

Where are our Youth?

I keep pondering on this question time and again but could not sort out why we do not see our youth whenever opportunities are offered to them. There is no doubt that as mature adults we see the world differently for having been through various difficulties and life experiences. The youths of today are living their lives day by day, and a big majority of them do not worry about the far future, better leaving that for their parents to look after. This state of affairs that we are currently experiencing is nothing less than Lethargy.

Last month Pathirikai launched a 'Young Reporter's Crash Course' intended for young HSC holders to enable them to develop their public writing skills. The course incorporated modules on Photography and Interviewing Skills thus giving the participants the full breath of a reporter's aptitude. Whether one would wish to become a reporter or not, this course could help one to write press articles for any newspaper such as L'Express, Le Mauricien, Le Matinal and Pathirikai and to develop that skill with time into a profession or a side activity. The course was advertised on Pathirikai, and on Facebook and email was equally sent to many of the Facebookers. To our great dismay, we got only three applicants. Is it because the course is FREE or is it because they do not see the necessity of acquiring additional skills?

Recently the MTTF conducted a career guidance forum, whereby professionals from various sectors and institutions were called upon to provide advice to our youth aspiring to go for further studies. The forum was timed before the August intake of the two public universities, to enable those seeking courses to select the right course in view of foreseeing developments happening in Mauritius. Representatives of banks were also present to introduce their financing schemes. Not more than 10 participants attended the forum at the seat of the MTTF. Another missed opportunity.

However it is a completely different picture that we see in entertaining events taking place around the island, at very odd times and places though. Attendance by the same age groups at Tamil Nites, Adhi Nites and similar events are surprisingly high. You will even see many of them flocking around during the celebrations of Govinden Thiruvizha. No doubt that the folkloric aspect of Govinden Thiruvizha nowadays has made it a crowd puller, which is not bad in itself. While not disputing the need for such activities for our youth, we pain to understand why we do not see them in educational, training and career fora. Some socio-cultural associations are starting to face this crisis as well – absence of youth is being badly felt. In the launching of the 75th Anniversary of the Tamil League, the President Gurnaden Vydellingum shared with the audience the difficulties he is facing to recruit young members. In the years to come, if we do not inject young blood in our associations we shall face serious issues in managing these associations. One of the problems that Vanakkam was facing every month was the absence of young volunteers to help in the packing and distribution of Vanakkam Newspapers. A group of old Tatas have been doing these jobs for years with Dr Pillai. They could no longer sustain this effort and had to close door. Even for cleaning the kovil yards nowadays, we are having to employ cleaners, while in the past, young bhaktens were happily doing the job.

Every month Pathirikai publishes motivational articles in its Youth Page from a very eminent academic - Dr. Vridhachalempillay SUBRAMANIAM. Up to now it has not triggered the discussion we were expecting.

While it is said that the YOUTH OF TODAY ARE THE ADULTS OF TOMORROW, the expectation is for not just adults but better adults. This can only be achieved if the youth of today seize the opportunities that are given to them, to make them better adults. Shall we not organize a Youth Forum or a Youth Camp to address these many issues facing our youth, so that we may safeguard a better future? Let's give it another try.

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