



## MSMF Newsletter

# A Ray of Light

Education \* Eye Care \* Disaster Relief



## ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND STRATEGIES FOR SANKURATHRI FOUNDATION

On August 24, 2010, I had the pleasure of finally visiting Sankurathri Foundation and meeting formally with Dr. Chandrasekhar Sankurathri. My initial encounter with Dr. Chandra was in Spring 2009 at an event organized by Niranjan Vijay of Sudbury who visited Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology as a medical intern the previous year. As a health care professional focused on care for older adults living with illness related disabilities, the work conducted at Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology was of particular interest to me.



**Jacqueline Batista**

Before my departure to India, one of the Board Members of MSMF had requested me to review the most recent strategic plan commissioned by Sankurathri Foundation and conducted by INTERVENTIONS (India) Pvt. Ltd., and discuss the future as envisioned by Dr. Chandra and his staff. The first 20 years of MSMF and Sankurathri Foundation have been primarily focused on development and growth, which it has done at a rapid pace. The most recent strategic plan focused on present changes in the area of health care provisions in Andhra Pradesh and its impact on the future of Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology.

Primary areas of the discussion were leadership structure, funding sources and evolution to a centre of excellence. For the past 10 years, Srikiran has been under the guidance of Dr. Chandra. There is a recognition that in time Dr. Chandra will need to pass the responsibility of organizational management to a successor. When and who will take on the role of Executive Trustee has not been established. However determining the qualities of the ideal candidate is under consideration. In the future an alternative management structure may be required, depending on the developing needs of Sankurathri Foundation

and the available qualified candidates. At this time Sankurathri Foundation has no Board of Directors. Such an external governing body may be advisable to implement, especially during a period of transition to ensure that the original vision and mission of the organization is adhered to. Attempts at implementing a Board of Directors are in the works, but locating committed and qualified community members is posing a challenge.

Recent changes in health care insurance for the poorest of the poor in Andhra Pradesh came into effect in 2008 (pilot project 2007). Some procedures provided at the Institute are covered by a new provincial health plan for eligible residents (<http://www.aarogyasri.org/>). The positive reputation of care has also lead to demand from patients wishing to pay for procedures. The organization historically has not been known for providing care at a cost. However one of the founding principles is providing accessible care to all, including those with the means to pay for care. While Srikiran Institute is known for providing quality eye care to those who are unable to afford care, there is acknowledgement from Dr. Chandra and staff that it is necessary to do paid work to ensure sustainability. At this time determining the optimal ratio of free services to paid for by third party payment is being discussed. The vast majority (over 70%) of services will continue to be provided at no cost to patients, where cost recovery from third party funding sources is possible it should be pursued. Premium funding from client fees and third party payment will allow Srikiran to cross-subsidize free eye care. It should be noted that current state health insurance is not comprehensive and does not cover screen, prevention and elective procedures, such as cataract removal which accounted for over 92% of surgical procedures provided in 2008-2009. The current surgeries and therapies covered by the state program are related primarily to life threatening illnesses and severe injuries.

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Continued partnership with visiting medical professionals, expansion of vitreoretinal services, continued implementation of a patient electronic medical record system and possible large endowments from individual or corporate donors are means of pursuing the goal of becoming a centre of excellence in eye care. Most recently Dr. T. Dhupam returned from a one year fellowship at the University of Alberta. Dr. T. Dhupam and staff are hopeful that his newly acquired skills and knowledge in the area of retina related illnesses will help expand the profile of Srikan. Dr. Chandra and staff have been developing realistic strategies to continue the current work of Srikan and addressing areas of growth. The goals set forth in the strategic plan are specific, attainable and realistic. However, they need to be measurable and timely. Further involvement of medical staff in planning is crucial, as they are imperative to service delivery.

(Jacqueline Batista is with Bridgepoint Health in Toronto, Ontario. She is a Director of SALCO (South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario). She has a graduate degree in Social Work. Bridgepoint Health is one of the largest complex care rehabilitation hospitals in Ontario.)

### LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY TO PARTNER WITH SANKURATHRI FOUNDATION ON A RESEARCH PROJECT

The International Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Law (ICIRL) and Centre for Research in Social Justice and Policy (CRSJP) of the Laurentian University is partnering with Srikan Institute of Ophthalmology of Sankurthri Foundation. The focus is to carryout a research project to study the impact of cataract surgery on activities and gender, and power relations in rural households in India in the context of sociocultural and economic status. Work on this project will start in 2011 and will be completed in 2012.

Social customs and the patriarchal structure of Indian society determine women's intra-household status. In general, women in rural India are highly marginalized in society and their place in the household reflects their marginalized status. Vision loss due to cataracts and post surgery recovery may contribute to changes in societal norms and practices, and may also have an impact on gender,



**Neville Hewage**

power relations and socio-economic status in the household. It is important to identify and measure any changes, in order to evaluate the nature of gender and power relations. In addition, a positive change in increased daily activities following cataract surgery has been noted anecdotally. However, Srikan has no empirical evidence to support this.

The primary purpose of this study will aim to determine what changes, if any, occur to gender and power relations in a family after a member has undergone cataract surgery in a rural household. A secondary purpose is to examine the theoretical implications of bargaining theories on the intra-household status of women (wives or spouses or elderly females).

The project will undertake the investigation of positive changes in increased activities following cataract surgery using World Bank Living Standard measurements (quantitative study). The impact on gender and power relations and any transformations will be further studied by examining the consequences of the increased activities and its connectivity on societal and cultural norms of the formerly handicapped person on the socio-economic status of the household (qualitative study). Interviews will be scheduled, one prior to cataract surgery and a second 90 days after surgery. The interviews will be analyzed according to principles and practices outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) for open, axial, and selective coding. NVivo 8 software will be employed as an aid to the management and analysis of data.

The research team consists of Dr. Henri Pallard, Director of the ICIRL, Dr. Carol Kauppi (CRSJP), Dr. Rashmi Garg and Neville Hewage, a PhD candidate. The results will help to, understand the effects of cataract surgery on related social and cultural settings. Srikan Institute of Ophthalmology will also be able to design its poverty alleviation programs accordingly. Data collection will be undertaken in 2011 and 2012 at Srikan Institute of Ophthalmology, Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, India.

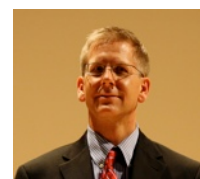
(Neville Hewage is a PhD. Candidate with International Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Law (ICIRL), Laurentian University, Sudbury ON.)

### REVIEW OF TEACHING METHODS AT SARADA VIDYALAYAM

Mr. Michael Schreider, Principal of St. Isidore School in Kanata, Ontario, visited Sarada Vidyalayam in August 2010 to observe the teaching methods and make recommendations. He followed classes on two school days. The classes he attended the first day included languages (English and Telugu), Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. On the second day, a more focussed approach was undertaken, attending only English and Mathematics classes but several grades of classes were included in the observation and reporting.

Overall, Mr. Schreider felt that some teachers did a wonderful job. Others perhaps needed mentoring to become more effective. He felt that the school should use the talent already available to improve its teachers. He made specific recommendations. The following is an excerpt from his report.

- Students should always be given a problem of the day that is an extension of day's lesson. This problem can range in the level of difficulty. This is a good way to engage the students in their problem solving abilities. As well, it is a great way to start or end a lesson when they take it up. Students should learn to solve problems in different ways and share their ways with other students in the class. This will build confidence.
- Give the problem and have students try to solve it. Ask students to show their answers. Then proceed to teach them and complete with other examples.
- The teacher should always try and extend the lesson to give students a chance to use what they know on different problems. This challenges and excites them.
- The teacher should model and expect complete sentences. This way she will get to know her students grasp of passage as she roams the room to check for understanding.



**Michael Schreider**

□ In classes where two teachers were involved, Mr. Schreider felt that a teacher can use his/her time more effectively by grouping children so that one teacher does not have

to do all the work. He felt that activities that extend the lessons being taught must be carefully planned. This would speed up the process which in turn would lead to more instruction time. The students need to be challenged in order to keep enthusiasm in a subject. They also need to have an idea of what to do when work is completed.

(Michael Schreider is the Principal of St. Isidore School, Kanata/Ottawa, Ontario.)

### CHANDRA SANKURATHRI VISITS CANADA.

Chandra Sankurathri visited Canada to support MSMF activities during the months of May-June, 2010. The trip was a busy one as usual with visits to several cities, fundraisers, visits to hospitals and schools and other information and awareness meetings.

His visit started with a public engagement session at the Greenboro Community Centre in Ottawa on May 15, 2010. Other visits in Ottawa included those to the University of Ottawa Eye Institute, Help the Aged Canada, St. Gregory School in Nepean, St. Isidore School in Kanata and a meeting with Hon. David McGuinty, Federal Member of Parliament representing Ottawa South and Premier Dalton McGuinty of Ontario.

Other visits in Canada included the following: Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton, AB, to continue with the co-operation related to training of residents and Retina Sandwich Fellowship Program with Srikan. A fundraising meeting was also held in Edmonton.

In Winnipeg, he attended a fundraiser organized by the Telugu Literary Society of Manitoba and Hindu Society of Manitoba in Winnipeg. There he was presented a plaque in appreciation and gratitude of his tireless humanitarian services. Media interviews and visits to schools followed.

Dr. Chandra, as he is fondly known, also managed to make several stops in the US for awareness and fundraising events.

The annual MSMF picnic was held in Ottawa in June where about 500 supporters attended. Dr. Chandra returned to India with a stop in Cork, Ireland to attend the 25th Memorial Service for the victims of Air India Flight 182.



Hon. Harinder Takhar, Minister of Government Services (Ontario) and MPP for Mississauga Erindale hosted an information session for MSMF and introduced Dr. Chandra at the meeting.

### PROGRESS REPORT FROM SANKURATHRI FOUNDATION.

This year is very special because the Foundation has completed 20 years of its existence and entering a new period of growth and facing challenges in the years ahead.

**Sarada Vidyalayam** has a new landmark this year. The first batch of Class X students have appeared for their final board examinations. There are a total of 13 children consisting of 10 girls and 3 boys. The students and the teachers are confident that they will all secure 1st class in their examination results and we are all anxiously waiting for the results. They are planning to write entrance examination for Polytechnic courses during the summer time and hoping to continue their further education.

The school celebrated its 18th anniversary function on February 20, 2010. The school also received a special award in recognition for the best mark obtained in Telugu language in East Godavari District (97%).

**Vocational school** currently offers three courses - Fashion Design, Computer Basics and Ophthalmic Assistant training. There is an overwhelming response for the Fashion Designing course from the rural women. Due to the high demand, the school had to start two sessions per day with 15 women in each session. There are still another 15 women waiting for the next course. Nine women are now completing the Computer basics course. Nine candidates are continuing their Ophthalmic Assistant training course.

**Srikan Institute of Ophthalmology:** Dr. Tejeswara Dhupam returned after a one year fellowship in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Alberta. His work has focussed on setting up a full retina unit so that the patients requiring vitreoretinal

services need not have to travel to far off places. Srikan has already acquired an OCT and is in the process of getting a high speed vitrector. Once the facility is ready, SF will launch an aggressive campaign regarding the Diabetic Retinopathy treatment. With four specialists on staff, it is anticipated that the patient care becomes comprehensive at Srikan.

### HON. HARINDER S. TAKHAR HOSTS AN INFORMATION SESSION FOR MSME.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar, Minister of Government Services (Ontario) and MPP for Mississauga-Erindale hosted an information session for MSMF in Mississauga on October, 5, 2010. About 100 people attended the event. He introduced Dr. Chandra at the meeting and said that MSMF is conducting Community Development Programs, in particular, Blindness Prevention, Education and Disaster Relief, with volunteer help and support from many Canadians across Canada, Canadian NGOs and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He also presented Chandra, a Certificate of Appreciation for his work. Following the Minister, Dr. Chandra made a presentation to the group and asked them to support the activities of MSMF generously. Other speakers in the evening included Dr. Peter Kertes from Sunnybrook Hospital, Toronto, Mr. Michael Schreider from Ottawa and Dr. S. Eswar Prasad from Collingwood. Dr. Sarma Vishnubhatla was the MC for the

evening. The evening produced several valuable contacts as well as renewed some old friendships.



**Chandra with Hon. Takhar**

## The Statistics Speak for Themselves

*The statistics below provide a glimpse of what we have been able to achieve with the support of our funding partners and volunteers. Donors and volunteers are very important partners in what we do. It is essentially people empowering people.*

Facts	Cumulative 1990-2010	2010 Jan-Sep
Out Patients Treated	1,578,308	203,373
Surgeries Performed	159,607	7,811
Vision Centers	5	-
Eye Screening Camps for Adults	1,532	238
Eye screening Camps for Children	899	105
Medical Personnel Trained	320	32
Support Staff Trained	91	10
CME Workshops Conducted	47	7
Children Educated	1,620	165
Scholarships Provided	152	34
School Children Screened	289,235	58,460

### Volunteers

Dr. Carol Kauppi, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario  
 Dr. Henri Pallard, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario  
 Neville Hewage, OIDA, Sudbury, Ontario  
 Dr. Raywat Deonandan, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa  
 Mr. Michael Schreider, St. Isidore School, Kanata, Ontario, Canada  
 GSE Team from Brazil, Rotary International District 4580.  
 Ms. Kaavya Velagapudi, Littleton, Colorado, USA  
 Jacqueline Batista, Bridgepoint Health, Toronto, Ontario.  
 Dr. S. Eswar Prasad, Collingwood, Ontario.

### SANKURATHRI FOUNDATION TAKES A LEAD ROLE AT TEDx.

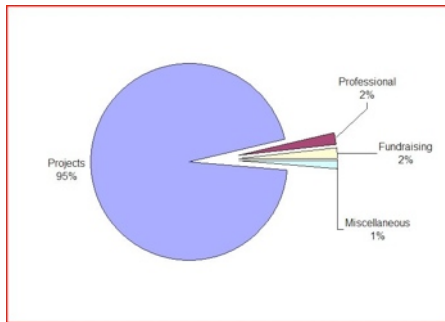
What is a high profile convention like Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) doing in a rural town like Kakinada? You would be surprised. Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada (JNTU-K), Sankurathri Foundation (SF) and other dedicated individuals came together to bring talented entrepreneurs, politicians, and social activists to the youth of the Godavari belt. The motivation behind organizing such a large scale event was to inspire youth to become socially conscious citizens. The large banner above the stage aptly read **Awakening Young India.**

A convention such as this cannot be successful without a few dedicated individuals. Dr. Allam Appa Rao, Vice-Chancellor of JNTU and Dr. Chandra Sankurathri, Executive Trustee of SF, pulled in their contacts and helped organize this event. Any solutions found will become an example for the country to follow.

(Kaavya Velagapudi, Social Worker, Denver, CO, USA).

### HOW DID MSMF SPEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2009 ?

We are very proud to inform our readers that 95% of every dollar you send goes to support the projects of Sankurathri Foundation. The expense are for: Professional Fees: 2%, Fundraising Expenses: 2% and other expenses: 1%.



For further information, contact us at [info@msmf.ca](mailto:info@msmf.ca) or call at (613)523.5413.

### PLEASE GET INVOLVED

Eye Camps, Art Projects, Science Projects are just a few ways you can help.

Manjari Sankurathri Memorial Foundation (MSMF), a registered charity (BN 89002 4995 RR 0001) in Canada ([www.cra.gc.ca/charities](http://www.cra.gc.ca/charities)), is dedicated to promote rural community development in India through Education and Vocational Training, Health Care and Disaster Relief.

This newsletter, **A Ray of Light**, is published by MSMF twice a year from contributions and reports sent by its volunteers. The newsletter is edited by S. Eswar Prasad. Please send your comments or suggestions to [info@msmf.ca](mailto:info@msmf.ca) or call us at (613)523.5413. We appreciate hearing from you.



**S. Eswar Prasad**

### Thank you for caring

We would like to thank you for your continued support of MSMF, for Eye Care, Education and Disaster Relief, in order to maintain current activities and support new initiatives. You can donate to MSMF in three ways: with a cheque or credit card information sent directly in mail to MSMF, online through ([www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)), and through the United Way campaign. Some organizations and employers match donations of their employees.

If you need more information, please call us at 613 523 5413, or visit our website, [www.msmf.ca](http://www.msmf.ca). Our mailing address is: MSMF, 23 Mary Dr., Gloucester, ON, K1V 1G9, Canada. Email address: [info@msmf.ca](mailto:info@msmf.ca).