

GANDHIBHAVAN INTERNATIONAL TRUST AND ITS FOUNDER DR PUNALUR SOMARAJAN

-Sathyam Muttambalam

THE SELFLESS GUARDIAN OF THE DISABLED

No one can separate fragrance from a flower as both are fused and embedded from its inception. Gandhibhavan is the flower and Dr. Somarajan the fragrance.

The history of Gandhibhavan is the life story of Dr. Punalur Somarajan the progenitor of a charity tree that is always growing every minute with branches. The history of Gandhibhavan is the life story of Dr. Punalur Somarajan. His entry into the world of charity wasn't haphazard. Rajan was an orphan of sorts. He lost his mother Saradha in his early childhood making him yearn for motherly affection and kisses of love. So he thought everyone whom he saw lying on wayside unnoticed by anyone lacked what he lacked—A mother's love. As a result the destitute whom he met on his way to school grab his attention and haunted his mind. While in the classroom or sitting in front of the lunch box or buckling down to study his mind was overwhelmed by this single thought—"what makes someone an orphan?"

Chellappan, Rajan's father was also a Samaritan. Rajan used to see his father bringing the poor and drifters home. He bathed them, gave a pair of clothes and a square. When Rajan grew up into Dr. Somarajan, he found the answer which nagged him in his childhood. That answer morphed into a more practical solution to the question. That is Gandhibhavan. A great institution which strives to blot

out the word "orphan" from our social discourse. It is virtually an asylum for many.

STORY OF THE LARGEST JOINT FAMILY IN ASIA - GANDHIBHAVAN

Gandhibhavan is situated on the banks of Kallada River at Kundayam, near Pathanapuram in Kollam District, Kerala, India. It is a registered non-government organisation which is deeply devoted and dedicated to the destitute of beings ranging from month - old kids to well-aged senior citizens. They are abandoned by the very people they count on. There are the deranged who move without any destinations; the paraplegic and the bedridden; the physically, mentally and visually challenged; the HIV affected, the

Cancer patients, the TB patients, the people with suicidal ideation, orphan kids etc.

Gandhibhavan has been awarded Vayoshreshtha Samman 2019 from the Honorable President Shri. RAMNATH KOVIND on 4 October 2019 for the best institution for providing services to senior citizen and awareness generations. Gandhibhavan also received Rajiv Gandhi Janma Panchasapthathi puraskar from former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on 20 August 2019 for the best care home for the Destitute, Mentally and Physically Challenged People. Here all this people are given opportunity to live with dignity according to the rituals of their faith..



Former President of India and visionary Bharat Ratna Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam on his visit to Gandhibhavan proclaimed “Gandhibhavan means a Mini India. We can see miniature forms of all sections of people here. The beauty of equality and secularism in this Mini India is exciting. I am very lucky to be here.”

The most memorable moments with the loved ones is to celebrate some of the occasions such as birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc. Similarly, well-wishers take part in Gandhibhavan’s Prayer Services, in memory of their loved ones and enjoy a meal with the inmates. It may be a unique experience in your whole life and would like to invite all to be a part of this experience.

DAY CARE CENTRE



Gandhibhavan provides a daycare centre for our infants, toddlers and kids. It caters to the developmental and age appropriate care, needs and opportunities to explore, learn and create. The safe, healthy and nurturing environment foster the physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth with their development. We have dedicated, devoted and professional facilitators for this venture. The tiny tots enjoy music and movement, fine motor and gross motor activities, rest and sleep

moments, story time, tasty meal breaks and regular paediatric visits. Children that provide all the learning developmental tools and guidance that children need at this age. The day care centre is furnished with the most modern facilities that are required to help them become self reliant and smart. The purpose of the daycare centre is also to help working mothers who have no social support or family system to help look after their children while they seek to earn a living.

OVERVIEW OF GANDHIBHAVAN

Gandhibhavan located on the banks of Kallada River in Kundyam, near Pathanapuram of Kollam District is a registered non-government organisation which is well designed, deeply devoted and dedicated to the destitute ranging from months old kids to the senior citizens. They are left high and dry by the very people they count on and the deranged who move about aimlessly or without any destinations. They also include the paraplegic and the bedridden; the deaf and dumb; orphaned kids, the physically and mentally challenged and the persons who just came back from the brink of suicide; the visually challenged; the HIV affected and the cancer patients and so on. They are the ones who had drifted from the set of courses of mainstream have created a world of their own and are leading a peaceful life, the physically and mentally challenged.



CHILDREN'S HOME



Heavenly Home for the Destitute Children

Gandhibhavan has a children's home that is dedicated to provide a safe home for socially and financially deprived children. The home (children's) is a home to children of all ages from kindergarteners to college going children. The home provides the children with a host of facilities that include comfortable accommodation, nutritious food, proper and appropriate medical treatment and recreation facilities.

They are also given general education, art, sports, culture, music training. The purpose and vision of this home is to ensure a safe and loving environment for these children who have been unfortunate not to have received the love and affection of their families and loved ones. The home depends on the generous and loving contributions of kind donors from all over the world and India for its day to day working and survival.

HOME FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN



Guru Karunya Mandiram to Shelter Women and Kids

Gandhibhavan provides a roof with all the necessary basic amenities for children and old aged women who need special care and attention. This is a three storied building that house the elderly mothers on the first and second floors while the children are housed on the ground floor respectively. The shelter has doctor on call throughout the day for medical needs of the inmates.

SPECIAL SCHOOL



Gandhibhavan provides schooling to the needs of over 250 special needs students with our special school that caters to the special needs of the children with cerebral palsy, autism and other types of mental and physical disabilities. The school serves as a learning and developmental resource for these students who comprise of inmates of Gandhibhavan and children coming from poor and impoverished families living within a 60 kilometer radius of Gandhibhavan. At the special school the children are provided with a range of developmental skills that help them to have employment and lead better and dignified lives. They are also provided infrastructure like air conditioned smart classrooms, physiotherapy rooms and are trained in extracurricular activities like arts and sports along with vocational training like handicraft making. The students are taken on educational tours to places of importance in a school bus that is specially designed to cater to their special needs.



RECEIVING VAYOSHRESHTHA SAMMAN 2019 FROM THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT SHRI. RAMNATH KOVIND

SUPPORT OUR NEW PROJECT OF CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SCHOOL BUILDING FOR MENTALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN

PROPOSED BUDGET: \$292,031.00

The proposed project is construction of new school building including Class Rooms, therapy centre, physiotherapy centre, vocational training centre and play ground for Gandhibhavan Special School that caters to the special needs of the children with cerebral palsy, autism and other types of mental and physical disabilities. Gandhibhavan started the Special School in 2006 which approved by Department of Education, Government of Kerala. This year 224 students are studying in the school. Our aim through the construction of new modernized school building is to provide residential education, care and support to more mentally and

physically challenged children (approximately 500 mentally challenged children) in Kollam & Pathanamthitta Districts. In the present situation they are staying in houses without getting education due to poverty and helplessness of family members. Gandhibhavan has two school buses and two vans for transporting the students within a radius of 60 km from various parts of both the districts. Free Education, Accommodation, Counselling, Medical Check-ups, Therapies, Entertainment activities and Skill Development training are the benefits to such children.



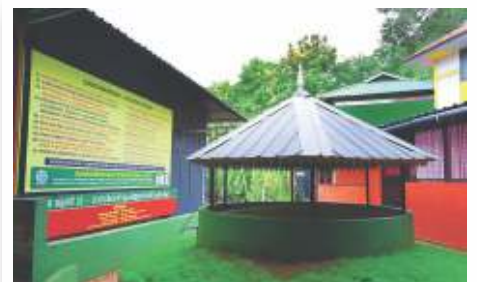
Dr. Punalur Somarajan with a cross section of Inmates at Gandhibhavan



A partial view of Disabled Inmates



Netaji Block and Sabarmathi Village for Physically Handicapped



Professionally Managed Waste management system



GANDHIBHAVAN INTERNATIONAL TRUST

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