

SPARK

(Case studies from Urban Intervention of Loyola Students)

Edited by

Rev. Dr. A. Louis Arockiaraj, S.J.

K. Arokia Sagaya Melson

Department of Service Learning

Loyola College (Autonomous)

Chennai-600 034

April 2020

Acknowledgement

Department of Service Learning, Loyola College, Chennai has been serving the student community and urban Slums in Chennai from 2001. It provides a great opportunity to the students who enter into Loyola Portal to get an exposure in substandard settlements in and around Chennai. They are formed into a socially responsible citizen through inculcating service attitude and rendering service in action. Programs conducted by the Department in the intervention areas create opportunities for a realistic experience of the social reality that paves way for transformation and empowerment with due respect and dignity for every living being.

Students experience the poverty-stricken situation and all other related social problems in the urban intervention areas and become aware of the social issues so that they respond proactively in their own capacity immediately or in their future career. Their exposures and experiences will surely influence them in their approach to life and as well as contribute for the wellbeing of the poor, vulnerable and marginalized population of the society that is neglected socially, economically, culturally and politically. Some students and the people in the slum undergo a real transformation in their personal life too.

This SPARK is the collection of experiences interiorized by the students and the community members. All these experiences will be the limelight for the students who come to the temple of learning.

We appreciate all the faculty members in the Department of Service Learning for their continuous dedicated services to the community and the guidance to the students in achieving the tasks entrusted to them.

We are very grateful to Rev. Fr. Rector, Rev. Fr. Secretary and Rev. Fr. Principal for their encouragement and for rendering support in all the initiatives of the Department. This program would not be possible without their support.

We sincerely appreciate all the students who play an active role in the community and financially support the programs which can change the life of the community. Our immense thanks to every person from the community who accepted us with trust. They collaborated with us in all the efforts of the department towards self-reliant and empowerment programs.



Rev. Dr. A. Louis Arockiaraj, S.J.



K. Arokia Sagaya Melson

Message by Rev. Fr. Rector on the Celebration of Elders Day

10.03.2020



Loyola is happy to receive so many elderly people converging to Bertram Hall today. The Jesuit management thanks the Department of Service Learning, led by Rev. Fr. Louis Arockiaraj S.J., the faculty members and coordinators and the students who visit the elderly and learn from their service. Our students visit with you not simply to offer their help but they come to you to learn and gain experience. Your practical wisdom and your experience would be a source of inspiration and learning for them. They receive in giving.

In the Bible:

In the Bible we read: “You shall rise up before the gray-headed and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD” (Lev 19:32). We respect you and we welcome you to this campus. We are there for you in times of need.

Statistics:

Life expectancy for men is estimated as 69.8 and for women it is 74.2 at present. Indian population is today 1.36 billion (136 Crores) – 8% is above age 65. This would grow to 20% in 2050, that is, from 100 million to 300 million (that is from 10 Crores to 30 Crores) elderly people would be there (one-in-five would be old). At that time more people older than 60 years than those below 15 years would be there. Aging is irreversible and inevitable but we could grow old graciously.

71% of elderly population resides in rural areas, while 29 % lives in urban areas. About 65 per cent of the aged had to depend on others for their day-to-day maintenance. Less than 20% of them are elderly women but majority of elderly men were economically independent.

UN Population Fund India titled ‘Caring for our elders: Early response India Ageing Report 2017’ points out that the section that deserves maximum attention remains old women, who are more vulnerable than men due to their longer life expectancy and meager or no income. The top five causes of death among the elderly are: i. heart diseases; ii. road accidents; iii. cancer (esp lungs); iv. pulmonary diseases; and v. strokes. We need to ensure reasonably health care as well for our elderly, who have sacrificed their entire lives for others.

What do they need: Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) indicates:

Three priority areas:

- i. Older persons and development;
- ii. Advancing health and well-being into old age; and
- iii. Ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

We also need to meet the expectations:

- i. Financial and food security,
- ii. Health care, and
- iii. Shelter and protection against exploitation.



Everyone has a part to play for the well being of the elderly, including the government and civil society, communities and families. Govt action: June 2017 – Union Minister for social justice and employment, Shri Gehlot promised: Idea of old age homes as *ashrams* was not acceptable to some and so we are now opening a large number of day-care centres for the elderly. He

further added that the government has also decided that unclaimed funds lying in Employees State Insurance and Provident Fund accounts as well as in banks will be used for the empowerment of senior citizens. “A sum of Rs 483 Crores from such accounts has been used for the purpose this year,” he announced. Secretary in the ministry Ms Latha Krishna Rao said: Senior citizens can be formed into groups and their experience and services can be used as mentors in schools, colleges, hospitals and even at *anganwadis*.

Professor Ravi Srivastava of Jawaharlal Nehru University also pointed out that women stand at a greater risk in old age as they are by and large poorly paid for the work done during their lifetime and so have meagre or no savings. Due to this, their vulnerability also rises with age and widowhood brought about by lower life expectancy for men only compounds this problem. Srivastava added, as 93% of the workforce is in the informal sector, there is no social security for them in old age and this problem too afflicts women the most, who along with SCs, STs and the poor remain the most vulnerable in old age.

The above mentioned report also mentioned that the problems of “income insecurity, lack of adequate access to quality health care and isolation are more acute for the rural elderly” as most areas lacked proper roads and transport access. As per the 2011 Census, it is said that 71% of all old people resided in rural India. Migration of younger working-age persons from rural areas can have both positive and negative impacts on the elderly, the report said, adding that while “living alone or with only the spouse is usually discussed in terms of social isolation, poverty and distress”, it was also a fact that “older people prefer to live in their own homes and community”. However, it said, new technologies are helping the rural elderly stay in touch with their children. (Cf. <https://thewire.in/politics/elderly-population-demographics-india>)

What do the Elderly need: The following could keep the elderly happy and healthy:

1. Be active:
In rural areas: For good health – active life of hard work – keeping to exercises, esp. walking, preferably with other elderly people.
2. Have purpose:
To learn something new, to help others in need, what can I still do and keep myself busy?
3. Laugh a lot:
Laughter is the best medicine – humour in worst situation is medicine – happiness is contagious.
4. Value friendship:
Keep connected to friends and win new friends to enrich and enlivens life.
5. Find Faith:
Find God again in life – Perhaps lost him amidst busy schedule – faith is the strongest form of hope.
6. Be grateful:
Count the blessings and count them one by one – every day thank one person or one event – re-live the happy days with beloved people esp children and grandchildren (even if they do not visit you often) – the more you are grateful, the more you receive, esp. of peace and joy.
7. Never too late to learn:
Learn media gadgets such as cell phone, computers - games, group exercise, enjoyable hobby, intellectual activities (chess, cross-word puzzle, Sudoku) etc.
8. Listen to others:
At the ripe age, each one has a lot of accumulated and interesting events and information to share - Listen to them with interest - A patient listener, with a kind word, learns a lot from the world around them.
9. Plan ahead:
Plan for the best but be prepared for the worst – plan for days when you would be bedridden or you would not be able to communicate
10. Stay Positive:

Have courage to learn a new and more – learn to be independent as much as possible.

Cf. <https://listovative.com/top-10-important-life-lessons-we-can-learn-from-our-elders/>

The Notebook: Love is stronger than death.

The Notebook is the moving novel by Nicholas Sparks. The notebook of Noah bears his poems for Allie, as monuments of his love for her. Allie is in a home for the elderly – Suffering from dementia and Parkinson disease. Everyday Noah would come and read the poems he wrote for her, even though he knew that she does not recognize him nor does she understand his poems. But he knew that she enjoys their being together. He whispered to her, “You are the answer to every prayer I’ve offered. You are a song, a dream, a whisper, and I don’t know how I could have lived without you for as long as I have”. Often there prevails silence as they sit together the

whole daylong. The author notes: “Silence is holy. It draws people together because only those who are comfortable with each other can sit without speaking. This is the great paradox”. One day Noah concludes his poem session: “You are my best friend as well as my lover, and I do not know which side of you I enjoy the most. I treasure each side, just as I have treasured our life together”.

Common Regrets in life:

In the evening of life we could realize what we have not learnt but we could put on courage to learn anew. The common regrets in life, as a result of interviewing about 100 people at deathbed, are:

1. I wish that I'd let myself be happier
2. I wish I'd stayed in touch with my friends
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings
4. I wish I hadn't worked so hard
5. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me

We can take note of these regrets and we can, in our own way and in our given situation, do the needful to cherish life. Nothing is too late in life.

(Cf. Bronnie Ware, *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying*, 2012)

What Loyola does?

Loyola brings you together; creates an atmosphere of a feeling that you are wanted and appreciated; and offers help through our students and staff.

You are our great teachers: we learn from you –

You are our inspiration: we imitate your enriched life –

And you are our blessing: We see God's grace-filled protection in and through you. Our wish for you today is the Irish prayer:

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

the rains fall soft upon your fields...,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Wish you a happy Elders Day. God bless you and keep you happy.

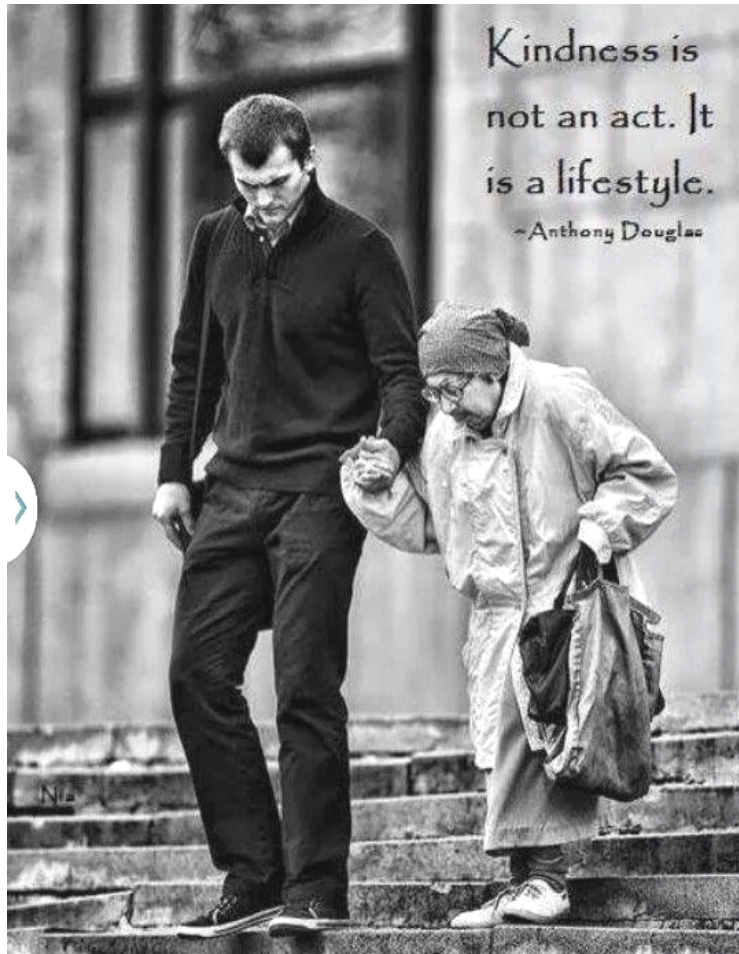
Francis P Xavier SJ

10 Mar 2020

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**ELDERS
AND
DIFFERENTLY ABLED**

Spark – 1



I am Mary and I am 74 years old. I was born into a family of nine children where I was the only girl in my family and all my brothers had passed away. I studied till grade one. I am a mother of six children and three of my daughters are married. I was living under a roof with my family until my son-in-law had got into trouble by mounting too many debts. I live in the street opposite to SPEED Trust. My intake of food is very limited as I consume a lot of medicines for my ailments.

My day begins in the morning. I wake up, sweep the street and sit there. I have been seeing Loyola College Students come to this locality for the past three years. The students are very caring, affectionate and helpful. The first assistance that I received from the students of Loyola College was an amount of Rs. 75. I purchased some rangoli powder and other essential items to start a business. After some months, I received gifts and a stove worth Rs.3000. Later on, I received rice and food.

The Loyola Students also helped me to obtain a bank account and got me a Pass Book from the Bank. I have visited Loyola College twice and I spoke on the microphone about the help, care and services I have received from the Professor. The Professor was very helpful and he is doing a marvelous job in guiding the students to the needy people of the slum. It is all because of the Professor's assistance, many people in this locality including myself receive many services and assistance from Loyola College Students. Without the Professor, I would not be able to lead a peaceful life.

Spark – 2

A senior citizen who has been supported by our students

D. Kamala Kannan, a 60 year old had been doing housekeeping job for an outsourcing company and was also working part time as a watchman. He used to get a nominal salary of Rs.6000 which was sufficient to live a normal life. His family comprised of 5 siblings: 2 elder sisters and two brothers. Unfortunately, his two brothers lost their lives. His elder sister is a flower vendor and is also a widow, whereas the other sister is mentally challenged.

He used to be an alcoholic and had a great time with his friends. **He had a lot of friends when he had a job and a good salary, but when he lost his job, he was all alone and none of his friends were there for him.** He neither had a roof over his head nor had any other place to stay. Without any help, he used to live in the streets and on the road side with no one to give a helping hand.

When the outreach students of Loyola College heard about this, they decided to support him. He was given an OAP (Old Age Pension) of Rs.1000 per month for his living. An additional amount of Rs.250 was also given at the end of every month. He told that he was feeling proud and happy for this whole hearted support.

He was taken to the hospital for an eye surgery by the students of the English Department. One of his eyes was operated successfully. Afterwards, he was taken to the hospital 5 more times by the students for post-operative check-ups. In addition, he was also given a table fan and a mobile phone by the students of our college.

He was truly thankful for what we had done and had told “I am grateful to have got this much love and support from the students of Loyola College. Thanks to Loyola College for supporting me”.

Respect your elders and the world will respect you.”— Saeed Ahmed

Spark– 3

One day, we found an old woman named Saradha in Dr. Thomas road who was from Royapettah. While enquiring, we came to know that she lost her husband and she has got no children. She was staying on the streets of Dr. Thomas road for few days. She had a trunk box which had 3 sets of sarees, one plate and a tumbler. She was also looking sick.

Having seen her pathetic condition students of the Department of service Learning plunged into action. The students arranged a small house for her nearby so that she could live in it. The students provided her with all the necessities such as food, medicines etc, Even after treatment, she was not feeling better and she was diagnosed as being affected with breast cancer.

We arranged a car to take her to the hospital, but she neglected to come to the hospital. Then the nearby neighbors forced her to go to hospital. Then she accepted to come with us. She was given proper treatment in the hospital and we took her to the nearby orphanage. After few days, Because of her illness she passed away. After her death, we took over all the rituals for her.

This experience taught me the other side of the society how people live with hardships. We also felt happy how we were privileged to have our life. We also felt very sad knowing her death.

“Treat your parents and elders the way you want to be treated by your children later in life.”

– Anurag Prakash Ray

Spark– 4

I met a lady in the slum who went by the name of Begam. She walked around the entire slum without slippers, always barefoot. She must be at least 70 years old and though normally at this age people begin to develop ailments and prefer to take rest at home, nobody told Begam it was supposed to be like that.

There are very few people who look so confident and strong even in the face of adversities. Begam or Gandhi Begam as many people know her, is a social worker who has lived in the slum for many years and had decided to try to make it a better place every day. She knows a lot of languages, so conversing with her in any language is very easy.

She has the appearance of an old poor woman; however she has as much energy as a young woman. She loved children; she'd always make sure that all the children get something, every time there is a distribution in the slum.

She always tries her level best to get something from the well-off people and help the poor. She is the community volunteer. I learnt a lot from Begam on how I should carry myself and how I should lead a life.

Sri Damodhar Sastri 16-UEC- 415

**Healthy children will not fear life if their elders have
integrity enough not to fear death.”**

Erik Erikson

Spark– 5

I'm Laxman residing at Samiyarthottom, Saidapet. I have issues in walking and I move around in a wheelchair.

Students of Loyola College visit my place every week as part of the outreach. One day, they conducted sports day in my area. I thought that this event is useless for me as I'm on a wheelchair and cannot walk.

To my surprise, there were special games for disabled people too. I was a bit shy to participate in the events. When I resisted, a young boy asked me that, "If sister doesn't then who will?" Those words were a great motivation for me and I came forward voluntarily to participate in the games. My friends also were motivated to participate in these games.



We had a great time with the students. I won a prize which was the first prize I ever won in my lifetime. I finally have a confidence that I'm not a useless lady but can do many things in spite of my disabilities.

Students from Loyola College also provide free tuitions, awareness about health and sanitation and various entertainments for our community.

I thank Loyola College for providing an opportunity to the students to involve themselves in Social service at Samiyarthottam, Saidapet.

"The best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person."

Spark – 6

My name is Nizana Begum. I reside in the slums of Chetti Thottam in Saidapet. I'm a physically challenged person.

I'm basically shy because of the sufferings which took place in my life. I never had someone to support me until some students from Loyola College started visiting my house every week (from the Department of Statistics). They inquired about my life and



difficulties. Nobody had ever done that to me. At first, I was afraid but eventually I gained some confidence to speak with the students. I feel very inferior because of my disability and my orthodox family background. Due to my disability, my family members restricted me from going out without their presence. I have never been outside of my house.

Students were commemorating Independence Day opposite to my house. I didn't attend it because I was afraid to get out of my house. The chief guest of that day was Ms. Sopna who is also a disabled person like me. After the celebration was over to my surprise Ms. Sopna came to visit me and spoke to me personally.

She narrated how she earns for herself by making hand-made jewels. I understood that she was trying to motivate me. She, along with the students compelled me to come out of the house. I resisted at the beginning after that my mother permitted me to attend the celebration with the students outside the house. That was my first program which I had attended.

After hearing the motivational speech of Ms. Sopna, I have some positive energy to overcome all my struggles. I am happy that the Independence Day celebrations changed my perception. I thank Loyola College, Prof. Rathna and the students for coming to our place and spending time with us.

Spark – 7



This is the story of Ramayee. Her parents passed away and since then she has been taken care of by her brothers and sisters. She was born on 12th March 1982 as the fifth child to her parents. She was born hale and healthy, but, unfortunately her legs became paralysed overtime.

Ramayee resides in a small house, which is barely 80 square feet, at Thideer Nagar on the banks of Coovum River, Saidapet. She has been provided a wheel chair through the initiative of Outreach Department of Loyola College.

With the help of the wheelchair given by the Outreach Department of Loyola College, she is able to commute with more convenience. She is feeling really happy and she has expressed her gratitude to Loyola College and the Outreach Department.

“My advice to other disabled people would be, concentrate on things your disability doesn’t prevent you doing well, and don’t regret the things it interferes with. Don’t be disabled in spirit as well as physically.” - Stephen Hawking

Spark – 8

My name is Alexander. My house doesn't have a roof. It was during this ordeal; I met the outreach program students of Loyola College. They bought a plastic cover to act as a roof for my house. My wife was blind and after she passed away, I was living alone.

I am disabled and can't walk. However, the Loyola College students came and bought me provisions and helped me. They all visit me frequently and help me a lot. I thank them all for everything that they've done for me through their college.



“When you hear the word ‘disabled,’ people immediately think about people who can’t walk or talk or do everything that people take for granted. Now, I take nothing for granted. But I find the real disability is people who can’t find joy in life and are bitter.”

- Teri Garr



WOMEN

A Successful woman is one who can build a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at her.

Spark – 9

Financial Assistance to a woman whose husband met with an accident and was unable to get employed



6th February 2020

Stuck in the woes of poverty, is the family of Mr. Rajendran, Mrs. Kala and their 4 male children, who live in a slum by the banks of Coovum river, near Chennai Park Town Station.

Living in a house, which is barely 100 square feet, the family barely manages to fulfill its needs through the meagre earnings of Mr. Rajendran, who is a construction worker/ They had to pay a rent of Rs. 1500 for the house, and meet the educational expenses of their children, one of whom is studying in 10th grade, apart from meeting their day to day expenses. Mrs. Kala, suffering from low blood pressure had always found herself unable to work for prolonged periods of time.

The family was pushed into extreme despair when Mr. Rajendran, fell from the second floor of a building under construction, and severely damaged his neck, which left him almost bed ridden. Doctors strictly advised against any form of physical activity for a minimum period of One Year. The medical expenses of Rajendran, was added to the existing list of expenses, with no earning member in the family. One square meal a day became a matter of question for the family.

In this backdrop, Professor K. Arokia Sagaya Melson, of Loyola College, took me, Adithya Venkatesh, a student of Loyola College, to meet this family during the Outreach Program of the college, which is presided over by the professor. Professor Melson, encouraged me to interact with the family, and helped the family communicate its woes to me, on 3rd February 2020. Further the professor took off time to suggest ways to help the family, and inspired me to help the family. On offering to help, Mrs. Kala informed us of her abilities as a cook, and that, roughly an amount of Rs. 1200, will help her set up a food stall outside her house, which will act as a source of income for the family.

The plight of the family, and willingness of Mrs. Kala to work, moved us deeply.

I, from my side, explained the plight of the family to my classmates, and pushed them to contribute money to help Mrs. Kala.

With the money I and my classmates contributed, we managed to raise Rs. 1700, in a span of 10 minutes. We handed over the money to Mrs. Kala, who became overwhelmed by the compassion of the students, and with tears in her eyes, thanked us for the timely help.

On 4th February 2020, Tuesday, Mrs. Kala started her food stall. Today the food stall is generating a daily revenue of Rs. 600, which is now helping the family meet their daily needs.

In a span of 10 minutes, we were able to ensure that the family can meet its needs for food. “Service to man, is Service to God”, seems to be a principle deeply ingrained in the students. Education should be man making, and this experience has proven to be so.

Adithya Venkatesh

18-UBU-082

BBA Department, Loyola College

Spark – 10

Revolving fund to a woman auto driver

I am Aadhilaksmi and I am an auto driver. I have two children. The first daughter is doing a nursing course and the son is doing 10th standard. My husband deserted me and I heard that he has died recently. I started to drive auto 10 years ago. On an average I earn about Rs.900 per day. Since I regularly have headaches, I am unable to drive auto for three days in a week. My medical expenses take a considerable portion of my meager income. My salary from auto is not enough for my daughter's educational needs and my debts were increasing. The college fee itself came around Rs.150000. I wanted to have a side business like a saree retail shop or tiffin shop to earn more to help my family.



When I met the outreach students of Loyola College who were guided by Mr. Melson. He explained of a revolving fund scheme and collected the basic details of me. I was asked to come to Loyola College to complete the process of collecting the fund. The Principal addressed us and provided Rs.5000 under the scheme of Revolving fund which is provided by the department of Service Learning.

I used this fund to start a clothing retail business (bed-time clothing). Now I have started to earn a profit of Rs.400 - 500 from this business. I use this profit for my daughter's educational needs like buying books, uniforms, etc. The fund from the college helped me in my daughter's education. Now I am thinking of expanding my business by adding sarees to my retail business which I expect would give me an additional profit for clearing my debts. I am thankful to the outreach students, Mr. Melson and the Principal of Loyola College for giving me an opportunity to start a business and support my family.

It's important for women to work. They need to keep their independence, to keep earning and being challenged.

Tamara Mellon

Spark – 11

Mrs. Parmeswari is a role model for all of us. She became a widow at a very young age, didn't have a source of income and had to raise her daughter all by herself. She accepted this harsh reality and started looking for a job in order to make a living. She started working as a coolie where she roughly made around Rs.2000 per month, which was however not sufficient to feed her family. Her income was not enough to fund her daughter's education. There is saying "when all doors are closed, God opens a window". This is exactly what happened in Mrs. Parmeswari's life.

Through her acquaintances she came to know about the services and support provided by The Department of Service learning, Loyola College, after which she visited the college and explained her problems to one of the members of the department. The members empathized with Mrs. Parmeswari and decided to provide her with the necessary support. A sum of Rs.5000 was given to Mrs. Parmeswari. With the help of this amount she was able to pay her daughter's school fees and was also able to feed her family. They also helped her find a job as a domestic helper. Today, she earns roughly Rs.5000 per month and there are no hindrances in her daughter's education as she is studying in a reputed government school in T.Nagar.

Hence, we can conclude that the Department of Service Learning, Loyola College has restored her life and provided Mrs. Parmeswari and her family with a better standard of living.

**You educate a man; you educate a man. You
educate a woman; you educate a generation.**

Brigham Young

Spark - 12



Ms. Shanthi aged 50 years living in door no 167 in the slum is a married woman and has 3 boys and 2 girls. Shanthi's Daughters are married and they left home years ago while her sons have gone out to work in the city. They visit her sparsely. She has lived in the slum since childhood and barely knows about the outside world. Her Husband works as a rickshaw driver and his earning is very inadequate to fund all their basic needs. The two of them don't have access to nutritious food or clean drinking water, and to add to their woes there are no bathrooms in their house.

Students of Loyola College, during the program conducted by the outreach department of the college, interacted with her to understand her problems. She reacted positively and discussed ideas about how to work and support her family. She decided to use her talents in cooking to start a Tiffin stall business. Her husband received counseling to support his wife and agreed to take loan for her stall. Her sons also started helping in the business and the family is currently in a stable position. She has overcome her depression and has developed a positive outlook towards life. She thanked the students for the timely help.

There was no financial support from the side of the students. The advice given was highly effective and practical. Students felt very happy that they could make changes in the life of ordinary people.

All we can tell you is, she was a hard working woman.

Stanley Johnson

Spark – 13



Ms. Usha is a widow, living in Gangaikarapuram. Her husband, Mani passed away, leaving behind two sons and a daughter to be taken care of. Her sons, Arun and Sridhar, are working as painter and load worker respectively.

Her first son Arun, as well as her daughter are married, with her daughter being a housewife. She is working as a house maid in that area. She has been a widow for the past 25 years.

She was struggling to support her children after the death of her husband.

As a single person she has raised her children through their schooling and made sure that they got settled in their life. She faced extreme difficulty as a single parent and crossed the financial crisis without her husband to support the family. This exemplifies her will power. She has swum across several difficulties in life, and her life stands as a reflection for the saying “Whatever life throws at us, we must face it bravely”.

If it's a good idea, go ahead and do it. It's much easier to apologize than it is to get permission.

- Grace Hopper

Spark – 14

Ms. Indira, aged 50 years is married with 3 girls and a boy. None of her children have received college education, which she hopes they will acquire someday. Both her daughters are married and had left her home several years ago. She has lived in Girriappa road, in the Slums since childhood and knows very little about the outside world. She lives with her Husband who works as security in the area. She doesn't get enough food and medicines necessary to treat her various ailments, which includes diabetes, Thyroid and Heart problems. She claims to have studied till 10th Standard and that she knows to read, Speak and write English and Tamil.

Changes in life after Outreach visit:

The students, sent by the Outreach Department, of Loyola College, interacted with her to understand her problems and discussed new ideas and motivated her. She changed her outlook after the session and immediately went to get treatment for her heart and thyroid problems. She then decided to use her 10th pass certificate to get a job as a clerk in a supermarket to financially support her family and to accumulate assets that can act as minimum collateral to apply for an education loan for her children. She is now working hard with a smile on her face for her family and was overwhelmed by the compassion shown by the students of Loyola College.

“If you ever find in the wrong story Leave.”

- Mo Willems

Spark – 15

Sarala (36 years of age) is a housewife and is working as a part-time Tailor. Her husband, Ravi Kumar (41 years of age) is working as a painter. They have two sons, Rahul (15) and Kameshwaran (12). They are living in 9/6 , SS Puram , M.K. Radhanagar, Teynampet , Chennai-6. They have been living in Teynampet for the past 40 years.

The family is a victim to the terrible evils of poverty. Despite the many problems, life has thrown at them, they have encouraged their children to learn, and both of them are well on their way towards becoming 1st generation learners in the family.

To fulfill their vision of educating their children, the parents applied for a scholarship in Loyola College. The college's helping hand doesn't end with its scholarship packages, but extends infinitely through the Outreach Department. The Outreach department after understanding the problems of the family gave an amount of Rs. 5000 for the purpose of pursuing self-employment.

She started a small business and became a person who helped the family. The family expressed gratitude since it is in a much better position today due to contributions of Loyola College and its outreach department.

Think like a Queen. A Queen is not afraid to fail.

Failure is another stepping stone to Greatness.

- Oprah Winfrey

Spark – 16



Her name is S. Selvarani. She is 40 years old and has benefited a lot in the past few years, through Loyola College. She received an amount of Rs. 5000 under the Revolving fund scheme of the Department. At first she got a tailoring machine and started working from home. Then she started a chemical store with products like phenol, & soaps and made some profits from the same. Then she started to make handmade greeting cards and earned through it. Now she has a grocery store in Avvaipuram, Choolaimedu.

We came to know that she has used the money given in a productive way. She has also motivated the children to join the college. She has been a volunteer to the programs conducted in the college. We have understood that she has grown in her life and guided many for their livelihood. And moreover, we executed the ideas we developed on how to support and uplift people.

We realize the importance of our voices only when we are silenced.” — **Malala Yousaf zai**

Spark – 17

My name is Arunachalam and I am a street vendor. I used to sell stationery for my daily bread. One day, a random gang of thieves stole all of my stationery on which my livelihood depended. I was also severely wounded and admitted in the hospital. Since my job is not a permanent one and involved frequent travel, I had kept all my belongings in a locker at the Koyembedu bus stand. When I was hospitalized, I had to spend all my savings for my treatment and medication. After I was discharged, I had no money so I had to sleep by the nearby temple.

Later, I was advised by people to stay in a shelter for homeless people which was nearby. I wanted to take my belongings and a few possessions from the locker Room, but I was not able to since the rent for the locker was more than one thousand three hundred rupees. As it was only twenty days since I had been hospitalized, all I had in hand was two hundred rupees. I requested help from a lot of people but no one came forward.

On 12th September, 2019, I was passing through the Bazaar Street in Chindhadripet and I saw a group of students talking to the local people. I enquired them about what they were doing and came to know that they came there as a part of their Outreach Program. One of the students put me on with their Outreach staff-in-charge, Professor. Francis Kumanan. I requested him to help by explaining about my situation. I waited there patiently for a response from the team.

By the time I returned, the students had arranged for the money. One of the students, Bharath, picked me up and took me to the Koyambedu locker room. I took my belongings and I managed to start my own direct sales business. I met the Professor later and thanked him for all the help. Later, I knew that the students belonged to Advanced Zoology.

The Best Protection any Women can have is Courage.

- Elizabeth Lady Stan tin

Spark - 18



In the year 2001, Selva Rani of Avvaipuram got in touch with the outreach students of Loyola College for the first time. Within a span of one year, Selva Rani and also the other people of Avvaipuram got a very good exposure to quality education. They also learnt various skills like candle making, preparation of detergents, tailoring, embroidery and a lot more.

With the help of numerous programs conducted by the outreach department of Loyola College, she developed the quality of leadership and teamwork. This motivated her to set-up a 'Women self-help group' which had 240 members. This also helped her to get a job with an NGO. In the year 2011, after the death of her husband, the college offered a tailoring machine to Selva Rani to help her in managing the daily financial struggles. Later, she was sent to New Delhi by the NGO to attend a meeting for widows. With the support of the outreach department, she acquired the motivation to conduct awareness programs and also to help the other widows obtain their pensions.

Even if she had studied only till 9th grade, she developed her skills through the department of outreach to a very great extent that she could interact efficiently and build a good rapport with people and the NGOs. Recently, she started a trust named "Adaikalam Araikattalai" by which many were benefited. They received basic necessities for a better living. In the year 2015, she was given an opportunity by the NGO to take part in a meeting in Japan which was attended by representatives of seven countries including India for 45 days. Selva Rani says that she is very much grateful to the college and the department of outreach for trusting the potential in her which helped her to improve the lives of hundreds of people who were in need of it.

Spark– 19



Ms. Lakshmi is a widow who lives at Chetti Thottam, Saidapet. She has two children, a son, Tharun, in 8th std and a daughter Priya in 11th std. Apart from being the sole earning member of her family, Lakshmi also supports her mother.

Lakshmi worked as an accountant in a Doctor's clinic. She was a diligent employee. She left her employment since he refused to show even the slightest humanity during 2015 Chennai floods. He offered her no relief or any aid for her personal loss in the floods.

Lakshmi started a tailoring unit with a sewing machine donated by Bhoomika Trust. Loyola College has given her Rs. 5000/- loan repayable in monthly installments of Rs. 500/-. She used the loan amount to buy lining and other materials required.

Lakshmi successfully runs her business and declares that she is now socio-economically independent. She feels very satisfied about her efforts being successful. She plans to expand her business by acquiring an overlap machine. She thanks Loyola College for being there at the right time and the students for their support. She has repaid the loan amount of Rs. 5000/- successfully within the stipulated period of time.

“Don’t compromise yourself. You are all you’ve got. There is no yesterday, no tomorrow, it’s all the same day.”

– Janis Joplin

Spark – 20

Esther Rani is a resident of Saidapet. She runs a successful tailoring unit. Besides this, Esther conducts free training camps in tailoring for the women of her area. Her husband, Kevin is a Tamilian and she is from Andhra whose family had settled in Tamil Nadu for the past few generations. She has four siblings and they hold jobs in the corporation. One is a house keeper in a private company.

Esther currently stitches blouses and cushions and is busy with her tutoring and designing. Loyola College gave her the loan of Rs. 5,000/- repayable in monthly installments of Rs. 500/- Esther used this money to purchase materials for her tailoring business. She says this has greatly helped her business.

Esther plans on expand her tailoring unit by acquiring two more sewing machines. She also plans to start selling bathing products and spices.

Esther thanked Loyola College for the loan which was of immense use to her. She expressed her gratitude to Prof. Rathna of Loyola College for her constant support and is deeply grateful to Loyola students for their support.



Spark - 21

I am Antony and I am a street vendor. During the flood of December 2015, I lost a lot of things. I couldn't sell anything as everything was lost during the disaster.

When I was in despair, the students of Loyola College came and helped me. They went to Koyambedu and bought some fruits and a digital weighing machine. They gave it to me so that I could continue with my business.



I am extremely grateful to Loyola College for helping me in my time of need. Thanks to them, I am able to continue to provide for myself.

One Woman can make a Difference, but together we can Rock the World.

- Policy and Fashion.com

Spark - 22

Ms. Amalarpova Mary is a widow and her husband passed away ten years ago. She is sixty-two years old and she is still very active and runs a Tiffin shop to take care of her needs. She has two sons and a daughter and three grandchildren.



Even though she has two sons, she does not depend on them for financial assistance. She runs a Tiffin shop in the morning and she cooks and sells breakfast items like idlis, dosas and pongal in the mornings. She starts her shop at 8 am and closes her shop by 11.30 AM. She purchases food items for Rs. 6000 every week which she uses for cooking and she makes around Rs. 2500 every week through her Tiffin shop.

She occasionally borrows money for running her small business and now she has not been borrowing money for buying her food items as she is able to rotate the money which was given through the revolving fund project. She says that she will borrow money for interest only if the need arises or when she has to buy food materials for cooking for a function or festival. She appreciates the work done by the students in identifying and referring her for the project and as the students and the faculty have been encouraging and motivating her in running her business.

**Forget her looks. How about her insane work ethic,
her unstoppable ambition and her ridiculously
dope soul.**

Spark – 23

Ms. Sasikala was deserted by her husband a few years ago. She lives in Nochi Kuppam and she sells vegetables and flowers in that place. She has one child and she supports the needs of her family through her meager earnings. She occasionally borrows money for doing her small business and also for supporting the education of her child.

She has stopped borrowing money for her business as she is able to rotate the Revolving fund money which was given to her as she buys and sells vegetables with the money which was given to her.

She sells vegetables five days a week and she sells flowers on Fridays near the temple as there is a demand for flowers on Fridays since many people come to the temple on that day. She feels that the revolving fund of Rs. 5000 has helped her in sustaining her business to a reasonable extent.



**Sweet Heart Marry you Goals, Remain committed to Success,
be Loyal to your Dreams, It's okay to choose yourself.**

- RH Sin

Spark - 24

Beneficiaries of the Outreach Revolving Fund



Mrs. N.Kalyani (45), W/o Late Velayudham, is a resident of Kalaingar Nagar, Saidapet. She is a mother of 3 children. Her husband died 7 years ago and she is still struggling with her three kids for day-to-day survival.

Kalyani approached the students of Loyola College to help her set up a small business. They informed about this to Dr. E. Anand who said that the department of service learning is giving Rs.5,000/- as an interest-free revolving fund for starting a small businesses. The students informed her about the fund and asked her to set up a micro enterprise unit.

She decided to set up a flower making business because of her expertise in it. The department of service learning gave Rs.5,000/- as a revolving fund to start the business. This has enabled her to provide continuous financial support for her children and for the needs of her family and she is in a position to sustain itself.

Earlier, she used to borrow money from a money lender at high interest rate. Now she has stopped it due to financial support provided by the Outreach Department of Loyola College. Her average income is around Rs 600 to 700 per day with which she is able to meet her family's daily needs.

Kalyani has even repaid the loan taken by her husband for treatment. She has also improved the sales by buying new varieties of flowers. At present, she is not facing any difficulty because she has been earning constant profits and repaying the loan promptly. When we went to Kalangar Nagar area, she thanked Loyola students and the Department of Service Learning.

Spark – 25



Ms. M. Saritha (35), is a Daily wage earner who is a resident of Sher Khan Garden Kodambakkam. Her husband's name is Mr. Muthu (40) and she has an aged father, Muthukumar (75), and mother Muniammal (72), who can hardly work because of their physical illness. Saritha has three daughters namely; Saratha (21) who is pursuing Diploma in Nursing, Ragini (14) who is studying 9th standard in a government school at Kodambakkam and Srimathi (11), who is studying 6th standard in a private school at Kodambakkam.

Ms. M. Saritha is engaged in doing household works in two houses and earns upto 3,000 rupees per month. This is not sufficient for her to maintain her family expenses and for meeting the educational expenses of her two daughters (one daughter is studying in a government school). In this situation she asked the Loyola College Outreach students whether there is a possibility of conducting a tailoring training course in that area.

The Students started a 2 month free tailoring training course for the unemployed women and widows living in the sub-standard settlement area Sher Khan garden. Ms. Saritha attended two months training without taking leave for a single day. Then Ms. Saritha received a sewing machine from Loyola College Outreach students. Through the sewing machine, she is able to earn up to 100 rupees per day. Now she now earns a monthly income of Rs 3,000 as a result of tailoring apart from Rs. 3000 which she earns by doing household works.

She stitches blouses, falls for women. This has helped her daughter in pursuing her higher studies without begging anyone to sponsor the tuition fees of her daughter. She has not obtained an educational loan from the bank for the purpose of educating her daughter and it has also paved the way for slowly withdrawing themselves from the hands of money lenders and pawn brokers. Finally, her economic condition has improved and she is very grateful to the Outreach Department and students of Loyola College for their help and support.

Spark – 26

Beneficiary of Loyola Competitive Exam Study Centre



Karsini is 21 years old and is now in her third year of Under Graduation. She is pursuing her Bachelors in Commerce. But she was not a very good student in school as she was struggling in her studies. She failed in her +2 exams and she was not interested in writing her exams again. She had no thoughts of pursuing her college education. Loyola College students who are doing their Outreach intervention in Sherkhan thottam started a competitive

exam study centre to help students like Karsini and other struggling students.

The students encouraged many of the children and students in Sherkhan thottam to spend a lot of time in the study centre to prepare for their exams and encouraged them to read and write and to help them whenever they have any doubts in their subjects. The students also cleared the doubts that karsini had in subjects like Accountancy and Maths.

She was told to concentrate on clearing her exams and to give up unwanted works for a few months so that she could prepare well and clear her exams. Karsini had received continuous support from Loyola Outreach students and her parents. This support had motivated her to study well and helped her to find ways to manage her time and involve her in preparation.

Karsini had very trusting relationships with all those involved in helping her, especially Loyola College Students, Now, She has passed her +2 exam papers and is now pursuing B.Com final year and she has also passed the Preliminary Exams of TNPSC.

Spark - 27

“Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere”

My name is Lakshmi and I currently reside at Jothiammalnagar, Saidapet. I got married at the age of 20. Now I have two kids. My Husband is a daily wage worker. Due to poor financial conditions in my family, I didn't study much even though I was very much interested in studies and learning new things. Every year, students of Loyola College visit my area and offer their services like helping elders, teaching tailoring to women, providing free tuition for school children etc.

I was eagerly looking for a coaching center where the basics regarding a computer will be taught. I was interested to have some computer skills, since I didn't know how to even start a computer or laptop. When I came to know that the students from Loyola College are planning to teach the basics of computer and its uses, I kept all my work aside and gave my fullest commitment to learn from that course.

At first, I was not able to understand what the students were teaching. But slowly I started to get what the students were conveying. Since we come from a Telugu background, we thought that we may not be able to understand the language through which the student taught. But one of the students who were present there during the classes, named Vijay (from Department of Statistics) had known telugu. In that way, my classes became more interesting and comprehensible. He conducts classes twice a week.

Vijay framed a syllabus for the computer course and followed it chapter wise. He taught the concepts of MS word, MS Power Point & MS Excel. He conducted a simple test twice a month. I scored 8 out of 10 and that made me so proud and happy. In this way, he thoroughly taught us computer basics.

Now I have started to teach my daughter whatever I have learnt from the computer class. I thank students who willingly came forward to teach computer classes and I kindly request Loyola College to continue this type of service to our slum at free of cost.

Spark - 28

Ms. Sathya(45) a widow, is working as a daily wage earner. Ms. Sathya's husband died due to heart attack. After the death of her husband no one supported her. From that situation her life had totally changed. She went for a daily wage works; She had three children to raise up. Due to lack of money she couldn't afford to pay the school fees for her children and so the three stopped their education.



But the situation becomes worse than before, due to the lockdown from March as there is no job for her, She somehow managed to survive without a job by borrowing money from her neighbors for 5 to 6 months. But she couldn't manage the situation beyond that point. Right at that moment, we met her and she explained her situation to us and we promised to help her with the groceries with which she could manage somehow. We supported her with groceries. She immensely felt happy about our timely help during the lockdown.

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Spark - 29

Relief during Corona Lockdown

Ms. Dhanalaxmi, 62 years is residing at Chetti Thottam of Saidapet, Chennai. She is one of the community leaders of Chetti Thottam populated with 450 families. She runs a tea stall for nearly 40 years. Her son had died from jaundice infection. She led her life as a home maker. She has been supporting the students of Loyola college for 3 years in arranging tuition programs for children; organizing community celebrations; and awareness programs.



During the corona lockdown, people of Chetti Thottam were not stable financially. Therefore, they couldn't maintain good health, since the whole community was unemployed. At that time, the department of Service Learning had collected more than 1000 relief materials as dry rations to support the community people who were in need. The Department of Service Learning gave nearly 25 dry rations to the most affected and deserving families of Chetti Thottam. Ms. Dhanalaxmi and the beneficiaries of Chetti Thottam thanked the department of Service Learning and Loyola College Management with tears for the support.

All Women are working women. Only few are salaried.

- Kavithasharma



CHILDREN

Spark - 30

Nishanth's Message

My name is Nishanth. I am currently studying in 6th standard in Assumption Higher Secondary School, which is in St. Teresa's Church Campus at Nungambakkam. The Loyola College Outreach students often come and visit the students in the school since it is close to a slum in the area.

The Loyola college students have helped the people living in the slum a lot and have helped the area prosper. They are like a beacon of hope in the time of our need. Everyone is extremely grateful as no one had actually spent their time to come and talk with us and find out exactly what the people need in order to improve their lives. They also help the students who go to school near the area. They teach students who are academically weak and help them by tutoring them. They have also helped fund the education of a number of students who couldn't pay the fees of the school. I am also one of the students who benefitted from their help.



I don't have a mother and so my family was in a dire financial condition. I couldn't afford to go to school and continue my education. I was extremely worried about my future as without a proper education, my scope for development was limited. I had almost given up hope. At that moment of my despair, the Loyola College Outreach students came and offered to pay my school fees so that I could continue my studies.

They paid Rs. 10000 for my education and thanks to them, I can continue going to school. I am extremely grateful to them for changing my life for the better. I would like to take this chance to thank the students who helped us and the Outreach Department of Loyola College for everything that they have done for us and to the other slums in similar or worse situations.

Spark – 31

U. Karthik is an autistic child who resides in Bharathi Nagar near Villivakkam which is one of the Outreach intervention areas of the college. He was diagnosed with mental disability from the time he was a child. His mother has devoted her life to take care of him and she has been giving him love and affection to take care of him all these years. He is now 18 years old and at times he is very aggressive in his behavior towards others. It is becoming increasingly difficult for his mother to control him.



The Outreach faculty and the students have met him a few times and have noticed that he is adamant and aggressive at times and he does not even listen to his mother and follow her instructions at certain times. Thus, the Outreach Faculty and the students decided that it is better to refer him to a home for the mentally challenged as he can get the desired psychological and medical attention. Hence, he was referred to Samarpana Home for the mentally challenged at Kolathur.

**Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best
hope for the future. - John F. Kennedy**

Spark - 32



Anand (35), and R.Vallankanni were a resident of D Block, Gothemedu, Saidapet. Anand and Vallankanni passed away 10 years ago leaving behind their three children.

Their grandmother Mrs. Nadhiya, is taking care of the three children. She works as a house maid and earns a monthly salary of Rs. 1500. Among the three, two children are studying in Kanchipuram Government residential school. Another boy is Raman, who is a school dropout from first standard.

According to Nadhiya, Loyola College students visit their area twice a week and interact with them to resolve their difficulties and problems. She has informed about her family situation and requested them to get her grandson admitted in a school. The students adhered to her request and admitted her grandson in a school.

Today, he is a beneficiary of Loyola College scholarship scheme for the children of widows. He also gets study materials free-of-cost. He goes to school regularly and is securing good marks in all subjects.

Nadhiya says that Loyola College students frequently visit her house to enquire about her grandson's studies and other activities. According to her, even their relatives, friends and neighbours have neglected them, but Loyola College students are doing their best for her family's welfare.

Nadhiya says that she will never forget Loyola College student's timely help because it was only because of the timely support provided by the students of Loyola College, her grandson got admitted in a school. She is really thankful to both the students and the Outreach Department.

Spark – 33

This is Mahalakshmi and Sivasakthi, studying IV standard, and living in bazaar street area in chindhadripet. We study in chindhadripet government school. We don't have any books at home. Hence we never had an opportunity to read any other book apart from our textbooks. At this juncture, students from Loyola College, who came for service learning classes, opened a small library in our area. They had collected more than two hundred books in it.

Now we spend a lot of time in the library, reading books. I really like the books, especially, comic books in Tamil. Even though, it is difficult to read and understand English comic books, we keep reading it. We have also learnt new words from reading books and we have developed an interest in reading books. Now one of our important hobbies is to read books. Nowadays, we feel confident while reading books. Thanks to the Service Learning students of Loyola College for all their efforts.

Our greatest national resource is the minds of our children.

- Walt Disney

Spark - 34

My name is Tamizhbharathy and I live in Bazaar Street. I am studying VI standard in the government school. Even though I used to learn hard I never got high marks in my exams. There is a tuition centre run by The Police Boys Club in our area. Students from Loyola College will come and teach there regularly. They will help us in our regular subjects and also in extracurricular activities. I like Thirukural very much and whenever the Loyola College students conducted competitions I used to outshine the other competitors.



Later, I started practicing to recite Thirukural and also oratory. Now, I am a budding orator and I could recite more than two hundred kural by heart. Even in my school now I'm recognised and I regularly compete in competitions. Thanks to Service Learning students of Loyola College for all the help that they have rendered to me.

The best way to make children good is to make them happy.

- Oscar Wilde

Spark – 35

Kaleb, a 10 year old boy, is studying 4th std, and resides at Jothiamalnagar, Saidapet with his extended family. He is studying in Government school near Saidapet. Students of Loyola College came to his area, and encouraged him to come for the tuition program at Saidapet.

Even school students (friends of Kaleb) have gathered to provide good education and that helps to support the community.

Children would come regularly for the tuitions since students from Loyola college were motivated and made things interesting by conducting games quite often, teaching robotics and computer skills and many more. They were encouraged by providing note books, pen, colour pencils and sketches.

Kaleb has not passed in all his subjects since his family members were illiterate. Tuition program made him to study his subjects and clarify mathematics problems with the support of Loyola Students. He had scored good

marks in his monthly test which were conducted in his school. He showed his mark sheet to his parents and students of Loyola College. Kaleb was very happy, and students of Loyola were proud about his improvement. All the children who came for the tuition program, were so



happy about their improvement in studies and their behaviour.

Nearly 30 children benefited through the tuition programs and students also had learned the techniques of teaching and learning patterns.



YOUTH

Spark – 36

My name is Vignesh. S, and I am studying B.Sc. Mathematics (3rd year) in Loyola College. I am proud to say that I received this opportunity due to the efforts of the department of service learning. My mother is S. Shanthi, a domestic worker and my father is V. Suresh, a car driver. I have one elder sister.

Having finished my higher secondary exams, I applied for a UG course in Loyola College. After a week, the students of the outreach dept of Loyola College visited our area East Namachivaya Puram in Choolaimedu to collect data regarding students who had appeared for their 12th board exams in order to conduct a camp for them for which I had given my name as well. I attended this one-week summer camp, arranged by the department of service learning to acquire some basic skills and gained a lot of knowledge. I used to feel very bad and confused because everyone including my friends, family and neighbors told me that I wouldn't get admitted into the college. The bosses of my parents had discouraged them too. Everyone said "Loyola College is only for high class people".

But the department of service learning helped me prove them otherwise. One day, I received a message in my mobile stating that I have been selected into Loyola College for B.Sc. in mathematics. After receiving the call letter, my mother and I visited three professors (Rathna Ma'am, Kumanan Sir and Melson Sir) and thanked them from the bottom of our hearts. They also wished me with blessed words and said "What you are going to study is not important but what you study and why you study is more important". Till now I haven't forgotten those words. They have a lot of hope on me and I have not done anything to lessen their hope in me. They give me a chance to study in the most prestigious college. They have made me braver and more courageous. I have told all my relatives that there is no partiality by way of caste, religion or status in my college. Loyola is for all deserving students. After my UG I will be continuing my studies. Service Learning **Department is my Strength.**

Thanks to them **now I can proudly say "I am a Loyolite".**

Spark - 37

Santosh is a 12th standard student living in Gangaikarapuram. Thanjan, his father, is a going for daily wages. Ms. Chithra Devi, his mother works as a shopkeeper in a petty shop. Pavithra, his sister is currently studying 7th grade. Santhosh has opted for commerce with business maths as his stream in 12th grade.



He is a quick learner and also helps his sister for her studies. Santhosh has an extremely positive attitude towards the society. He assists his mother in the petty shop after his school hours. He is good in studies as well. He is looking forward to join Loyola College after his schooling to pursue his dreams in life.

His hard work and good character attracted the students of the Department of Service Learning. As students visit the slum he helps the students to visit houses and supports the programs when they are conducted.

I was born in a slum, but the slum wasn't born in me.

- Jesse Jackson

Spark – 38

Rahul (15 years of age) is studying 10th standard in Karnataka Sangha School and has plans to apply for scholarship in Loyola College for the sake of pursuing his higher education. His father Ravi Kumar (41) is working as a painter. His mother Sarala (36) is a housewife and is working as a part-time Tailor. His brother's name is Kameshwaran (12). They are living in 9/3, SS Puram, M.K. Radha Nagar, Teynampet, Chennai- 6 for the past 40 years.



He is a first-generation learner. During the outreach program of Loyola College, the family explained their problems to the students of Loyola College, who in turn brought it to the attentions of the professors of the department. The department arranged for a sum of Rs. 1000, for the current educational needs of Rahul. This act has gone a long way in motivating the boy, to direct all his efforts towards education. Though it was a meager amount, it was considered as a big gift which has motivated him to perform better in his education.

Learning is never done without errors and defeat.

- Vladimir Lenin

Spark - 39

Yeswanth was studying class 8 in the Corporation school. Loyola college students visited him in his school and they came to know that he was a slow learner and that he did not interact with his friends and preferred to be lonely. He did not spend his time in any physical activity. He was



taught mind games and memory skill enhancing activities. He was given training to do extempore speeches. It has worked well.

Yeshwanth got an opportunity to speak in the school programs. He was trained to memorize a small speech which he performed well and was appreciated by his classmates. He also began to put hard work and had increased his concentration in the class. He was trained to be a positive person. He felt that the visits of the students from the department of service Learning, Loyola College has brought out his latent skills. He also told that he gained his self-confidence.

The Meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.

- Pablo Picasso

Spark - 40



Punitha resides in a mere 80 square feet hut at Thideer Nagar on the banks of Coovum river, Saidapet. Her son Dinesh wanted to be a part of Loyola College after seeing Loyola College students visiting their area. To help students like Dinesh achieve their dreams, Loyola College conducted a summer coaching camp.

By participating in the special summer coaching camp, Dinesh was able to get an admission in Loyola College. He is now studying B.Com II year in Loyola College.

Punitha says that she has heard about Loyola College helping the poor and needy but their act of giving admission to slum-dwellers is an act of generosity, that has been exhibited by very few. They really help students support their community and society.

She adds that her son has completely recovered from all bad habits. Dinesh says Loyola is an excellent college for the poor and rural students. It trains them to become well-versed in English. There is an excellent student- teacher interaction, remedial classes for academically disadvantaged students, knowledge-orientation and skill development as the basis of all activities, and well-maintained discipline. His mother expresses her sincere thanks to Loyola College and the students of the Department of Service Learning.

The Slums are not a Place of Despair. It's Inhabitants are all working towards a better life.

- Vikas Sworup

Spark - 41



I am Vetri, 23 years old, and a school dropout. I became an alcoholic under the influence of my friends due to which I had to face many hardships in life. My hobby is to play carrom with my friends.

When Loyola College students came to our area for interacting with us, they came to know about our addiction towards alcohol and drugs. They came forward to conduct a carrom competition and me and my friends welcomed the initiative and decided to participate.

In this backdrop, Professor Dr. E.Anand, of Loyola College, wanted to have a meeting with us. During the interaction with the Professor and students, we narrated the struggles faced by us in our daily life.

Then the students asked us the reason behind our passion for carrom. We told them that if they conducted a carrom competition and distributed a carrom board, then we will be diverted from alcohol and drugs. The students managed to raise Rs. 2,000 and bought a carrom board for us. We play carrom board whenever we find time.

I and my friends feel really proud about spending our time productively rather than wasting it under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Thanks to Loyola College and the Department of Service Learning, Chennai. Loyola College students' gesture has proved that one has to do something in life that is honorable and praise-worthy.

Spark – 42

Rajesh has completed his schooling in the academic year 2006-2007. He could not study further due to family issues. At that time, the department of service learning organized Youth Development Residential program funded by slum clearance board.



He participated in the program. Department of service learning helped him to get an admission in Loyola College. In his third year, he had a tough time without having a place to stay because of the slum clearance eviction project, He didn't get the house at that time. At that time 'The Director of Outreach' and Professor helped him to get a new house in Chemenchery with the help of the Tamilnadu Slum Clearance Board.

Rajesh was so proud during his job interview because all the candidates were so shocked and gave respect to him as he was a Loyola College student. Rajesh secretly thought in his mind that he would have joined some Government College but he is so happy to be a part of Loyola College as people have a good opinion about the college. And he lives happily ever after. He is now working in a Leading Pharma Company as a Medical Representative.

Now he looks after his beloved wife and he lives happily and he always used to say thanks to Professor Mrs. Priya, Department of Service Learning, The Director of Outreach, and Loyola College because he got good environments, many friends, and improved his English skills, etc., And he is suggesting about the outreach program to his juniors who are in a position like him. He is a role model for fellow youth of the society.



LOYOLA STUDENTS

Spark – 43

A student who has undergone the outreach program

I'm Anton, from Shift-II Department of English. I'm happy and excited to say that I was awarded the best volunteer award by the outreach department in the academic year 2018-2019. One of the purposes of our outreach is to facilitate an easier access to education for that section of the society which finds it difficult to afford this basic necessity.

At first I had very glum expectations regarding the outreach program; I attended very few classes. But I was given the responsibility to tutor a few students from the slum which completely changed my perspective. As I was in shift-2, it was tiring and hard to go from college to the slum.

My parents disapproved the idea of tutoring the slum students and asked me to concentrate on my studies. Despite this, I went on to teach the students. I was in charge of 13 students. A happy thing to note here is, one of them was pursuing MBBS and another went on to join our college.

I was assigned with a new project which was to help slum people get their old age pension, which will be helpful for their daily life. When I was given with the project, I had already completed my required hours due for the outreach program. But I found the project interesting and compelling to work on and so I took it up. My friends and I took it up as a challenge. We went around the slum and collected data to initiate the process. Though it was tiresome, we accomplished it.

The outreach program encouraged me to engage in service to the society. It has changed my opinion regarding the slum community. As Helen killer says '**Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much**'. Let's unite together and uplift them or try to improve their way of living.

Spark – 44

I met a little girl named Latika in the slum, she is 8 years old, and you will always see her with a smile on her face no matter what. She walked up to me on the day of the distribution, and looked up to me and asked me if she could get a chocolate. Her clothes were tattered and torn, but her smile was immaculate. She had perfect teeth and she looked very adorable. “Anna oru chocolate kudungu”, she said to me.



I responded by giving her two chocolates instead of one. She frowned for a second and immediately gave one chocolate to one of the younger kids in the slum. She looked up to me and said, “orupaiyyaoru chocolate”. The child was more wise and generous than most people with wealth that I had known.

Gautom Krishna-16-UEC-484

**A person who never made a mistake never
tried anything new." — Albert Einstein**

Spark - 45

I attended the orientation course conducted by the department of Service Learning and I was selected as the leader of the school teaching team. School teaching has benefitted me in a number of ways including helping me to improve my teaching skills and enhancing my ability to interact with children. Actually I have rediscovered myself and my team members have shared with me that they were able to assess their own skills and potential while teaching.

I had a standout experience with a girl called Nishanthini from 6th grade who is very focused in her studies. Even though she is not from a good background, she is not highly dedicated and from her we have gained confidence that whatever may be the situation we persistently strive and give our best. The students have gained confidence from us. They also felt that they can study well and by doing so they can be placed in good colleges and excel in their life.

The experience we gained through school teaching is invaluable. Meeting the children in school and spending time with them was fulfilling. It took us back to our school days and we felt that we didn't have opportunities like these to interact and learn directly from college students. We felt very happy to teach the children how to read and helped them in improving their English. The interesting thing we observed was that in every class there were students who were eager to learn who co-existed with students who were notorious and restless.

It was a good learning for us as we could directly come across the students and we were able to understand their mindset. On the first day of the school visit, we were nervous since we had no prior experience, but as the days rolled on, a beautiful rapport blossomed between the students and us. Now we feel blessed for the opportunity that the college has given us to guide the children.

A. Calvin Wilbert Raj, 18-UBC-204

Leader - School Teaching Team

Spark – 46



The purpose of outreach was to understand the difficulties and struggles of the disadvantaged sections of our society. Department of service learning (outreach) is the only department which helps to bring out the humane qualities in us by providing opportunities to help the disadvantaged sections of the society.

As the leader of my Elders and Differently abled team I have truly overcome some of my basic fears like communicating with people. During the outreach orientation, I decided that I wanted to be the leader of the elders group because I hold the blessings of elders in high regard. I discovered, through interaction with the people that they have to face many problems in their life like living alone without a family, lack of proper sanitation and clean drinking water, health problems and so on. Even with so many problems they dress their face with a beautiful smile and bless us whole heartedly.

We have witnessed an entire spectrum of emotions, including tears of happiness, gratitude, benevolence and pain. As a team we conducted special events for the elders, where we made them sing and play games and received the same amount of immense happiness



and joy by seeing them play like small kids and having fun. My experience during the outreach program has taught me patience, discipline, duty of a leader and has enhanced my communication abilities.

SYED ABRAR (LEADER)

Spark – 47

Name: S.Aayush Chhajer

Class: 2nd year B.Sc. Computer Science

Before coming to outreach classes, I never visited slums and never knew about the condition of people living there. I knew the conditions would be bad, but I was taken aback by the ground reality when I visited the slums for the first time through the Outreach Program of Loyola College. The entire area was congested, and covered with garbage and litter. Running sewage water and open drainage filled the area with a foul smell. I wanted to help as much as I could and joined the school teaching team and even helped other teams occasionally.

Our Group taught children Alphabets and words in Tamil and English. We even listened to the stories of the people in the slums and sometimes gave solutions for their problem, consoled some people and tried to cheer them up. To spread happiness, we even celebrated Christmas there. Over all it was a soul stirring experience, that gave me the satisfaction of helping those in need and made me appreciate the blessings I had in my life. I discovered a gentle and passionate side of me while helping the children in the slums.

I sincerely thank my outreach Professor Baskar Jayabalan and Loyola College for giving me an opportunity to help others and learn more in life.

There is no substitute for Hard work.

- Thomas Edision

Spark – 48

The student that I have chosen for the case study is a high school girl (7thstd). Her name is Angel. She is studying in St. Joseph's High school, Susaipuram, Nungambakkam. a calm girl from a decent background. She has been attending the local school since her young age. She is quite an active girl and well-groomed and well mannered. However, she finds it quite difficult to communicate in English. All her lessons from her young age have been taught in English yet she finds it difficult to cope with other students and the teacher. She's been struggling a lot to understand concepts and ideas and the various teaching techniques exhibited by the teachers and us (the student volunteers). She hails from an area where speaking in the English language is not much exercised.

Through the school teaching team, I wished to provide my knowledge to other students. I found myself drawn towards this child and I felt that I could teach her and be a mentor to her. Since day one of our arrival, I have been consistently observing her language skills and I started noticing small improvements in the first few weeks, which was followed by exponential improvement in her fluency, which came with increased practice and vigorous training. As a part of the service learning programs, I used to give special care and attention to this kid, as I believed she required it. She was not fluent yet keen. She started to practice day by day improving her skills slowly. At first she struggled but she slowly began to advance and then improved her speaking skills and even her vocabulary.

Some of the steps taken to improve her speaking skills are:

1. Vigorous speaking drill daily for 15minutes.
2. Constant motivation along with tips.
3. Reading English Newspaper daily and summarizing the events.
4. 10 minutes speech twice a week to boost her confidence.

As a teacher, one needs to prepare daily and I experienced the same. I had to learn more words and constantly train myself so that I can help my students. I also learnt that CONSTANT EFFORT with PROPER GUIDANCE fetches us exponential results that can help create a win-win situation for all. It also takes proper planning and strategy to make anyone learn anything.

F. JEFIN (18-UCH-010)

Spark - 49

I am Anirudh. I am pursuing my under-graduation degree in Commerce. We belong to the Health, Sanitation and Environment Team of our outreach program. One day, on our regular field visit we came across an old lady, Ms. Jaya. We inquired her if she had any health issues which they can assist her with. She told us that her spectacles had broken and she needed to have a checkup with the Doctor for which she did not have any money.



We decided to help her first with consulting a Doctor and then buy her spectacles accordingly. Fortunately, she had the eye test report from the check-ups which were done previously. Once we affirmed her that we will assist her in getting new spectacles, she told that she would go the hospital and get her eye tested.

A week later she gave us the eye test report. Then we went to a shop and ordered a new pair of spectacles based on the eye test report. The next day we got the new pair of spectacles and gave it to Ms. Jaya.



She was very happy. She liked the new spectacles very much. She thanked us and blessed us all. We thank our college and the outreach department for this opportunity.

We will continue to help everyone who needs help.

Spark - 50



‘Service to the society’ is definitely a part of the learning process in education. At first, before going to the allotted venue, I had no big expectations out of this project and I figured that I would not be benefitted in any way apart from my credits. But only after a few visits, I realized that it is a platform which our college offers to know and understand the real situation of the world where we can all induce a change for something good. Due to the outreach, I understood the grave situation of people who were living in the slum unaware of the importance of education, hygiene, sanitation, ailments, government schemes etc. We all dream of a well-developed India but this would be achieved only if everyone makes a contribution. Therefore it is our duty to teach these minds the code of conduct that they should practice in a way they would understand.

My very first exposure was being elected as the student’s coordinator of outreach. This taught the patience and resistance to handle any sort of situation and build a balance between the students and the staff in charge. By organizing various programs, I learned to delegate the work equally and monitor the situations. Leadership quality, good observation, patience, decision making and rapport building were the qualities which I developed through the outreach. It was only because of outreach that I got selected for the leadership training program.

The service learning played a major role by giving a realization that the growth of a country is determined by every sector of a society and there should be an equal and balanced growth in both the lower and higher sections of the society.

Spark - 51

I am Sathish Kumar doing second year Economics in Loyola College. Initially I was never interested in participating in outreach programs. But it proved to be a fruitful one where I spent quality time in providing service to the poor and helped them in enriching their life and career. I thought I did not have any talents. During my first year in Loyola I felt that I was fish out of water.



I began to visit the houses in the slum allotted by the department. Programs conducted by my team clearly made me realize that one's talent cannot be washed away by poverty. People in the slum helped me in understanding life's obstacles and gave hope that they can be solved patiently.

I have gained a lot of experience and knowledge about life which wouldn't have been possible without participating in the outreach program.

**The Future belongs to those who believe
in the beauty of their dreams.**

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Spark – 52

Academic excellence combined with disciplined character molding was always part of Loyola's legacy. This legacy is still being imparted to every student who seeks the shade of Loyola. Undoubtedly, we could say that the outreach program designed, developed and inculcated as a part of academic curriculum is a unique, life enlightening practical experience a student can receive at the right age, where the societal influences shape his life. Outreach program, spread across the final year UG program and PG program are meticulously organized. The one-week rural exposure camp in the first year of Post-Graduation course is surely a gateway of varied experience, where the students leave their comfort zones and spend a week in a remote village in the state, engaging themselves in productive social service activities and interactive session with the villagers, which sheds light on their way of life to us.

With this presumption and having spent time in social service during my UG urban exposure and service sessions in Loyola, my expectations for the rural exposure camp was high. I was certain that the few days we are about to spend in the camp will have a profound influence on me and my class mates. The travel to Ariyalur district with another bunch of 'about to be' friends was as memorable as the camp itself. The Thirumanoor parish priest welcomed us with a warm smile just like the open-hearted villagers with whom we will be spending the rest few days. The accommodation and the basic facilities provided made us feel ease.

The 5 days that we spent in the camp were eventful and enlightening. The organized and carefully planned allotment of work and division of schedules with my peers taught me about the productivity of team work. The opportunity to mingle with the students of other departments broke the monotony of comfort zones of our class and usual circle of friends, thus broadening it. The aim of every rural exposure camp is to provide the students first-hand experience of the naked realities of the rural India. We saw the way the common people who work in the field to feed their family and also ours live, the negligence from the government which results in their exploitation, the class-caste struggle that they have to face and the hardships of the works they are involved in. During our short time with the villagers, we interacted with them and enquired about their way of living and their social conditions. It came as a shock to realize that these people, who live in one of the most fertile soils of the state, lead a life in darkness where they are

deprived and stripped of their basic rights and decent living. Only a handful of houses had toilets in almost every village we visited and the people including the women used to go out near the bushes or the river beds to answer the call of nature. They have been normalized to this way of living as many of them consider this as a very routine part of their life and don't find the need of a restroom in their homes. Our searching also made us aware that people in the village said no to public restrooms too as they were unwilling to take up the responsibility of cleaning them on the regular basis. Even during the pregnancy time, women are supposed to go to the river beds or the nearby bushes and forests to free their stomach. Thus, personal hygiene was a great matter of concern.

Alcohol abuse was another pertinent issue of concern among the youth. They start drinking at a very tender age and from what the women of the villages told, alcohol use takes tolls on the mental health of the youth as they restrain from going to work regularly and that they involve in brawls too. A substantial amount of the familial income is thus wasted on alcohol. It was also great to find out that these people valued education so much. They used to send their children to study in the local Government Schools. Young women preferred working as a nurse as this was found to be the most chosen and common profession among the educated young women.

Caste issue was the most common problem of the villages. Even though the republic of India abolished caste system and discrimination, these remote villages practice it even today. Separate tumblers were kept in tea shops for the people of different classes and certain parts of the village were no-go zones for some castes. Though religious harmony existed, caste-based segregation was rampant. The people of the village are very warm hearted. We were amicably invited into their homes and they were very hospitable and welcomed us with whatever they could offer. Usually they are hostile towards government employs, but since we were college students, they were really friendly and cooperative. It was a very new experience which is definitely a life-changing for all of us. It's true that in this stage we might not be able to provide these people with much help, but realizing their hardships and problems, made us aware that as a responsible citizen who was blessed to have access to education and resources, we are obliged morally to lend a helping hand to these people in need when we are in a position to aid them.

The rural exposure camp is definitely one of the finest opportunities that Loyola provides to its students, in molding them up as a socially responsible citizen. - **AntoVarun**

Spark – 53

S. SARAVANA KUMAR is now a student who is pursuing his third year in B. Sc. computer science. He comes from one of the Outreach intervention areas. He was identified by the second-year students when they did their Outreach intervention three years ago in AvvaiPuram. Then the Outreach department conducted a camp for five days and at the end of the camp his name was included in the short list of candidates who were recommended for securing admission in the college after taking his socio-economic status into consideration. His father is a plumber and his mother works as a domestic worker in a few houses. His father earns a meager income as a plumber and his mother's income is just about enough to meet the important basic necessities of the family.



After getting admitted into the college, he found it difficult to cope with the pressures of college education. Then, through sheer hard work and effort and through the encouragement given by the Outreach faculty and students he was able to do well in his exams and he has got no arrears in five of the six semesters that he has completed in the college. He was given fees concession for his course. He recently got placed in HCL after attending the campus selection interviews which were conducted in the college for a salary of Rs. 23,000 per month. He is very thankful to the college and the Outreach department for giving admission to him and for all the support and encouragement as he has got a good job offer in a reputed company.

**Failure is the opportunity to begin again
more intelligently. - Henry Ford**

Spark – 54

My outreach Experience

Loyola College organized the outreach rural camp from 18th November 2019 to 23rd November 2019 and the place was Allala Patti Village. It was a great platform for us to know the village culture, farming and their food habits. Students from two different departments Mathematics and Bio-Technology were taken together for their rural camp and hence we had a great time to explore ourselves. We were divided into several committees and I was in the food committee group.



Our activities each day would start with great pleasure and joy. First, we had yoga practice in the morning and then we had to ensure that the food was prepared on time by the cook and once the food was prepared, we would be involved in serving food to everyone. Some of us would occasionally help the cook if there was a delay by cutting vegetables or doing other helpful tasks if the cook felt that our support was required.

It is a hilly region and so the temperature was quite cold but still there was water scarcity in the village. So, their farming culture was also based on the availability of rain water or ground water. The main crop which was cultivated there was ragi, bhajra and tapioca as these crops do not require plenty of water. Each and every moment in our rural camp gave us a new experience and we also learnt a lot by talking with the people in the village as they spoke about their difficulties and struggles in life. We were able to live without using our mobile phones for one week. We still enjoyed the hard work that we did in the villages and walking many kilo meters each day never made us tired as all the activities were done as a group and we enjoyed the company of our friends. The cultural events were great and many of us experimented in cultural events and games which were held in our group and it was a fruitful experience. Still there are a lot of things that I want to say but there are no words for me to express that. I'm very thankful to Loyola College and the Outreach department.

Justin (19-PMT-015)

Spark – 55



“Life is something in which everything happens unexpectedly” Before joining college I never heard about outreach and only after joining Loyola college, I came to know what exactly it is and the Outreach intervention which I had undertaken during my second year of Under graduation was quite interesting. I had a great time in my outreach sessions even though sometimes it was harder. Still it was an eventful experience as I learned many things, and came to know about many people and their experiences. We also learnt about their way of living as everyone has a different life style. The people in the intervention areas were kind to everyone as well.

We had conducted some programs like drawing competitions, distribution of medicinal plants, Medical camp, distribution of nilaveambu kashayam, pongal celebration etc...

I have learned some skills like leadership skills and management skills and also came to know about everyone’s perspective. I was also disappointed on seeing some of my fellow classmates who had never showed interest in things like these and did not have the enthusiasm that I had. But still I’m happy that at least it has changed someone’s perspective in their life and changed their thoughts and the way in which they perceive different aspects of life. After seeing the people who were living there, we came to know about their living conditions and how they were able to manage and sustain themselves inspite of their hardships. I had a wonderful experience during my Outreach intervention and it has influenced and created some changes within me.

- THIRUMALAIVASAN.A

Spark – 56

I studied B. A Tamil Literature in Loyola College and completed my graduation in the year 2019. I am now pursuing M.Voc. Digital Journalism (1st Year). I was first involved in Outreach Intervention during the second year of Under graduation. I did my UG outreach in R. K. Nagar and meeting the poor and needy people there had a significant impact on me. We conducted awareness programs for the people on different issues and also conducted street plays for them. Then I was involved in street plays which were conducted inside the college campus. When street plays were conducted inside the college campus, there were a sizeable number of students who would always watch our plays as these plays were conducted during the break time. The appreciation and applause which I received from the students and Faculty members motivated me and I developed my acting and communication skills by being involved in these plays. My ambition was to become a Film director before joining college and I never had the intention of doing my PG course. But then, after completing graduation I have joined M.Voc. Digital Journalism and one of the reasons for that was because of my involvement in Outreach and other cultural activities during my second and third year of Under graduation.



I have now been trained well in Parai dance and have also learnt a lot of acting and PR skills through the efforts of Dr. Kaleeswaran when I was the student Coordinator of Arts and Literary student unit in LSSS. I am also involved with some good NGOs and voluntary organisations like Arappor Iyakkam and one of our recent plays called Sakkadai Thiruvizha was well appreciated and Mr. Piyush Manush, the social activist whom I greatly admire, congratulated and encouraged me as he was impressed with my performance. I had recently acted in a play in the role of Buddha to make the general public understand how Buddha would look at this present world. There was a person in the audience who appreciated my performance and gave me a thousand Rupee note. More than the money that he gave me, I was pleased about the fact that the person felt that I had the ability to influence and conscientize others. I feel that the Outreach Department, LSSS (Dr. Kaleeswaran) and my involvement in cultural activities has made me a better person and I feel that I have a lot to offer to the society. - **Rajeshwaran.B**

Spark - 57

PREM KUMAR M

I studied B.A. Tamil Literature in Loyola College and finished my graduation in the year 2019, I am now doing media shows in Puthiya Thalaimurais a Freelancer apart from being involved in doing cultural shows and events in different parts of Tamil Nadu. I was first involved in Outreach Intervention during the second year of B. A. Tamil Literature. I did my outreach intervention in R. K. Nagar and after meeting and getting to know the people who lived in those informal settlements had made me understand and realize the conditions in which the poor are living in Chennai.



I also learnt important things by interacting with them and we also did some awareness programs for them. Since I was interested in cultural events, I was involved in doing street plays for them and also conducted games and competitions for the children and the people. Then I was involved in street plays which were conducted inside the college campus. I was trained in Parai dance and I was given the opportunity to entertain around 700 elders from the Outreach intervention areas who had come to our college campus for the elder's day program. We were involved in street plays conducted inside the college on different social issues to all the students in our college, during the break time and I was happy that I was able to create awareness and sensitize our fellow students about important social issues and problems in our country.

I am now working in channels like Puthiya Thalaimurai as a freelancer and am associated with other organizations. I am able to look at things with a different perspective as a result of my experience in being involved in Outreach and several other cultural activities which I had undertaken. Even though I cannot openly criticize some of the schemes of the government when I am involved in doing shows for TV channels, I feel that the central government needs to rethink some of its recent policies. My aspiration is to become a leader who will be able to make a difference to the lives of the poor and the vulnerable in our society.