

A.P.C. MAHALAXMI COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, THOOTHUKUDI
Report on TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND SCIENCE: A CULTURAL
EXTRAVAGANZA-2018

A three day cultural festival titled *Antaiya Vazhvum Ariviyalum – Kalam Kaana va Rani Va* was organised and celebrated at A.P.C. Mahalaxmi College for Women, Thoothukudi, from 4th – 6th October 2018. As a move towards making the present generation aware of the scientific principles behind traditional practices, this mega event was planned and held at the college premises in a grand manner. With the strong support of the President A.P.C.V. Chockalingam and the Secretary Mrs. C. Subbulaksmi, a Planning Committee comprising 10 members was formed to monitor the programme. The Committee includes Dr. K. Sathya Bama, the Principal, Dr. N. Meenakumari, Head & Associate Professor of Mathematics, Dr. K. Subbulakshmi, Associate Professor of Tamil, Dr. D. Radha, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Dr. V. Sornalakshmi, Assistant Professor of Botany, Ms. B. Abinaya Bharathi, Assistant Professor of English, Dr. S. Uma Mageswari, Assistant Professor of Commerce, Mrs. J. Arokia Jeyanthi, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Dr. J. Clara Jeyageetha, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, and Dr. T. Lilly Golda, Assistant Professor of English & Coordinator of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell.

Thoothukudi District Collector, Mr. Sandeep Nanduri inaugurated the programme on 04.10.2018. On the occasion, over 400 students clad in traditional attires performed a variety of traditional dances. There were stalls set up exhibiting the traditional foods, sweets and handicrafts. The students demonstrated the everyday life of Tamils who were living in huts. Medicinal plants like the Indian mulberry and commonly used plants for home remedies like Vasambu and Tulsi were displayed. Besides, students sold a variety of handmade crafts including jewellery, bags and ornamental items. Scenarios such as horse cart travel and celebration of Pongal were also depicted. There was an overwhelming response from the schools, colleges and outsiders. Nearly 6000 people visited, enjoyed and came to know about the value of our tradition and culture by this festival.

Golu:

Tamil tradition, culture, customs, rituals have some scientific reason behind them. The universal truth of religion and science were exhibited through the Golu. The Golu relates the religion with science. Along with the colourful dolls in the Golu, the setting of Galaxy, *Kailayam*, and various temples were the real fest for the visitors' eyes. Department of Mathematics excellently made the Golu at the lawn was the centre of attraction.

Traditional Dance:

The students performed traditional dances such as *Kummi*, *Bharatanatyam*, *Karagam*, *Paraiyattam*, *Silambattam*, *Kavadi Attam*, *Thappattam*, *Pinnalkolattam* and *Oyilattam*. The colourful dance was a remarkable spectacle for the visitors. Nearly 400 students exhibited their talents through their astonishing dance performance during the festival. Appreciating the students' performance Puducherry Natyanjali Trust has bestowed "Gramia Kalai Muthukkal" award to the President of our college Thiru A.P.C.V. Chokalingam. On behalf of Puducherry Natyanjali Trust, its founder A.Susairaj also presented "Gramia Kalaichemmal" award to Dr. Sankar, Assistant Professor of History, V.O. Chidambaram College, Thoothukudi, appreciating his efforts on training the students to perform well in the traditional festival.

Food Court:

Our ancestors were amicable with nature. They maintained their health and led a hale and healthy life during their life span. Modern life has modified everyone's life style. In the recent years we don't really know the value of traditional food as we are lured by fast food items and eateries from different parts of the world. Contemporary Tamil culture and food habits are rapidly changing leading to neglect of values and decline in health. So there is a need to preserve and follow those ancient practices. In order to insist on the importance of healthy diet, conventional food items like home made *dosai*, *laddu*, *paniyaram*, *uppuma*, *satham*, *vadai*, *ponda*, *kolukattai* etc., using millets such as *cumbu*, *ragi*, *maize*, *kuthiravali*, *thinai* and *varagu* were displayed and sold by the students. The students brought alive many traditional recipes, made of nutritious millets, cereals and pulses. Some dishes like *Olai Kozhukattai*, *Kambampul Urundai* and *Ragi Adai* were sold like hot cakes. No wonder the visitors really felt the traditional taste. The Department of English had made all the arrangements for the food court.

Thiruvizha:

The *Thiruvizha* setting visualised a real thiruvizha in front of us. Seven stalls namely *Pasumaiyagam* (Fruits Stall), *Samanthi Saaragam* (Sarbath Stall), *Sempanchukulambagam* (Mehendhi Stall), Flower Stall, *Mitai* Stall, *Vallaiyal* Stall (Bangle Stall) and *Pandian Sevu Kadai* (Snacks Stall) were arranged by the Department of Commerce and Department of History. Traditional sweet stalls with *Koli Soda* and colourful *Kutchi Mitai* and sweets made from jaggery attracted the children. As part of the *Thiruvizha*, *Villisai* and *Kummi* with *Mulaipari* were performed by the students. Initially, training for *Villisai* was given by Mrs. Jeya Lalitha and *Kummi Pattu* by Ms. Vishnu Priya and Ms. Dhana Vincy of I B.Com. The visitors also had a chance to sing folk songs. Folk songs sung by our students as well as the

visitors added to the traditional flavour. Merry-go-rounds were also arranged to entertain the visitors.

Pongal Vizha:

Mattu Pongal, Siru Veetu Pongal and *Samathuva Pongal* were celebrated along with traditional Pongal games. Every day, varieties of Pongal were prepared using earthen pots by the Department of Commerce (UA) and distributed to the visitors.

Gramathu Veedu:

Yet another highlight of the three-day celebrations was the real setting of a *Gramathu Veedu* with a well, fields and a pond with lotus flowers. The huts featured traditional kitchen utensils of Tamils such as pottery, furnace, wooden furniture and stone equipment like *Ural* etc. The setting of Scarecrow and the *Paran* in the field seemed like a real one. The Department of Tamil put their effort to bring a real village in front of us.

Earthen Utensils Exhibition:

An exhibition-cum-sale of different varieties of earthen utensils was displayed in a stall. Different shapes of earthen pots, water bottles, tumblers, plates etc., attracted the visitors and induced them to buy and use at their home.

Traditional Games:

Students from various schools, colleges and outsiders had a gala time playing our traditional indoor games such as *Pallanguli, Thayam, Sularchikai, Gillianda, Hopscotch, Seven Stones* and outdoor games such as *Uriyadi, Kayiru Iluthal, Kayiru Thanduthal, Pandi, Pambaram* and *Poopanthu*. Many forgotten games and some which were being neglected like *Kichu Kichu Thambulam, Thattangal* and *Pallanguzhi* were brought to life. The Department of Physics and the Department of Chemistry wonderfully made all the arrangements.

Craft Exhibition:

To promote students' interest and entrepreneurship skills and motivate them to stand on their own legs, Exhibition-cum-sales and a Tailoring unit were arranged by the Career Guidance & Placement Cell during the Traditional Festival. Initially in the month of September seed money was given to both Hand Crafts and Tailoring Unit students in order to enable them to prepare hand craft items and to buy cloth material for stitching Chudidhar tops for sale during the festival. Jewellery made of crystals, beads, pearls, terracotta clay, quilling paper, silk thread and woollen items like shawl, wall hanging, pouch, key chains, cloth made purse, flower bouquet etc., by the students were exhibited and sold. Chudidhar tops were stitched by the tailoring unit students and sold. There was a overwhelming response from the

visitors and the 3 day exhibition-cum-sales ended very successfully. This exhibition was a great platform to make our students good entrepreneurs.

Model Display:

On behalf of Ethics Club, an Inter-Department Model Making Competition was held on 24.09.2018 at our college premises. The multiplex models made by our students were displayed during the traditional day celebration. Our students exhibited their artistic flair through their Models on the theme of “Gramiyum”. They were using biodegradable wastes for picturing our old traditional way of living. There is no doubt the models were really attracting the school students and the viewers.

Plants Exhibition:

The Department of Botany displayed nearly 30 medicinal plants and herbs which included Indian mulberry (*Morinda* sp) used for treating cancer, Spiral flag (*Costus* sp) used for diabetes, *Bacopa* used as cardiogenic, *Andrographis* used for fever and snake bite, *Gulantha* (*Tinospora*) used to treat Asthma, Indian pennywort (*Centella* sp) used to improve memory power, Air plant (*Bryophyllum*) used to dissolve kidney stones, Cat’s Whiskers (*Orthosiphon*) used for urinary disorders. Sablings of medicinal plants and ornamental plants such as Lemon grass, Indian mulberry, Spiral flag, Air plant, Desert rose, Bleeding heart, Orchid etc., were sold during the 3 day festival.

Fish Aquarium:

On behalf of the Department of Zoology, an Ornamental Aquarium was kept in the New Hall for 3 days. Twenty five types of tropical fish were kept in the aquarium by Mr. J. Martin, Proprietor of NISHA Aquarium, Arumuganeri. Mr. M. Sudalai, assisted to establish the Aquarium. Five students from I B.Sc. Zoology were selected as volunteers and they helped to manage the fish for the three days. Those who visited the aquarium enjoyed seeing the colourful fishes.

S.No	Name of the Fish	<i>Scientific name</i>
1	Lionhead Goldfish	<i>Carassius auratus</i>
2	Shubunkin Goldfish	<i>Carassius auratus</i>
3	Oranda Goldfish	<i>Carassius auratus auratus</i>
4	Telescope goldfish	<i>Carassius auratus auratus</i>
5	Tiger shark	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>
6	Great white shark	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>

7	Red-tailed black shark	<i>Epalzeorhynchus bicolor</i>
8	Silver shark	<i>Balantiocheilos melanopterus</i>
9	Black Molly	<i>Poecilia Sphenops</i>
10	Silver Molly	<i>Poecilia Sphenops</i>
11	Balloon Molly	<i>Poecilia latipinna</i>
12	Sailfin Molly	<i>Poecilia latipinna</i>
13	Chocolate molly	<i>Poecilia latipinna var</i>
14	Kissing gourami	<i>Helostoma temminckii</i>
15	Blue Gourami	<i>Trichopodus trichopterus</i>
16	Tiger barb	<i>Puntigrus tetrazona</i>
17	Rosy barb	<i>Pethia conchonius</i>
18	Tinfoil barb	<i>Barbonymus schwanenfeldii</i>
19	Mono Angel	<i>Monodactylus argenteus</i>
20	Arowana	<i>Scleropages formosus</i>
21	Catfish	<i>Corydoras semiaquilus</i>
22	Sucker mouth catfish	<i>Hypostomus plecostomus</i>
23	Guppy	<i>Poecilia reticulata</i>
24	Siamese fighting fish	<i>Betta splendens</i>
25	Tetra	<i>Paracheirodon innesi</i>

Antique Collections:

Different types of keys, pots, utensils, crafts, swords, sickles, watches and potteries used in the olden times were exhibited by history-enthusiasts V. Karuppasamy of Thoothukudi and Lenin of Tirunelveli. Artefacts like a *Veer Shivaji* lock, that needs three keys to unlock, sundial, old radios, old urns etc., were the attractive items at the ‘museum’.

Photo Shoot:

Various settings in the college depicting *Thiruvizha*, *Golu*, *Gramathu Veedu* and *Pongal Vizha* attracted the visitors for photo shoot and made them feel like entering into a small village. An exclusive traditional setting served as a worthy souvenir for the visitors to take photos with the stills and the background portraying village environment.

Audio-Visual Show:

To add shine to the wonder, Audio-Visual show on the scientific truths behind our culture and tradition delighted the visitors.

Cart Riding:

Traditional bullock-cart and horse-cart rides were an attraction for the school and the college students. The carts were beautifully decorated to provide an unforgettable and exhilarating experience to both the students and the outsiders.

Along with APCIAN family school and college girls, former faculty members and alumnae of APCMC and the public experienced the feel of traditional aura. The visitors were overwhelmed to see the student volunteers busy as bees in the various stalls that were set up to prove their entrepreneurship skills. The grand gala event, which was organised to create awareness of our tradition, culture and customs to the present generation and disseminate the same to the society, came to an end on 06.10.18 leaving behind sweet memories that will remain evergreen.

PRINCIPAL

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