

Bellur – Guruji's Vision

Guruji once said 'giving does not impoverish and withholding does not enrich.' He lives by his words. Since that time he has committed to improve the quality of life in Bellur, his birth place and he has been working very hard towards his goal. Along with the other members of the Bellur Trust he has been working to see this vision fructify.

Guruji Bellur Krishnamachar Sundararaja Iyengar has transformed the lives of thousands across the world. Now, with the support of his family and students is transforming the lives of people in his birth place, Bellur.

In 2003 the Bellur Krishnamachar & Seshamma Smaraka Niddhi Trust (BKSSNT) was formed by Guruji, in the memory of his parents Krishnamachar and Seshamma, to serve the people of Bellur and the neighbouring villages. The BKSSNT has four distinct objectives to provide education, to provide primary health care facilities, to improve the social standards and living conditions and to promote the cultural skills of the villagers.

Much has been achieved by the BKSSNT in since it was formed. A hall was built over the children's primary school, which serves multiple roles ranging for a classroom to a yoga room to a room for social get together. A water storage tank has been constructed to provide clean drinking water to the villagers. Nearly 16 acres of land was purchased to accomplish the other objectives including the building of a high school, a guest house, a hospital, free eye clinics. This entire complex has now been named as Ramamani Nagar in the memory of Guruji's beloved wife Ramamani.

Ramamani Iyengar High School

The foundation stone for this school was laid in January 2005 and the first group of students registered in June 2005. The school initially had 180 admissions for the eighth grade in 2006 and another 160 students joined the eighth grade of the school for the academic year 2006-2007. The Trust bears the entire expenses for the uniforms, books, school material and of course the running of the school.

The land around the high school is quite barren and Bellur is surrounded by stone quarries. The building is well designed making a very conducive and pleasant environment for the students. As well as a large quadrangle for meetings and special functions the school has a pleasant yoga room, which is equipped with ropes and many, many photographs of Guruji doing *asanas*.



The new Ramamani Iyengar High School

The Guest House

Adjacent to the school building is the guest house. The building has a very pleasant ambience with self sufficient rooms. The environment around is pleasant and accommodates yoga students for short holidays. It will be used by those visiting the village and the Patanjali temple.

Ramamani Iyengar Hospital

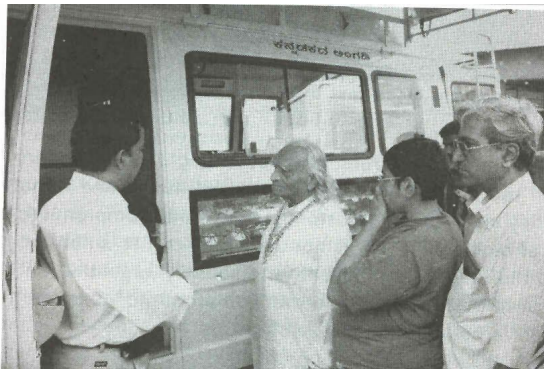
The Ramamani Iyengar Hospital was built to take care of the villagers basic and emergency health needs. The hospital was opened by Guruji in 2007 and also incorporates free eye clinics. These clinics have been conducted on several occasions many of the villages when having their eyes tested find they have compromised sight. They are given corrected glasses and so are able to see clearly – some for the first time. The hospital has many beds and several well equipped operating theatres. Doctors from Bangalore and other large centres attend the hospital to assist the local people



Several free medical “camps” have been organized by the trust for Bellur as well as the surrounding villages. In March of this year over 70 doctors came to attend over 600 of the village people – ENT, dental, orthopaedic, paediatrics and gynecology. During the celebrations for Guruji’s 90th birthday a large contingent of students – about 350 – will be taken by bus to visit this extraordinary project – an extraordinary vision – of Guruji’s.

Education in health is equally important. The villagers, during the clinics were educated with interesting audio-visual presentations so that they learn not to ignore health disorders.

Inauguration of the mobile refraction unit



India’s first mobile refraction unit was inaugurated at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial School on June 7, 2006. The function was attended by Guruji himself; Dr. Badrinath, the vision behind Sankara Nethralaya; Mr. Cherrier, the Asia-Pacific chief of Essilor; Prof Shetty, former vice chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences and the local Member of Parliament, Mr. Jalappa. It was a good opportunity for the young students to listen to such stalwarts, a source of great inspiration to the budding youngsters.

Today

Guruji’s vision for his home village of Bellur was first talked about some 40 years ago when funds were collected at a demonstration in Switzerland organized by Yehudi Menuhin (see article “With No Instrument”). Its development continues with the work of the BKSNT, the generosity of Guruji and the support of devoted students of Iyengar Yoga from all over the world.

***What I was in unimportant
What I am now is important.***

- Guruji, BKS Iyengar -



The Bellur Trust The Bellur Krishnamachar and Seshamma Smaraka Niddhi Trust

Yoga Vaani has regularly published articles about the BKSNT – the Bellur Trust - and the work it is doing in Bellur the village where Guruji was born. Bellur is in the southern state of Karnataka and is one of the many very poor and backward villages in India. Guruji built a primary school there in 1967 with the assistance of monies raised by some of his international students, before that time there was no school at all. The village did not have clean, fresh water supply until 2004 when, with Guruji’s financial aid, a 50,000 gallon water tank was erected providing fresh water to the villagers. Guruji, has assisted too in the rebuilding of the temple to Sage Patanjali – the first one built anywhere in the world.

The Trust has the ambitious forward vision of building and equipping a Technical College to provide vocational skills for young members of the community eg stone masonry, animal husbandry as well as a College of Nursing to further equip and staff the hospital. The Trust also intends to provide 100% free education to those who live below the poverty line – approximately 50% of the students. The plans are ambitious and will need support to see their completion and maintenance.

The Trust is now an approved Institution under section 35AC of the Indian Income Tax Act. This means that individuals and companies in India can claim donations as a tax deduction.

Guruji has asked for his students of yoga throughout the world to launch fund raising activities to help raise monies to further the already successful projects of the Trust. Individual donations can be sent directly to the Trust.

To download the application form to make a donation:
www.bksiyengar.com and go to Institutions/BKSNT.

