

**Presentations made at the Seminar on**

## **The Sojourn of Mandayam Srivaishnavas Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

**Held on 3rd September 2016, as a part of**

**The Centenary Celebrations of**

## **Seminar Sub-Committee**

**Leader** - **M.A.N. Prasad**

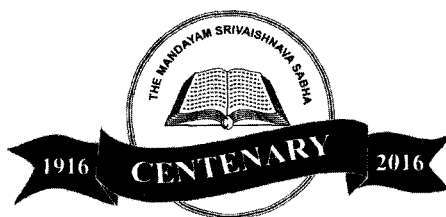
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**The Sojourn of Mandayam**  
**Srivaishnavas**  
**Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**



**Held on 3rd September 2016, as a part of**  
**The Centenary Celebrations of**  
**The Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha,**  
**Bangalore**

## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Foreward  | v  |
| The Seminar and its Theme<br>- <i>M.A.N. Prasad</i>   | vi |
| 1. Keynote Address<br>- <i>Prof. M.A. Lakshmithathachar</i>   | 1  |
| 2. Our hoary past that makes us proud<br>- <i>Dr. M.A. Alwar</i>  | 11 |
| 3. The Values we have inherited from our elders<br>- <i>Ram Srinivas</i>  | 17 |
| 4. Migration to other Countries and its impact on our traditions<br>- <i>Dr.M.P.Srinivasan</i>  | 27 |
| 5. Mandayams at the helm of Various Professions<br>- <i>Dr.M.A.R.Iyengar</i>  | 38 |
| 6. Tomorrow: The Need to Develop an Inclusive Outlook, while Retaining the Core Values of our Tradition<br>- <i>Dr. M.A. Srinivasan</i> | 44 |
| 7. Mandayam Srivaishnavas at the forefront of Technology<br>- <i>Dr. M.K. Srivas</i>  | 55 |
| 8. Valedictory Address<br>- <i>Smt. Dwaraki Krishnaswamy</i>  | 60 |

## FOREWARD

The Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha started in 1916, has completed a long journey of 100 years of its existence in 2016 – the Centenary Year. To celebrate the milestone event, many programmes have been planned and scheduled throughout the year, in the area of sports, culture, etc and it was thought that the Sabha should review the happenings and growth in the last 100 years and look at where the Mandayam Srivaishnavas are today and the future. Generally speaking, it is well known that, post independence, country's economy has grown improving standard of living and bringing prosperity, inspite of many tribulations. Science and technology which has brought convenience and comfort in daily life including instant communication, speedy travel, better health care, digital education, etc. has increased materialism by leaps and bounds. Globalisation in the last 2 decades, meant for trade only has brought in change in culture also. All these have affected Indians, Mandayam Srivaishnavas in particular in maintaining the spiritual fervor, the backbone of a Mandayam. Being intelligent and analytical, Mandayams occupy many good positions in the field of latest technological corporations and institutions. This has led to an exodus of qualified Mandayms to foreign countries, particularly USA. The 'Diaspora' abroad continues to grow. No longer marriages are within the community. It was thought, these changes and their impact and the future is best subjected to a 'SEMINAR' – titled as '**Past-present-future**', addressed by Mandayam speakers of experience of the past and current young professionals from both local and international, to ultimately bring a vision for the future. I am certain a future path should be laid encompassing all.

Sri MAN Prasad – Leader of 'Seminar' has put lot of efforts in organizing this seminar. His innovative mind is a great asset to the Sabha. My grateful thanks to him and his team. I place my gratitude to all the learned speakers for their enlightened views.

The booklet in your hand is a brief summary of talks given by speakers. This will enable Sabha in their future plans.

**Natampally Narasimhan**

Chairman, Centenary Committee

## **From the Leader - Seminar**

### **The Seminar and its theme**

The success of the seminar conducted by the Sabha in 2014 prompted us to have a seminar as a part of the Centenary celebrations of the Mandayam Sabha, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, 2016, at the Ubhaya Vedanta Pravartana Sabha's hall. Based on the feedback received at the earlier Seminar, the duration of the seminar was kept to half day, followed by lunch.

### **The background and the theme of the Seminar**

The MandayamSrivaishnava community is a small community of intellectuals, whose strength has been learning and knowledge. They have not confined themselves to academic learning only, but have made significant contributions in other fields too. We have a very hoary past. Our ancestors were learned men who were the elite of the society and we have heard stories of their being invited by the maharajas and royalty for playing chess or 'pagade', scholarly debates & discussions, etc. They have many achievements that make us proud.

Apart from these achievements, they had a spiritual leaning and were leading a simple Spartan life. These characteristic features – learning & knowledge, spiritual leanings, simple unostentatious living and a lack of undue importance to money – of the MandayamSrivaishnava has been handed down from generation to generation.

The changing social environment and greater emphasis on material wealth, have caused changes in our life style, which have brought some sweeping changes in our community. How deeply are we affected by these changes? In the changing world of today and tomorrow, how will these characteristic features of MandayamSrivaishnavas be affected? To what extent have our original ideals /values got diluted? What role will we have to play to preserve and pursue these values? These are some of the questions that the speakers will address in this Seminar.

Keeping this background in view, the subject for the Seminar was chosen as "The Sojourn MandayamSrivaishnavas – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow".

The talks would essentially be covering the following areas:

**1. The factors that make us proud as a community**

Achievements in various areas, continuing to be in the fore front of knowledge – though the area could have shifted from philosophy to science and technology, research, academics, etc. – Excellence in various professions

**2. The values we wish to live up to and hand down to the next generation**

Changes in life style caused by migration to various towns / countries seeking a livelihood, need to adapt to new life style and social conditions, need to acquire an inclusive attitude, etc., relevance of our traditions in this changing world, problems and limitations in sustaining them; kind of efforts required, etc. Each segment of “yesterday, today and tomorrow” will have two speakers, and one of them will cover the factors that make us proud as a community and the other would speak on the values we wish to live up to and hand down to the next generation.

Based on this concept the following topics were given to the speakers:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Yesterday</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Our hoary past that makes us proud</b></li> <li>◆ <b>The values we have inherited from our elders</b></li> </ul>  |
| <b>Today</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Mandayam Srivaishnavas at the helm of various professions</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Migration to other countries and its impact on our traditions</b></li> </ul>                |
| <b>Tomorrow</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Mandayam Srivaishnavas in the forefront of technology</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Need to develop an inclusive outlook, retaining the core values of our tradition</b></li> </ul> |

Each speaker was allotted 30 minutes in which he would

use 20 minutes for his talk and devote the balance 10 minutes for interaction with the audience. Since the time available to the speaker was short, it was suggested that he uses a power point presentation and covers the highlights of his talk.

A half-day seminar cannot possibly arrive at any conclusive suggestions or solutions to the community that is at the cross road of a sweeping change. But, if it can set the participants and members to think in this direction, it would have served its purpose.

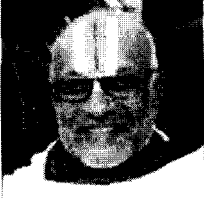
We had requested all the speakers to give us a detailed write up on the topic covered by them at the Seminar and these have been brought out as a book today. We do trust that you will find the presentations made at the Seminar interesting and thought provoking.

With Best regards

**M.A.N.Prasad**

**Leader - Seminar**





**Mahamahopadhyaya, Shashtravidyanidhi, Pandita-raja**

## **Prof.M.A.Lakshmithathachar**

Prof. M.A. Lakshmithathachar hails from a unique family of Swayam-Acharya Purushas direct lineage of Saint Sri Anandalwar, one of the 74 Simhasana-adhipathi's appointed by Sri Ramanujacharya which has unbroken for nearly 1000 years. Prof. M.A. Lakshmithathachar is a great traditional Sanskrit Scholar who specializes in all the Indian Knowledge systems. He has dedicated his life to prove to the world the relevance of these ancient knowledge systems to the modern fields as varied as information technology, agriculture, horticulture and so on. He has edited / authored more than 100 various publications. He has taught at the Post Graduate and doctoral levels and established several institutes of national and international repute. Presently, he continues to be actively engaged in research work and spreading awareness about the importance and significance of the traditional Indian knowledge systems through the following positions he is holding:

- ◆ President, Samskriti Foundation, Mysore
- ◆ Chief Patron, Virtual Academy of Ancient Knowledge- Systems (VAAK, Bangalore / Mysore)
- ◆ Senior Honorary Advisor, Trans-Disciplinary University, FRLHT, Bangalore
- ◆ Chief Mentor, Center for Advanced Research & Technology (CART), Sri Venkateshwara College of Engineering, (SVCE), Bangalore
- ◆ Dean & Chairman of Research, Sri Ramanuja Vishwa-Vidya Prasthan (Indian Institute of Transdisciplinary Research in Philosophy of Sri Ramanuja), Melkote
- ◆ Visiting Professor, VYASA University, Bangalore
- ◆ Head, Rishi-Krishi-Vijnana-Kendra (RKVK), Melkote
- ◆ President, Sri Vivekollasini Sabha, Melkote
- ◆ Presiding Acharya, Anantarya Peetham, Melkote

He is also the Recipient of President of India's Award and has been honored with many titles, among which the notable are the following:

- ◆ Mahamahopadhyaya,
- ◆ Shashtravidyanidhi,
- ◆ Pandita-raja

**Keynote address****Mahamahopadhyaya, Shashtravidyanidhi, Pandita-raja,****Prof.M.A.Lakshmithathachar**

Dear Shri. NatampallyNarasimhan, Shri. Jayasimha, Speakers of today's Seminar, and fellow Mandayams,

The Mandayam community is always admired and respected for their distinct traits, enterprises, spirit, spirituality, philanthropic activities, honesty, dexterity and good mannerism.

This community has formed MandayamSrivaishnava Sabha for the welfare of the community for preserving the social relationship among members of the community. As long as the community was confined to a certain part of the country namely Mandya and the surrounding villages there was no problem of its identity. With the advent of democracy, globalization, urbanization, American consumerism, Macaulay's Education system, loss of spirituality and other reasons, the community is facing an identity crisis. Many of our community members and families have migrated to various places all over the world. With increased communication facilities the world has shrunk to the status of global village. Being part of this global village the community has crossed national boundaries and the members of our community could be seen in many parts of the world. Many of them could be found in UK, Germany, Canada and USA and thus it has become an international community. In their new cities of residence they have been struggling to maintain their identity. They have associations to provide an opportunity to members of the community for interaction and collective care of their problems in their new locations.

The new locations of the members of the community are distinct and different from their ancestral birth places.

In the new location, they have the opportunities and compulsions of intermingling with other people and communities, gradually distancing them from their ancestral traits and qualities. This state of affairs rises important questions. Will the community be able to maintain its distinct

identity in years to come? With the passage of time, fifty years or hundred years after today, the present generation will be replaced by new generation which will have little connection with their past. What will be the factors to bind the new generation into the five hundred year old well-knit MandayamCommunity.

To answer this question we have to first of all answer the question , What is a community? According to a sociologist, "A community like ours is an ethnic group." According to sociology, "At a very simple level, ethnicity can be thought of as sense of group identity derived from real or perceived common bonds such as language, race or religion."

Ethnicity is involuntary in which members share common socialization practices or culture. Ethnic group membership is not a matter of choice but rather an accident of birth.

According another sociologist, "Ethnicity refers to an involuntary group of people who share the same culture or descendents of such people who identify them and/or identified by others as belonging to the same involuntary group."

These definitions help us to describe the essential objectives and characteristics for the existence of an ethnic group such as our MandayamSrivaishnava Community as they are as follows :

1. Languages
2. Race, colour, physical features
3. Religion
4. Geographical features
5. Ancestors

### **Languages**

Most of the MandayamIyengars or the Srivaishnavas of Mel Nadu by inscriptional evidence at Malur dating back to 1014 clearly says there were Mel Nadu Srivaishnavas even before Ramanuja's advent in Karnataka. Among the MelnaduSrivaishnavas, mainly there are 4 groups: Mandayam.,Hebbars, Mardur, Hemmige. Among these groups, MandayamIyengars were commanding high respect because of their spiritual moorings, outstanding knowledge in the field of spirituality and strict orthodox practices. Even today, many

of the Kilnatiyengars who have close interaction with the Mandayamiyengars of Melkote mention that Mandayamiyengars wash their hands in fire. Now I regret to say, the pure Mandayam community is on the verge of extinction. Probably this may appear to be an exaggeration but when we closely watch the day to day living style of MandayamSrivaishnavas, it appears that the MandayamSrivaishnava community is bound to lose its identity in the long run and become non descriptive.

### **Solutions for identity crisis**

1. **Language:** Preservation of the dialect that they are speaking

Every community will have a strong bond with the language it speaks. Many of the communities speak dialects that have emerged from one single language which strictly follows the rules and regulations of grammar. In the case of MandayamSrivaishnava community, they are separated from the mainstream of Tamil speaking Sri vaishnavas of Tamil Nadu long ago, that is , prior to Ramanuja itself. Hence, MandayamSrivaishnavas speak a different type of Tamil which is called the MandayamSrivaishnava Tamil. This dialect of the literary Tamil language plays a very important role in binding the Mandayams together. In fact, the language one speaks represents one's own culture. Hence, MandayamSrivaishnavas should always try to speak their own dialect, atleast, when they are discussing among themselves. The language bond is an irresistible bond and keeps the community together.

There are certain important features of this Mandayam Tamil which has preserved certain archaic Tamil usages which have gone out of currency in the mainstream of Srivaishnava community of Tamil Nadu.

These are some of the examples :

1. Avandepaade - which means Avani dattil, in pure Tamil. At present, if the word Paade is used in Tamil Nadu, it refers to the stretcher made out of bamboos for carrying corpse. But, in Tirunarayanapurattu Ayi Vyakhyanam of Tiruppavai, the word Paade is frequently used to refer to the meaning 'in'.

Besides, MandayamSrivaishnavas use certain important Tamil words which are out of currency in Tamil Nadu. For example, Tirumadapalli or Madapalli, Tirukkannamudu, Shatrumudu, Saadikkiradu, prasadam, etc which have high antiquity and also sanction according to the Srivaishnava spiritual way of living. In Tamil Nadu, when food has to be served, instead of using Saadi - servi, they use the word Parimaaru. Word Saadi or Saadikkiradu invariable refers to the distribution of the sanctified offering of God to the devotees.

The word Tirumadappalli has been derived from the root Adu - to cook. Adupalli means the kitchen or the cooking room. The word Tiru appended to Adapalli means the sanctified place where Prasadam or offerings are prepared with the noble intention of offering it to the Supreme Being with cleanliness, devotion and dedication.

Similarly, the oft used words in Tamil Nadu namely Payasam, Rasam, etc referring to certain food items are designated as Shaaruamudu , the ambrosia in the form of Rasam, Tirukkanamudu, the porridge of payasam, which is sanctified by the Graceful eyesight of the Lord.

In the same manner, many archaic words which are used in 13<sup>th</sup> century 14<sup>th</sup> century Tamil Language like Kuppayam, Vellatti, Thodati, referring to Blouse, Housemaid, Washed clothes are used by the MandayamIyengars.

Thus, it can be shown that MandayamIyengar Tamil, a unique dialect of pure Tamil language has its own vigour, spiritual content and also represents the way of living.

In this way, if one has to maintain the Mandayam Identity, one has to speak the Mandayam dialect only when interacting with his own community members.

### **Spiritual Moorings**

Most of the MandayamSrivaishnavas are called Paramaikantins who are solely dedicated to the Supreme Being and His affectionate service. Besides, they were also following the Charmaparvanishtha to the letter.

Regarding their dedication to the service of the Supreme Being it can be said that a Srivaishnava respects the incarnation of the Lord as an icon (Archavataram), then all other forms of God like Para, Vyuha, Vibhava and Antaryami. Hence, most of

the MandayamIyengars were associated with some temple service or the other. Since the originator of the Mandayam community, namely Anandalvan sacrificed everything,even the cohabiting with his own Acarya, which was most dear to him, for the sake of carrying out the orders of the Acarya in the form of offering Pushpakainkaryam to the Lord of the seven Hills, namely, lord Venkateshwara. Most of the Mandayams who had settled earlier in Mandya, Malur, Honnalegere, Kunigal, Nagamangala and especially Melkote, had hereditary posts in the temples attached to those places. While offering sevas at the temple, many a times, they would not be in a position to perform the Nitya karmas of Brahmins like saindhyavandhanam, etc at the proper time as they were involved in the affectionate service of the Lord in the Temples. When Alwar Swami, my great grandfather was question about the lapse of MandayamSrivaishnavas in performing Nityakarmas due to their total involvement in the temple services , he said, "The direct service that is offered to the Supreme Being in the form of Archavatara is better than the indirect daily services that are offered to the Supreme in the form of Nityakarmas. He also said, paramaikantins who were deeply engrossed in the affectionate kainkarya, many a times, will forget the passage of time. This is the reason for their not adhering to the proper time of performing Nityakarmas.

Besides, almost all the Mandayams were following Charamaparvanishtha, that is taking soul refuge in the Acarya as ones spiritual imancipator. The Acarya Bhakti possessed by these Mandayams was outstanding and unique. For instance, as mentioned in the AharaNiyama of Vedanta Desika, some of the disciples of my father, who was a Svayamacharyapurusha, used to partake the prasadam of my father who was their revered Acharya. A lady belonging to the well-known Makaramfamily who was known as ChikmagalurShitti, used to request my mother to give the privilege of eating food in the same leaf in which my father had taken the prasadam. She used to tell my mother, "Dear Ammangaramma, you have the privilege of eating in the leaf of your husband, who is my Acarya, every day. Atleast for this day, can you give me that privilege so that I feel blessed. "This was the type of devotion MandayamSrivaishnavas , both

men and women had towards their Acharya and this is the height of Charmaparvanishtha.

Such spiritual moorings and considering Acharya as the soul means of salvation was the hallmark of Mandayam community. They would not perform any auspicious functions and NalayiramTiruvaimozhitodakkam, etc. Invariably, they would take guidelines from the Acharya and perform all these rites strictly according to the guidelines given by the Acharya. Even now, when they perform Nalayiram or Tiruvaimozhitodakkam and shatumurai on the final day after the recital of Tiruviruttam, the Acharya has to recite the following which should be recited by the Karta of that Nalayiram or Tiruvaimozhitodakkam and shatumurai.

"Swamihaladiyenudaiya .....  
aanavaracharyantiruvadihalaiadaindar. Tannimittamaahakoil,  
tirumalai, perumalkoil, tirunarayanapurammudalana 108  
tirupathihalezhundaruliirukkumjeeyal, swamihal, ekangihal,  
srivaishnavarhalanaivarum ennaishunnam kandaruli  
kripaisheidurakshittarulavenum."

This practice clearly indicates that they were desirous of attaining the lotus feet of the Lord instead of attaining the lotus feet of the Supreme Being. Such was their Acharya bhakti. Though the practice continues even today, hardly one can witness the spirit of it. If MandayamSrivaishnava community wants to maintain its identity, it should strictly follow these spiritual and religious practices.

Apart from this even while performing Mangalakaryam like upanayanam, marriages, etc, most of the MandayamIyengars started with Nandi tarpanam. This is a unique feature of the Mandayam community members after offering libatory waters to their predecessors, koiltiruvaimozhi, excluding Veeduminmuttam and shoozhvishumbudasakams is recited by Srivaishnavas. After the shatumurai, Alwar Acharya sambhavana is followed. This practice is not found in Tamil Nadu Srivaishnava Brahmins. At the end of these performances, they perform these without Nandi tarpanam and Acharya sambhavana, etc.

In this way several unique religious practices and spiritual attitudes distinguish MandayamSrivaishnavas from the other Srivaishnavas.

MandayamSrivaishnavas were following the Acharams and Vyavaharams strictly as laid down by SmritiGranthas. Most of the MandayamSrivaishnavas would covet poverty and remain in the holy divyadesams to offer kainkaryams to the Archaemberuman without bothering about their career. Most of them were really UbhayaVedantins well versed in the DivyaPrabandhams of alwaars and also Samskritha Vedanta. They were well aware that pure satvic food alone would help them to continue their spiritual pursuits. Nobody would eat outside their house and partake food prepared by specified persons strictly according to the AharaNiyamam laid down in the Shastras. Most of the MandayamIyengar wives used to prepare food chanting TiruppavaiTiruppallandu, etc. They would not use prohibited vegetables like cabbage, tomato, potato, etc as they are said to be causing many defects due to their shape, colour, etc. They would not use tap water other than well water for drinking or cooking purposes. Stoves, etc were not known. Only wood fuel was used for cooking. Slowly charcoal was introduced and it seems my grandfather used to remark "pinattilatalihapannariya"when charcoal was used for cooking.

Now another important point to be considered is with regard to the marriages performed by the MandayamSrivaishnavas, Apart from the religious practices that are observed in the marriages, strictly they would bring and give daughters in marriage only to the brides and bridegrooms of the Mandayam community. Now due to globalisation, advent of Information technology, American Consumerism, the marriages are not performed among the members of our own community. There are inter community and intra community marriages due to obvious reasons. Unless this is given a grinding halt, the purity of Mandayam breed cannot be protected. While preserving the purity of breeds among animals, the breed characters have to be strictly observed and animals belonging to the same breed with all purity has to be cohabited to bring out the next generation. Now this cannot be followed due the reasons mentioned above. Under these circumstances, it is suggested that as far as possible the marriages should be performed from among the members of the community without depending upon extraneous circumstances. Then alone the



genetic characters of the Mandayam community could be preserved. Otherwise there is the fear of losing our identity.

In this connection, it is noteworthy to read the following:

AlkondavilliGovindacharya in his book, "The life of Ramanujacharya" says,

"Varna= the four typical castes of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. Asrama = the four typical orders of life, viz, Brahmacharya (Student), Grihastha (householder), Vanaprastha (Anchorite) and Sanyasa (Monastic).

A recent speech by Mr. N. N. Ghose at the Hare Anniversary Meeting (1904) is important as bearing on the vexed question of caste in India, which the Christian will not understand. He said, "The division into castes cannot be understood by anyone who does not realise that all Hindu institutions were inspired by one principle. It was not political expediency, not social convenience, not the happiness of the greatest number, not the development of fighting capacity. Material good was a subordinate end. The ruling principle was the spiritual evolution of man, the perfection of character, realisation of the self. For the purposes of spiritual evolution, a segregation of classes and occupations was considered necessary. The Brahmans, for instance, were to be devoted to religious work and meditation and the function of teaching and so on with other castes. It was no mere division of labour that was thus accomplished. It was an institution meant to prevent the spiritual degradation of men by the mixing up of finer and courser spiritual natures. The four leading castes were marked off from each other by characteristics that could not be mistaken. The division was not arbitrary. All experience shows that men are not equally endowed on the spiritual side. Then it has to be remembered that the law of Karma was one of the root conceptions of the caste-system. Men were born into a particular caste by their Karma of a previous life. Men of lower castes could go up to the higher in another life if they had made spiritual progress enough in this life. No mere intellectual qualifications or material conditions would raise a man to a higher caste. Each man was born into the caste for which he was destined by his own susceptibilities. There was room enough for advancement and usefulness within the limits of

his on caste. But he was not to be permitted to spoil his own breed by marrying in a lower spiritual plane or spoil the breed of a higher caste by marrying on a higher plane. Modern life may make it difficult or impossible to carry out these ideas. But in them is to be found the interpretation of an ancient system which has puzzled and provoked men whose ideals are different from those of our ancient ancestors. Not muscles and intellect, not happiness, not political ascendancy, but spiritual perfection and purity were the only end." The warning voice against promiscuous intercourse and admixture of castes is found in the Bhagavad Gita, 1, 40 to 44; which may be read by all the devotees of this Holy Bible, and laid to heart before venturing to anathematize the caste-institution of India.

Therefore, all our traditions have a deep meaning and purpose. We need to explain it to our members and make them understand their significance in terms of today's context.



## **Dr. M. A. Alwar**

Dr. M. A. Alwar is a Sanskrit scholar specializing in Sanskrit literature and Indian Philosophy, especially the systems of philosophy that deal with traditional Indian logic. Presently, he is a Professor of Indian Logic at the Maharaja Sanskrit College, at the Karnataka Sanskrit University, and also the Project Director of the Medical Manuscripts programme at the Trans-Disciplinary University, FRLHT, Bangalore. Apart from authoring books on various aspects of Indian Philosophy, he has been involved in the development of software for various aspects of manuscriptology, and is presently engaged in preparing a digital repository of manuscripts on Indian systems of medicine with many pioneering features. He is also actively involved in disseminating knowledge of Indian cultural heritage in different media and various reputed forums.

## **Our hoary past that makes us proud**

**- Dr. M. A. Alwar, Mysore**

I feel it a great privilege to have been given an opportunity to present a paper at this seminar being held as part of the MandayamSrivaishnavaSabha's Centenary Celebrations.

When I was initially asked to present a paper on the topic mentioned above, I felt both a deep sense of pride and also a sense of loss. The former was due to the really hoary past our community as a whole had; the latter due to the fact that, in reality there is no such identity left as of today due to the fast changes that have occurred in our society in the last many decades, especially in the last 30 - 40 years of globalization resulting from the IT revolution and such other factors.

Today, among the real thinkers of our community, there is a very deep debate as to what really means when we talk or think of the term 'MandayamSrivaishnavas'. When we analyze this term, it has two components viz. 'Mandayam' and 'Srivaishnavas'. Let us first analyze the meaning of the term 'Srivaishnavas'. This term means "those who are engaged in the worship alone of Lord Narayana, also known as Lord Vishnu, and have given up everything else, both in letter and spirit to absorb themselves in the divine experience of the Lord, (that too in accordance with the tenets laid down by our Supreme Acharya BhagavanRamanuja)". In the works of our predecessor Acharyas, such persons are known as 'paramekantis'.

The word 'Mandayam' means that those who belong to the geographical location of 'Mandaya' details of which are given in various locations including the website of the MandayamSrivaishnava Sabha, and hence I will not go into those details.

While the literal meaning of the word 'Srivaishnava' can apply and refer to any person who fulfills the criterion mentioned above, the compound word 'Mandayam-Srivaishnava' refers to certain Srivaishnavas, whose origin belongs to this geographic location. As in a huge number of cases (in the various contexts<sup>1</sup>), during the last several centuries, the term 'Srivaishnava' has come to mean those who are born in the lineage of a certain clan, irrespective of

whether the persons (who are referred to by the concerned word) possess the characteristics mentioned above.

While identifying this Mandayam-Srivaishnavas as a community or a clan, it is to be noted that, a unique identity was preserved until almost the past 50 years or so (with exceptions that could be easily counted), due to certain social and religious norms that were diligently followed by the persons belonging to this community like:

- Respect for tradition and antiquity of Srivaishnavas
- Adhering to certain social and religious norms and practices to the maximum possible extent
- Performing marriages within the community and thus preserving the unique characteristics of the community, and so on.

However, due to the vast amount of change in the political, social, religious and other spheres of life over the last seven or eight decades (probably after the advent of Indian Independence to begin with and the IT revolution and globalization as the almost end point) the community has disintegrated with only small remnants of the tradition being preserved in miniscule pockets (read 'households!') due to certain 'die-hard' (to put it in a very blunt manner!) personalities who really cared to put in conscious and perseverant efforts to preserve the 'tradition'. This has resulted in only about 20 persons (literally) still preserving at least the outward appearance of traditional Mandayam-Srivaishnavas of what is an almost indistinguishable entity today. Thus, one feels tempted to even dismiss the idea of a distinct Mandayam-Srivaishnava community as a redundant one, given the fast paced developments that have influenced society as a whole, especially the so-called 'Brahmin' community of India, which when deeply looked into, does not seem to want to preserve its separate identity at all.

Given this situation, on this unique occasion of the MandayamSrivaishnava Sabha's Centenary Celebrations, it would not be out of place to reminisce about the past of our community members, though one may dismiss the exercise as 'reveling in past glory'. Many a times, it is by looking back into the history of our forefathers do we get inspired to preserve

something, as one gets exhilarated and stimulated to try to follow in their footsteps if not emulate them.

As we are aware to a particular extent, Mandayam Srivaishnavas were in the forefront in various fields stretching from traditional streams of knowledge to modern science, basic farming to the frontiers of technology, performing arts et al. This fact is well-known and also being documented in detail in the form of a specific monograph / book devoted exclusively for this purpose. On the other hand, I would like to dwell upon some not-so-well-known contribution of the persons of our past which would make us proud. In this regard, I would like to limit myself to the fields that I am more acquainted with, like Sanskrit literature and Indian philosophy, traditional rituals, temple rituals and so on.

Before we go into the specifics, I would like to make a few general observations:

We understand that, in general, the Mandayam Srivaishnavas had mastered the art of becoming outstanding components of the fields that they entered into. They would accomplish the tasks undertaken by them in a very versatile manner that would earn the appreciation and acclaim of all concerned persons. They were also adept in improvisations and customizations that would not be detrimental to the original / basic nature of the concerned practices / fields; on the other hands, these improvisations and customizations would enhance the value of the concerned practices / fields and also help in popularizing the same and also set an example for others to follow and emulate. This has been recognized and widely acknowledged and amply appreciated by dispassionate and unprejudiced persons belonging to other communities also.

With these general observations, let us see some of the contributions of our predecessors due to which ***our hoary past makes us proud!***

### **1. Contribution to upgradation and standardization of Temple rituals at Melkote and other Southern Divya-desas**

It is generally observed that one of the strongholds of our Srivaishnava Culture is Melkote, traditionally known as

Tirunarayanapuram. It is also understood on the basis of certain records that before settling in Melkote predominantly, most of the members of the Mandyam community were settled in Mandya and surrounding Agraharams (traditional town-residences of resolute Brahmins, as it was called in those days). During those times, the temple rituals at Melkote were not as sophisticated as it was until about a few decades ago (and still much of the grandeur etc. has been retained today also). The members of our community used to frequently visit Melkote and systematized and streamlined the temple rituals, culinary traditions, methods and procedures of Divyaprabandha and Veda parayanams and many other aspects. Later, due to various reasons (including certain internal squabbles etc. which are bound to be there in any close-knit community, - quarrelling is recognized as a human trait) there was an exodus of members of our community from Mandya and surrounding areas to Melkote, Bangalore, Mysore, Chennai and a few other places also. Thus the wonderful traditions prevailing in Melkote owe their allegiance to the members of the Mandyam Community. There are several records to prove this - I am not going into the individual details for obvious reasons.

## **2. Contribution to traditional culinary arts**

With their good knowledge gained purely by word-of-mouth traditions over the generations, our community members have gained very good knowledge of food-science, nutrition, dietetics and all other aspects associated with the preparation of dishes, method and mode of consuming them and also their preventive and curative aspects. Due to the above expertise, they standardized the preparation of delicious, unique foodstuffs by specifying the ingredients, exact proportions, methods of cooking and so on, which is still largely followed in the old Mysore region of Karnataka and members of the community wherever they are. Other Srivaishnava communities too adopted these procedures etc. and continue to follow them. Many books that vouch for the

above fact have been published in English and Kannada language, and these books are readily available in the market.

### **3. Contribution to Sanskrit literature and Indian philosophy**

The members of community, until the last few decades contained many stalwart scholars especially in the divine language of Sanskrit and Sanskrit literature and Sanskrit-based Indian philosophical and knowledge systems. Several treatises of the highest academic order have been authored by members of our community with regard to the above subjects. They are too long and diverse to be listed here, and also beyond the scope of this article. To put it in a nutshell, it can safely be said that members of our community dominated the popular discourse with regard to all fields of intellectualism especially the above mentioned fields.

### **4. Contribution to other fields**

The members of community have not lagged behind, be it fields as varied as sports, agriculture, law, education and almost any such subject that warrants human intervention. Once again, are too long and diverse to be listed here, and also beyond the scope of this article.

To conclude it would be pertinent to note the words of an elderly person of the community who remarked: "There are several communities like ours that have contributed to society; nevertheless, what is praiseworthy is that the Mandayam community is a small, miniscule community and from among the small number of persons that make up this community many have contributed (and continue to contribute) so much in so many different fields. It is this aspect that makes us feel proud of our community". Thus, there is no doubt whatsoever that 'our hoary past makes us proud'!

#### **Footnote**

<sup>1</sup> The same applies to other terms such as 'Shiavas, Christians, Muslims etc. also!



## Shri. Ram Srinivas



### Education:

Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science

(SJC Institute of Technology, INDIA, 1997);

MBA in Strategic Human Resources

(University of Illinois, USA, 2007)

- ❖ *Awarded the Regional Midwest Management Association Gold Medal for Graduate Students for undertaking empirical research on Innovation*

MSc and MPhil in Organisational Psychology

(London School of Economics, London, UK, 2010)

- ❖ *Admitted into the LSE Distinguished Roll of Honour for Psychology for carrying out empirical research that affects society in a profound manner*

Pursuing Ph.D (Doctorate) in Business Administration

(University of Texas, USA – Expected completion, 2019)

### Background:

On a sabbatical from the Ph.D., Ram has been working for nearly a year as the Professor and Research In-charge for Strategic Human Resources Management and Behavioural Economics at the CMR University, Bangalore.

Ram was most recently employed in the Corporate Sector as a Principal Consultant for Redbridge Consulting, London, UK, specializing in areas within Strategic HR such as Executive Coaching, Succession Planning, Employee Engagement and Organizational Change Management. He also worked with IT and Consulting firms such as WIPRO, IBM, RelQ and Responsys.com both in India and Palo Alto, CA

**Research Interests:**

Ram's research interests lie at the intersection of studying

(i) Whether HRM practices are transferrable to different countries and whether they have the same effect on organizations and their employees,

(ii) How and why knowledge sharing across distance and differentiated contexts is undertaken,

(iii) Whether and how human and social capital produce important individual and organizational outcomes and

(iv) Undertaking research as to how and why bicultural and multicultural employees contribute to global teams and organizations.

## The Values we have inherited from our elders

- Ram Srinivas

His Holiness Prof MA Lakshmi ThathacarSwamin, Dr. MA Alwar, Centenary Celebrations Committee Chairman Sri. NatampalliNarasimhan, Leader of the Seminar Shri MAN Prasad, members of the MSVS, my fellow co-panelists and speakers for the day, dignitaries on the dias and in the audience, including the online audience, Ladies and Gentlemen.

One of the greatest Sociologists that mankind has ever seen, Karl Marx, once very famously said that '**Values are to a Society what Memory is to an Individual**'. Just as memory is an absolutely essential ingredient for an Individual's survival, so are the values absolutely essential for a Society or a Community's survival.

Put another way, Values are an instrumental and enduring (although not permanent) phenomenon for human survival. It serves a useful purpose and because of that (just like memory) it is transmitted to others. Values has also been considered "the human-made part of the larger environment that leaves a deep imprint on the minds of a particular community". Just like memory, Values are a function of time – meaning values change, they degrade, they also improve like memory over a period of time. And on similar line exactly in the same way that an Individual remembers things that he considers are important to him and both consciously (and sub-consciously) lets go and forgets what he considers are unimportant for him, in the same way a Society or a community over a period of time (and as a matter of convenience) gets accustomed to changing values and forgets some values whilst remembering other values.

Just as in history, so in real life, the terms 'culture,' 'values,' and 'customs' are often used interchangeably and quite freely, although each is actually a distinct piece of the bigger picture. A **custom** is a ritual or other tradition that is an outward sign of the community's cultural values. The communities' **values** aren't always obvious straight away – because they run deep in a human system. Cultural values can be pieced together by observing the various customs that the people have passed down for generations. And lastly

**Culture** is defined as all of communities' guiding values and outward signs and symbols taken together as one big whole.

Our worldview influences how we interact with our environment, including how we relate to our families, communities, and societies, as well as how we create the systems that help us to live a productive life. Values can influence our individual attitudes, beliefs, judgement and ideologies and hence allows us to see the outside world from within our Value structure.

It is important to understand that Values is not just a group or community or society level concept. It exists and is transmitted in the minds of individuals from people to people and from generations to generations. There are, therefore, two components of Values – an objective component and a subjective component. Within our Iyengar culture the Objective components are the obvious, material products generated by our people, such as food, art, the way we dress, literature, festivals we celebrate and the language we speak. Subjective components on the other hand refer to such aspects as how people categorize and define things, and what importance they place on them in their lifetime and how they view themselves in relation to others. For example how important is it for me to observe rituals, how do we pray and why do we pray to the Lord and how do we see life, whether the Srivaishnava concept of total surrenderance makes any sense to me or not? How important is Upakarma and Sandhyavandhanam for me, why and how do I perform my Nithyanusandhanams, my Tiruvaradhanams, and also in how I see my Values shaping my everyday life. A few days ago (on Wednesday) we had the Amavasya, and I did the tharpanam for paying obeisance to my ancestors in my home. Obviously No one sees or witnesses whether you perform Sandhyavandhana and Nithyanusandhanam at your home but as subjective components of your values you do them because inherently it builds your system in terms of faith, judgement, attitudes and beliefs.

But it is one thing to talk about subjective and objective values of our Iyengar tradition and quite another to know and learn, let alone practice and inculcate them. But one sure shot way of learning and ascribing to values is when it is

handed to you or taught to you by someone whom you respect and admire.

Management theories tell us that Storytelling and narratives are two of the most compelling ways in which you can change an Organization's culture and the values they espouse. Just as the organization is a subset or a microcosm of the society, so is our community. So in the same way when you hear compelling stories of how and why values are important to you, it is only then you see some merit, something good in those values, and you change yourself to embrace those values and slowly adopt them. And what better way to learn and inculcate values than from elders. The idea of role modelling and trying to follow someone is as old as society. A **role model** is a person whose *behavior* or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people. I looked at 3 people as my role models in my life – my mother, my father and my Acharyan Lakshmi Thathacharya.

I have seen from very close quarters my father becoming a successful executive with a British Company, and subsequently leading social and sporting organizations at the International and National levels and also having represented our country in the Olympics, Asian Games and World Cups as an official. All of a sudden one day in his 50's he gave up everything and changed his lifestyle by 180 degrees, visited 104 Divyadeshamams and also wrote a compendium travelogue on the 106 Divyadeshamams when Internet was yet in its infancy. I looked up towards him as a role model and wanted to blend modernity with the hardcore Srivaishnava life. Despite him leading a very modern lifestyle, he practiced everyday, and also taught me the importance of doing, Sandhyavandanam and chanting Gayathri Japameveryday. Similarly another person who has had a deep, lasting and a profound impact on me is my Uncle (whom I actually consider as my friend and adviser) that is Natampalli Narasimhan. I have watched him with awe, respect and dignity how he has not merely changed but transformed from a Corporate Executive with HLL to becoming a Srivaishnava expert. Although he is from an older generation but we can see how he seamlessly blends modernity and technology with Iyengar values and respect to our traditions and legacy. We all know how professionally he has

run the MSVS and also how he has managed to collect nearly 3 crores for the MVN project in Mysore. When I enquired how honestly does he get the energies at this age, he points to God and his Iyengar values.

### **Stories about Saligramams**

Similarly on the same day that I received my Panchasamskarams from my Acharyan he told me (as he knew of the Saligramams in my home) that I now have the licence to start performing Aradhana to the SaligramamPerumal. Immediately the very next day, my mother ordained me and taught me the procedures of how to perform the Tiruvaradhanam. It is my good fortune that during the time when my parents had accompanied Swamin and Ammangaramma on a 1 month North India Tour, particularly to Badrinath, when my mother had enquired Swamin whether there existed Saligramams in white colour. Immediately upon returning back home, HH Swamin called my parents and gave them a very rare white Saligramam (also called as DwarakaShiley) that his father - PeriyaAlwarSwamin - was performing pooja to and that he had himself received it from his father. Inturn my parents gave this to me.

Similarly myself and my good friend MA Dwaraki's son Raghu sought out different elderly Iyengar personalities to teach and guide us in their own way as to understanding the Vedas, various shlokas, pashurams and japams too. Whether it is GK Rajagopal or Prasad Mama (of Sree Travels) or Ranganna who used to work in the YY Mutt earlier or MD Srinivasan or even RamanujamuniJeeyar's son (Shelvapillai Mama) each one of these elderly and wise people taught me and initiated me into our Iyengar traditions, rituals, customs and values. And although Lakshmi ThathacharyaSwamin is my Supreme Acharyan, I consider my mother to be my everyday guru. She is the one who taught me the essence and importance of Guru Parampara, AcharyanTaniyan, Thirumantram, DvayaMantram and also the importance of getting up in the Brahmi Muhurtham and to begin my day like a true Iyengar before starting my occupational work. Due to my Vritti Dharma and my occupational requirements I may dress up and talk in a certain manner that is suited to the modern world but when I return home everyday amidst the

SaligramamPerumal and DwarakaShiley I feel the pulse of true divinity and hence the true values of living like an Iyengar.

Just as I have narrated my stories of how elders in my family, how elders in our community and most importantly how my Acharyan have inculcated Iyengar Values into me, I am sure that each one of you here has a story to tell of how you would have inculcated Iyengar values in your own life. The degree of inculcation may differ, some people may have been more fortunate to receive and inculcate more than us and some people may not have been as fortunate to receive as much as others. Also what values you embrace and accept as being important to you may differ, just as what you remember as part of your memory, you will also selectively ascribe to various subjective and objective elements of our Iyengar Values. But the important thing is that the primary sources of providing you with these values are your elders – that is they gave you something that was within them and in their Nature.

The question next arises as to why and how few people receive and ascribe to Iyengar values easily whilst some of us are unable to. It is very tempting to blame globalization and cross-cultural influences as the reason why some of our people have let go of the values. It is actually much more complex.

Globalization (called by some 'Americanization') has amplified the modernity project many fold, supported by mass education and communication technologies, particularly the Internet and the mass Media. Globalization is increasingly perceived by many as 'a form of western ethnocentrism and patronizing cultural imperialism which invades local cultures and lifestyles, deepens the insecurities of indigenous identities (like the Iyengars Identities) and contributes to the erosion of national cultures and historical traditions'. With the ease of access to a variety of information, online and offline, peer pressures, intrusion of global services, products and content into our everyday life it is extremely difficult for people to stay rooted for a variety of reasons. Most people want things easily, considering that the pace of life has increased, everyone wants to have things fast and quickly. Whether it is food, commodities, work, recreation, transacting with people or even relationships with our family is highly transactional and has

become fast. But are the twin problems of economic growth and globalization to be solely blamed for this – I don't think so and I will tell you why.

As an example, I know several Iyengar families in the US and the western world who are more traditional and are rooted to Iyengar values than several of us here and also there are many of us who have never travelled or lived abroad and yet we have imbibed a much more western modern lifestyle (disregarding the Iyengar values) than people in the western world. Why is this so?. It is not because where you are rather it is because of what you have been taught and what you have learnt and what you consider to be important in your life. If you consider that leading a life that is filled with your own Iyengar values is essential you will do so whether you are here or anywhere in the world and if you decide that Iyengar values are not for you, then even if heavens fall and you are living here in Malleswaram you will still lead a life that you have chosen. But how and why do we make this choice?

For over 120 years researchers belonging to a variety of fields such as Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology and History have studied as to what shapes a human being and his values systems. This has led to the debate of '**Nature versus Nurture**'. The nature versus nurture debate is one of the most convoluted in the field of psychology. In the 17th century, a French philosopher, René Descartes posited that "we all, as individual human beings, have certain innate ideas that enduringly underpin our approach to the world". The use of the terms "nature" and "nurture" henceforth has referred to the roles of heredity and environment respectively in human development. Some scientists believe that human beings behave as they do in response to genetic predisposition. This is known as the **nature theory** of human behavior and is the view espoused by naturalists. Other scientists think otherwise; that people think and behave in certain ways because they are taught to do so by the environment and people around. This is known as **nurture theory** of human behavior and is the view of empiricists. In exploring the nature versus the nurture debate, we presume that nature endows human beings with inborn abilities and traits through genes (in this case Iyengar genes) while nurture takes these genetic tendencies and molds them as we individuals learn and mature.



According to nature theory, personality is natural. This group believes that personality is a result of evolutionary process. Human beings, it believes, inherit behaviors due to a complex interaction of genes. As such, genes control their behaviors. And we get the genes from our parents. Naturalists and scientists such as Steven Pinker include conservativeness, **religiousness** (the ability to ascribe to one's parents religious tendencies) and liberalism as gene related traits.

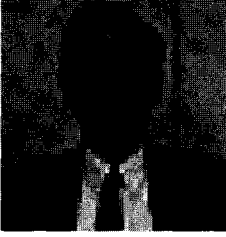
However on the nurture side of the debate, Evolutionary psychologists believe that behaviour is a result of natural selection in the environment of evolutionary adaptation (EEA). Arguments for the supremacy of nurture posit that personality is nurtured and not due to nature. This group argues that one does not get personality from inheritance. They argue that the mind is a blank slate at birth. The definition of nurture has extended to influence of development that emanates from prenatal, parental, peer influence and extending to the role of media, marketing and socio-economic status. Harvard psychologist B. F. Skinner's, experiments, produced birds that could dance and play tennis, and he is worlds leading scientists on the Nurture theory. Today, known as the father of behavioral science, Skinner ultimately went on to prove that human behavior could be conditioned in much the same way as animals. If environment did not play a part in determining an individual's traits and behaviors, then identical twins should be the same in all respects, even if reared apart.

Finally, another Stanford social scientist, Richard Levy, examines the roles played by both nature and nurture in the origin of values, beliefs and moral dispositions. He asserts that evolution gives human beings a precondition of values due to the genes and by where we were born but it is only as a result of the environmental and cultural elaboration of the importance of values that we come to be complete human and moral beings who have the ability to understand, appreciate and accept values from our elders. This means that we still get to choose who we will be, when we grow up, we can choose to either embrace and live with Iyengar values or not, and it depends on both our genes and parentage (Nature) and the ability to comprehend it using the Environment (Nurture). Social scientists gradually understood the extent

of the interactions that take place between nature and nurture and say that both are equally important to make a person embrace values and morals.

Lastly, I will like to close my speech by mentioning that Lord Thiruvengadamudiyan of Tirumala and Goddess Padmavathi have provided me a chance to research and study with a Nobel Laureate, Nicholas Stern, at the London School of Economics, and also study under some of the best of intellectuals in the world such as Lord Meghnad Desai and Dr. Raghuram Rajan. I have also had the privilege of working towards a biography of the greatest Police officer in the country, Padmashri Shri KPS Gill who is single handedly responsible for seeing that our country does not partition a second time and I have also worked with some of the best and well known CEO's of multinational corporations as an Executive Coach to them but none of all this provides me the fulfilment, satisfaction and enriching experience that I receive when I stand in front of the Lord Srinivasa for the Shatamurai or even when I just see the Saligramams in my house and perform the Abhishekam to the Gods. This is my values and what I consider to be supremely important and relevant in life and the reason why I have inherited these values are because of the 3 elders – my parents and my Acharyan – who have guided me.

The famous philosopher Plato said that "If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if you think in terms of ten years, plant trees; but if you are thinking in terms of 100 years, then plant values into the people", and today we are celebrating 100 years of MSVS and I can only think of what the 3 main foundational pillars of the MSVS were in the year 1916 – they were (i) promotion of livelihood through dissemination of knowledge; (ii) adopt a spiritual fervour and (iii) in order to achieve both the above one needed physical strength and mental alertness for which one was advised to practice Yoga and meditation. I think the time has come for us to reinforce the Iyengar values and teach it to the younger generations. And we can do this by utilising the same forces like technology and communication (that we felt have eroded our culture) to actually promote and protect our culture and values.

**Dr.M.P.Srinivasan**

Dr.M.P.Srinivasan, popularly known as MPS, is from MandayamParamekanthi family. Historically the family name 'Paramekanthi' is conferred by Sri. Yathirajar himself to the ancestors of 'Paramekanthi' family, praising their deep knowledge and understanding of Veda and Prabhandhas. MPS lives with his family in San Jose, California since 1995.

Parents are M.P.DoreswamyIyengar(MPD) and Smt. Rukminamma (MallurChinna). He has one elder sister Vasantha married to RAD family and one younger brother Sridhar, retired Executive engineer (KEB). Father was a Railway Station Master served in various villages in Karnataka. MPD came from a Middle class family, joined Railways as a signaller and finally retired as Station Master, Yeshwanthapur. MPD served Southern Railway for 42 years. Most of his services are in very small village Railway Stations, the village or the railway quarters(housing) which had no electricity or water or proper toilets. MPD use to choose stations (villages) which often other Station.Masters refused to serve due to lack of basic facilities. MPD was very hardworking, devoted to job and family. He was a very disciplined person , he use to say work hard , sacrifice now, you will reap the benefit later. MPD taught how to respect money , live within the limits and save for the future. The first 17 years of MPS childhood is among poor farmers of Interior Karnataka. Hence MPS had a rare opportunity to live with nature and among honest people of interior Karnataka. MPS got his primary education in Bageshapura, Highschool in Hassan, mostly in Kannada government schools. Until 10<sup>th</sup> grade there was no electricity in home, whole family use to live in a small two room quarters with just two kerosene lamps, one in the kitchen and one in the hall . All three children studied sitting around one Kerosene lamp( 1958 - 67). His father's salary was just enough to support a small family of 5 people, hence his parents were not in a position to give education in good/private schools . MPD was an ideal man, knew how to serve and survive under worst conditions. From 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, MPS and his sister use to travel to Hassan from Bageshpura by a slow steam engine train for high school and PUC classes. During those days the travel was very tedious and time consuming. In Hassan from Railway station to school is about 3 miles, walk every day, since Hassan is in

Malenadu, it use to rain all day, making walking even more difficult. Afternoon lunch or even a simple snack use to cost money, hence the children carried two carriers from home, KolumbuSadam and ThayirSadam and a delicious home made pickle. During school days, children use to leave home by 8 am and return by 7 pm. His mother use to find difficult to cook food by 8 am since there was no stove or cooker in home. Even good fire wood was scarce. The fire wood was of poor quality ( just twigs), use to produce lot of smoke and ash. To cut short it was very tough time for the parents to rise the family. Even with all difficulty, MPS got first class in PUC and secured a seat in PES College of Engineering, Mandya with full freeship. MPS and his brother lived in a very small room in temple street Mandya, doing self cooking and continued their education (1967 -1972). One very exiting facility in Mandya is there was ELECTRICITY, we had a luxury of using one 60 watts lamp in the room, this was a great motivation to study in the evening. MPS and his brother sacrificed a lot to complete their 5 years of engineering degree. MPS requested his father to buy him a bicycle, since in Mandya, the engineering college was quite far and he has to carry Drawing board , heavy work shop models every day to the college, MPD, father suggested MPS to wait till he save money to buy a bicycle, which was costing about Rs. 100 at that time. MPD was a principled man, he use to say wait/sacrifice till you find money, never borrow money to buy things you need, borrowing will create a chain of problems and pulls down your positive energy. There were some Mandyam families in the temple street, but no one was helpful. Now a new health problem started in MPS life in Mandya. The MYSUGAR factory in Mandya was polluting the whole atmosphere with burnt ash and carbon, by which MPS developed frequent breathlessness and wheezing problems, which continued to bother him , next 27 years, even more severe later in Bangalore. Lot of precious time was wasted in hospitals, money is spent. Doctors said there is no cure for this allergy. One doctor suggested to leave Bangalore, by god's grace MPS got an opportunity in 1995 to leave Bangalore. The allergy problem vanished like a miracle when MPS moved to USA.

MPS completed in BE Degree in Electronics (first batch,1972) with distinction, by then his father was working in Yeshavathapur and came to Bangalore looking for a Job. Every day when MPS was riding on bicycle to Malleswaram, use to take the route by the side of IISc compound and use to see various IISc buildings and hostels. One morning MPS very hesitantly asked the watch man in the front gate, if there are jobs in IISc for a fresh BE graduate. The watch man brought a yellow form and asked MPS to fill it and drop in a box. After about one week MPS found an advertisement from IISc for another job,a senior Research Assistant position in a local news paper. MPS applied

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till now in USA ( a record) and his classes are very popular, continue to teach even after retirement from Industry.

Since 2000, MPS is busy in organizing activities to Mandayam Families in SFO, bay area. He is a life member Kannada koota, Vipra Sabha and Religious committees in San Jose. He is very kind and generous man, helped many people in emergencies. Many families who got help from MPS call him 'Lord Srinivasa' in human form. Due to confidentiality of instances, we are requested not to mention any names. Some of the help he has rendered are 'records' in Mandayam History. He has intention to build a live memorial for the 700 people who are massacred in Srirangapatna , a YadugiriYathirajaMatam, a youth hostel and a Brahmins housing complex in San Jose. He has two sons Jayadeep and Shreyas , daughter in laws Sripriya and Sridevi and two grand Children Shriya and Vishnu. MPS is a very good speaker both technical or religious. He has collected very interesting details of MandayamSrivashnavas and Sri Ramanujar. If anyone wish to contact Dr.MPS, his email id is mps25us@yahoo.com. MPS invites all Mandayams visiting San Jose, to make it a point to visit his house.



## **Migration to other Countries and its impact on our traditions**

**Dr.M.P.Srinivasan**

II SrimatheRamanujayaNamha II

Good Morning Everybody. Thanks for attending today's function in good numbers. The topic assigned to me is 'Migration to other Countries and its impact on our traditions'. Unfortunately I am unable to be present in person, hence this speech is videotaped during my recent visit to Bangalore.

I migrated to USA in 1995 and live in San Jose, California. There are people who migrated before me, living in USA for almost 50 years, I think they are the best people to do today's presentation. I sent couple of emails to the International Mandayam Community about today's topic, requesting them to send me their views or points which I could use in today's presentation, but I haven't received much response for my request. One more thing, when I complement or criticize any tradition, it also applies to me and my family members. This talk is limited to 20 minutes. I am a professor in a University with 40+ years of experience in giving lengthy lectures on any topic, but don't worry, this talk is limited to 20 minutes exact.

I thought of dividing the talk into some categories – Appearance, Dress, Food and Culture. The entire talk of today is my general view of the situation, there are always exceptions. Hence, if there is any coincidence with some one's living style, it is definitely not intentional. Please, don't take it as personal. A general disclaimer also applies. I am OK if you don't agree with me, but this is not the stage for a debate/ arguments.

I heard MandayamIyengars /Srivashnavas/Brahmins lived in groups /agraharams/temple towns like Triplicane, Srirangam, Kancheepuram, Melukotai, Mandya, Mallur to name a few. When one lives in a community/group and vicinity, people see the events, participate, learn & enjoy the traditions and pass on the knowledge to the next generation. Also when you are in a community, you are more likely to follow others. In olden days, majority of the Srivaishnavas use to be

employed or served or associated with the temples. They were dependent on the temple and agriculture for their lively hood. When a person is associated with or dependent on a temple, the chances learning and following traditions is very high. Due to various developments, people started leaving the aghrahams / communities and stay away from temples for living. Under these circumstances, it was not practical to follow the traditions. Due to this movement, traditions got diluted. When people moved to big cities, people started living near to their place of work, away from each other. Also, when there was one watching, our tendency is to take a short cut or skip. Traditions call for discipline, but today people like to be 'free' and don't like restrictions. This was the impact when people moved to big cities like Bangalore, Bombay, Delhi, Chennai etc., during the last century. Our traditions started getting diluted almost 100 years ago. Now the trend is to migrate to foreign countries that are far away from India, where the religion and culture are entirely different. When you are away from your community, it is natural that the traditions which are linked to our culture get gradually diluted and the traditions of the environment you are living in slowly get inculcated. I think this has already affected our community members to a great extent. I see lot of traditions are already missing in India itself. This is the first impact on our traditions.

The second impact is marriage /alliance with other communities. When a boy or girl marries from other community, automatically the traditions are diluted. I am sorry to say, compared to other Iyengars or Brahmins, Mandayam community is less strict in following the traditions. They lack pride in themselves.

The third reason – on which we have no control - is our size. We are hardly 4000 or 4500 in number, distributed around the world. Our population is also dwindling year by year due to variety of reasons. I am told Mandayam is the smallest or close to bottom in the list.

The fourth reason for dilution of tradition is, some traditions are outdated or difficult to follow. It may not fit in today's environment. If a tradition has a scientific basis, the chances of it being followed is high.

My feeling is that present NRI Mandayams remember the traditions, some they enjoy the memories, some remember them as funny and also feel guilty inside when they are missed or misused. The subconscious mind is pinched and repents. When this happens, the subconscious mind seeks 'papa pariharam'. People continue to skip. The first generation Mandayams (like me) mostly follow, but I am not sure about the next generation. The reason is obvious, when a religious function is going on, the next generation children are playing outside or busy talking on the phone or some other activity. When politely asked about the function they have no clue, they can't even pronounce properly names of gods. Compared to men, women are better.

Kacchepanche&Madishar

Let us examine a few traditions. The appearance, dress. Where are our 'Vesti', 'Valli', KachhePanche, Madishar ? (not to mention the efficient and inexpensive inner garments). These traditional dresses are economical, easy to maintain, multipurpose and can be used directly from the weaver or mill, without the need for a tailor. But today whether it is India or abroad - Dress means Punjabi (Pyjama Kurtha), Food means North Indian (Roti, Parota, Subzi, Paneer), Rice means (Biryani, Pulav) and music/dance means 'North Indian, Cinema songs or Punjabi Balle...Balle. Consumption of prohibited vegetarian items like onion, garlic, mushroom etc., is accepted and very normal. During the early part of the last century, selling food was considered as 'Mahapapam'; people used to provide free food to the needy. With the elapse of time, due to the influence of British - specially in their cantonments - western food habits became popular and commercial selling of food and hotels started. Brahmins used to secretly enjoy restaurant food by getting them home or visiting hotels when it is dark or covering their face. Ladies never use to go to / seldom visited restaurants. But today going to restaurant has become fashionable, and is not considered as anything unusual. I see people with 'Srichurnam', enjoying Masala Dosa/Maddurvade in Indian restaurants. I don't have any objection, if the place is hygienic and serves pure vegetarian food. But the tragedy is Brahmins in India or America, don't mind eating food in a Non vegetarian

restaurant and say that they only eat vegetarian items, though it is a non-veg restaurant. What a tragedy! I have seen weddings in USA of Mandayam with Non Brahmin, where non-vegetarian items are on the menu and often the popular choice. Eating egg/white meat by so called vegetarians is considered 'Okay' in USA. Going to Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, African and such other restaurants is considered very popular and modern, with each one offering their own justification.

Another important entity which has done maximum cultural damage is movies and TV serials. Often they depict parents as stingy, orthodox, traditional, greedy etc.. TV serials depict hatred within the family. Glorify frauds, cheating and show imaginary ideas as practically workable. When a person watches such programs, his sub conscious mind gets affected, makes a permanent imprint on his mind and also the body tries to experience a 'Virtual Reality'. This is a big damage. People mix entertainment with relaxation and fall into movie/video trap. Recently one child asked her mother why his younger sister doesn't become flat when he hits her, - the effect of video comics

Now a days majority of Mandayams (both in India and abroad) celebrate birth days following Christian tradition. Lighting candles and cutting a cake is common. Blowing off a candle (jyothi) never considered as a bad omen? The cake cutting is not in our tradition, more over everyone says it is a vegetarian cake, but made in the same facility where egg cake is prepared. What is the need for all these compromises, is our traditional way of birthday celebration shameful? I don't know how many adults and kid know the Indian Star (Nakshatra) system and their Gotram and Nakshatram. I don't know if anyone goes to a perumalkoil on a birthday. Then the birthday lunch/dinner is very interesting. For majority of the children our traditional food is too spicy, and allergic. Children don't like puliyogare, most of the 'Karembdu' varieties, Moor kolumbu and mostly all items which has chilies or spicy, including Dhadyodhanam. (traditional curd rice ). The 'pizza' is very popular among children, because it is easy to eat and they have seen all other culture children eat and say 'Pizza' is good (including TV advertisements). Hence pizza is ordered from the best Pizza place in the town. But I have not heard of

any pure vegetarian Pizza restaurant. So from first birthday itself our next generation kids begin to think it is OK to buy food/eat from a non veg restaurant. In USA the food for adults in parties is mostly from a nearby restaurant, generally north Indian items , no problem if the restaurant makes non vegetarian food, we have requested the manager to change hand gloves when cooking our order.

Next comes the invitations, mostly it is via evite. A follow-up call, if you don't respond in time. If you respond, no follow up! A few traditional style invitation will be printed but the takers are generally elders. These invitations have a prayer for the family deity and a respectful invitation text mentioning family names. But the boy or girl creates a separate invitation for his/her choice of friends. If you criticize this, you are considered narrow minded, a block for the progress of community.

Let us take for example, the appearance, the hair style of both men and women. Will you agree with me If I say 99% of the people don't follow our traditional hair styling in India itself, leave alone NRI's. I think our tradition is to have a Kudumi, half moon cut, no side locks and clean face with no beard or Mustache. But now the men are entirely adopting western hair style. May be people in India make fun of our traditional hair style, but definitely not in America. Then why our men follow western hair style in USA? May be because, men follow the 'Be a Roman while you are in Rome', rule. Next look at the face, almost every youth has a beard and mustache. For some it looks good and others it is ugly. I saw one youth with muslim style beard. What about women/girls, they are in no way lagging behind. It is 'Amangalam' to cut girl/women's hair in our tradition, but cutting girls hair is common in India, in orthodox families also. Hence our community is accepting without any hesitation the western hair styles.

Another drastic change is there is no interest in our Desi/ traditional games. I have not seen much Goli, Buguri, Marakothi, Carrom, Pagade, Chowkabara, Pallankuli ,Gigiragatley to name a few.

Coming to festivals, children are more enthusiastic in celebrating, Christian New Years day, Easter egg hunting, Halloween , Christmas etc., due to the environment. A few families still perform Navarathri festival.

What about adult festivals? Major festivals like Sri Krishnajanayanthi, AnePandige ,Ugadi, Deepavali etc., are celebrated depending on the interest and available time of an individual family.

Festivals like Upakarma and CharaduPandige celebrated in homes on individual capacity. Not sure if people follow the traditions completely. I see very few people in the temple and none in the 'PrabhandaGosti'. Some go to whatever temple nearby. There is no difference between gods.

I am not in a position, or experienced enough to predict the future of our Second generation. When I speak to some of the youths, they don't know much about our community or traditions. Some consider our traditions as outdated, and restricts human rights. Most youngsters settled outside the country don't want to come to India. They enjoy Mexican and Chinese food more than Mandayam cuisine. Teenagers bring friends/mates from other cultures for parties. I have seen youngsters and some adults ridiculing our traditions and practices. Most of the kids speak English , not comfortable in Tamil or Kannada. Perhaps, there is no solution for some of the issues, it is a side effect of immigrating to a different culture.

I do not intend to suggest that all Mandayams living in USA live like this. But this is the general scenario of the kind of changes that are sweeping us there and in India also.

In all fairness to them we must admit that many of them – the first generation Indians - do make attempts to keep up their traditional practices. Like for example, they celebrate various festivals, visit temples, observe certain festivals at a community level, and so on. Due to the availability or various factors, this might look like a compromise, but the spirit to continue with our traditions despite all odds, is the crux of the issue. Even today, many NRI's would like to come to India and go through a traditional wedding. Our traditions of family bonding continues.

Possibly, one of the reason for this kind of low esteem for our tradition could be due to the poor understanding of the core values of our traditions. We have not explained the scientific basis of these core values – due to the over emphasis given to religious and spiritual aspects – which does not go

well with the younger generation of today. Often, many of the adults themselves are ignorant of these, and how could they pass it on to the next gen. We need to understand what these practices tried to promote and adopt them to our changed life style.

Now the time has come for our elders to take stock of situation. I suggest that, we the elders continue practice our traditions as far as possible, and urge our children & grand children to participate in functions and festivals and make them understand their significance and importance for a healthy and peaceful living.

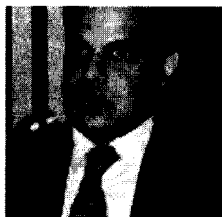
Indian philosophy, and culture are very universal in nature. It is the only philosophy in which have prayers for the peace of the entire mankind. I am reminded of our prayer:

AakashathPathithamThoyam, YathaGachathiSagaram

SarvadevaNamaskaramKeshavamPrathigachathi II

With these few words I conclude my observations, and I thank the MandayamSrivaivhnava Sabha Centenary Celebrations committee, for giving me an opportunity to present my talk in this august conference.

Thanks for your time, Shubhamatsu !



### **Dr. M.A.R Iyengar**

Born in 1939, in the famed Mandayam Anandampillai family to parents U.V M.A. Alwar Tirumalai Iyengar and Smt M.A. Singamma, in Mysore, is of high academics, holding a Doctorate-Ph.d-in Chemistry. His professional career spanning 38 years between 1961 & 1999, has been in Health Safety' in BARC Bombay & Jaduguda in Bihar. He has successfully organised many programmes relating to Nuclear science, Environmental Radio activity, Health physics, Uranium Hazards & safety etc. A major highlight in his role as Chief Scientific Investigator from India is in an International Atomic energy research programme (IAEA), at Vienna in Austria, followed by France, USA, Austria, Japan, Germany etc.

He has, also, a sound Management experience, leading a team of Scientists in planning & co-ordination. He has been a well sought member on the board of country's various universities. He has served as Vice President of Indian Association of Radiation protection. He was associated with preparation of 'Safety Code' for ISI, Government of India. He has been the director for many seminars, symposiums, workshops etc. Over 100 Scientific publications have been presented by Dr. MAR Iyengar. The above, shows his passion & Zeal for the subject of 'Healthy & Safety' which has culminated in fruitful rewards. The passion continued in the post retirement period from BARC, in 2000. Apart from associating with Bangalore University and private laboratory as an advisor on his pet subject of environment & safety, his focus on 'Research & Development' in the area of water purification 'has brought the above said '**Miracle**'

Dr. MAR Iyengar is a brilliant Research Scientist. His contributions & findings, as could be seen in water purification, not only upgrades health of people but also elevates India's health status. He is highly analytical & a very pleasant personality. It is a great privilege that he is helping the Sabha in its Centenary Celebration by co-ordinating the programme of Mandayam Achievements and Achievers. He has a wife & 2 children and 3 grand children.



**Mandayams at the helm of Various Professions****- Dr.M.A.R.Iyengar**

Dear Fellow Mandayams,

MandayamSrivaishnava community is an intellectually motivated community from the early days, devoted to performing various kainkaryams, as prescribed by the Acharyas and the founders of the community. Learning and scholarship in Vedas, DivyaPrabhandhas and shastras was their forte and they were engaged in knowledge based activities for their livelihood. However, due to economic reasons, during pre-independence period, there was a shift and from teaching Vedas, DivyaPrabhandhas and Shastras, they switched to teaching in schools and colleges which taught western based education. Like in the earlier times, many excelled as teachers even in this period, as it was again in the domain of knowledge, though it had a British imprint.

It was a time when the country was full of political movements to oust the British, and many Mandayams, particularly in the Madras Presidency, took part in the movement with great valour and at considerable sacrifice. However, when we got independence and formed our own government, they did not claim any benefits from it, due to their attitude of renouncement.

Before the country attained independence, most of our community members, were generally serving the Princely State of Mysore, and found it attractive to serve within the precincts of the Royally administered State Govt. in various parts of the old Mysore State. Hence most of the Mandayam Community folks were generally confined to the geographic regions of the old princely Mysore State. But with the dawn of national freedom and proclamation of the Indian Republic, and the Wodeyars of the Mysore Royal Family acceding to the free Indian Republic, there occurred a quantum shift in the whole scenario.

With independence, a whole world of opportunity opened up. Mandayams started moving out of their home confines, to different corners of the State and country, entering new professions hitherto unknown. Sri.JatavallabhaShingriengar's

book, painstakingly gives a list of Mandayams, in different parts of the country, serving in various professions.

The traditional Vidwans of Sanskrit, Shastra and DivyaPrabhandha entered new field of education. They became engineers, doctors, lawyers and other professionals, as the newly independent India needed many such professionals. Many new projects were being taken up and many engineers were required. New manufacturing activities, new trading activities etc. opened up many new requirements for professionals. The Mandayams responded to this need and got into these professions.

Politically, Mandayams did not go far at the national or State level. Late Sri. M.R. NarasimhaIyengar, later Shri. M. C. Narasimhan, and M. S. Krishnan, appeared on the political horizon, but a Mandayam, at the core of his heart, is a non-political person and this perhaps is the reason why the community did not seek any benefits from the govt. in the form of largess.

We can see a great shift here too. Earlier, under the princely rule, our people held important administrative posts, as merit was the basis of selection. But with the new govt. coming in, with various reservations, selections being based on various factors other than merit, Mandayams steered clear of the Governmental jobs and went into the private sector, where merit was the basis of selection. Whether it was yesterday or today, Mandayams relied purely on their merit and intellectual capabilities. This was very unlike those of other groups or communities in the State or Country, where intense lobbying for jobs and favours, was the order of the day. Lobbying or seeking favours is generally an anathema to the Mandayams. If a Mandayam has gone up in the ladder of success, it is entirely due to his or her inherent capacity, high standards of performance and realization of the objectives at considerable sacrifice.

Today, many Mandayams abroad and within the country are working in frontier areas of science and technology, earning global attention and admiration. The success, prosperity, recognition and fame being enjoyed by the vibrant Mandayam

community to day, is owing to the stoic and intellectual philosophy of the preceptors, early practitioners, and our forefathers. This healthy tradition that has been bestowed upon us, has stood by us today and will stand by us in the days to come. This is a heritage that is cherished by every Mandayam now and in future too.

Our community is indeed very small and looking at it as it is thinning out, one might be tempted to ask 'where have all the Mandayams gone?' a couple of decades ago. But today, it might be more appropriate to ask 'where all have Mandayams gone?' – considering the way they have fanned out all over the globe. The ever enterprising Mandayams, by their sheer talent and enterprise, have made their presence felt where ever they have settled, in whatever profession they have taken up.

The decade of 90's ushered in the age of Information Technology, which revolutionised the country's potential as never before. Bangalore became the IT Capital in the country, attracting huge investments and talent from within and without. Naturally, the enterprising Mandayams did not miss the opportunity and a large number of the young Mandayams joined this new, promising technical band wagon, eager to reap a golden harvest. Following their enormous success within the country, the Mandayam diaspora ventured into almost every nook and corner of the modern day world earning great wealth and fame, besides bringing laurels to the community. Such an astonishing kind of enterprising spirit and skills, latent in the Mandayam community for long, finding an expression in various spheres on the world stage, would perhaps be a scenario, never even imagined by our forefathers. This is indeed a handsome tribute to the genius and the enterprising spirit of the community, nurtured by the emphasis laid by our forefathers on knowledge and learning which have been our mainstay.

The speakers in today's seminar are a good example for the fact that we have excelled in various professions. Let's look at some examples. These are only illustrative and not exhaustive.

If we look at the earlier decades, we have

- **M.C.SampathIyengar**, Chief Engineer KRS Dam
- **M.S. ThirumaleIyengar**, Chief Engineer Hirakud Dam, Orissa
- **R.A. Alasingrchar**, Chief Engineer Madhya Pradesh
- **M.A.Thirunarayan**, Chief Engineer, National Malaria Eradication Board/ Delhi Municipal Corporation
- **R. Parthasarathy**, Director INSDOC, New Delhi
- **Dr.M.J.Srinivasan**, Director, National Chemical Laboratory, Pune
- **Prof.M.A.Sampath Kumaran**, Director, All India Inst. of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta

If we look at the current times, we have

- **Dr.M.A.Srinivasan** at MIT, working in the field of Haptics, the science of touch. He is an international authority on the subject.
- **Dr.Srinivasan** at Australian National University, is working on decoding the honey bee flight dynamics, which are highly useful in developing technologies for flying objects, including drones.
- **M.T.ShyamSundar** is a specialist in Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) and is a Sr. Manager at G.E. Research Centre, Bangalore
- **SudarshanMandyam**, Global Program Manager at Sai Global
- **Srinivas Mandyam** Founder and CTO, Tynker
- **SanthiratanMandyam**, Integration Consultant, Fannie Mae, USA
- **Ms.LakshmiMandyam**, Dir. Server Systems and Ecosystems, ARM
- **Madhusudan Mandyam**, President, Tata Teleservices
- **Rajesh Mandyam**, VP Business Development, Clear2Pay
- **VijayasimhaMandyam**, Sr.Delivery Manager, Metric Stream

- **VarshaMandyam**, Sr. Quality Assurance Engineer, Software Testing
- **NiranjanaMandyam**, Consultant
- **VikramMandyam**, Architect
- **Sridhar Rangayyan**, An Award winning film maker

The list could go on and on, because we have many more Mandayams in various professions who have excelled in their field. It should be a matter of pride to all of us that our community, though quite small in size, has contributed so many eminent professional in various fields.

Thank you.

### **Dr. M.A. SRINIVASAN**

Dr. Mandayam Anandanpillai Srinivasan is founding director of the MIT Touch Lab and Senior Research Scientist in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Research Laboratory of Electronics at MIT. In addition, he holds the Professorial Chair of Haptics at the Department of Computer Science, University College London, UK. He received the Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Bangalore University, the Master's degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Science and the Ph.D. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Yale University, USA. As a member of research faculty in the Department of Anesthesiology, Yale University School of Medicine, he conducted research on the mechanics and mechanisms of the primate sense of touch. He moved to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1987 and founded the Laboratory for Human and Machine Haptics. This "MIT Touch Lab" is now internationally recognized for its leadership in multiple aspects of haptics research. In 2010 he founded the UCL Touch Lab at the Department of Computer Science, University College London, UK and has been commuting between Boston and London every month to manage his two research laboratories.

Dr. Srinivasan's research over the past 3 decades has played a pivotal role in starting and establishing the multidisciplinary field of modern Haptics. He has been recognized worldwide as an authority on haptic computation, cognition, and communication in humans and modern machines such as computers and robots. The following is a list of his most significant contributions to a variety of fields: (1) Neuroscience: New paradigm to study tactile neural coding, namely, how object properties such as microtexture, shape, and softness are conveyed from the skin to the brain; (2) Biomechanics: development of the first biomechanical and finite element models of tactile sensing in the fingerpad and continued refinement and validation of it using multiple

imaging techniques such as videomicroscopy, MRI, high frequency ultrasound, and OCT; (3) Robotics: development of a variety of haptic and tactile interface devices to enable a user to touch, feel, and manipulate virtual as well as real objects ranging in scale from nanometers to superhuman; development of a robotic fingertip and a teleoperation system capable of operating on single cells at micron precision; (3) Computer Science: development of computer algorithms and software to simulate the geometry and dynamics of objects for realistic haptic feel of their virtual models; (4) Psychophysics: Use of multimodal Virtual Reality (VR) systems and demonstration of new illusions in human multimodal perception; (5) Medicine: Development of VR based simulators for training medical personnel; (6) Communication: First demonstration of touch between Boston and London across the Atlantic as an illustration of touch across computer networks; (7) Rehabilitation: First demonstration of controlling robots directly from brain neural signals; development of haptic aids based on virtual reality to help blind people navigate unknown spaces.

The international impact of Dr. Srinivasan's work has been multifaceted. He has authored over 200 publications in multiple fields ranging from neuroscience to robotics that include some of the most highly cited papers on haptics. He has patented several key haptic technologies and given over 125 invited talks all over the world, with many keynote or plenary talks in premier international conferences. A measure of wider societal impact is that Dr. Srinivasan has been featured or quoted in print media such as the Scientific American, Time magazine, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Times of India, Pravda and Smithsonian, as well as by worldwide radio and TV networks such as BBC and CNN in programs focused on cutting edge research in information technology and its future prospects. Several of the technologies that were developed in his lab have been displayed as hands on interactive

exhibits in many museums such as the Boston Museum of Science, MIT Museum, and V&A Museum in London.

When Dr. Srinivasan started his Laboratory for Human and Machine Haptics (MIT Touch Lab) around 1990, it was the first haptics lab in the multidisciplinary sense of the word and now there are more than twenty haptics labs distributed around the world. Approximately 10 Bachelors, 20 Masters and 10 PhD students have conducted research in his MIT Touch lab, with a majority of them being international students. In addition, about 20 post-doctoral fellows have received their research training in both of his labs. At least half of his PhD students and Post docs are in university faculty or research positions around the world. To commercialize the results of cutting-edge research performed in his laboratories, Dr. Srinivasan founded Yantric, Inc., a startup company devoted to developing futuristic virtual reality, robotic and healthcare technologies. More details about Dr. Srinivasan can be found on the internet by Googling his name (Mandayam A Srinivasan).

Dr. Srinivasan is married to Dr. Anuradha Mandayam Annaswamy, a Senior Research Scientist in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at MIT and a world-renowned authority on automatic control and its applications to power grids, batteries, autonomous aerial systems, and self-driving cars. Their triplet children, Aneesh, Giridhar, and Suma, will be graduating with a Bachelor's degree from MIT next year. The whole family has enjoyed performing on stage at various functions organized by the Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha over the years.



## **Tomorrow: The Need to Develop an Inclusive Outlook, while Retaining the Core Values of our Tradition**

**M. A. Srinivasan, Boston, USA**

Dear fellow Mandayams,

I feel honored and humbled to have been asked to express my thoughts on the topic above, yet as a Mandayam settled in the United States for almost 4 decades, I believe my perspective could be of some interest - or amusement - to community members. I sincerely thank the hard-working officers of the Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha for giving me this opportunity, while I hope that they are not too unhappy with the result. During my student days in Bangalore, when most city-dwelling Mandayams had already switched to "cropped" hairstyle, I still had my "juttu" until just a few weeks before leaving for America. Paradoxically, this was not because I was committed to tradition, but actually was both an act of respect for my parents and defiance against societal norms on appearance – I say this just so you have a forewarning of my penchant for offbeat thinking. I do not intend this piece to be controversial, and hope that it leads to fruitful discussions that shed more light than heat. I have chosen to interpret "inclusive" as "all-embracing" with respect to other people as well as personal lifestyle. Given that this session is organized as "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," I will take the same tack and rely on my own experience, which is what I can be confident about. I am quite aware that if you ask two Mandayams, you get at least three opinions which is what I love about our community of intellectuals. In this tradition, the following is solely my current opinion and thoughts on the matter, and not a prescription for others to follow. I am open to modifying it as others with more wisdom will surely point out its shortcomings.

Time and change are inextricably linked: time never stands still, for there is always change. This change is particularly noticeable when there is life. Many ancient civilizations,

including ours, have observed that change is the one constant in life. Civilizations, big and small, rise or fall depending on how they respond to changes over time. We Mandayam Iyengars, probably the smallest distinct social group among Iyengars, who themselves are a few percent of the population, are no strangers to changes either initiated by us or imposed on us. We have survived and even thrived over a millennium, because of our core values and inclusive attitude. These are being further tested at present and our response will determine how we fare in the future.

We trace our beginnings as followers of Sri Ramanuja's teachings and feel proud about the religious, philosophical and social changes he advocated. Whether reciting the ashtakshara manthram from the top of the Srirangam temple for all people to benefit or facilitating the entry of thirukulatthaar into the temples, Sri Ramanuja pushed for more inclusion in the society at large. When Sri Anandalwar undertook to rebuilding the Tirupati temple in the 11th century or when our forefathers had to migrate to Mandya in the 16th century, they embraced boldly the change thrust upon them and were able to build sustainable communities that thrived for several centuries to this day. As immigrants in both places, they would have had to adapt to the changed living conditions while retaining their core values.

In the 18th century, the peaceful and contemplative lifestyle in Melukote became very difficult to pursue with the stripping of temple assets and the genocide inflicted by Tippu Sultan. At that time we see our community members entering politics actively in soliciting the British to help restore the Mysore kings. However, the British rule in the late 19th century, while bringing peace and stability, was very insidious – our forefathers had to seek jobs away from ancestral aghrahams to make ends meet and English education became necessary to have a decent standard of living. The development of railways facilitated travel, but also must have necessitated adaptation of daily rituals during the journey and more intermingling of communities. The distinction of Vaidikas and Loukikas itself is an indication of the adaptations and lifestyle changes during this period. While rapidly decreasing population of Vaidikas

strived to maintain sampradaayam in the temples and homes, increasingly large proportion of the community adopted the Loukika lifestyle, partly necessitated by working in faraway places within India.

The wearing of stitched "office" clothes, caps to cover head and hair and later adopting cropped hair eating in restaurants, introduction of coffee and onions at home, participating in performing arts such as music and dance are examples that were seen as deterioration of our core values by traditionalists when they were introduced, but yet overwhelmingly adopted by the community. The main point is that the need to develop an inclusive outlook has been faced probably by every generation before us and our forefathers have adapted their attitudes and lifestyles to the changing times.

As far as I know, my grand uncle Dr. Sampathkumaran was the first Mandayam to leave India and cross the seas, thus violating a major prohibition. After he got his PhD in Botany at the University of Chicago around 1920 and returned, his own father, Sri Alwar Swamy refused to meet or accept him as a member of the community. I have heard that some of the pragmatic reasons for the prohibition to cross the seas were that at that time it took many weeks on a ship when vegetarian diet could perhaps not be guaranteed and daily rituals could not be performed to the same standards as at home. And staying in foreign lands was also problematic for the same reasons and possible corruption of the mind and lifestyle due to alien influences. Nevertheless, the rest of the community, particularly my father's generation, seems to have been quite proud of Dr. Sampathkumaran's achievements after his return and interacted with him and his family without much reservation. In the second half of 20th century, traveling and staying abroad was no longer an issue for most Mandayams: jet travel reduced the travel time to a day or less and enough information was available that one need not compromise on daily rituals and vegetarian lifestyle while staying abroad. In fact, apart from the lack of some familiar produce and spices, it was not much different from staying in, say, Northern India. As an anecdotal illustration of these changes in attitudes, it may be interesting to note that when my brother returned from the USA in the early 70s, he had to go through

"Praayaschitta," a religious purification or atonement procedure, whereas when I went back in the late 70s it was no longer necessary.

By now, I estimate that about a thousand Mandayams have either travelled abroad or settled all over the globe. The highest number of Mandayam settlers is undoubtedly in the US, particularly in California, followed by Europe (including the UK), UAE, Southeast Asia, and Australia in no particular order. The US opened its borders to Indian engineers in the mid-60s and the first wave of Mandayam immigrants have not only children but also grand children born and brought up as US citizens. Hundreds of temples have been built and located in almost every major city with one difference compared to South India: Both Vaishnāva and Saiva idols are present under the same roof and the priests from both streams perform daily rites to all the gods. Although separate North and South Indian style temples exist, it is common to see people from both regions, and even white Americans, worshipping in these temples. Indians are only about 1% of the US population of about 325 million, and therefore form a very small part of the dominant culture, but nevertheless are free to practice religion and lifestyle mostly as in India. One advantage of being such a tiny immigrant minority is that differences in language, caste, rituals, food, etc among Indians are not at all issues compared with the differences with the other 99% who themselves were immigrants at some point and are quite heterogeneous in beliefs and lifestyle. For Mandayams, while practicing a Melukote vaidika lifestyle may be impossible in the US, practicing a Bangalore loukika lifestyle requires only minor adjustments, in my opinion.

In looking at the future, one of the most important questions is how can we ensure that the Mandayam community will continue to thrive. The answer needs to involve both quantity (will there be enough number of Mandayams?) and quality (will they be able to maintain core values?). I would like to address the former first. It is well known that for a population to maintain its size, the Replacement Fertility Rate (RFR) needs to be about 2.1 children/woman. This can be interpreted as each married adult is replaced by a child plus 0.1 to account for those who remained single or passed away before producing a child.

Therefore if each Mandayam marries another Mandayam and produces 2.1 children on average, the population will be maintained. Looking back, our previous generations had much higher number of children (i.e.,  $RFR > 2.1$ ), which means the community was growing. This enabled sufficient numbers of eligible men and women and thus sufficient choice of spouses even while the marriages were "arranged." For example, 5 children or more seems to be quite common for my grandfather's generation, at least 3-4 in my father's generation and typically 1-2 presently. My inference is that our population is not growing and possibly shrinking, but this needs to be verified.

One consequence is that young people are feeling that they do not have enough choice for a suitable mate within the community, and with reduced parental authority in insisting on arranged marriages, are increasingly marrying outside the community. Within individual families, it appears to be a standard method that one looks for eligible spouses within the community first, and more often than not are unable to find a suitable match because of shrinking numbers, forcing them to look outside the community. For young people, often well educated professionals who are financially independent, used to having close friends and colleagues outside the community, and are exposed to other cultures internationally (even while living in India), marrying a Mandayam solely to follow tradition will be increasingly more the exception. If one imposes a very conservative rule that for a child to be part of the community both parents need to be Mandayam, it will effectively reduce the RFR to less than 2 (because the Mandayam who married outside will not have a replacement), unless there is a substantial increase in the number of children the "both-Mandayam" couples produce. The latter cannot be imposed as a requirement and goes against the current trend. Hence the conservative rule will further exacerbate the shrinking of the community and over time, will probably ensure its demise by accelerating the need felt by our young for outside community marriages. As the logic above shows, I think the only reasonable policy for the Mandayam community to stop shrinking is to be inclusive and welcome Mandayams

who have married outside, their spouses and children to be part of the community.

The science of human genetics also seems to support this recommendation, but I am not an expert in the field. In my limited research, genetic implications of intermarrying within a small population over a long period poses another danger. I found studies that show some genetic overlap among parents might have a reproductive advantage, but too much overlap raises the risk of genetic disorders if the child gets copies of the same recessive gene from both parents. The latter is more likely to happen as the genetic diversity reduces within the group that the parents come from. Avoiding marriages within the same gothra might have helped maintain some genetic diversity, but given the small population to start with, it may not be sufficient as time progresses. If maintaining genetic diversity is the basis for gothra-based marriage restrictions, then the gothras of both parents should be given equal weight since they both equally contribute to the offspring's genome. Moreover, if the parents are confined to a relatively small group, as the number of generations increase, the genetic similarity among the offsprings also increases.

One striking example of this is the Spanish Habsburgs who ruled large sections of Europe over several hundred years by consolidating power through marriages between relatives, which eventually led to their extinction because of genetic disorders. Closer to home is the example of Parsis of Bombay, who also trace their history in India for about 1000 years like us. In spite of their population which is more than 10-15 times that of mandayams, marriage practices similar to ours has resulted in a unique culture they are proud of and a dwindling population they are seriously worried about. In fact, they have debated the same questions – for example, what to do when a member marries outside? Should one treat the offspring of men who married outside the same as those of women who married outside?

Before our community develops some guidelines for the future, we need to better understand these issues from both scientific and social viewpoints. Strict traditionalists among us might argue that following "sampradaayam" has served us

well and the goal should be to continue it fervently. However, as I have pointed out earlier, our forefathers were quite liberal in their thinking and adopted new practices and gave up old ones over time. Apart from the examples on lifestyle changes I gave before, we accept late marriage, divorce, and remarriage while we would not accept pre-teenage marriages or polygamy today. Several of our traditions are based on what was convenient and appropriate at the time, or what is acceptable evolved as in the case of women's college education or working outside the home. Increasingly, the male-dominant traditions are giving way to equal partnership between women and men, which should be especially supported by our community as Sri Vaishnavas who celebrate Andal as an Alwar. A wise man from our community once told me the following funny story about how some traditions can develop. In one family, when they performed the annual death ceremony of their forefathers, they kept the family cat under a bamboo basket so it wouldn't be running around. To the kids, this was a routine procedure as they were growing up. When it came time for them to perform the ceremony, they didn't have a cat. So they made their kids procure a cat for the day so it could be put inside a bamboo basket, which then became a tradition for the future generations! So I think we need to exert our discretion and be wise in determining what to maintain and what to modify, just as in amending the constitution of a country. Whatever decisions we take, if we truly believe in the Thenkalai Principle of Marjaala Kishora Nyaaya, there is absolutely no need to worry about the future, is there?

Regarding how we can help the present and future generations maintain core values, as a Mandayam parent living in America, I would recommend increasing the utilization of modern communication technology to build and maintain a so-called virtual community. Various Mandayam volunteers and the Sabha have already implemented portions of the list below, which is meant as an incomplete checklist.

1. Family tree: Several volunteers in California have started this on Geni.com several years ago and it would help not only in communication among us but also in answering a variety of questions about our roots, community, youth, etc., if all

Mandayams fill in their details. In locating a fellow Mandayam now or in the future, it would be great if all of us followed the naming convention of having Mandayam or Mandyam as either middle or last name that can be used in web-based searches.

2. Language: Preservation of our unique language requires video or online lessons on the internet. When young people reach a certain maturity, they want to connect with their roots. The more we facilitate this need, the more their identity will include their Mandayam origins, a benefit of us being inclusive of our young.

3. Core philosophy and religious practices: Having a central online place where one can learn about our traditions (including origins, meaning,<sup>4</sup> etc.) would be valuable.

4. Festivals: I know there is at least one book on our Festivals written by Smt. Goda. However, it would be very helpful if this information were available online.

5. Recipes: Again, books have been written about Mandayam dishes over several decades, but these days we need them to be accessible online.

6. Social networking: many families are using smartphone based apps such as WhatsApp for instantaneous communication and have found it to be very valuable in keeping in touch. A community-wide version with events like "aanai pandigai contest" would help us come together more frequently.

I would like to close my talk with the well-known quote from the Rig veda:

***Aa no Bhadraah Krtavo yantu viswatah*** (Let noble thoughts come to me from all directions)



## **Mandayam Srivaishnavas at the forefront of Technology**

**- Dr. M.K. Srivas, Chennai**

Good afternoon. Thank you for having come to listen to me and thanks to the Mandayam Sabha for giving me this opportunity. First of all let me confess, I am neither a historian of Mandayam community, nor an expert Srivaishnavism. However I shall try to do full justice to the topic in this presentation.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of two experts who have helped me a lot in putting together this presentation. They are Dr. M.D.Srinivas of Chennai and Dr.M.A.L. Thathachar, with whom I have had lengthy discussions on the subject,

The Mandayam Iyengar community is unique in many ways, one of it being the high percentage of technical and professional people it has produced, despite being a small community. This is perhaps due not only to the emphasis placed by the community on education, but also to the tradition of Srivaishnavas which puts a premium on knowledge seeking. I shall try and highlight the contributions of Mandayam Iyengars to the field of science and technology.

I shall proceed with my presentation on the following outline:

1. Glimpses of pioneers who have made significant contribution to science and technology

This is not exhaustive and many contributors would have been left out. However, the goal is to set the right context and show that many Mandayamshave contributed significantly.

2. Significance of Srivaishnavism and Mandayam Iyengars
3. The role of Srivaishnavism and Mandayam Iyengars in guiding the younger generation

### **The Early Era (Pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century)**

- Vedanthi Ramanuja Jeeyar's contribution to Tharka Shastra
- ThirumalaiIyengar (Thirumalaraya) has penned many scholarly works including Chikkadevaraja Binnappa.
- Thirumalaraya's brother has contributed immensely to Kannada literature.

### **The Modern Era (19<sup>th</sup>& 20<sup>th</sup> Century)**

- Malur Rangachar – has edited the Jain literature 'Charitra Sara Sangraha'
- M.A. Anandalwar – has many publications on Ancient Indian Temple Architecture
- M.G. Singlachar- A scholar in Ayurveda, has translated many works of Ayurveda.
- M.D. Srinivasan - Ancient Mathematical concepts in Vedas
- Dr.M. A. Sampathkumaran – Prof. of Botany; has done significant research work in Botany .
- M.O.Parthasarathy Iyengar - an expert on Algae; has conducted significant research in that area
- Jeersannidhi Narasimhan - Research in Botany
- M.J. Thirumalachar – Son of Jeersannidhi Narasimhan, was Director of Research at Hindusthan Antibiotics, Pune. Recipient of Satish Bhatnagar Award.

In the field of mathematics,

- M.T. Narayana Iyengar - Editor of the journal of Indian Mathematic Society, which published some of the early papers of SrinivasaRamanujam.
- M.J. Narayana Iyengar/ PNJ Sharma - has authored many books for students of Maths. At the graduate level. Inspired many students
- AjiVenkatachar - has authored many books for students of Maths. Inspired many students.

In the field of Medicine,

- Dr.S.S. Jayaram- specialized in psychiatry in those days. Opened a Nursing Home
- Dr. M.N. Jayaram

In other fields,

- Dr.M.G.Srinivasan - Metallurgist
- Dr. M.A.L. Thathachar – Electrical Engg., Prof at Indian Institute of Science.

Late 20<sup>th</sup>& 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- Dr.Veerambudhi Srinivasan -An Australian President's Awardee, has been doing research on the flight characteristics of honey bee, which is important in designing drones etc.

- Dr. M.A. Srinivasan and Anuradha Srinivasan – both are working in MIT. Srinivasan is an internationally known authority on Haptics.

The above list is largely of academicians only. There will be many who would have contributed similarly in other fields too.

What is the role played by Mandayam Iyengar traditions and Srivaishnava philosophy in this?

- A thirst for excellence and knowledge

As a community we emphasize the value of education and Srivaishnava tenet of service to humanity.

- Evolution of the world and the nature of work

Earlier the focus was on philosophy & shastras. Later the emphasis was on professional education and modern science.

Our elders were able to maintain a balanced blend of both *lokika* and *vaidika* in their lives. However, there has been a gradual erosion of this in the later years.

### **What can and should we do?**

I am giving here some of my personal views. The Sabha / community perhaps needs to debate this and arrive at a consensus.

- Srivaishnava and Mandayam Iyengar style of life has value even today. How do we make it relevant to the youth of today?
- Mandayam Sabha is doing quite a lot, but this may not be sufficient.
- Need to educate youngsters on the relevance of Srivaishnavism
- Construct/provide reformed guidelines
- Invite / encourage volunteers from younger generation in organizing activities.

Thank you



**KARNATAKA KALASHREE**  
**Smt. DWARAKI RISHNASWAMY**

Born to Sri.M.G.NarasimhaIyengar and Smt. Yadhugiriammal, from a highly cultured family, Smt. DwarakiKrishnaswamy evinced keen interest in Carnatic music from childhood. She got her training in Carnatic music up to Vidwath grade under Vidushi Smt. Pushpa Srinivasan, a senior disciple of Vidwan Sri. M.S. SelvapillaiIyengar (of Bangalore AIR fame). She started learning flute under Vidwan Sri. M.S. Srinivasa Murthy from 1978.

With the encouragement and support of her husband Sri.R.A.K.Swamy, she started performing as an accompanying flutist in the orchestra for dance programmes for her daughter, Smt. Maithili Krishnaswamy and has the privilege and the pleasure of continuing the same even now. She has accompanied many dancers of national and international repute, particularly to Smt. Padmini Ravi, Smt. Vyjayanthi Mala Bali, Smt. Vani Ganapathi, Smt. PrathibhaPrahlaad, Smt. Bhanumathi, Smt. SrideviUnni, Smt. SundariSanthanam, and Smt. Lalitha Srinivasan.

She has composed lyrics and music for dance ballets to many dance schools like NruthyaLahari, Pradhan dance center, Bharathanjali, Monishacenter, Shivashakthi School, Nupura, and BharathaNruthya School. She also heads an institution for Carnatic classical music, "Sri Vidhyasudha" for ladies "NadhaBindu" for youngsters.

It was a challenging offer to the composer, when she was given a project to compose Dance Ballets having main characters equivalent to the number of students i.e. 1 student to 12 students appearing for the final exams every year. Each of these creations was well accepted and the dancers came out brilliantly with high grades!!!

It was her sheer privilege and luck to study degree classes in Kannada under guru Sri. G.P. Raja Ratnam. A drop of that vast ocean of knowledge has helped her to create lyrics in Kannada to dance repertoire. Her creation of lyrics in music for Pushpanjali, Kouthavam, Jathiswarams, Shabdams, Padavarnams, Javalis, Kruthis and Thillanas has given her immense contentment in life. Recently Academy has brought "Kannada NrityaNatakagalu" volume 1, compiling 25 dramas for dance.

Karnataka Sangeetha Nruthya Academy has brought out the 2nd edition of her creation of dance repertoire in Kannada, "Nrithakke Kannada Krithigalu" with a set of 3 CD, first of its kind in Karnataka,

and a book of dance dramas composed by her in Kannada. She has been honoured as "Artist of the Year" by Bangalore GayanaSamaja, "Karnataka Kalashree" by the government of Karnataka, "The Rasika award" by shapreCarnatica of Chennai, and has been honoured by many more organizations. She has also received many awards by other prestigious dance and music institutions as follows.

1. "Kala Ratna" award by Padmalaya Centre of arts
2. "Kala Margi" award by Nrityakalamandira.
3. "Abhinavasharada" award by SheshaMahaGanapathi Institution
4. "Vamshi" award by Vamshi Institution
5. "Kaladeepthi" award by Thyagaraja Sangeetha Sabha
6. "Kala Rasana" award by Monisha Arts
7. "GaanaTapasvi" award by VenkateshNatyaMandira
8. "Aryabhata International award, 2013" by Aryabhata Cultural Society

It was her deep wish and vision to help upcoming artistes if music and dance, in understanding the depth and beauty of "KshetragnyaPadams" that led her to translate them into Kannada. "AnanyakalaSinchana", is publishing her poetic translations in Kannada for the past 5 years. AIR Bangalore FM station has broadcasted her musical feature on the great poet's original Telugu padams translated to Kannada in 19 episodes. For the past 8 years, she is part of the flute faculty in BharathiVIDyaBhavan, Bangalore.

## **The Valedictory Address**

**By Smt. Dwaraki Krishnaswamy**

**SrimatheRamanajuayaNamaha**

It is the greatest blessing of Lord Tiru Narayana to have been born in this highly intellectual Vaishnava community. In particular, it is a privilege to belong to the ShishyaParampara of Shri Yethiraj mutt as Mandyam Shri Vaishnavite.

I would like to share with you my evergreen unforgettable memories as a young girl at Malleshwaram. My father, an engineer hired his abode at Yethiraj mutt complex in 1948, A sheer stroke of luck for us all. At that time Malleshwaram was a colony of Vaishnavas. Eighty percent were Mandyams only. Each house, small or big, brimming full with elders, couples with a bunch of children, a happy joint family. They had the benevolent heart to accommodate all. Life was simple. No pomp, no showmanship. On all the festivals and house functions like Poochootal, cradle, first birthday, marriages, Shashtaabdipoorthi, the whole community used to come together as one family. No formal invitations expected. Even festivals would be hectic with visiting sprees but with bout of joy and entertainment. A warm welcome from the hostess and a rigid protocol sampradayam followed by rich feast prepared by the hostess family, a simple vethelepaaku, with fruit, dakshine, and manjalkombu. Throughout the year, socializing and sharing the happiness with one and all somewhere or the other was the inspiring life then.

Our house was in 11<sup>th</sup> cross. Each morning, at dawn, the Mangalamaniouse of Sri Venugoplaswamy Temple used to wake us up with all its serenity and vibrations. The 11<sup>th</sup> cross, wide and calm used to reverberate with the Goshti recitation by the VidwathGoshti. They used to pass our house from temple to Yethiraj mutt in Sampige road. Many a time, I used to follow them to the Mutt. At Shri ShriJeerswamy's grace, after mangalaarathi it would be my seva as Gananusandanam. With blessings from Acharya and a handful of prasadam, I used to come home blessed, thus temple and Yethiraj mutt became the part and parcel of life along with university studies.

At the back of our house, YMMA basketball field had the greatest attraction for girls and boys. I was a regular player with friends of my age every evening. It used to be an

exhilarating experience. At home, my mother YedugiriAmma who was very pious but brilliant was well versed with Naalayiram Prabandham. Women folk gathered at our house every evening to recite the same. She expired young at her 54<sup>th</sup> year because of her poor health. Many eminent scholars and celebrities used to visit her after attending the poojavidhis at the mutt. It was my Bhagyam to serve them wherein I used to watch and hear with awe and admiration, as they would dwell deep in to the subjects thus exchanging and propagating many noble views. Though I absorbed very little, I was inspired and enjoyed the intellectuals and acquaintances. Dr S.T. Narasimhan, M.O. Alasingar, My tata Srinivasaacharya of Madras Mr and Mrs Mandyam, Mr and Mrs M. R. Narasimha Iyengar and many more visited us.

Even now I remember the hot discussions of Shri M.R. Narasimha Iyengar about his struggle and his perseverance to get the full land to our Sri mutt and how he won. Now, our mutt is standing high and mighty in its splendor and glory. Another great is Mr. Mandyam fresh in my memory. He used to cycle all the way, rain or shine with an umbrella and a bag, persuading one and all to become patrons and members of the community to bring it to glory. A real achiever!

Lastly, I want to share my experience of those days, 70 years back. Women folk of our community with abundant talent and wisdom had very little chance to blossom. In spite of the restriction, I have marveled at some brave spirited ones breaking the shackles. Mrs.Ranganayakamma Mandyam, a graduate, Dr.Andalamma, an ayurvedic doctor, Alamelamma Narsimhaachar, serving at hospitals, Manni Vengadamma, a performing musician, My mother Yedugiriamma publishing a book on Bhartiyar, which is highly appreciated in and out of India, KaggaduRanganayakamma teaching Veena at palace to women folk, Veena Rajamma, a veena exponent at Mysore, Vasundharadevi, in film world at Madras, Mrs. Y.G.P of famous Padma Sheshadri educational institutions, M.D.Vedavalli's grandmother, a great composer of Sampradayahaadu in Kannada and such many more unexplored flowers of talents lived and faded. But one truth stands great among all of them. It is all the great housewives who brought glory and richness to our community with their abundant matured wisdom which has laid a great firm foundation on which the modern, affluent in all aspects, is rising to great heights.

## Feedback about the Seminar

We had sought a feedback from the delegates who attended the seminar. Many of our members who saw the webcast of the seminar have also given us their feedback. We share below with our readers the highlights of their feedback:

- Over 75 % felt that the coverage of the subjects in the seminar ranged from good to very good.
- Over 60 % felt that the time allotted to the speakers was good and the speakers covered their subjects well.
- A vast majority felt that services like ease of registration, materials given to delegates, hospitality services and the overall ambience of the seminar ranged from good to very good and rated the seminar in the overall as good.

Here are some of the views expressed by them:

- The Subjects were relevant and the speakers were good. They should keep up the time. . .  
- Pushpa Srivatsa
- Tomorrow's delegates' participation is very poor. Need for next generation Mandayams to participate.  
- M.A.Venkatesh
- Personal presentation should be there instead of video presentation - Indira Prakash
- Very good initiative to have a seminar. A good audio would have made the seminar more interesting & meaningful. Probably, we could have made it free, just like sports, so that more Mandayams could have attended.  
- M.A.Dwaraki
- Such Seminars should be arranged at least once in 3 months or 6 months. Some more audience need to be present.  
- R. Parthasarathy
- To organize more Seminars with professionals of various faculty and involve youths who will become the future leaders of the community. . .  
- M.D. Rajasimha



- Audience discipline is a must. Cross-talking while a lecture is going on, will disturb the interested delegates from listening and appreciating the talk. . .  
- N. Rangarajan
- The subjects were very relevant and the speakers were very good. . . The number of speakers could be reduced considering the duration of the Seminar . . . It is better to avoid video recordings, as it fails to make an impact on the audience, though the speakers are eminent. . .  
- Radha Rangarajan
- Once again the Centenary team has excelled. The Seminar was well structured, topics were relevant, speakers were authentic, forthright and presented achievable plans and strategies for sustaining the core values of the community in spite of recognizing the formidable and challenging threats due to dispersion of the community members widely across the globe and taxing and conflicting professional needs. Hearty congratulations and special thanks to all involved. Regards,  
- M. C. Badarinarayana

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