language.

Also, during the last five or six decades, but certainly since the dawn of democracy in 1994, embodiments of Indianness have been regarded as unimportant and have been slowly removed from the national psyche. In the main, grandparents and parents stopped speaking to children in Tamil. Older folk who was the custodians of Spoken Tamil abandoned their responsibility of ensuring the Tamil language passed from one generation to the next.

Languages are conduits of human heritage and transmitters of culture; when Tamil dies, we lose the history and narrative gems contained in Tamil literature.

How then do we revive spoken Tamil to ensure the language does not become extinct in South Africa? Some hard work, dedication and perseverance is required.

For spoken Tamil to be restored to its former glory, we must first build pride among the younger generation. We the youth must be informed of the long history of Tamil achievements. Tamil trade with the ancient Greeks and Romans is verified by literary, linguistic, and archaeological evidence. Under the Chera, Chola, Pandya, and Pallava dynasties, the Tamil people built great temples, irrigation tanks, dams, and roads, and they played an important role in the transmission of Indian culture to Southeast Asia. UNESCO declared the Tamil language a “Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” in 2005.

The blockbuster movies Ponniyan Selvan 1 & 2 with a star-studded cast; a brilliant, award-winning musician; a legend of a director; spectacular cinematography and costumes, will help greatly to ignite the dying flames of Tamil pride in viewers. Movies can play an important role in rekindling interest in Spoken Tamil. It certainly did for me. Kollywood, the

Tamil film industry, has been a part of my life since I was a little girl of four when I would be sitting on my parents’ bedroom floor whilst my long, sleek hair would be blow-dried on a Friday afternoon. To pass the time, I would enjoy watching popular Tamil movies such as Vaanathaippola, Baba, Gemini and Avvai Shanmugi on VHS copies. On my checklist for a regular sleepover at my Patti’s house would be a copy of Padayappa, alongside a packet of popcorn seeds and my teddy bear.

“Movies can play an important role in rekindling interest in Spoken Tamil”.

Movies can play an important role in rekindling interest in spoken Tamil. As the years passed, I got to watch more and more Tamil movies; thus, my knowledge of the Tamil language grew. Alongside picking up Tamil from the movie dialogues, my daily conversations with my Thatha until the age of 15, also motivated me to speak in my mother tongue. Lessons from Mathangi Akka of the Manning Road Temple in Overport, Durban, also embellished my Tamil vocabulary. Booster doses of speaking in Tamil also came during the annual visits to the Margaazhi Festival in my cultural home, Chennai.

Had my parents and grandparents not instilled in me pride and love for Tamil, I would have been all the poorer as I would have not enjoyed the beauty and richness of this great classical language.



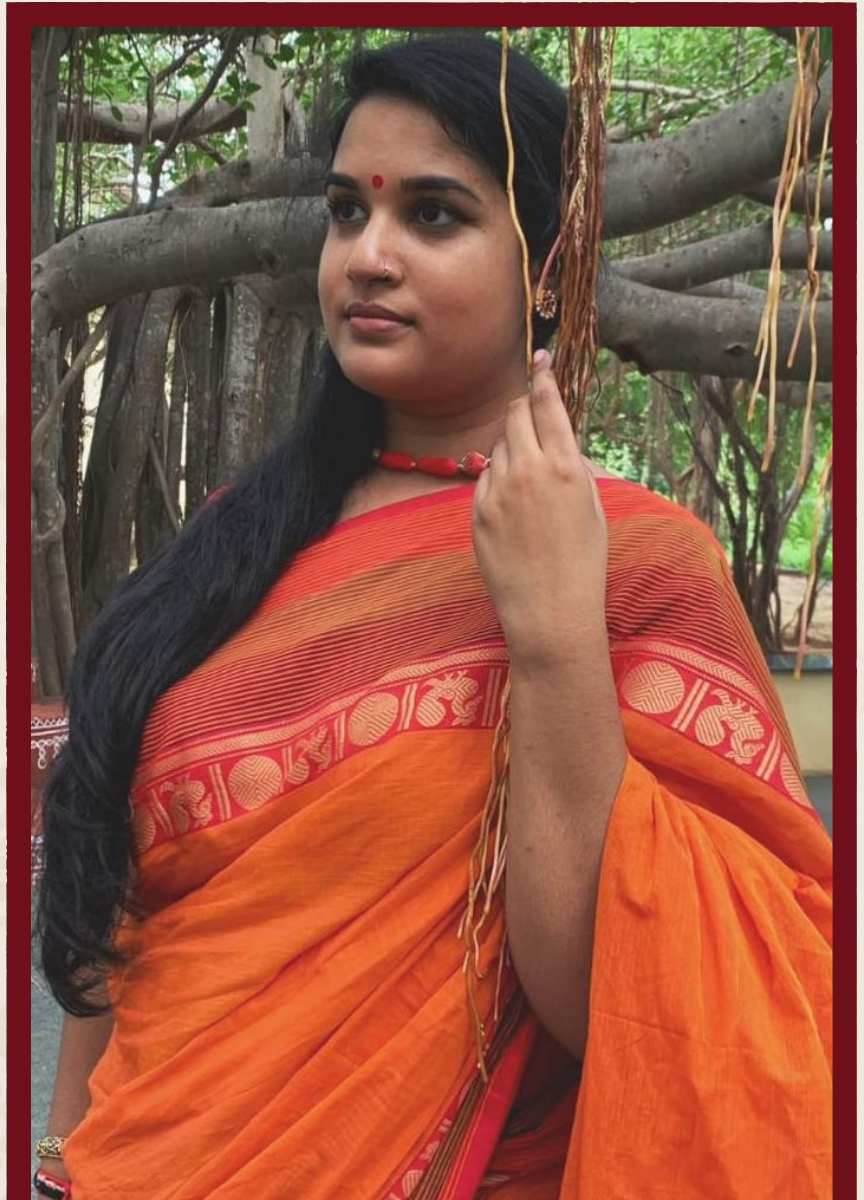
As youth, we often find reading lengthy scripts to be a bore. Fortunately, we are the generation that depends on social platforms like Instagram, Facebook and TikTok to be in the loop of things. To give spoken Tamil a mighty jolt, it is time that you follow more South Asian pages on these different platforms to see how Tamil has been thriving in other parts of the world and to improve your knowledge. On Instagram, there have been many Canadian Tamils that have been successful in creating a brand for themselves in the clothing industry. Tia Bhuva started her own Saree Silhouette brand as well as Tanya Yoganathan who has her own personalized range of baby wear.

On TikTok there are many pages that are constantly creating new dance challenges that are trending to the latest Tamil songs or even short Bharathanatyam Jathi challenges. Let us not forget about the weekly videos uploaded by The Bala Brothers of Singapore who provide us with amazing covers of Tamil movie hits and Carnatic treasures.

We are fortunate to have a movie medium such as Netflix. In the last three years we have been spoilt for choice with the abundance of great Tamil

movies that have been accessible to us on this platform. The hit series Never Have I Ever which is soon to be aired in its third season on Netflix, projects Tamil people making their way into the mainstream of life.

So, my fellow Thamizhans, let us stop being held back. It will require concerted effort by all in the community to keep the Tamil language alive and relevant. Make that change to revive Spoken Tamil. The first you can take is to stop feeling embarrassed while speaking in Tamil.



For a start, clasp your hands together and greet Tamil friends and relatives with a spirited “Vanakkam”. Start listening to Tamil music on Southside FM. Visit the temple more often. Celebrate your Tamilness. Develop a taste for traditional Tamil cuisine such as idli, dosai and sambar. Learn two or three new Tamil words each day. Join a Spoken Tamil class such as that run by the Malaysia-Durban Tamil Socio-Cultural Organization (email – themdtsco@gmail.com for details).

When our mother tongue, Tamil, a beautiful classical language that has survived the trials of time, in our Motherland and in most of the Indian diaspora, it is even more a reason to hold on to it.

I leave you with the outro of the trending Ponniyan Selvan-2 song, Veera Raja.

**En Thamizh vaazhga vaazhga!
Veera solam vaazhga!
Natramizh vaazhga vaazhga!
Nallor Dhesam Vaazhga!**

**Hail the Tamil language!
Hail the brave words!
Hail the Tamil land!
Hail the good country!**

*** Saranya Devan holds an MA in Dance from the University of Cape Town and MA in Bharathanatyam from the University of Madras.



A LOVE That Deserves More Than A DAY

By Nivani Bhimsan

How do you describe a Mother's love? Poets and writers have tried to do it in words and artists have tried to do it in pictures, but through centuries of art and literature, we have managed only to capture glimpses, ideas, and perspectives. I realized this when I finally was able to experience it for myself. At the age of thirty-one, I became a mother for the first time and since then, the way I think and feel about almost everything has been impacted by this one change in my life. I have only celebrated three Mother's Days so far, and I have been told that I have no idea what's in store on this motherhood journey.

"I have been told that I have no idea what's in store on this Motherhood journey"

I have now started to view life through my daughter's vantage point and have begun to wonder, how I can begin to change the world for her betterment? Becoming a mother has made me much more vulnerable than I would have liked to be. They say that having a child is like having your heart running around outside of your body. This is as close as I can come to describing myself. She runs around fearless and carefree, and I cover my eyes, realizing that at any moment my world can explode, as it is beyond my control. I find that I now have empathy for people whom I previously judged harshly, including my own extraordinary mother. I have less tolerance for many ideas and traditions that previously did not offend me. I have begun to rely more desperately on God when I see the limitations of my ability to provide complete protection and to control the outcome of each day.



NATAL TAMIL VEDIC SOCIETY TRUST

SA Tamil Centre for Creative Arts & Culture

- South African Tamil Heritage Centre • Institute for the Advancement of Tamil
- Schools of Tamil Language, Music & Dance • International Tamil Network



Thevaram & Thiruppugazh

workshop by

Maganathan Balakisten

NATAL TAMIL VEDIC SOCIETY TRUST

SA Tamil Centre for Creative Arts & Culture

337 Florence Nightingale Drive, Westcliff, Chatsworth

Every Sunday @ 07H00am, live from Perth, Australia via Zoom

Please note that we will not be streaming the workshop online. We encourage you to physically gather in prayer at the Centre every Sunday.

Please bring a cushion if you wish to sit on the floor. Contact: Thaniga Moodley 073 7762915

“For me there’s no greater joy than being her mother”.

For me there’s no greater joy than being her mother.

Also, there is no greater fear. The weight of the responsibility to give her the best life is extremely daunting. We place so much emphasis on the nine months that we physically and mentally carry our babies. There are books and podcasts and products galore that cater to pregnancy and yet I think the fact that mother’s physically carry their babies in pregnancy serves more as a metaphor for the relationship that follows. The carrying metaphor extends far beyond pregnancy and birth and for the many mums who don’t carry their children during pregnancy, they get the opportunity to carry them in every other way throughout their lives. Even in their absence or when they leave our watchful care we will carry them in our thoughts, our choices and in our hearts.

It’s possible that for centuries to come, we will be trying to uncover the intricacies of this love and where its limits lie, if there are any. The complexity of this relationship is bewildering to most. We find it difficult to understand how a mother can forgive the greatest offense from her child, acknowledge their good traits despite the worst behaviour or be willing to sacrifice everything without question, even her own life. I have judged many mothers in the past, even criticized their apparent blindness towards the flaws of

their children and then have had to eat my words when I joined the fray. Every time I look at my daughter, I am convinced about how I often disregarded my own mother’s feelings. I wonder, when she looks at me, does she feel this helpless love too?

“The thankless and overwhelming task of holding the title of mother”.

It isn’t a glamorous role, but it is certainly highly regarded. Just ask those who have lost one, those who were abandoned by one or those who long to become one. Over the past two and a half years I have experienced a mother’s love and have been very aware in the moment that there is no other feeling quite like this, yet still in writing this I struggle to put it into words. I doubt I will be the one to crack the code and make all the poems, pictures and songs make sense so let me just propose that we set more than a day aside to honour this amazing love and I’ll leave you with this:

A Love Like No Other

*I loved a man with all my heart,
I vowed to do so, till death do us part
We shared good times and hard alike,
The ups and downs and rounds of life
One day he asked, how far my love runs?
I told him, truly, from moon to sun
So, would I pamper him, clean up after
him, wait on him and his friends?
Would I spoil him and to all his demands
dutifully tend?
Would I give all my attention to him and
no other?
My dear, I do love you, but I am not your
Mother.*



NATAL TAMIL VEDIC SOCIETY TRUST

SA Tamil Centre for Creative Arts & Culture

SPOKEN THAMIZH & SAIVA SAMAYAM CLASSES

JOIN US!

Join our Spoken Thamizh & Saiva
Samayam Classes !

Date: Saturday 10th June

Instructors:

Prof Prabhakar Subramaniam(Spoken
Thamizh)

Dr Rudiren Sarma(Saiva Samayam)

TIME

14:00-15:00

VENUE: NTVST CENTRE

337 Florence Nightingale Road
Westcliffe, Chatsworth





The Revitalization of **TAMIL CULTURE** in South Africa

The Thamizh community in South Africa has played a significant role in shaping the cultural landscape of the rainbow nation in South Africa. Our forefathers carried forward the traditions of our motherland and of course, along the way adapted them to accommodate their way of life when they arrived as indentured labourers some 163 years ago. Over the years, various factors such as migration, assimilation, and globalization have posed challenges to the preservation and promotion of Thamizh culture. However, in recent times, there has been a remarkable revitalization of Thamizh culture in South Africa.

Thamizh migration to South Africa dates back to the 19th century when indentured labourers were brought to work on sugar plantations. Over the years, Thamizh immigrants faced cultural assimilation, language barriers, and the suppression of their traditions. With the passage of time and the gradual relaxation of social and political restrictions, the Thamizh diaspora embraced initiatives to reclaim and celebrate their unique identity which has allowed it to survive through the generations. However, in the 21st century, there was a growing concern about the potential loss of cultural identity among Thamizh youth, who were becoming increasingly disconnected from their roots.

Many organisations have been established over the years to preserve and propagate the Thamizh culture through Iyal, Isai and Naadakkam. Two organizations that have played a pivotal role over the decades are the Natal Tamil Vedic Society (NTVS) which recently opened a beautiful cultural centre in Chatsworth where workshops and classes are being hosted and are open to Thamizhans of all ages. Let us not forget that before the age of live streams and YouTube, the NTVS eisteddfods provided a platform for most of South Africa's Thamizh artists to showcase their talents at their regional and national eisteddfods. The Merebank Tamil School Society (MTSS) also offers Thamizh and music classes to Thamizh youth in the greater Durban south area, gratis for decades. The organization also supports other Thamizh organizations in their pursuit of the propagation of our beautiful Thamizh.

The arts have been a powerful medium for revitalizing Tamil culture in South Africa. There has been an upsurge of new age and captivating Thamizh film songs released in the last few years that have sparked and attracted the interest of Thamizh youth. One such artist that has been adding his essence to the music of Thamizh cinema and invoking a large buy-in from the youth is the South Indian singing sensation, Sid Sriram. His unique voice and approach to music have certainly led him to record multiple hit songs.

His song Sri Valli had South African Thamizh and non-Thamizh Tik-Tokers joining the trend and releasing their own dance and music videos onto the platform for the Sri Valli Challenge.

We must also attribute this outpouring of enthusiasm in Thamizh culture to the establishment of the Southside FM radio station. It is heartwarming to walk into a Thamizh home in SA and hear Southside FM on full blast playing local and international music. This station has provided a platform for many local artists that did not have the opportunity before this to market their music and brand. This station has empowered its young RJs to play a pivotal role in propagating Thamizh culture in their unique way whilst simultaneously connecting on the same wavelength with the youth. So how can you play your role in revitalizing Thamizh culture in SA?

So whilst you are giving this some thought, you may consider joining the SA Centre for Creative Arts & Tamil Culture in Westcliff, Chatsworth: Contact Deeanum: WA & Mobile: 073 254 6482 or offer your talents to organize a workshop. Or if you love writing, contribute to the SA Vanakkam a publication that has an international footprint. You may also visit the 1st Tamil Reference Library at 337 Florence Nightingale Drive, Westcliff, and Chatsworth. Another thought: donate Tamil books to the Library or donate Indian Music instruments.

DROPATHIEAMMEN FIREWALKING A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE:



In the early 1950s the Shree Murugan Alayam under the leadership of the late Papiiah Naidoo, Subban Govender, SG Mannie, NP Dixon, SC Reddy, VS Padayachee, VP Chetty, KC Balakisten, MD Vandayar, PR Pillay, Ponnen Naidoo, VR Rethensamy and CM Naidoo, the idea of a Dropathieammen Firewalking prayer was born. Under their leadership the first Dropathieammen Firewalking was organized and observed with a total number of 6 devotees walking over the auspicious fire. During the subsequent years with a growing number of officials and devotees, the Prayer started to gain momentum and devotees walking the fire grew steadily to around 40.

With the steady interest and dedication to the prayer, the infrastructure needed attention to accommodate the growing number.

The Clairwood Tamil Mather Sungam approached the officials of the SMA to replace the then Wood and Iron Ammen temple with a permanent structure which stands proudly in the Alayam grounds presently. As the years passed on, the Devoteeship grew to larger numbers and a procedure for conducting the prayer and festival was put in place to manage the expected growth.

A group of devotees was selected to honour the Alayam by carrying the: Mahavishnu Kalsum, Dropathieammen, Parasathie and Anagalesperi garaghums together with the Shakti Soolum and Agnee Shetty.

During the decades following, the number of devotees grew to 100s. All activities around the prayer started to escalate and the lighting of the wood grew from 1 ton in the 1960s to the current 6 tons.

Meals cooked and provided to devotees from: **1960s comprised:**

- 3kg mealies meal porridge
- 1 small pot of mixed curry
- 1 small pot of pumpkin curry
- 1 small pot cabbage curry

to: **in 2023:**

- 40kg mealies meal porridge
- 5 decks of mixed curry
- 10 bags of pumpkin curry
- 10 bags of cabbage curry
(a total of 22 decks)

The Shree Murugar Alayam currently boasts the largest number of firewalking devotees in KZN and the management and officials still maintain the same standards set out by our pioneers. Mr B Reddy Interim-Chairperson: Shree Muruga Alayam





TAMIL PRIDE SHOULD HAVE NO BOUNDARIES



By Parthasarthy (Solly) Pillay

Tamil pride should have no boundaries or restrictions and people should never be embarrassed or afraid to demonstrate this – not in a sectionalist way but in a manner that celebrates the pride of our origin.

Too often, people of the younger, upward mobile generation especially, feel somewhat shy to demonstrate their 'Tamilness'. While we appreciate the inescapable fact that we have to operate and survive in the context of western norms, the ethos of our South Indian upbringing – qualities of humility, tolerance, perseverance – are the foundations upon which we built our lives. Our academic appendices thereafter just serve to propel us from the foundation that has been built. One has to just reflect on the mammoth achievements of Tamilians in the international diaspora and one would appreciate the greatness of our origin.

During April, we were fortunate to enjoy a Ship Cruise on the 'Queen Elizabeth' from Singapore to Japan over three weeks. The entire experience was enhanced by the discovery on board of about thirty people of Tamil origin, most of them from South Africa (Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth) as well as London and Australia.



Personally, being one whose Thamizh hearts beats louder than my western one, it was a bit disappointing that we had to spend Tamil New Year on board the ship. My irrepressible Thamizh Pride did not deter my yearning to celebrate it in some way.

Fired by the cliché 'Nothing ventured, Nothing gained', I approached the Maitre D of one of the restaurants on board who fortuitously happened to be a Thamizhan from Kerala. I asked if he could provide us with a celebratory Indian cuisine fare for that evening. He enthusiastically agreed. For the next stage, I approached the Head of Customer Relations, who happened to be the niece of the former owner of Rajput's Pizza in Reservoir Hills, now living in London. I bravely asked if they could allow us the use of a small venue where we could celebrate with some singing of Thamizh songs. Without compunction, she agreed. I pushed a little harder and asked if they would allow us a sound system. Done.

And so it was, that on April 14, proudly Tamil New Year, we were treated to a sumptuous full Indian meal – lamb curry, chicken curry, vegetable curries, pickles et al, and the most 'out of this world' pavasum – all done by another Chef from Kerala. They cordoned off a whole section of the Restaurant for the occasion. And to crown it all, after supper, we moved to the private venue where we gathered and demonstrated our pride with speeches and Thamizh songs sung by myself, having always carried my music backing tracks on my mobile phone.

It was one of the most defining and memorable celebrations of Thamizh New Year for all almost forty of us – most of us proudly dressed in our easter garb. (See pictures). The Captain of the ship said that this was the first time something like this had ever been done on the very British Cunard Queen lines – it was a great feeling with Indians colonising the British for a change (Ha Ha).

If nothing else, this demonstrates that we should never ever be embarrassed of our Thamizh existence and we should always be proud of this origin.

Do not cover it up or be apologists for it – we hold our own as one of the most intelligent linguistic groups in the world.

Vaazhge Thamizh Mozhi, Vaazhge.

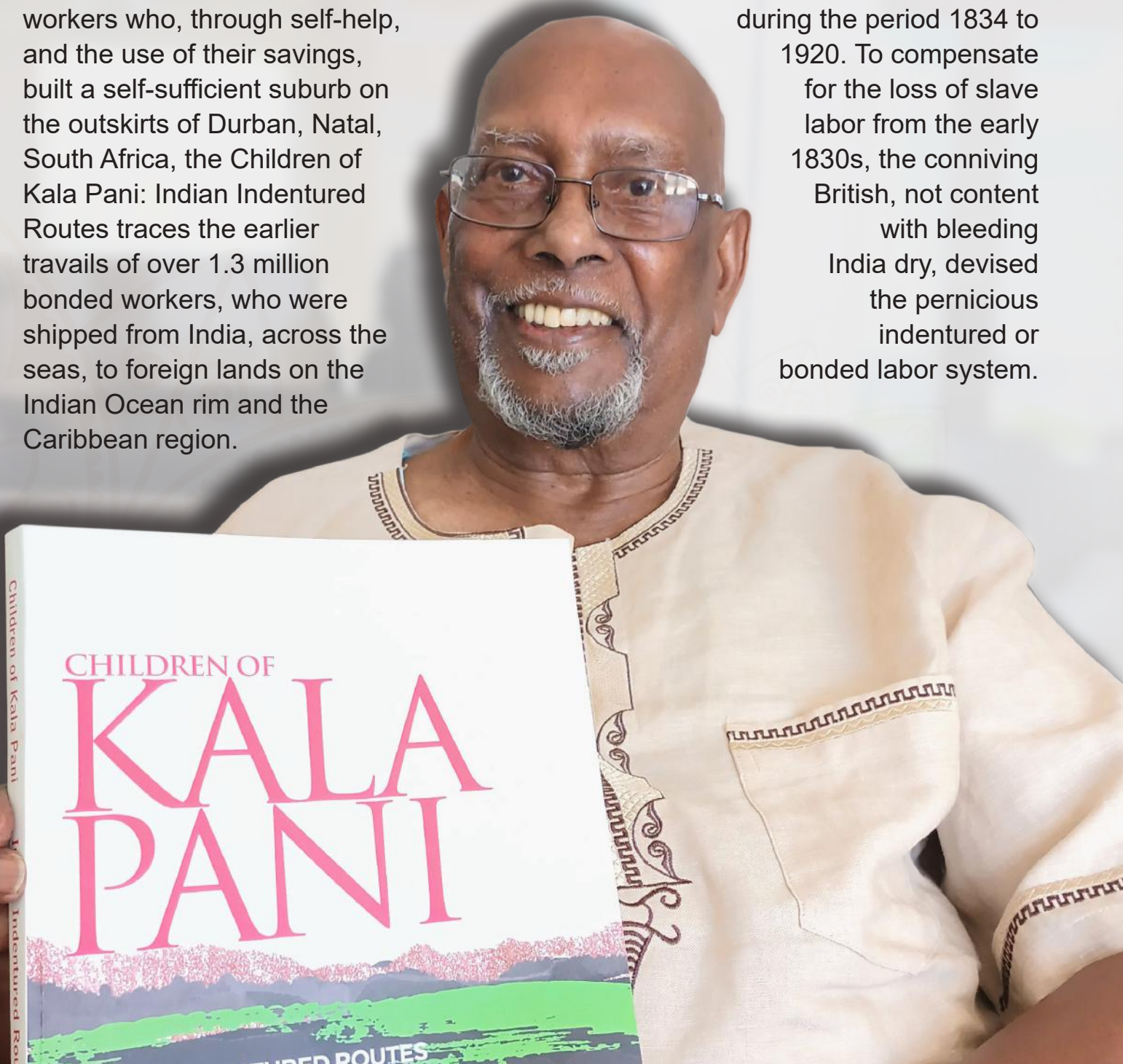


Synopsis

CHILDREN OF Kala Pani

This book is a prequel to the author's first publication, *Clairwood: The Untold Story*. Whilst the debut book was about the contract-free Indian Indentured workers who, through self-help, and the use of their savings, built a self-sufficient suburb on the outskirts of Durban, Natal, South Africa, the *Children of Kala Pani: Indian Indentured Routes* traces the earlier travails of over 1.3 million bonded workers, who were shipped from India, across the seas, to foreign lands on the Indian Ocean rim and the Caribbean region.

This was the largest, single movement of workers from one continent to far-flung colonies managed by the British, French, Dutch and Danish, during the period 1834 to 1920. To compensate for the loss of slave labor from the early 1830s, the conniving British, not content with bleeding India dry, devised the pernicious indentured or bonded labor system.



The conditions of service seemed fair on paper; but, in reality, they favored the colonialists.

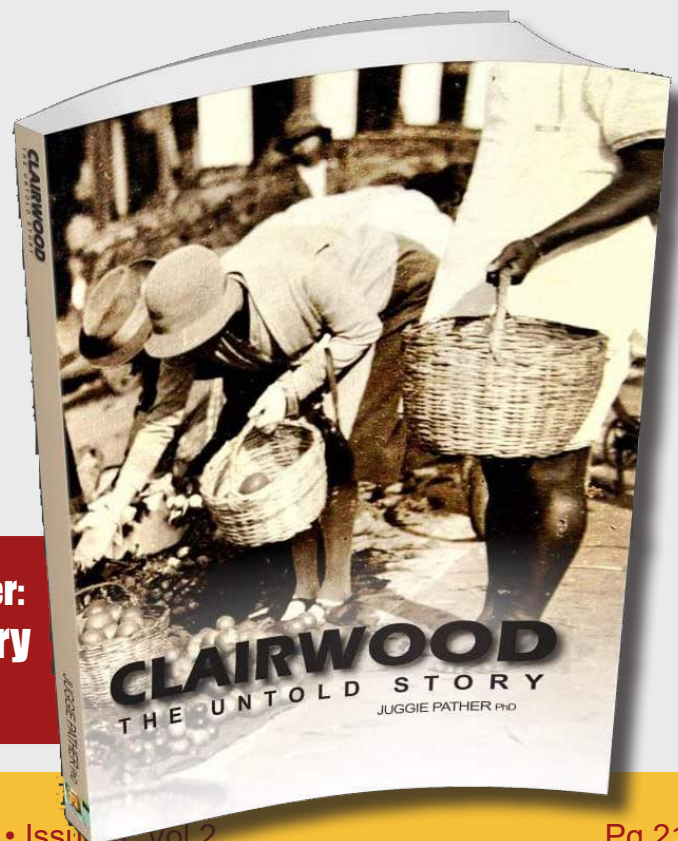
A large number of deaths, both during the voyages from India and on the plantations, explains why the workers referred to their lives as Narak (or Hell, as the Girmityas called it). In running the gauntlet, the weak in health and spirit fell by the wayside. Strengthened by their faith and the camaraderie forged on the plantations, and through extraordinary personal resilience, many managed to complete the period of indenture. Those who remained in South Africa began to gradually establish themselves in a variety of occupations; and this paved the way for succeeding generations to enter the professional, business, and political arenas successfully.

Whilst the book is about the era of indentured workers, the impact of colonialism and imperialism on societies that used bonded labor is still evident. More broadly, the decimation and annihilation of indigenous nations, resource depletion, environmental degradation, the unspeakable cruelties on poor communities continue to be a blight on the present-day world, as is evident in many places in Africa and the Caribbean.

Whilst one may wear different lenses in studying the history of the Indian indentured between 1834 and 1920, an important common theme is the failure of the colonial masters to dehumanize the workers. In this context, the book also reflects on the significance of the subaltern Indian female worker. Despite narrow Victorian gender norms and an abusive patriarchal system, Indian mothers were able to survive and succeed in a very hostile environment.

“WITHOUT KNOWING THE HORRIBLE SUFFERINGS OF OTHERS, YOU CAN NEVER PERCEIVE WHAT BEAUTIFUL LIFE YOU ARE LIVING!”
(Mehmet Murat Ildan)

**Available at The Cultural Center:
 Clairwood The Untold Story
 Juggie Pather's Best Seller**





NATAL TAMIL VEDIC SOCIETY TRUST

SA Tamil Centre for Creative Arts & Culture

WOMEN'S FORUM

*Join
Us!*

07.06.23

10:00 - 11:30

INDEPENDENCE- LEADERSHIP - UPLIFTMENT

Empowering woman of all ages into a thought process of leadership, reaching full potential, independence & taking active roles in the upliftment of ourselves, our organization & our community at large.

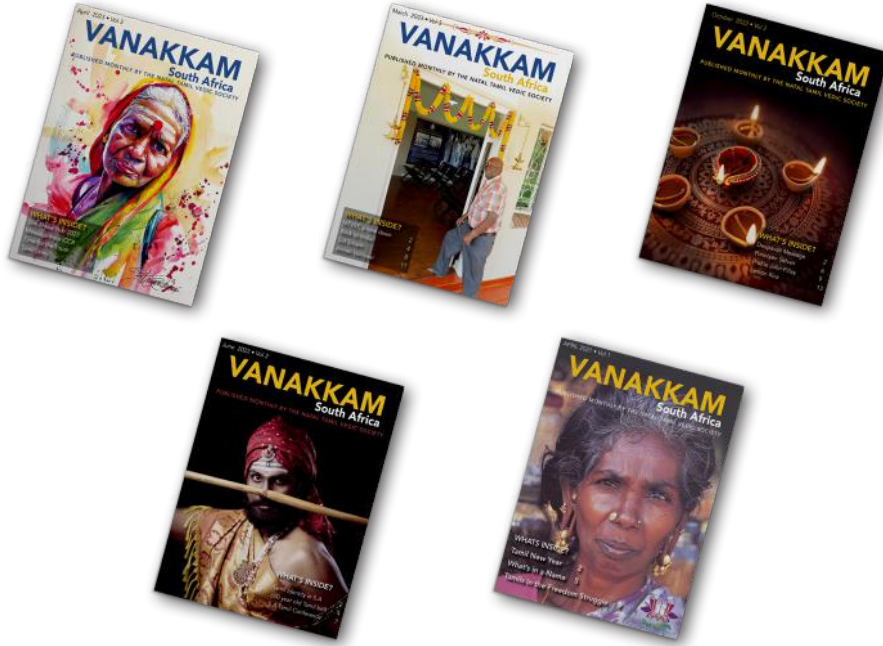
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Previous Issues



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