

A culturally very active community

Last month the Tamil community of Mauritius was blessed by a series of high level cultural events, among which we had the Final of the Tevaram Competition of the Northern Tamil Association, the semi-final of the Tirumurai Competition of the Sivanadiyar Association, the Bharatnatyam presentation of Smt Padmini Krishnamurthy for the Global Rainbow Foundation and the Issai Arangam of the Tamil Cultural Centre Trust. There is no doubt that we are very active culturally, and it's not the Minister of Arts and Culture who will deny this fact. At the head of the organisations mentioned earlier, we have people having at heart the interest of the community; without whose dedication and devotion these would not have been possible. We have to be thankful to these organisations for encouraging our youth in keeping in touch with our culture and religion, thus maintaining the link with our past generations. To a large extent, these initiatives help to inculcate the right mindset and citizenship education in our youth and give us hope for a better society in the future.

However, in our modern society, such initiatives are unfortunately not enough to ensure a prosperous future of our community. We need to do much more. We need to provide our people with academic and technical education, we need to send them to universities, technical schools and alike. We need to get them prepared for better employment. We need to advise them not be tempted to go for short-term jobs with only immediate benefits which in the long run will not be sufficient for themselves and for their children. All tamil associations should have this objective inbuilt in their vision to assist the community. Indeed there are some organisations which are engaged in such initiatives for years. The Tamil League, for example, recently launched its invitation for scholarships at local tertiary institutions for the year 2012. Mr Armoogum Parsuramen, through his Global Rainbow Foundation has negotiated and secured 2 scholarships every year with a University of Tamil Nadu for two of our Tamil sons and daughters. We also noted with satisfaction the award of two scholarships for further studies at Chennai by the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust.

Then? Do we have similar facilities available elsewhere? Are they being publicized appropriately? The academic year will soon start at our local universities. How many of our people have applied? How many will be admitted? Are there any such monitoring? Should there be any monitoring? If yes, who will do that? We do not even have a bank of tamil professionals who can assist in such initiatives.

Our people should be constantly reminded that there are many facilities, here itself, in Mauritius. There are needy scholarships at the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). There are funding options available at Banking and other financing institutions at very affordable conditions which one might wish to consider. A list of these institutions may be consulted at <http://educare.intnet.mu/grants.htm> . The government has set as objectives to have one graduate per family. After all why should we not adhere to this objective? In my humble opinion we need to have a national forum on this aspect only – how to get our people to attend Universities and Technical Institutions. That's our future!

Nandri, vanakkam.

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Jul 2012