

Fellowship Update
From June 2018 to June 2019
A.S. Karthik Bharathi

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Greetings.

The later 6 months of 2018-2019 educational year were very much relaxed and contented personally, the reason was I was able to receive my fellowship directly from Madurai Seed itself. I have started to receive Asha fellowship from 2003. Some years in the middle, I haven't received any fellowship. From 2007, I received through some Asha Indian chapters like Bangalore and Chennai. After, I've received through 3 various organizations. It is somehow difficult to receive the fellowship on correct time every month which disturbed my personal life and gave stress to little stretch.

But now, I am able to receive my fellowship from Madurai Seed itself, because of the recent board change. I am receiving the fellowship monthly without the burden of thinking the routing and reporting problems. So, thanks to Madurai Seed trustees and Asha Boston.

I will gratefully remember, how Asha is being a major instrument in developing the lives of so many children and young people through Madurai Seed and for helping me to live a confident and self-satisfactory life by doing what I like to do.

As usual, this year too we have reached new friends, organizations which resulted in big events, good resources for children and young people, and many activities. Apart from some big events and activities, our young people themselves acted as resource persons for example in theatre activities, craft, and science activities.

In a broad view, this year our major action areas revolved around teacher trainings, English classes, theatre productions, science and social science club activities.

Our endeavours provide Seed children with opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have and raise them as confident individuals who can start to think of their dreams, and works to develop the skill sets and educational qualifications needed to achieve the dreams.

In this report I mentioned few major activities, achievements, and portrayed my major working areas from June 2018 to June 2019.

Major Responsibilities and Actions:

- Madurai Seed's board is rearranged, I was the managing trustee before from 2007 to 2018. I am given responsibility as the **director** now.
- I am a **fulltime key functioning staff** in Madurai Seed, planning and executing the day to day activities, assigning tasks to the volunteers.
- Apart from Madurai Seed children, I am extending our activities to other children as well through our own activities and through programs in partner with other organizations
- Apart from skills and personality development activities of Madurai Seed young people volunteers, some activities are planned to reach other young people, teachers, and general public.
- Apart from the daily evening study centers in Karumbalai and two hostels, many other children and young people got benefited through events organized solely by Madurai Seed, and events organized by other organizations where Madurai Seed being one of the partners and provided human resources, knowledge, and participations.
- Kaleidoscope-**Thedalgai Arangam** is one such example, where I work closely with Professor.Prabakar. The center is where artists, writers, film makers, social innovators meet children, young people, and public. Our children and young people utilize each and every opportunity from this partnership.
- Worked with **organizations** like Kaleidoscope, Cuckoo, and Nandavanam and did a big role in organizing public events like Madurai Art Festival, Children Theater Festival in Madurai and Chennai, Teacher trainings for volunteers. Madurai Seed children and young people got chances to stage their dramas, and participated as audience in those events.

- Organized Madurai Seed's annual **cultural festival** as "Five days theater fest and children carnival" at Gandhi Museum. Our children, young people, and parents as well as children, parents from other areas, many teachers, and artists participated in the program. There were art and craft sessions, photo expo, film screening, and five dramas. Our children acted in one drama and young people acted in a short drama in that. Our young people were the resource persons, volunteers, and organizers of the whole event.
- Worked with Thurgga a law student from France who came as **Intern** to Madurai Seed in June 2018, Worked with Jennifer a law student from Pune in May 2019. Prasanth, a theatre student from Hyderabad joined as volunteer in our theater festival and he organized a theatre camp for young people in May 2019.
- Worked with **ELT professionals** John Potts, Keith, Nick, Katrin, and Andrea planned English classes for children, workshops for young people, workshop for teacher trainees, and teachers.
- Guided Madurai Seed's coordinator Arun to teach English for children in a **corporation school** nearby. He taught there for 5 months from June 2018. Normally, it is not easy to enter to a corporation school from outside, It was possible by a teacher in that school who is a friend of mine.
- Found **resource persons** like Thilagarajan, Rajakumar, and Radhakrishnan and utilized them in theater productions, theater camps, and cultural activities. (Summer camp May 2018, Theater Camp December 2018, Madurai Art Festival February 2019, Chennai Theater Festival April 2019)
- Like teachers, identified **B.Ed students** who are studying in teacher training colleges can be a target audience of our educational interventions. We continuously invite them to our public events. Two teacher training colleges are responding continuously.

- Dr.Prakash, Principal of Thiagarajar College of Preceptors is good friend of mine. Teacher trainees from the college take part in our workshops and public events. The college provided “venue” facility for 4 days of Nandavanam-Madurai Seed teacher training workshop. Plus, I gave a seminar to the college students on “**Role of teachers in NGOs**”, explained about NGO formation, management, and how teachers can involve themselves in social service platforms.
- Also, this year, we got most attention in **the medias**, 10 articles mentions in English newspapers, and 4 articles mentions in Tamil newspapers.
- Rajendran, a Linguist and spoken English trainer trained volunteers in **Phonemic awareness**, prewriting skills. He tried to create a module which will help children who can't identify alphabets, sounds and support in their reading skills.
- **Thalir Thiran Thittam**, a life skills training module created by Aparajitha Foundation in audio visual media was implemented for children. Our young people facilitated those classes.
- Organized Madurai Seed **Alumni Meet** during Diwali 2018, 29 alumni took part in the event.
- Encouraged volunteers Viki, Anand, and Arun as **Design Team**, who took care of images, videos, Youtube, Posters, invitations, greeting cards, souvenirs, and print materials all worked inhouse of Madurai Seed.
- Launched **new website** for Madurai Seed. The text, images, and design are renovated.
- Vasim, who was our student during school and volunteered last three years studied B.A.English. He showed immense in theatre activities. His motivational talk is uploaded in **Josh Talks**”-Tamil a media channel in YouTube.

Major News about Holistic Education Centers:

Overall Enrollment in the Last Academic Year June 2018 to March 2019

Children in Karumbalai Holistic Education Center

Boys	140	Girls	108	Total	248
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Children in Hostel I

Boys	60	Girls	50	Total	110
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Children in Boys Hostel II

Total **127**

Young People Volunteers

Boys	14	Girls	09	Total	23
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10th,11th and 12th results May 2019:

10 th std students	34
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11 th std students	17
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12 th std students	10
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100% result in 10th,11th, and 12th std results.

College Admissions June 2019:

Four students from last year, joined as new volunteers.

Jeevananthan joined in B.A.English, Bhavani B.Sc Zoology, Jerk joined in B.Sc Tourism and Hospitality management, Marimuthu joined in B.Sc Chemistry.

Higher Education:

Nandhini who finished B.Sc. Maths is going to study Bachelor of Education, two year teacher training course.

Srinath who finished B.A.English is waiting for admission.

Outgoing volunteers:

- Prem who finished B.Sc Tourism and Hospitality management works in a Hotel in Kerala.
- Viki and Anand who finishes Diploma in Graphic Designing soon, will join in jobs.
- Vasim who finished B.A.English works in a BPO.
- James who finished B.Sc Tourism works in a private job.

Alumni Comes to teach:

- Muthuganesh, Madan, and Jensi who works in different private jobs comes to teach children regularly in the evenings.

Children Bank

Total money saved by 104 students (2018-2019) was Rs. 38,716, we distributed it with Rs. 6,275 interest.

Scholarships

Benefited Children	78
Benefited Young People	26

English classes June 2019:

Spoken English classes for children are taught by Arun to children aged 10 to 13, three hours in a week.

Spoken English classes for college young people are taught by Elavarasi two hours in a week.

Volunteer Vindhiya and Madan teach English to Vandugal Arangam young kids through rhymes and games two hours in a week.

Added Readings

THEATRE PRODUCTIONS:

Madurai Seed organizes a lots of theater camps and theater exercises for our children and young people. Every year we produce at least a children drama. We strongly feel theater provides lots of benefits to children in building up their self. They learn to work as a team, to speak with out stage fear, to speak loud and confident, creative skills through stage, costume, and makeup designing, self-management, presentation and presence of mind. They develop great interest to come regularly to Madurai Seed, so they don't lose their academic and higher education track. After each stage, they feel a great sense of achievement and receive admiration from all. These mean a lot to childhood to build up positive, joyful environment which reflects in their skills, personality development, and educational path.

Ithu Yaar Kombu in May 2018:

Story Line: This is a satirical drama questions the unfruitful education system, corrupted politics, fake democracy, and over exploitation of natural resources. The drama incorporates games of children and story telling method. The drama ends in a good note, the people are aware of exploitation by leaders and questions the crowd who is the good leader here? If individuals become good, everything will become good.

Maanudam Vendrathu in December 2018

Story Line: Caste, Religious, and Language discriminations and intolerance result in the social unrest and threat to humanity. This drama has a social message of conquering the demons like caste, religion, and language discriminations with the help of unity and humanity. This play uses "*Traditional Koothu Theatre Form*" and songs as tools to communicate with the audience.

Vannangal Atra Vaalkai in December 2018

A short drama depicts the suffering of young school students. The drama portrayed how parents kill the dreams and joyful childhood of their children by stressing on memorizing, marks, exams, extra coaching, and narrow view of successful life. This drama was created and rehearsed in one day directed by Prasanth, theatre student from Hyderabad university.

In May 2018

A three day workshop was conducted for young people in Thiruvannamalai amidst quite, green farm lands. Prasanth, theatre student from Hyderabad university facilitated this workshop for young people. A play depicts advantages of healthy life style and disadvantages of fast food culture in a humorous way.

THEATER CAMP IN CHENNAI, April 2019

Nandavanam and Madurai Seed

Nandavanam is a special school for children with developmental challenges, and also runs a learner's club (after school center) for children from fishermen colonies. Nandavanam provided a 6 days teacher training workshop for our volunteers in three phases from December 2018 to April 2019.

Nandavanam came to know about Madurai Seed's efforts in children theatre productions, and they viewed our children plays in Youtube. We discussed about the positive impact drama provides to children in their behavior. Nandavanam is fascinated by the stories of change. Nandavanam invited Madurai Seed to support a play production for their Learner's Club children including some special children.

From Madurai Seed 17 children (among 9 are girls), 5 volunteers, 2 organizers, and 3 resource persons took part in the Chennai Neelankarai Theater Fest.

15 Nandavanam children took part in the theater camp among 4 are special children.

"Paati Paati" (Grandma...Grandma...) is the new story, it is humorous yet has a powerful moral at the end. It emphasis on the importance of going to school and education. Madurai Seed children witnessed the evolution of the new play step by step. Madurai Seed young people helped the children in dialogue delivery and stage management. Madurai Seed children encouraged Nandavanam children a lot as this was their first kind of experience in theater.

Theater Festival in the Shore:

Theater Festival was organized every evening at the beach in Neelankarai. Madurai Seed children staged their three plays, in the final day Nandavanam children played their drama.

We arrive at beach each day with makeup and costumes, and call the public to witness the drama. Public enjoyed the plays very much and appreciated the children. It was the first experience for children and us to stage the drama in beach for public. Performance in the beach needed more stamina and voice throw, those doesn't stop the children in giving the best. The first ever staging and acting experience of Nandavanam children turned excellent.

MARGAZHI UTSAV –Children's Carnival – Theatre Festival, December 2018

Margazhi Utsav, part of Madurai Seed anniversary celebrations took place in Gandhi Museum that gave delightful experiences through fine art and performing art mediums over the course of 5 days from December 26th to 30th. A visual and aural treat to mark the 20th anniversary of Madurai Seed manifold ecstasy of arts, dance & theatre lovers of Madurai. Margazhi Utsav staged performances of dramatists and story tellers came from various parts of Tamil Nadu. Events took place in such a way engaging child in arty-crafty activities from 4.30 to 6 pm, and, performance of professional thespians took place from 6 to 8 pm. Here are some of the highlights from Margazhi Utsav.

- The priceless joy begun with songs of children in chorus with Mr. Radha Krishnan from TVS school, and team building games of Vasim Khan from Madurai Seed
- Madurai Seed young people presented elegant style of folk called Oyillatam to the public.
- Performance of Azhi Venkatesan from Kalaiveli, chennai. Kids enjoyed and had a good time watching his 30 minutes solo performance on Sindbad's voyages
- Activities for children like painting on clothes, traditional games, palm-leaf origami, hand painting, five types of hat making with newspapers, and shadow puppetry making with paper cutouts were carried out.
- Story teller Mrs. Akila Shankar from Magic Carpet, Bangalore beautifully presented two stories, sign actions and its meanings, and fun games
- Madurai Seed children staged "Maanudam Vendradhu", a play directed by Mr. Rajkumar that spoke about the strong roots of caste, religion in our society.
- Shadow Puppetry "Annai Mozhi" presented by Madurai Seed children articulated in puppetry language about reverence, discipline, good habits.
- Children bursted out in laughter for the humorous "Komaaliyin Kudhirai" a one-act performance of Mr. Vijayakumar, Udhiri Nadaka Nilam, Tanjore.
- Story teller Madhiyazhagn from Thamirabarani drama troop came up on stage expressing sorrow of crow. Songs and his another fairy tale echoed children's clap
- Five different activities colour powder splashing, clay model & collage making, paper clothing carried out for children gave them matchless joy and learning
- Audience were caught up at the moment by VasimKhan(Theatre artist of Madurai Seed) solo performance on "Vaanga Vandavaalangalai saapiduvom" directed by Bakrudeen from ThinaiNila vaasigal
- Young artists of Madurai Seed Kamalesh & Jai performed Silambattam, Martial arts.
- Teacher Thilagarajan, Singer Ms. Vaanavil, cheered up children through their songs.
- Pottery making, Colouring, Photo frame making, Drama practicing & Parai dancing all portrayed nuances in every creation of children.
- A skit of Madurai Seed young people "Vannangal Atra Oviyam" directed by Prashanth from Vavunya received big applauses.
- Solo performance of Ms. Stella in "Meen Vaangalayo Meen" directed by Gopi of Yaazh IsaiKuzhu, Pudhucherry and Bharathatyam dancer, Ms. Pragnya brought a serene mood

Margazhi Utsav has been designed to recognize the skills of children by providing them a big stage. Hence it happened in front of huge audience who were surprised to notice the special talents staged by Madurai Seed children from Karumbalai.

TEACHER TRAININGS:

Keith and Nick taught “Strategies for teaching English” a one day workshop teacher trainee students from Thiagrajar College of Preceptors and Madurai Seed young people benefited from that.

John Potts taught a workshop “Smart Teacher”-online tools for English teachers, teachers from schools around Madurai and Madurai seed young people took part in that.

EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

Trainers: Ms. Arthy, Ms. Kala, Ms. Shruthi, Ms. Jayashree from Nandavanam, Chennai

Trainee: Teacher volunteers of Madurai Seed & Students of Thiagaraja college of Preceptors

Madurai Seed has a mixed group of children with slow bloomers more in numbers than others. Our teacher volunteers helps in all way to achieve reading, writing and arithmetic ability of every child. Supporting them for making lesson plans, materials, study sets through resource persons ensure quality teaching and learning process.

Experiential Teaching workshop was organized for 25 nos. from Madurai Seed & TCP college under three modules for six days in Kaleidoscope and TCP college. The six-day module is all about understanding and experiencing the processes involved in learning.

1st Module: 8th – 9th, December 2018

- Introduction to the training program.
- Understanding child development.
- Role of physical movement in learning.
- Understanding of learning various learning styles and its uses in teaching.
- Role of memory and attention, it application.

2nd Module: 23rd– 24th, February 2019

- Understanding the difference between skill, content and knowledge.
- How to develop reading skills.
- How to develop writing skills.
- How to develop study skills.

3rd Module: 6th – 7th, April 2019

- How to teach math effectively helping children to understand the concepts involved in math.
- Multiple Intelligence and its implementation in Teaching Thinking skills.

Some of the teaching strategies discussed in the workshop.

- Teaching Mathematics in a fun and interesting way for children. Ms. Arthy put forth the solutions to overcome Math difficulties and she emphasized on tricks, shortcuts for doing Math fast.
- Integrating Multiple Intelligence in classroom teaching, implementing MI strategies to find out particular strengths of a student, applying MI through skits, rhymes, & story telling for Kinesthetic learners, activities to use MI theory while teaching were introduced to participants by the resource persons.
- The module on Language skills and study sets carried out by Ms. Sathya, provided strategies for breaking complex lessons into simpler using different teaching methodologies like fish-bone method, web, pictorial, venn diagram & linear methods.
- The role of memory- short term, active working and long term and attention & its applications were illustrated by her with examples. Participants were displayed with information on VAKT - Visual, Auditory, Tactile and Kinesthetic which connects all sensory of a child.
- Mrs. Kala, elucidated the child's development phases and teachers role in it & gave a presentation about child's 7 life processes.
- Life curve about the impacts of experiences in early life and its consequences in later adulthood, generalization concept for quick learning, importance of play & exercises, movements in learning, were presented by Mrs. Shruthi
- Ms. Arthi presented interactive teaching sets under linking, stimulating and organizing. Participants learned about categorization, organization, classification and connection. Also, she discussed solution for difficulties in learning English.

The whole workshop was a power packed module full of strategies, activities, exercises for teaching children who needs special care for their studies. It was very useful and productive in understanding various learning styles and its uses in teaching. Enormous energy, loads of interesting lessons, fun filled activities provided the participants a huge confidence in teaching process. Certificates were provided for everyone at the end of the workshop thanking Mr. Micky, Dr. Prakash, Ms. Arthi, Mr. Muruges.

MADURAI ART FESTIVAL, February 2019

“Madurai Seed, an NGO that works with less privileged children, brought together a group of street children and students of TVS Matriculation Higher Secondary School for powerful inclusive plays. “

The Hindu highlighted our children's play in Madurai Art festival that united arts of different forms at one place. The festival for three days from Dec 26th to 29th was organized in such a manner providing new artistic experiences for Madurai people. Perch theatre group's vibrant performance based on the folktale of legend Ki.ra, Light music of Sanil, Thappaattam, silambatam, karagattam, & oyillatam of local artistes, Manudam vellum - children's play of Madurai Seed, Assamese dance, and many events gave us a break from this hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Madurai Seed volunteers were involved in planning, designing, organizing and documenting this mega event. Madurai Seed children received applauses on the same stage where so many professionals staged their performances. Also, it was such an honor for their parents to see their kids on stage performing in front of huge audience at the Eco Park.

CONCLUSION

- The new center (space) which Asha has sponsored the lease fund will come to full-fledged function in two-month time.
- I expect some more young people from Karumbalai or from outside will join in the volunteer team in the next month.
- In the months of July and August 2019, will work together with an intern student from France and another ELT professional from Switzerland.
- Annual report for April 2018 to March 2019 is in the preparation, will be sent to you in the last week of July 2019.

I sincerely thank Asha for Education, Boston Chapter friends, Melli Annamalai akka, Friends of Madurai Seed, Laura & John for being with me in my activities. I am very much looking forward to the coming year filled with many actions and achievements.

Links and References

"Hurdles are nothing when you feel you can do it".

Sriman Vasim, a teacher volunteer of Madurai Seed shares some of his experiences as a theatre actor..He recollects how he was recognized, believed and encouraged by people in Madurai seed. He remembers and thanks John Potts, Dr. Melliya Annamalai, Dr. Laura Villiger and Madurai Seed for shaping his dream to come true.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_5STWNpICI&feature=share



Nandavanam

April 28 at 10:14 AM · 🌐

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1st day of Children Theatre Camp, 27/04/2019.

Nandavanam had a festive feel and physically the whole place looked like marriage hall. The big beautiful rangoli, the lamps and the flower decoration was too good. The program began with Tamil Thaa Vaazhthu and 2 beautiful song sung by the resource person. Next, every body was introduced and the theatre resource person started with warm up exercises with learner club children while the Madurai Seed children observed. It was such a delight to see children from both the organisation getting along and trying to forge their own friendship. Post lunch it was amazing to watch the drama getting unfolded with Nandavanam children also pitching into the play. Lastly but not the least was the mesmerising performance by Madurai Seed children in the Beach, such a talent and so well practiced. They did not even need mike and there was absolute speech clarity.

Nandavanam was filled with so many children laughter and high pulsating energy



Nandavanam is with Karthik Bharathi.

April 29 at 9:12 AM · 🌐

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Second day of Children Theatre Camp, 28/04/2019...

The second day of camp was very exciting, like a puzzle the pieces started to together. Our children play was practiced in bits and part yesterday and today it was wonderful to see the whole act coming together. Our children involvement was much higher.

The highlight was Surya's performance as Village muscleman, his expression was priceless. The children tried their costume and what took me by surprise was when Rupan came and asked for his costume and Megha wanted her face to be painted when Madurai seed children were getting ready. It was a delight to see children get the rhythm and movement perfect.

The art of shadow puppetry is so simple yet profound. Learners club teachers learned the puppetry from the resource person and hopefully we can carry it forward.

The evening performance was so poignant. It made a person to look at societies evil like caste, language and countries boundary in a different light.



Nandavanam

May 1 at 3:19 PM · 🌐

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The finale to the "Children Theatre Fest"

Madurai seed Children were waiting for learners club Children to arrive. As soon as the children, they greeted each other.

It was fascinating to see on one room learners club children practicing on their play, teacher's learning shadow puppet and Madurai seed Children practicing in their play. Supporting staff weaving in and out of each buzzing group like busy bees. Everybody would rest in between each rehearsal by interacting and playing with each other.

One final rehearsal was done after lunch and all the children rested for a while followed by fun filled make up session.

After the make up, there was formal gathering where everybody shared their experiences and learning. It was so heart warming to hear children's view about each other and their experiences.

The finale was the performance at the beach, the first play was by Madurai Seed Children, just like the previous two evening, their performance was excellent. This was followed by Shadow puppet by the teacher. The teacher surprised us all by learning this art in just a day. Last was the performance by Nandavanam Children and just when the performance was about to start the Madurai seed Children motivated the Nandavanam children and it was so touching. They sensed their anxiety and tried easing it for them.

The three days felt like a festival, every child walked off with memories, amazing experience and learning for life and start of new friendship

Thanks a lot Karthik and Madurai Seed for this wonderful experience.....



Sathya Yogithyaacademy is 😊 feeling positive with Karthik Bharathi and 2 others.

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May 1 at 8:43 PM · 👤

Theatre Drama by Madurai seeds and Nandavanam Neelankarai..Drama which brings their inner talents ,Improves self confidence, improves Vocabulary,concentration,Listening skill,Sequencing skill..It was an amazing Performance by the team of Madurai seeds and Nandavanam Neelankarai. My sincere wishes to both the team..

⚙️ · Provide translation to Tamil

