



# DR. RAMA SUBBIAH SCHOLARSHIP FUND

(EST. 1969)

COMMEMORATING FIVE DECADES OF  
COMMUNITY SERVICE



*The DRSSF Memorial Book is an extraordinary tribute to the Founders and members of the Board for their selfless contribution to the cause of Malaysian Indian students and to the betterment of the Indian community in general.*

**T.S.Thirumurti,**

*former High Commissioner of India to Malaysia and currently Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York.*



*In an address to the Form Six Pilot Project students:*

*'If you can go back and educate your siblings, that already sets the impetus of the process to draw the community out of its vicious cycle of poverty.'*

**Tan Sri Manickavasagam,**  
*(President of MIC, 1973-1979)*



*On seeing that a few University students of plantation background were in dire need of funds to continue their course, Rama Subbiah launched the Indian Students Scholarship Fund (ISSF) in 1967*

***The Genesis of Indian Students Scholarship Fund,***  
*chapter 2*

**DR. RAMA SUBBIAH  
SCHOLARSHIP FUND (RSSF)**



**COMMEMORATING FIVE DECADES OF  
COMMUNITY SERVICE**

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**Published by:**

**Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund**

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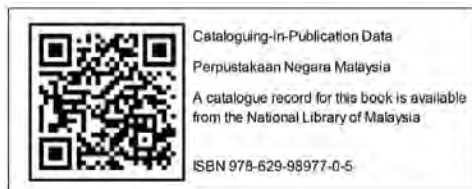
**First Edition: 2024**

**ISBN: 978-629-98977-0-5**

**Printed by:**

**Crinographics Sdn Bhd**

Tel: 03-7772 1714



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## EDITOR'S NOTE



When Chairman Dato V. L. Kandan entrusted me with the arduous task of completing the DRSSF Commemorative Book project I was rather reluctant at first, because of a concern that I would not be able to maintain the high standards that my late husband, Balakrishnan always insisted upon.

But I accepted the challenge as I wanted to know if I could make my husband proud and also to express my profound appreciation for the contribution that RSSF has made to the community.

Thank you Dato Kandan, for the opportunity you have given me. I would like to thank Professor Sankaran for proposing the idea of writing the RSSF book and for the research work he undertook with his colleague S.N.Rajan.

After some initial thoughts on how to proceed, I felt I needed some professional help. So I invited Mr. Philip Mathews to be our editorial consultant. Over time, I learnt many unforgettable lessons from him on the discipline of writing. I am very grateful to Philip who, despite not being a member of RSSF, voluntarily spent

many long hours on guiding and advising me from the beginning of this project until its completion.

I would also acknowledge the help received from the members of the editorial team- Segaran Mathavan, Navamukundan and Ragumaren for going through the final version with a fine -tooth comb and suggesting important improvements. They were a joy to work with over the last few months Also my appreciation and thanks to Sarojini Ruth who has been assigned to co- ordinate with the printer.

More than that, I would like to express our collective gratitude to our Hon Secretary Segaran who has been managing the affairs of RSSF for twenty over years ! It certainly is not an easy task setting up meetings, writing minutes, carrying out administrative paperwork, dealing with the public, interviewing students, keeping account books, writing reports and doing all the time -consuming but important work to oil the wheels of RSSF while keeping up with his legal and professional commitments.

We applaud him for his sacrifices, perseverance and selfless contribution to the cause of RSSF.

I also owe my special thanks to all our Board Members for their co-operation in contributing to this book. A vote of thanks to Mr Pasupathy of My Skills Foundation and his students for contributing towards the cover design of our RSSF book.

In writing about RSSF projects I was overwhelmed with the impact of the Form Six Project that late Bala and Pathma had come up with. This project, a far sighted vision, opened up vistas of opportunities undreamed of to transform fourteen young men into productive, creative and innovative people who have since passed on the education baton to their children who, in turn, have reached even greater heights. These recipients are living proof of the fact that if there is a will, RSSF is there to show the way.

Editor  
Girijah Balakrishnan  
January 20, 2021

## FOREWORD



Once I was introduced to a tall, lanky man by two very dear friends of mine, R.Balakrishnan and K.Pathmanaban.The man was Dr. Rama Subbiah. The year was 1968.

All three of them had graduated from the University of Malaya with First Class Honours degrees in Indian Studies.

Rama Subbiah came with the idea of setting up a fund to help impoverished Indian students who were admitted to the University of Malaya but who did not have the means to sustain themselves.

A group of 20 like-minded graduates of the University were already contributing RM5 each, every month, on a voluntary basis to help some needy students. Rama Subbiah wanted to formalize their efforts through the creation of a registered fund and asked me to draw up its constitution.

As a budding lawyer then, I felt honoured to be entrusted with such a task which was a noble gesture. At that time, I was already on the Board of Trustees of another benevolent fund, The Tunku

Abdul Rahman Scholarship Fund, set up by the first Prime Minister after whom the Fund was named. That Fund was set up by an Act of Parliament with the objective of helping students who had gained admission into institutions of higher learning but were financially-strapped.

I drafted the constitution for Rama Subbiah based on the template of that Statute. Thus, there came into being the Indian Students Scholarship Fund (ISSF). That Constitution, with minor changes, has continued till today to serve the Fund which was subsequently renamed, Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund. (RSSF) As the saying goes, a little acorn makes the mighty oak. The Fund, started by friends contributing RM5 each (later increased to RM10) has today exceeded our initial expectations. Much of the credit must go to Bala who became the Chairman of the Fund after the untimely demise of Rama Subbiah. Bala had many friends in India through whom he was able to bring to Malaysia leading, talented and well-known artistes of music and dance for public performances that generated revenue for the Fund.

The famed artistes included, the then 13-year-old Alarmel Valli now *Padma Bhushan* whose performances were not only captivating but had also helped to raise substantial funds for our coffers. Others included, leading South Indian Classical Singers and film actors Rajinikanth and Kushboo.

When we had RM750,000 in our kitty, Datuk Tan Hian Tsin,a close friend of the late Tan Sri V.Manickavasagam, the sixth President of the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), contributeRM250,000 to top it up to reach the target of RM1 million!

We are grateful to many people who have contributed in so many ways to the establishment and growth of this Fund, especially the Board members, past and present-and all donors who have pitched in, through cash and kind, for this noble project.

We wish to thank Prof. R. Sankaran, who was the first to moot the idea of this book and also carried out its initial research with his team.

The task was completed by Girijah Balakrishnan and her editorial team. I know how Girijah worked relentlessly for the past few months, researching, and collecting material and photographs, from a variety of sources and a host of people, to meticulously put this book together. Girijah, indeed was equal to the task, given her command of the English language, her passion for writing and her singular dedication to the RSSF cause, ably taking after her late husband, Bala and with the help of their son, Venkatagiri.

In this enormous task, Girijah was all along assisted by a non-Board member Mr. Philip Mathews, a renowned journalist, and Bala's close friend . I am aware that Philip had spent

countless man-hours, at all hours of the day and night, to help complete the book. Let me quote Girijah who described Philip's contribution in a note sent to me:

*I love doing what I am doing. But Philip's talent and skill are unbelievable. His strict ways and demands have pushed me to the limit to make this book look good. Many a time, I had wondered if I had taken on an impossible challenge. He is the man to be praised. I, as you know, am proud of my husband and of his dear friends like Philip Mathews and you.*

Special thanks to His Excellency Shri T. S. Tirumurti, High Commissioner of India to Malaysia from 2013 to 2018 who became an honorary member of RSSF and arranged Padma Bushan Alarmel Valli's third charity concert in 2015 for RSSF, as part of the year-long India-Malaysia Cultural Festival.

We owe them all a debt of gratitude.

**Dato V.L.Kandan**  
Chairman, RSSF  
January 22, 2021

## MESSAGE

T.S. Tirumurti



संयुक्त राष्ट्र स्थित भारत का स्थायी प्रतिनिधि  
न्यूयॉर्क

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK



I would like to extend my heartiest felicitations to the Dato V.L Kandan, Chairman and to all other office bearers of the Board of Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund on the occasion of the publication of the Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund Memorial Book.

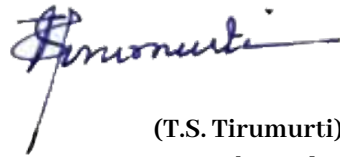
Since its establishment in 1969, the Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund (DRSSF) has carried on with the noble objectives which the Founders had envisaged, i.e., assisting the poor and disadvantaged students to continue with their higher education. Since its beginnings to assist disadvantaged Malaysian Indian students, who were mostly descendants of indentured labour brought to Malaysia by the British to work in plantation estates, Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund has helped more than 3000 such students to realise their academic and professional aspirations and attain high standards of living. This is indeed an admirable achievement. I take this opportunity to commend the passionate, dedicated and the compassionate work of the members of the Board of DRSSF over more than five decades.

The DRSSF Memorial Book is an extraordinary tribute to the Founders and the members of the Board for their selfless contribution to the cause of Malaysian Indian students and to the betterment of the Indian community in general. It also records the background and history of DRSSF, in particular, the inspiring initiative of Dr. Rama Subbiah himself.

As High Commissioner of India to Malaysia between 2013-2018, it was my singular privilege to be associated with the Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund and sponsor the Bharata Natyam performance of Padma Bhushan Alarmel Valli in 2015 in Kuala Lumpur. I thank DRSSF and the participants for making her performance a resounding success.

India-Malaysia relations are civilizational and historic and the Malaysian-Indian community have played a crucial role in bringing our countries even closer together. On this occasion, I would like to wish my Malaysian brothers and sisters good health, prosperity, happiness and success.

I take this opportunity to once again place on record my deep appreciation to Dato V.L. Kandan, Chairman and to all the office bearers of the Board of DRSSF for this initiative.



(T.S. Tirumurti)  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of India  
to the United Nations  
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January 29, 2021

## MESSAGE

FROM THE DAUGHTER OF DR. RAMA SUBBIAH



“ It is terrific to hear about the Funds, to learn a little about how it runs and the number of students it has helped!  
Daddy would have been proud of all you have collectively accomplished. ”

*Dr. Illavenil Subbiah is a Communication and Design Consultant who holds a PhD in Cognitive Psychology and owns Subbiah Design. She resides in Boston.*

## INTRODUCTION

This book traces the Genesis of Indian Students Scholarship Fund (ISSF) set up in 1967 by Dr. Rama Subbiah, to help financially-strapped Indian students desirous of obtaining higher education.

He firmly believed only education could break them out from the squalid circumstances of their forebears, who were recruited from India as indentured labour. ISSF was renamed, Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund (RSSF) after his demise in 1969.

The book serves to put on record the significant role played by Dr. Rama Subbiah, a brilliant academician in creating this platform for the disadvantaged. His foresight, enthusiasm and commitment contributed to the enduring success of RSSF. This book also recounts the life journeys of some of the recipients of the scholarships/loans and records their successes over the last 50-odd years

The RSSF stands today as a beacon of hope for the next generation of students who need encouragement and some financial help to make their dreams come true.

## INDENTURED LABOUR IN BRITISH MALAYA : CHALLENGES AND HOPES

## INDENTURED LABOUR IN MALAYA: CHALLENGES AND HOPES



*Indian labourer taps rubber supervised by a Kangani and a British estate manager*

In the 1800's, British Colonialists in the Malay States began recruiting South Indians principally from today's Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Orissa to clear jungles to provide suitable land to grow rubber trees and other crops, and later to work in them.

The majority of them came from impoverished and challenging circumstances due partly to the caste system which had relegated them to the most menial jobs in their native land. For them, the British offer of better opportunities and regular income gave them hope and they signed up. And the British employers found them to be 'malleable, easily managed, cheap to employ and they were not ambitious or demanding'.

Aided by the Kangani system, the British employed the workers according to their level of education, to make sure the system was well strategized to ensure productivity and continuity. The greater part of the work in Malaya was often menial and hard. In the estates, the British provided the workers with two-roomed houses (known as labour lines), schools, vegetable plots, and temples. Even toddy was made available for their relaxation and social interaction!

But the workers were stymied, partly by the Kangani system which was a form of labour recruitment and organization and partly by the dictates of British commercial interests.

Over the years, the workers' children were destined to follow in their parents' footsteps. They lacked opportunities for higher education or for economic advancement. They stagnated while the nation progressed rapidly.

In some urban areas, there were privately- owned Tamil and Telugu schools that followed their native syllabi. The first urban Tamil schools were in Penang and Perak as the early arrivals of Indian entrepreneurs and supervisors were concentrated in these areas.

By 1816, in addition to these schools, missionaries from the Catholic, Methodist and Anglican Churches set up the first formal Anglo-Tamil schools in Penang, Malacca and Johor. Soon our Government was cognizant of the need to make basic education available for all. Consequently, it passed the Labour Code Ordinance requiring all estates having ten or more children of ages 6 to 12, to offer basic schooling facilities. Over time, the number of students outnumbered the number of available classrooms. The teachers usually were the Kangani, the estate clerk, or just a literate labourer!

The children learnt the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) and elementary science. The medium of instruction was Tamil. Several students did not complete their first six years of schooling as they were pulled out of the classroom to relieve their parents from their daily chores by assisting in tapping, carrying the collected latex to the factory, weeding or collecting rubber seeds, or herding the cows to earn a few extra cents to add to the family income.

By 1930, Tamil schools improved significantly as the British Colonial Office showed serious concern over the poor living conditions of the plantation workers. As a result, trained teachers, financial assistance and better infrastructure were provided for them.

By 1938, there were a total of 511 Tamil primary schools in the estates, receiving government aid, with appointed inspectors and trained teachers.

From 1941 to 1945, all Tamil schools were closed during the Japanese occupation. The estate children were forced to work for the Japanese, along with their parents.

In 1946, the Government started vernacular schools, primarily to act as feeder schools to the established Government schools, where the instruction was mainly in English.

For those who completed the vernacular school education, there was an opportunity to gain entry to what was known as Remove Classes which was a halfway house between the vernacular schools and the government schools. The introduction of vernacular schools breathed hope for children in Tamil primary schools.

But very few Tamil school children attended them. The English language, as a new medium of instruction in Remove classes posed a cultural shock. As Prof. Dr. Thillainathan pointed out:

It was Tamil education or no education for the Indians!

By the early 1970s, the number of Tamil schools in the country reached 1,000.



*Undated picture of National Type Tamil Primary School (Selangor)*

In 1993, enrolment in Tamil schools reached 104,600 children but there were still 15,000 Indian, working class children in the 6 to 11 age group not attending school at all. Today, the number of Tamil Schools has dwindled to 523 throughout the nation.

The departure of British entrepreneurs, a few years after Malayan Independence in 1957, resulted in the sale and fragmentation of some plantations, thus displacing large numbers of Indians with little education, few skills and social mobility to cope and compete with the outside world.

Before long, there grew a generation of so-called 'tragic orphans', because they had to leave the security of their homes in the rubber estates to eke out a living in the unfamiliar urban setting. Being unskilled and ill-prepared, they took on odd jobs, or in some cases, even resorted to crime.

Other youths desirous of higher education had fallen short of merits, due largely to lack of guidance and other basic necessities, to enter university. Consequently, the quota allocated to the Indians in public universities was not filled and later removed.

Moreover, the mind-set of the workers and their circumstances robbed them of their chances to move forward. Some of those who were displaced were ignorant and unable to access the proper authorities to apply for citizenship. They remained stateless, and a

considerable number of them are still without the requisite, blue identity cards. Having no other option many of them returned to India.

Some parents, realizing that education was the key to progress, encouraged their children to further their studies. The few who got admission into institutions of higher learning had to strive with meagre financial resources or none at all.

The National Union of Plantations (NUPW), the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) worked hard to improve the lot of the poorer Indians but there was much left to be desired and done.

In recognition of this dire need for financial aid for students desirous of furthering their studies, ISSF was formed.

In recent times, it is encouraging to note that Tamil School children, in particular from Midlands Estate Tamil school have out-performed their peers National-type schools in a recent UPSR (Primary Six School Exam). Some of them have even participated in and won in science and mathematics competitions at National level. Credit also goes to the principals, teachers and community leaders who have helped and encouraged the children.

The emergent fact from these achievements is that the economic status of the children's homes or the different mediums of instruction are not obstacles for progress. What the children need is the support of the community and school administration with a little help from the government to make them excel.

It is important and meaningful that policies especially in Human Resource Development are implemented so that the Indians too are able to become employable workers in the economy.

## 2

## THE GENESIS OF INDIAN STUDENTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND (ISSF)

In 1966, while Rama Subbiah was pursuing his Ph.D at the University of Malaya, he interacted with the workers of several estates in Perak.

The estate workers expressed the hope that their children would have a better future through education.

On seeing that a few University students of plantation background were in dire need of funds to continue their course, Rama Subbiah launched the Indian Students Scholarship Fund (ISSF) in 1967. Soon ISSF drew the interest and active support of a few who had been in the same plight as the children of estate workers but who had managed to catapult themselves out of the estate environment to carve out a career for themselves. They shared Rama Subbiah's vision and joined him in his mission:

- **R. Balakrishnan,**  
from Rubana Estate who was Head of Indian Service RTM (1961-1988) and later became Founding Director of Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (1976 to 1988) .
- **Datuk K. Pathmanaban,**  
from Bertam Estate, Linggi, who later became Deputy Minister of Health (1976 to 1981), and Deputy Minister of Human Resources (1989 to 1999).
- **Tan Sri Dato' S. Subramaniam,**  
from Lima Belas Estate, Slim River who rose to become Deputy Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs from 1995-2004.
- **A. Navamukundan**  
from Regent Estate, Gemencheh, Negeri Sembilan is now National Executive Secretary, NUPW.

These are just a select few among many others who were and are RSSF Board members but each one of them has a tale of struggle and strife to share with us. However, they have not only proven 'if there is a will there is a way' but also that there are generous people to help when they knock on their doors.

Despite the successes of these and later many other individuals over the years, 40% of the Indian community in Malaysia is still lagging behind in terms of socio-economic development. RSSF continues relentlessly to reach out to aspiring but needy students with the help of the pioneers, scholarship recipients and philanthropists.



Arumbu  
Interview with R Balakrishnan,  
Chairman of Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund: (1998)

## *Arumbu*

**The Community Magazine Malaysia**

May 13 1998

**Tamil Osai Malaysia**

Interview with R Balakrishnan,

Chairman of Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund:

### ***The Genesis of Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund.***

*Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund is an establishment that assists financially strapped Indian students to complete their studies in the University. Among others, Bala has played an important role and was instrumental in forming this Fund. As Chairman, he talks of the genesis of the Fund:*

*When we were students in the University of Malaya, there was an incident when an Indian student was almost expelled as he was unable to pay his fees. At that time, the Head of Department of Indian Studies Dr Rama Subbiah handed his entire pay check to the student to continue his studies. It touched our hearts to hear this news. My friends and I discussed how we could help other students who may suffer the same plight in the future. We decided to make a monthly collection of a certain amount and help those who needed funds to complete their studies.*

*On Dr Rama Subbiah's sudden demise, we named our Fund after him and continue the mission. Many donated generously towards our Fund and in particular, Tamizh Vel K Sarangapani, Penang Arumugam Pillai, Vallal Rena and Johor Nadeson Chettiar were very helpful. Deputy Minister Dato S Subramaniam and Ex Deputy Minister Dato K Pathmanaban strongly support and help to administer our Fund.*

*As an experiment, we selected a few students who had obtained second and third grades in SPM and prepared them to enter the University. Among those who are successful today hold good posts. \*Navamukundan, the National Secretary of the National Union of Plantation Workers and Rawang Advocate and Solicitor Pasupathi are leading examples. It is a misconception that only SPM first graders can enter University. Based on this belief, it is a big mistake to ignore those who are not first graders. That is why we selected the second and third graders to prove that they too could enter University, given the opportunity. And the selected students certainly proved their worthiness.*

***\* Navamukundan supported and contributed towards the Form Six pilot project but was not one of the participants as reported in 'Arumbu.'***



**Dr. Rama Subbiah (1933 -1969)**

*He watch'd and wept and prayed and felt for all*

*Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774)*

(An Irish novelist, playwright, dramatist and poet)

## DR. RAMA SUBBIAH

### A Remarkable Scholar and Friend

Rama Subbiah was born on January 2, 1933 to Ramanathan Chettiar and Meenakshi Ammal in Vegupatti, a small village in Puthukottai district then under the British rule.

Rama Subbiah is of Chettiar lineage that is associated with money lending. Some of these Chettiars or Nagarathars migrated to Malaya during the British Era. Among the Chettiars, some ventured out of the money-lending business onto jobs as accounting clerks and small businessmen. Others opted to become academicians and professionals.

Rama Subbiah's father, Ramanathan Chettiar and his grandfather settled in Kuala Kangsar, the royal town in Perak in a *kittangi* (godown). In the earlier days, Chettiars who were traders had no permanent homes in Malaya and so stayed in the godown with their goods and when business was done they returned to India. This concept of 'bank and bunk' over time was carried forward as the Chettiars became money lenders.

Rama Subbiah, on completing primary school in India, joined his father and grandfather and stayed with them in the kittangi. He cycled to Clifford School, a pioneer, premier school in Kuala Kangsar. In school, he was withdrawn with only a few friends. He was not active in sports field but more academically inclined. He often wrote articles for the school magazines.

In the 1951 school magazine he had written an article signed "*I am a Chettiar*"! In the later years, he was active in the school Debating Society. As a diligent student with a flair for languages, he obtained brilliant results in his Senior Cambridge School Certificate in 1951 when Mr. D. Bennet was the principal.

He then enrolled at the Sultan Idris Teacher Training College in Tanjung Malim. He returned to Clifford school as a qualified teacher and worked there for the next five years. He also attended FEC (Further Education Classes) part-time and obtained his Senior Cambridge Higher School Certificate. In 1958, he obtained outstanding results which gained him admission to enter the Faculty of Arts, University of Malaya, then located in Singapore.

On January 15, 1959 when the University split into two autonomous universities, as the National University of Singapore and the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. As a result, Rama Subbiah, Bala and Pathma who were enrolled in the Singapore University pursued and completed their degrees in the University of Malaya. They were not only close friends but also shared their passion for the Tamil language.

Rama Subbiah was very active in the Students' Union. He was also President of the Tamil Cultural Society which he used as a forum, dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the Tamil language.

He was tutored in Tamil by Professor Muthu Rasakannu and in English by Mr. Maurice Baker who in 1967 became Singapore's High Commissioner to Malaysia.

He frequently wrote poems for English publications. His exploration, and deep understanding of the nuances of both the English and Tamil languages, provided him with the scope to effortlessly translate from Tamil to English and vice versa. Besides he was fluent in Malay too. In fact he was tri-lingual

In 1967, Rama Subbiah published many of his works in a journal called *Tamil Oli*, of which he was the founder and editor.

Rama Subbiah obtained his first-class Honours Degree in Bachelor of Arts. On graduation he was immediately recruited by the University as lecturer and tutor in the Department of Indian Studies while pursuing his Master's Degree. In 1968, he became the first Malaysian to be appointed Head of the Department of Indian Studies, taking over from Prof Dr. Xavier Thaninayagam, an expatriate from Sri Lanka. Rama Subbiah then 35 travelled throughout Malaysia encouraging eligible students to enrol in the University to study the Tamil language.

To pursue his deep interest in history and languages, he sought and received sponsorship from the Asia Foundation, the Lee Foundation, the Inter-University Council for Higher Education, and the University of London Research Council, for research and further studies

He then enrolled for his PhD. For his thesis, he conducted research in the rubber estates in Lower Perak. He spent time in Teluk Anson, staying in the home of R. Balakrishnan in Rubana Estate.



1960 Rama Subbiah BA Hons.

He made a detailed study of the Tamil dialects of the workers in various parts of Perak. For his dissertation on '*Lexical Study of Tamil Dialects in Lower Perak*,' he was awarded his PhD in 1967.



Two of Dr. Rama Subbiah's publications

*Rama Subbiah married Saroja in 1959.*

*Saroja, Rama Subbiah and daughter Illavenil in Rubana Estate in 1967*



*R. Balakrishnan and Dr Rama Subbiah (third and fourth from right) with others listening to an address by expatriate Prof Muthu Rasakannu, at the PPN Hostel.*

Rama Subbiah was also Residence Fellow ( RF) at First College ( Asrama Zaaba) at the University of Malaya and later served as a warden at the PPN Hostel in 1967.

In 1967, during his tenure in the PPN Hostel, at informal functions, Rama Subbiah would choose to be among young students and share his views and knowledge with them. He also chose to be with people like gardeners and other workers to learn of their challenges and grievances with a view to finding solutions.

It was during this time, Rama Subbiah encountered a student who was in dire need of financial aid to continue his course in the University. He not only gave him his whole pay packet to pay his fees but also arranged for his accommodation, meals and transport. The name of this student was not revealed but the severity of the student's need was clearly felt in the way Rama Subbiah responded.

He took an active interest in the welfare of such students and often counselled them. Further, to ensure future students did not suffer the same plight, he set up a small fund with the help of his close friends

*PPN Hostel where Rama Subbiah was a Warden*



That was the genesis of ISSF!

He also persuaded other like-minded graduates to donate their caution money to the Fund. The caution money was a compulsory payment of RM50 by every student on admission to the University of Malaya. It was an insurance coverage for possible damage they may have caused to university property during their sojourn on campus. The student received a refund of the caution money only when cleared of any offences on his graduation.

It was Govindan, on behalf of Rama Subbiah who convinced the university authorities to divert the caution money of willing students to fund ISSF.

Rama Subbiah's noble idea was met with enthusiasm by some graduates who donated their caution money to the Fund. Some lecturers and well-wishers were encouraging and willingly made contributions, when approached.

Among the first few graduates of University of Malaya to pledge their caution money to ISSF were:

- |                         |                       |                     |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Dr N.Chandrasekharan | 6. S. Subramaniam,    | 10. R.Vengadesan    |
| 2. Jamal Mohd,          | 7. T. E.Raghavan Nair | 11. R.Thillainathan |
| 3. R. Balakrishnan      | 8. V.N.Ramachandran   | 12. N. Govindan     |
| 4. K. Pathmanaban       | 9. R.Karthigesu       | 13. A. Navamukundan |
| 5. S. S. Singaravelu    |                       |                     |

The inaugural meeting of ISSF was held at the PPN Hostel on July 26, 1967. There were 57 attendees who had pledged their caution money to the Fund.

Members of the Board were elected. The Board organized activities to boost its coffers, finalize registration procedures, and establish contact points at other public universities with a view to increasing the intake of Malaysian Indian students into Higher Education Institutions.

The Board members of ISSF also agreed to make a monthly donation of Rm 5/- each to the Fund, the total sum of which was then enough to meet one student's annual fees at the University of Malaya Later the donation was raised to RM 10 each month.

It was a revolving fund. When a student took a loan from ISSF, he would, after completing his course and securing employment, pay back the loan to ISSF to help another student to get similar assistance.

At the request of Rama Subbiah to formalise ISSF, lawyer Dato V.L. Kandan drafted the constitution in October 1968. Six months later, the draft constitution was formally registered with the Registrar of Societies.

Among his other achievements was his input for Dato Prof Asmah Haji Omar's *'An Introduction to Malay Grammar'* published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in 1968. He had also completed several translations from Malay to Tamil, and one of them was *'Sejarah Melayu'* in a project funded by All Malaya-Nattukottai Chettiars.

In a review of his work, in the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Thomas W. Gething wrote:

*It is a pleasure to read a thoroughly researched and carefully written monograph by Rama Subbiah. 'A Lexical Study of Tamil Dialects in Lower Perak' is certainly exemplary of the type of scholarly writing.*

He also received accolades from Lutfi Abas an Indonesian linguist who became a permanent lecturer at the Department of Malay Studies, University of Malaya. He was also Associate Professor at the University of Brunei Darussalam. He has written numerous books on Malay language and literature and is admired for his intensive and extensive work in Malay linguistics and literature.



Lufti Abas

in 1969 **Lufti Abas** wrote :

Rama Subbiah was a prolific writer and the 17 literary scholastic contributions he made in just three years (1966 to 1969) hold a remarkable record. It is a tremendous effort and an academic challenge to have even one book published in such a short time! In his short but illustrious career, he had demonstrated what brilliance, hard work and dedication could achieve.



Prof. Dr. Kamil Vaclav Zvelibil

It is highly commendable that world renowned scholars like Prof. Dr. Kamil Vaclav Zvelibil also acknowledged Rama Subbiah as :

*..the most important single contribution to Tamil dialectology since French linguist Jules Bloch's path breaking paper in 1910 and describes it as **lexical wealth containing many gems of items not recorded anywhere else.***

Prof Kamil Zvelebil was a Czech scholar in Indian literature and linguistics notably Tamil, Sanskrit, Dravidian linguistics, literature and philology. He has authored numerous books and articles on Dravidian linguistics and literature. He is the only known writer who translated *Tirukurral* in Czech. Two of his writings; The stories *King Matanakama* and *Peacock Ravana* are UNESCO Collection of Representative Works: Indian Series.

Rama Subbiah was instrumental in organizing a programme, the first of its kind, to enable students of non-Tamil origin to master the written language in three months. Then he wrote the book, *An introduction to Written Tamil,* which is an outstanding and unique piece of work. As a lecturer, Rama Subbiah was often lauded for his ability to attract non-Tamil speaking students to study Tamil. One of his students, Santokh Singh, who later became an RTM broadcaster and a fluent Tamil speaker, fondly remembers Rama Subbiah's humility and caring attitude towards his students.

## TRANSLATIONS

Rama Subbiah was particularly keen that the treasures of Tamil literature should be made known to the non Indians in particular, those in the Western world. His translations included selected Tamil literary writings into English and some from Malay to Tamil.

Among these we

- *'Kuil Paattu'* by Mahakavi Barathi, an Indian writer, poet, journalist and an activist, was translated into English as *'The Nightingale's Songs'*.
- *'Chandana Kinnam'* by I Ulaganathan translated into English as *A Chalice of Sandalwood Paste.*
- Excerpts from *Kurunthogai*, an anthology of poems composed by 205 ancient poets of (1st to 2nd Centuries BC) as *'Words of Love'* in English.
  - *Tamil Religious poems* published in English in university publications in Malaysia and Singapore.
  - *'Vithu'* (Seed)1960's from Intisari Malay Social Studies Magazine was translated from Malay to Tamil.

The *Seed* was from the most prestigious publication in the field of Asian Studies, offering a wealth of information to Asianists and as an exchange of information among scholars to better understand East, South and South East Asia.

- *'Malakka Mannarkal Varalaru'* *The Tales of the Malacca Sultanate(1344-1414)* translated to Tamil from the Malay Annals.
- *'Pathupaatu'* or Ten Lays' from an anthology of longer poems in *Sangam Literature* translated from Tamil into English.

Sangam Literature (100BCE-250BCE) was one of the main sources used for documenting the early history of the ancient Tamil country. Much of what is documented has been confirmed with archaeological evidence. It remains the source for the early Chola, Pandya and the Chera dynasties. *Puranaanuru* or *'Life of the Poets'* translated into English.

- *Purananuru* is an anthology of 400 poems depicting heroic deeds, political and social history of ancient Tamil Nadu of Chera, Chola and Pandya dynasties in India dated 1st-5th century BCE.

As Head of Department of Indian Studies at University of Malaya, Rama Subbiah organized debates, talks and forums to promote Tamil language and Indian culture. Some of the activities were continued Indian students even after his demise. One such activity was a debate. (Refer to pages 24 & 25)

At a Board Meeting, on Sept 5 1969, Rama Subbiah tendered his resignation as Chairman as he felt he had failed to bring in more funds as promised. This reaction from Rama Subbiah indicates his level of commitment and responsibility.

However, the Board persuaded him to stay on, convincing him that it was a collective responsibility of the Board and not of the Chairman alone.

On October 2, 1969, Rama Subbiah chaired his last ISSF meeting at R. Balakrishnan's residence. He died six weeks later, at the age of 36.

Rama Subbiah tragically succumbed to a motor accident on Nov 16 1969. It was an irreparable loss.

Later, a naming ceremony was held at the PPN Hostel and the Reading Room was named '*Bilik Bachaan Dr Rama Subbiah*'. The event was attended by Mr S. Singaravelu, then the Acting Head of Department of Indian Studies, University of Malaya; Dr. P. P. Narayanan, General Secretary of National Union of Plantation Workers and **Justice Tun M. Suffian**, later President of the Federal Court.

In his speech **Dr. P.P. Narayanan** said:

*He was a dreamer who was not just satisfied with his dreams alone. He wanted fulfillment..... in which the ordinary man could share his compassion and derive the benefits of his efforts.*

**Emeritus Prof Dr.S. Singaravelu**, who succeeded Rama Subbiah as Head of Department of Indian Studies of the University of Malaya said,

*Dr Rama has to be given due recognition not only as a scholar and teacher but also as a man for his professional achievements closely interwoven with his life and influence.*

His close friend **Balakrishnan of Radio Malaysia** said:

*From University days Rama Subbiah had not only been proficient in languages but had creative skills in language and literature and in particular in translations. He was also an artist. His warm nature embraced one and all.*

Tun Suffian unveiled a large portrait of Dr. Rama Subbiah at this event in the Reading Room, in PPN Hostel.

Rama Subbiah was truly a man of wisdom who took an unusual path to reach out to those who needed help.

## DR. RAMA SUBBIAH DEBATE



### REPRODUCED TEXT FROM POSTER

The organizing chairman was Prof Dr. P. Agamuthu. The participants were representatives from the Non-Hostelite Organisation (NHO), the PPN Hostel, and the 5th Residential College of the University of Malaya.

The debate topics:

1. *The Malaysian Indian leadership has not benefited the Malaysian Indian Community.*
2. *The English-educated Malaysian Indian Youth have failed to meet the expectation of the Indian Community.*
3. *The Tamil Dailies of Malaysia have failed to promote the cultural, economic and political aspects of the Indian Community in Malaysia.*

The winning team was from the PPN Hostel represented by S. Gopalan, R. Masilamani, and S. Raman.

## Dr. Rama Subbiah Sebagai Ahli Bahasa

Dr. Rama Subbiah, Pemangku Ketua Jabatan Pengajian India Universiti Melayu, meninggal dunia dalam suatu kemalangan jalan raya pada 26hb. November, 1969.

Dilahirkan pada 2hb. Januari, 1933, di Kuala Kangsar, Perak, beliau adalah orang Malaysia yang pertama yang mendapat ijazah Doktor Falsafah dalam Linguistik dalam tahun 1965.

Dalam ceramah yang diberikannya pada Konferensi Pemodenan Bahasa-bahasa di Asia dalam tahun 1967, beliau menyatakan pendapatnya sebagai seorang ahli bahasa:

"Bahasa adalah dasar bagi segala tindakan sosial, dan apabila komunikasi gagal, iaitu apabila seseorang pembicara gagal untuk mengerti orang lain disebabkan oleh kesulitan-kesulitan bahasa, kecurigaan, kecemburuan dan kebencian mulai timbul. Makin lama masa yang kita ambil untuk menghapuskan halangan ini, makin kuat kecurigaan, kecemburuan dan kebencian itu akan menjadi. Oleh kerana itu, masalah yang pertama bagi negara manapun, yang berbilang bahasa dan yang telah mendapatkan kemerdekaannya, yang harus dihadapinya adalah pengenalan bahasa kebangsaan yang efektif."

Pernyataan beliau ini dibuktikan dengan diterbitkannya, bersama dengan saudara Asmah Haji Omar, buku *An Introduction to Malay Grammar* (Pengantar kepada Nahu bahasa Melayu) pada tahun 1968. Beliau juga telah menerbitkan *Malakka Mannarkal Varalaaru* (terjemahan Sejarah Melayu dalam bahasa Tamil) dalam tahun 1968. Bagi kegunaan orang-orang bukan Tamil untuk belajar bahasa Tamil, beliau

telah menerbitkan *An Introduction to Written Tamil* (Pengantar kepada bahasa Tamil tulisan) pada tahun 1966. Beliau juga telah menulis banyak kata Melayu yang masuk ke dalam perbendaharaan kata-kata bahasa Tamil yang diperuturkan oleh orang-orang yang berketurunan Tamil di negara ini dalam buku beliau *A Lexical Study of Tamil Dialects in Lower Perak* (Suatu Kajian Leksikal Loghat-loghat Tamil di Perak Hilir) pada tahun 1966 dan dalam rencana *Malay Words in Tamil Speakers* (Kata-kata Melayu pada Penutur-penutur Tamil) yang termuat dalam *Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Volume 2* (1969).

Sampai kepada akhir hidupnya, sebagai ahli bahasa, Dr. Rama Subbiah telah bekerja keras untuk melaksanakan misi sucinya, 'mengha-



puskan halangan' diantara berbagai kaum di negara ini dengan 'pengenalan bahasa kebangsaan yang efektif'.

—Lufti Abas.

### KARYA DR. RAMA SUBBIAH

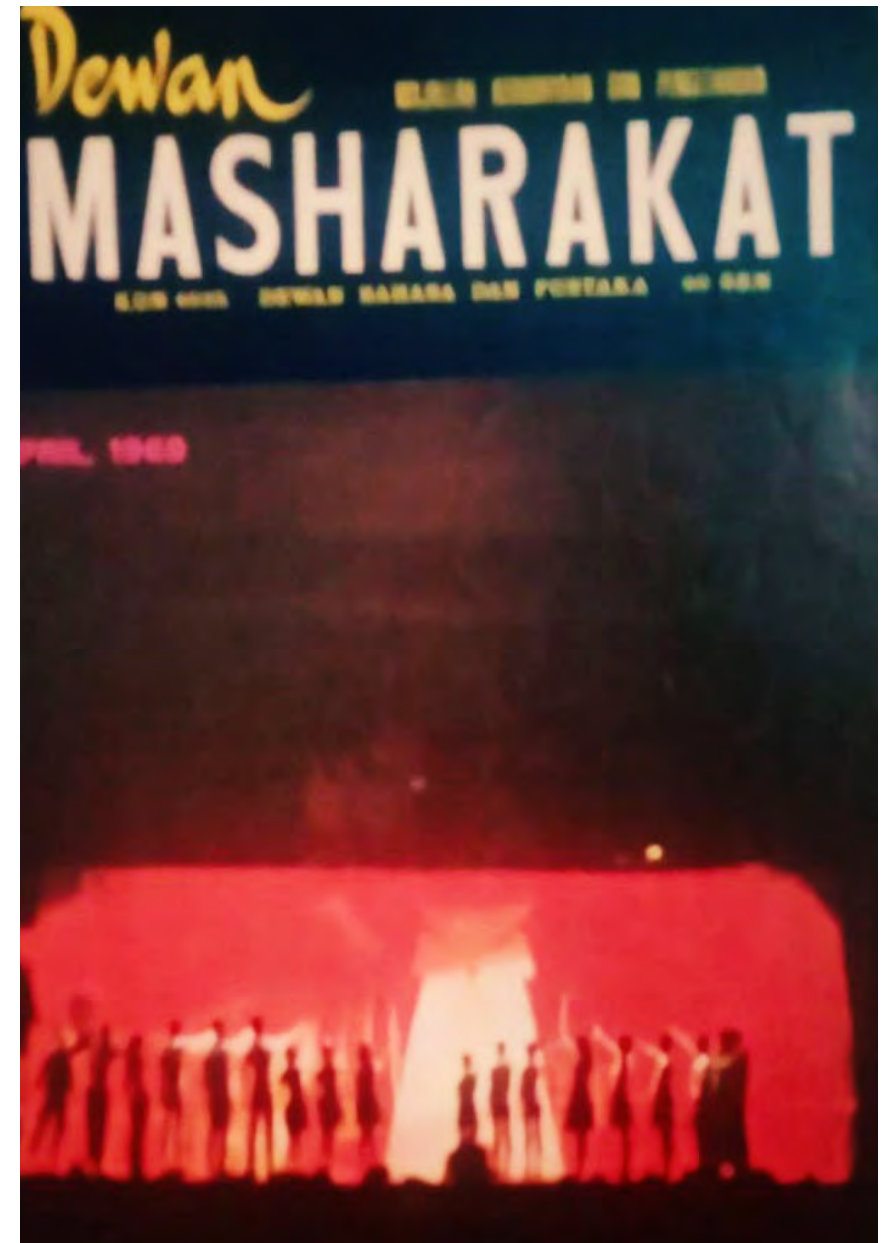
- *A Lexical Study of Tamil Dialects in Lower Perak*, Kuala Lumpur, 1966.
- *An Introduction to Written Tamil*, Kuala Lumpur, 1966.
- *An Introduction to Written Tamil, Supplement*, Kuala Lumpur, 1966.
- *Tamil Religious Poetry*, (terjemahan), Kuala Lumpur 1966.
- "Beschi's Paramartak Kuruvu Katali", *Tamil Oli*, Vol. 5 (1966 m. 105-107).
- "The Song of the Kuyil Paattu", *Tamil Oli*, Vol. 6 (1967), m. 158-184.
- "Teaching of Linguistics in the University of Malaya", (ceramah), *Conference on the Modernization of Languages in Asia, 1967*.
- "Modernization and the Failure of Modern Linguistics", (ceramah), *Conference on the Modernization of Languages in Asia, 1967*.
- *Malakka Mannarkal Varalaaru* (terjemahan Sejarah Melayu dalam bahasa Tamil), Kuala Lumpur, 1968.
- "Translation from Kuruntokai", *Poetry Singapore*, No. 2 (December 1968), m. 18-19.
- "Tolkappiyam and Phonetics", *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1968), m. 251-260.
- (dengan Asmah Haji Omar), *An Introduction to Malay Grammar*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968.
- "Selections from Kuruntokai; love poems from Classical Tamil Literature", *Tenggara*, No. 1 (1967), m. 52-59; No. 3 (1969).
- "Translation of Tamil, a new system", "Malay Words in Tamil Speakers", "Some sentence patterns and sentence structure in Beschi's paramartak kuruvukatali", *Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies*, Vol. 2 (1969).
- *Tamil Malaysians; a check list of Tamil books and periodicals published in Malaysia and Singapore*, Kuala Lumpur, 1969.
- *Words of Love*, *Poetry Singapore*, Singapore, 1969.
- "Teaching of Nominals Suffixes in Tamil", (ceramah, dibacakan di India), 1969.

Reproduced from *Dewan Masyarakat* December 1969

DISEMBER, 1969 DEWAN MASYARAKAT

17

## DEWAN MASHARAKAT 1969



*Dewan Masharakat, 1969 issue that published an article on Rama Subbiah by Lufti Abas*

An English translation of an article in Malay by reknowned Indonesian writer and editor Lufti Abas, on Dr Rama Subbiah, published in the magazine Dewan Masyarakat in December 1969.

### *DR RAMA SUBBIAH THE LINGUIST*

Dr. Rama Subbiah, Acting Head of Department of Indian Studies University Malaya, passed away in a road accident on 26th November 1969.

Born on 2nd January 1933 in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, he was the first Malaysian to be conferred with Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics in 1965.

In his speech given at the *Conference of Modernization of languages in Asia in 1967*, he expressed his view as a linguist as follows:

*Language is the basis for all social interactions, and when communication fails, i.e. when a speaker fails to understand others because of language difficulties, suspicion, jealousy and hatred begin to arise. The longer it takes to remove these obstacles, the stronger they grow.*

Therefore, the first task for any country, which is multilingual and has newly gained its independence, must be prepared to face the impact of the introduction of an elective national language.

His proposal was also realized with the publication together with his colleague Asmah Haji Omar in the book, in *An introduction to Malay Grammar in 1968*.

He has also published *Malakka Mannarkal Varalaaru (Malay History translated into Tamil)* in 1968. For non-Tamilans who wished to write the Tamil language, he published, *An Introduction to Written Tamil in 1966*. He has also written on the Tamil language spoken by people of Tamil descent in this country in his book, *A Lexical Study of Tamil dialects in Lower Perak* in 1966. Malay words adopted in the Tamil language spoken by Tamil speakers were included in the *Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Volume 2 (1969)*.

Until the end of his life, as a linguist, Dr Rama Subbiah has worked hard on his noble mission of 'eliminating barriers between the various races in this country on the introduction of an elective national language.

### *KARYA DR. RAMA SUBBIAH*

#### *Books and periodicals published by Dr. Rama Subbiah as listed in Dewan Masyarakat Dec. 1969*

- A Lexical Study of Tamil Dialects in Lower Perak, Kuala Lumpur 1966
- An introduction to Written Tamil, Kuala Lumpur, 1966.
- An Introduction to Written Tamil, Supplement, Kuala Lumpur 1966.
- Tamil Religious Poetry, (terjemahan), Kuala Lumpur 1966
- "Beschi's Paramarta Kuruvai Katai" Tamil Oli, Vol 5 (1966), pp. 105-107.
- "The Song of the Kuil Paattu" Tamil Oli Vol 6 (1967), pp. 158-184.
- "Teaching of Linguistics in the University of Malaya" (ceramah), Conference on the modernization of languages in Asia, 1967.
- "Modernization and the Failure of Modern Linguistics" (ceramah) Conference on the Modernization of Languages in Asia, 1967.
- Malakka Mannarkal Varalaru (terjemahan Sejarah Melayu Dalam Bahasa Tamil), Kuala Lumpur, 1968
- Translation from Kuruntokai", Poetry Singapore, No. 2 (December, 1968) pp 18-19.
- "Tolkappiam and Phonetics; Indo Iranian Journal, Vol 10, No 4 (1968) pp 251-260.
- (Dengan Asmah Haji Omar) An introduction to Malay Grammar, Kuala Lumpur, 1968.
- "Selections from Kuruntokai; love poems from Classical Tamil Literature", Tenggara, No 1 (1967), pp 52-59; No.3 (1969).
- "Translations from Tamil, a new system".
- "Malay words in Tamil speakers." Some sentence patterns and sentence structure in Beschi's Paramarta Kuruvai Katai."
- Dalam Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Vol 2 (1969)
- Tamil Malaysia, a check list of Tamil Books and periodicals published in Malaysia and Singapore, Kuala Lumpur 1969
- Words of love, Poetry Singapore, Singapore 1969.
- Teaching of Nominals, Suffixes in Tamil, (ceramah di-bacakan di India), 1969.

Committee members elected at the inaugural meeting of the Indian Students Scholarship Fund held on 26 July 1967 at the PPN Students Hostel, Petaling Jaya

Dr. Rama Subbiah	Chairman
Mr. E. Raghavan	Secretary
Mr. V.N.Ramachandran	Treasurer

SELECTION COMMITTEE

1. Dr Rama Subbiah	Department (EPU) of Indian Studies University of Malaya
2. Mr. K. Pathmanaban	(later Datuk) Prime Minister's Department Kuala Lumpur
3. Dr. N. Chandrasekharan	Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya
4. Mr Jagjit Singh	History Department University of Malaya
5. Mr. R. Balakrishnan	Radio Malaysia
6. Mr V. L. Kandan (now Dato)	Advocate & Solicitor, Shearn Delamore & Co

FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

1. Miss Loganayagy	9. Mr K Narayanasamy
2. Miss Maheswari	10. Mr. E .Raghavan Nair
3. Dr N Chandrasekaran	11. Mr. A. Subramaniam
4. Mr. A. C. Appa Rao	12. Mr. P. Subraman
5. Mr. V. A. Krishnan	13. Mr . Thandayuthapani
6. Mr. Jamal Mohammed	14. Mr N. Govindan
7. Mr. D. Ramasamy	15. Mr S. Subramaniam
8. Mr A Navamukundan	16. Mr V. N. R amachandran

Other Members who attended the inaugural meeting.

LIST OF 57 MEMBERS

1. Mr. S.Kandasamy	30. Mr. A. Subramaniam
2. Mr. K. Narayanasamy	31. Mr. M. Karupiah
3. Mr. N. Govindan	32. Dr. N. Raja Naidu
4. Mr. R. Kanniappan	33. Mr. Nitchsingam
5. Mr. M. Appa Rao	34. Mr. S. Subramaniam
6. Mr. Thillaisundram	35. Mr. V.N Ramachandran
7. Mr. N. Navamukundan	36. Ir. E. Raghavan Nair
8. Mr. R. Santhiram	37. Dr. Rama Subbiah
9. Mr. P. Subramaniam	38. Dr. R. Karthigesu
10. Mr. T. Subramaniam	39. Mr. S V. Muthu
11. Mr. P. Sellappan	40. Mr. G. Santhiran
12. Mr. D. Ramasamy	41. Mr. Thillainathan
13. Mr. Arangulavan	42. Mr. R. Vengadesan
14. Mr. R. Nadanarajah	43. Mr. R. Balakrishnan
15. Mr. P. Samynathan	44. Mr. K. Pathmanaban
16. Mr. S. Raman	45. Mr. Karnial Singh Nijhar
17. Mr. G. Thangavelu	46. Dr. N. Chandrasekaran
18. Mr. P. Ganapathy Pelly	47. Mr. Robert Selvaratnam
19. Mr. V. Nagendran	48. Mr. C. Appa Rao
20. Mr. Francis Jesu	49. Mr. Jeyaraj
21. Mr. M. Singaraveloo	50. Mr. Ganesmoorthy
22. Mr. Kanniah Arumugam	51. Mr. A. Raju
23. Mr. C. Johownathan	52. Mr. Harcharan Singh
24. Mr. Sundram lyappan	53. Mr. R. Shunmugam
25. Mr. A. Ralek Ramzah	54. Mr. Markandan
26. Mr. B. Padmanaban	55. Mr. Nesarajah
27. Mr. Jeyakumar S. Joseph	56. Mr. C. Krishnan
28. Mr. R. Appala Naidu	57. Mr. Harveer Singh
29. Mr. C. Nagendran	

THE PAST BOARD MEMBERS

A TRIBUTE TO PAST BOARD  
MEMBERS



*The highest tribute to the dead is not grief  
but gratitude*

*Thornton Wilde  
(An American writer and journalist)*

R. BALAKRISHNAN  
*The Architect of Institutions*



The first RSSF Chairman Balakrishnan Ramanujam, fondly known as Bala, was born to Krishnammal and Ramanujam on Dec 26, 1936 in Rubana Estate, near Teluk Intan, Perak. He was the second of seven children.

Bala spent his childhood in a rubber and coconut plantation where his father was a conductor. His early education was at a Tamil School within the estate. Only the middle class, urban families attended English medium schools in those days but his uncle, (father's younger brother) Venugopal, who believed in equal education for all, enrolled Bala in the English medium *Anglo -Chinese School* in Seremban, where he was the railway station master. Later when his uncle was transferred to another town, Bala returned to the estate. He had to be up by five at dawn and get 15 minute ride to the jetty on a motor-cycle, cross the river by boat and then travel several miles to school in Teluk Anson on bicycle. He had to move to Ipoh to complete his Form Six in *Anglo-Chinese school*. In 1957, Bala gained admission to University of Malaya and graduated with First Class Hons in Indian Studies in 1960.

In school, Bala was a very keen sportsman with particular interest in football and represented his school at the state level. As a goalkeeper, Bala was nicknamed *Goalie Bala* after he scored a goal for his team in a host university in Hong Kong with one formidable kick of the ball from his goal post!

Even as a student, Bala was known for his generosity and nicknamed *Rockefeller and Rubana Zamindar*.

In 1961, Bala joined Radio Malaya as a broadcaster and soon became Head of the Indian Section located on the sixth floor of Federal House. He also worked as a part-time tutor for Indian Studies Dept at the University of Malaya. Radio and Television merged under the formation of Malaysia on September 16, 1963 and was known as Radio Television *Malaysia* (RTM). Both Radio and TV stations moved to Angkasapuri Complex in Kuala Lumpur in October 1969.

During his service in Radio, Indian section, Bala broadened the spectrum of broadcasting to news, drama, cultural and entertainment events and ensured all content strictly adhered to using pristine Tamil with no inclusion of Sanskrit or local words. He was resolute as ever in making sure every minute of air time was productive and useful to the listeners of all walks of life. His ears were constantly tuned to broadcasting and never failed to catch any slips.

The range of programmes expanded to cater to all strata of Indians in Malaysia, providing broad scope for exploring literary, linguistic and cultural aspects, local and global news,

legal matters, sports and music, agriculture and small business sectors. Bala believed in the right 'to inform and be informed' and he equipped the Indian Section with the necessary resources to upgrade its services for the benefit of the Indian community, particularly those workers in plantations and rural areas.

It was not surprising that varied talents and skills were employed and Indian channel not only attracted but educated the community. In the annals of Indian Section, Bala, popularly known as '*Radio Bala*', made history as his tenure was called the *Golden Era*.

On May 14, 1960, Tun Dr.V.T. Sambanthan established the National Land Finance Co-operative Society (*NLFCS*) to provide an opportunity for landownership among estate workers. When Bala was Head of Indian Service he complemented this call nationwide by broadcasting a special programme called, *Oru chol kaeleer* translated as - *Lend me your ears*. NLFCS, later grew to be one of the biggest co-operative societies in Malaysia.

In 1967, the idea of a National Broadcasting Training Centre was mooted, and Bala was entrusted with the task of having it established. It was named *Institut Penyiaran Tun Abdul Razak (IPTAR)* and Bala became its first Director in 1974.

As IPTAR was taking shape, UNESCO and the Malaysian Government collaborated in the building of Asian Regional Institute of Broadcasting Training. With Bala's immense experience in developing IPTAR, he was designated to work with UNESCO experts on the project. As a result, the *Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)* was born in 1976 and Bala was its Founding Director and held the post as Director of AIBD till 1988.

Under Bala's leadership, AIBD became a bustling hub of activities, training broadcasters in the region and sponsoring numerous conferences and seminars in the broader field of mass communication with particular emphasis on human and social development. With his vast experience, he became a consultant and advisor to many Malaysian and regional institutions in broadcasting and mass communication. Bala clearly showed that he was proud of his Asian heritage, demonstrating to Westerners the important role that regional languages played in the field of communication.

In 1987, Bala was conferred a Fellowship by the Ryerson Institute of Canada for his great contribution to the broadcasting space.

Outside his broadcasting responsibilities, he worked hard to help promote the social interests, Tamil language and culture of the Malaysian Indians. Bala was instrumental in encouraging Pathma and Subra to enter politics under the guidance and advice of Tan Sri Manickavasagam. Though Bala supported both of them, he was not actively involved in politics as he was very busy travelling on broadcasting development duties.

Bala hardly had a meal without sharing it with his friends, whether at home or outside, often inviting consultants or trainees of various cultures attending programmes at AIBD. They underwent the rituals of eating Indian cuisine sitting on the floor cross-legged and using their fingers to savour rice and curry from banana leaves! To Bala, food was closely linked with friendship and friendship once made was lifelong. Till today his friends still speak of the 'taste' of his friendship and fondly of being at the receiving end of his sarcastic quips!

When Rama Subbiah launched ISSF in 1967, Bala along with Pathma and Subra joined him in his mission.

On Rama Subbiah's demise in 1969, Bala was unanimously elected as Chairman of ISSF Board which was then renamed *Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund (RSSF)*.

The same year, Bala introduced cultural and classical performances as part of RSSF's fund-raising efforts.

In 1976, Bala and Pathma set up a unique pilot project providing a full scholarship programme for 14 disadvantaged, rural students who wished to pursue pre-university studies.

In 2009, Bala, with Subra's assistance, initiated a Study and Training Programme via *Makkal Osai*, a Tamil Daily, for Tamil school children.

Upon retirement, Bala had more time to devote to social affairs. Bala's fiery passion for Tamil journalism never diminished even as his health declined. As Chairman of the Tamil Daily *Makkal Osai* he persistently drove to the office to advise and support the daily in its quest for social justice for Indians in Malaysia.

Bala married Girijah in 1965 and has four children-Anuratha, Lakshmi, Venkatagiri and Srithar.

On May 25, 2009, Bala passed on after a short illness. His departure was an irreplaceable loss to RSSF.



Datuk Pathmanaban Kunjambu was born in 1937 in Bukit Bertam Estate in Negeri Sembilan where his father was a rubber tapper and his mother a housewife. In school, he showed much promise and was sent to Tranquera Primary School and stayed in a dormitory, run by M. C. Verghese, in Malacca. Pathma, as he was fondly known, later attended the Malacca High School (MHS) some distance away from the same dormitory.

In the late-1950s, he enrolled at the University of Malaya in Singapore on scholarship. There, he met Bala. Both, with similar family backgrounds, became lifelong friends.

They graduated in 1960 from University's Kuala Lumpur campus. Pathma graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Degree majoring in Indian Studies.

Pathma successfully applied to the Public Services Commission for a position and was posted to the Ministry of Labour and Manpower. But his appointment was on a temporary basis because of doubts about his ability to perform his duties in a multi-lingual society, given his proficiency seemingly only in 'Indian Studies'. Undeterred, Pathma excelled at work, and was promoted. He was then in his early 30's. Later, on a Colombo Plan Scholarship, he went to Canada and returned with a Diploma in Business Administration in 1965.

When Rama Subbiah established ISSF, Pathma became a co-founder and the first Vice-Chairman. After Rama Subbiah's demise, the Board unanimously decided to appoint Bala as Chairman whilst Pathma remained as its Vice-Chairman till 2001.

In 1968, Pathma was appointed as the Director of the Socio-Economic Planning Unit, a position he held till 1974. He then took a brief sabbatical to further his studies at Harvard University. He obtained a Master's Degree in Public Administration and Economic Development. It was a remarkable achievement of A++ and a long way from his childhood days of playing truant to avoid maths classes.

Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam, then Minister of Labour, with the intention of bringing in more intellectuals into the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), inducted Pathma into politics. One of Pathma's earliest achievements was organizing the first MIC Conference on the Economic and Social Development of the Indians in Malaysia in 1973, which culminated in the publication of the Blue Book a collaborative effort by top Indian business leaders, in politics and education, as a blueprint for the upliftment of the Malaysian Indian community.

In 1974, Pathma stood as a candidate for Teluk Kemang and won the parliamentary seat which he held till 1990. Pathma was later appointed as Deputy Minister of Labour and Manpower for five years (1976 to 1981) and then as the Deputy Health Minister for seven years from 1981. He last served as Deputy Minister for Human Resources from 1989 to 1990.

After his retirement from politics in October 1990, he continued his efforts to help disadvantaged Indians. He was instrumental in establishing the Melaka Manipal Medical College, with the aim of providing opportunities for Malaysians to pursue high-quality medical education at an affordable price. This again, opened an avenue for Indian students who aspired to become doctors. Today, a scholarship programme in his name is administered by the College.

Pathma's true comfort came from his close-knit family. He married Prema in 1963. Prema managed the home-front, enabling Pathma to focus on his work. Prema herself was also active in community projects through Bakti, a charity organization comprising the wives of Malaysian Government Ministers. Their three sons completed their studies overseas. The oldest son resides in the United Kingdom with his family, while his two siblings live in Malaysia, with their families.

Pathma was generous to a fault, dedicating much of his life and resources to the service of others. It was known that his home had an open-door policy for people from as far as his constituency in Port Dickson to seek his counsel and assistance. They rarely left disappointed, and most times were served with home cooked meals and given money to return home. This unannounced and unscheduled flow of visitors consumed a lot of Pathma's time, often disrupting his schedule and causing him to be late for his other official or social functions or missing them altogether!

Pathma faced many challenges in his life - from financial difficulties his family faced in sending him to the University, to hurdles to his appointment as a civil servant. Even as a minister, he encountered countless problems in implementing his ideas to improve the lives of plantation workers.

In all of this, Pathma never gave up. He persisted and persevered, viewing these challenges as opportunities to improve. He empowered himself with knowledge, learnt from failures and soldiered on. He continued to search and structure solutions to deliver justice and equity for underrepresented groups. He earned respect and admiration from international and regional political leaders for his relentless efforts at promoting plantation workers' rights. Pathma's exemplary public service most certainly stands as a beacon for all students.

Pathma passed away on June 9, 2001. The then Deputy Prime Minister Tun Haji Abdullah Badawi, who was also his university mate, delivered his eulogy at a memorial gathering organized by the Tamil Writers' Association at the Plantation House, NUPW Petaling Jaya, on July 22, 2001. Tun Haji Abdullah described Pathma as a very close friend and paid tribute to him for his tireless efforts to serve the Malaysian Indian community.

## TAN SRI DATO S. SUBRAMANIAM

*Leader of the people*



Tan Sri Dato S. Subramaniam was born on October 26, 1944 in Lima Belas Estate, Slim River, Perak to parents Mr Sinniah and Madam Muthamah, started his early education at the estate Tamil school. He then went to Klang High School and St John's Institution before going to the University of Malaya to complete his BA (Hons).

Subra, as he was fondly called then, was an active student leader. He led delegations to India and was Deputy President of the Tamil language Society leading to his involvement in the 1st (IATR) conference organised by the Indian Studies Department. He researched and published a Tamil article titled *Politics as seen in Silapathigaram* which was published in Tamil Oli.

When Subra was appointed Executive Secretary by Tun V. T. Sambanthan, Rama Subbiah his friend and mentor advised him to write his thesis titled *'Politics of Indians in Malaysia 1948 to 1957'* which till today remains a reference in MIC.

In 1973, he was appointed as Secretary General of the MIC whilst working in Malaysian Airline System (MAS) in the Personnel Department. Tan Sri Manickavasagam, who was MIC President then, wanted to infuse new blood into the party. Subra's close friend, Balakrishnan or Bala, as he was fondly known, encouraged Subra to go into politics. He was given the Damansara constituency to contest and he won to become Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Labour under Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak from 1974 till 1976. In 1977, he was a Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department under Tun Hussein Onn who was the Guest of Honour at his wedding in that same year. As MP Damansara, he secured grants over 1 Million Ringgit for temples and relocation of the Ramalingeswarar temple in Bangsar.

As Wilayah State Chairman, he worked with FT Minister Dato Sharir Samad to get the name changed from Jalan Brickfields to Jalan Tun Sambanthan. Subra continued being an MP in Segamat and served as deputy minister in several ministries, Agriculture, Local and Housing and later in the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs. During this time, he also represented the Malaysian Government in the United Nations, New York.

After Rama Subbiah passed away, Subra even as a university student became the Manager of PPN Hostel.

When he joined MIC his significant contributions included the project paper and lottery sales of the Maju Institute of Educational Development (MIED). As Wilayah Persekutuan Chairman, he purchased the State MIC Building and raised several millions for MAIKA Holdings. Outside politics, Subra was the President of Koperasi Nesa Pelbagai Bhd.

Subra was known for his tireless commitment and hard work for the community. His charisma, humble ways and approachable manner earned him the title of *Makkal Thalaivar* (Leader of the People). Subra faced many challenges in his political life but never shied away from difficulties. He retained his position as Deputy President of MIC from 1981 to 2006. His love for the Tamil language prompted him to raise funds and provide assistance for many organizations, like the Tamil Writers Association to purchase their own building, set up the *Muthamizh Padippagam*, a private Tamil library and assisted launching *Kalvi Chudar* (Newspaper-In-Education), a joint project by RSSF and *Makkal Osai*.

An avid badminton player, he has also contributed much to the development of sports as President of the 100 year- old Selangor Indian Association (SIA).

He was President of the Malaysian Indian Sports Council and Malaysian Indian Football Association and Council Member of Football Association of Malaysia (FAM).

Despite his busy schedule Subra found time to organise the hugely successful Rajinikanth show in Kuala Lumpur.

A loving family man and a believer in the extended family system, Subra sheltered his parents, in-laws, brothers and sisters at his home for three decades. For leisure, he loved sports and travel.

Tan Sri S.Subramaniam passed away on July 5, 2022.

The RSSF held a special place in his heart..



## RAMANI RAMANATHAN

*17 Dec 1942 - 29 Jan 1978*

With his quiet, dignified and pleasant personality, Ramani Ramanathan helped organize cultural shows efficiently despite his busy schedule as Regional Director of the National Productivity Centre (NPC) in Kuantan.

As a RSSF Board Member and Treasurer from 1972 to 1974, he worked closely with second Chairman Balakrishnan in supporting many deserving students to continue their studies. Ramani graduated with B.A.(Hons) in Indian Studies from the University of Malaya in 1965. When Singapore separated from Malaysia in August 1965, and while he was serving as Tutor in the Indian Studies Department, he was head-hunted by the Singapore government to be the co-ordinator of Indian Section of Radio-Television Singapore.

He served in that post for five years before returning to Malaysia to join the NPC. In 1976, he was sent on an NPC scholarship to undertake his Master's programme at the University of Edinburgh and completed in 1977.

In January 1978 when Ramani was on a holiday in India late 1977, he fell ill and died in Chennai. He was 35. Kandan enabled Ramani's elder brother Prof. Dr. Sankaran Ramanathan to travel immediately to Chennai to perform the funeral rites and has been supportive of the family ever since.

RSSF Vice-Chairman Pathma subsequently helped to set up the Ramani Endowment Fund. A sum of RM 15,000 was collected, and two loans have been awarded from this Fund. The Fund is now managed by RSSF.



**PROF. DR. N. CHANDRASEKHARAN**

*29 Jan 1934 - 15 June 2003*

Prof. Dr. N. Chandrasekharan was born on Jan 29, 1934, in Cochin, Kerala, India.

He graduated with an MBBS degree from the Andhra Medical College in Visakhapatnam. He served as a MO (Medical Officer) in Johor and Terengganu and the Institute of Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur. In 1963, he joined the foundation staff in Faculty of Medicine, the University of Malaya under Prof. T. Dhanaraj. In 1970, he was the first medical graduate to be conferred with a Ph.D degree, in the Medical Faculty in the University of Malaya. He was made Member and then Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists in London in 1973 and 1984 respectively.

Later he joined as Professor of Biochemistry in Universiti Sains Malaysia in Kota Baru from 1994 to 1999. He contributed significantly to undergraduate and postgraduate education and paramedical staff and also carried out independent research in chemical pathology, nutrition, medical education, and public health.

To his credit are a large number of publications. Later, as Chairman of Plantation Health Committee, he was involved with the welfare and health of plantation workers. From 1994 to 2001 he served as the Nutrition consultant to the palm oil industry. He was also editor of the Malaysian Medical Journal from 1987 to 1990. Chandrasekharan was one of the Founder members and staunch supporters of RSSF. There have been many occasions when he contributed financially to help educate the disadvantaged and those aspiring to be doctors.

Chandrasekharan married Annapoorni and they have three sons-Suresh, Anand and Shankar.

He passed away on June 15, 2003.



**E. RAGHAVAN NAIR**

*27 July 1941 - 15 Feb 2007*

Raghavan was born in Kluang on 27 July 1941. He completed his schooling in the same town. His father was a rubber estate planter in Coronation Estate, Johor and later in Guthrie Mantin Estate, Negeri Sembilan. Raghavan completed his Form Six education at King George V School in Seremban.

In 1963, he graduated from the University of Malaya as an electrical engineer. Raghavan soon joined Preece, Cardew and Rider, a well-established British engineering firm.

Having lived in an estate, he was aware of the plight of the plantation workers and was impressed with what Dr Rama Subbiah was doing for the disadvantaged students in the University. He joined Rama Subbiah in all his activities and attended meetings held in PPN hostel.

In 1968, Raghavan became the first formal secretary of ISSF/RSSF and served till 1973. He was actively involved in organizing all the fund raising events and a few RSSF meetings followed by sumptuous meals at his residence.

After 11 years with Preece Cardew and Rider he went into partnership forming Nair and Ven Consultancy in Engineering and later into Nair, Ven and Oscar Faber Consultancy. The firm was installed in several projects including construction of Shah Alam Stadium. The firm also installed lighting at Batu Caves as complimentary gesture.

Raghavan married Shanta Nair in 1971 and has four children.

The generous, active member passed away on Feb 15, 2007.



### **KALIMUTHU NACHIAPPAN**

*16 Oct 1942 - 22 April 2013*

Kalimuthu was a dedicated and trained teacher who was very diligent and focused in his work. He not only taught in Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman and Victoria Institution but also served as Inspector of Schools in Kuala Lumpur. He was neatly dressed, much of the time wearing a white shirt over a grey pair of pants. His simple, patient and responsible ways made him stand out among his friends. This was a very polite, humble and soft-spoken gentleman who always wore a winsome smile that made one feel welcome and comfortable.

Kalimuthu who was born on October 16, 1942 completed his studies in schools in Kuala Lumpur and graduated with an Arts Degree from the University of Malaya. Kalimuthu was very close to Subra from university days and was his right-hand man when he entered politics. Very often one could see Kalimuthu sorting out essential documents and taking down notes for Subra in his home. He was also instrumental in introducing several students including Pasupathy to RSSF. He also made sure they had money to pay their fees and travel to school. If they lived faraway, he arranged accommodation for them at the PPN Hostel. He observed and noted the needs of people, made an effort to help them without being asked and always found the time to accomplish what he undertook.

He was a close friend to Rama Subbiah, Dr P.P. Narayanan, Tan Sri Manickavasagam, Bala Pathma and Nava. During all the RSSF events Kalimuthu was very involved with the arrangements and logistics for the performances in Kuala Lumpur. He was readily available for any chore to be done and he did them flawlessly. Kalimuthu was an efficient secretary under Chairman Bala and often arranged meetings at the Royal Commonwealth Club.

He married Rama Rajagopal on April 5, 1973, and their two children are Sri Ganesh and Sangeeta. Kalimuthu passed away on Apr 22, 2013.



### **N. GOVINDAN**

*6 Jan 1947 - 19 Jan 2015*

N. Govindan always maintained a low profile, but his contributions were much appreciated. He was responsible for all the diligent background work and networking for the logistics for fund-raising events. He too was a founder member of ISSF and donated his caution money to the Fund. He also persuaded his colleagues in PPN Hostel to do the same. If there was any need for help, whether financial or otherwise, he was among the first to volunteer and contribute. He considered his community service as a spiritual duty offering.

Govindan, of a small frame, was often affectionately teased by Bala who was a six-footer. Bala was highly appreciative of Govindan's reliability, integrity, and commitment. All the members of the Board loved Govindan for his willingness and genuine concern for those who needed help.

Nava remembers how Govindan and he worked closely, along with Bala, in organizing the shows by Chitti Babu, AKC Natarajan, Sundaramoorthy the Tamil Folklore dancer, and Kuchipudi dancer Uma Barathi.

Govindan hailed from Kuala Kubu Bahru where his father had a provision shop. He completed his school education in his hometown and moved to Kuala Lumpur to do his Form Six studies at St. John's Institution where he met Subra. He worked closely with Rama Subbiah, who was his mentor and friend in PPN Hostel where Govindan stayed while attending Form Six classes. He did well and was accepted into the University of Malaya.

Like Rama Subbiah, Govindan was fluent in Tamil, English and Malay and could translate from one to another quite easily and flawlessly. His knowledge of history was exceptional as he could recall dates of events at the drop of a hat. On graduating with an Arts degree in 1966, he tutored in his alma mater, the Indian Studies Department of University of

Malaya, for a short while. In 1974, he joined Urban Development Authority (UDA) and was then nicknamed 'UDA Govindan'!

In 1976, he married Sundary, a nurse trained in Australia and employed at the University of Malaya Medical Centre, then known as the University of Malaya Teaching Hospital. They have three children, two boys and a girl.

From his college days, Govindan was a great follower of Tun V.T. Sambanthan then President of MIC and became close to his family. As a student, Govindan used to frequent Tun's house on his motorbike, bringing along other students who needed financial help and received them from Tun. Toh Puan Uma Sundari Sambanthan was impressed that at such a young age Govindan took on the responsibility to help these students.

Govindan's relationship with Pathma, Balakrishnan and Subra formed an unbreakable chain in the service of the Indian community.

In 1997, when Govindan had a stroke while in India, he was for a while an utterly broken man, as his mobility was restricted. His right leg and hand were partially paralysed. He could only walk with a limp when harnessed in an 'iron shoe' (an assistive device). Govindan soon snapped out of his situation and carried out his duties as best as he could. He would strap on his iron shoe and visit his friends to provide them with moral support. Though he could not write anymore, he would dictate notes and articles accurately and comprehensively. He always stood by the leaders of RSSF and gave new meaning to the word altruism.

He passed away on January 19, 2015.



**PROF. DR R. KARTHIGESU**

*24 Aug 1946 - 10 Oct 2016*

It was with the proverbial 'single step' that Professor Dr. R. Karthigesu started from a tiny town of Bedong in Kedah, Malaysia, to become a Professor, a prolific, award-winning Tamil writer, and an active social and community volunteer. In his work, pursuits and accomplishment Karthigesu popularly known as Gesu, took a 'journey of thousand miles'.

The son of a postal worker, Gesu developed an avid interest in reading and, at an early age, became a freelance short-story writer and had his works published in Tamil newspapers.

Against many social and financial odds, he pursued his studies systematically, leading to his Doctorate in Mass Communications from Leicester University (UK) . For a spell, he was a radio broadcaster and producer before taking up a position in Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Throughout his journey, his active participation in many community projects and non-governmental organizations remains a testament to his passionate interest in helping to alleviate the condition of Malaysian Indians. He was an active committee member of many service-orientated organizations and other temple fund-raising projects. He financially supported numerous charities and individuals throughout his lifetime.

His involvement with RSSF began with his friendship and association with Rama Subbiah around 1966. He enthusiastically embraced and participated in ISSF. Being a connoisseur of music and classical arts, he initiated several fund-raising projects and hosted famous artistes from India, organizing concert tours for them in several cities and towns. In this fashion, he used the tools of language and culture to bring the community together and raise awareness of the broad gap in Indian equity and education and appealed to the community to support itself.

This became a vital activity of the RSSF, and the trend of combining fund-raising with cultural outreach programmes continues to this day.

His legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of those who continue to enlighten and enrich the Malaysian Indian society through empowerment, culture, education and moral infusion.

The words of *Booker T. Washington, who said:*

“Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.” aptly summarises Gesu’s contribution to Tamil, journalism, and RSSF.

He passed away on October 10, 2016.



**V. N. RAMACHANDRAN**

*04 Feb 1939 - 25 Jan 2017*

Born in Bedong, Kedah on February 4 1939, Ramachandran was the third of nine children of Narayanasamy and Manickamma.

Rama completed his primary education in India as his family had returned to India in 1941. On his return to Malaya, Rama completed his secondary education in 1960. In 1962 he completed his teacher-training at MTC Penang. He served as a teacher in Kuala Lipis, Pahang, from 1964 to 1967 and later enrolled at the University of Malaya after he was inspired by Rama Subbiah. Rama was a manager of PPN Students Hostel from 1966 till 1967. He then joined the National Productivity Centre as an Industrial Relations Executive. In 1970, he won a Colombo Plan Scholarship to India to pursue a course in Industrial Relations.

Rama joined MAS as an Industrial Relations Manager in 1971. In 1980, he joined Sime Darby Plantations where he was able to help plantation workers to secure land and elevate their living conditions. He personally supervised the building of their homes as recommended in MIC’s Blue Book. He retired in 1995 as Industrial Relations Advisor and set up his own Wirama Consultancy. He was then Commissioner of Oaths as well. As a consultant, he also served on the Disciplinary Board of the Malaysian Football Association and the Bar Council.

Rama assisted in the administration and logistics of many RSSF shows and events including AKC Natarajan, Dr. Balamuralikrishna, Super Star Rajinikanth and actress Kushboo, and Revathy.

Rama married Vasantha Rengasamy in 1964, and they have three children.

He passed away on January 25, 2017.



**R. RAJANNAN**

*30 Sept 1950 - 12 Sept 2021*

Rajannan was born in Behrang, Perak to Ravanah Rajannah and Bapanammah Erinaidu. He had his early education in 1957 at Rawang School in Selangor and completed his Form Six, in Jalan Davidson Methodist Boys School (MBS) in 1970.

He entered University of Malaya in 1971. In 1975, he obtained Bachelor of Arts degree in History. After a year's stint as a Graduate Assistant in the Faculty of Arts University of Malaya, he joined Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) as Executive Secretary till 1981. He was then appointed as Executive Treasurer of Koperasi Nesa Pelbagai Bhd. and having served for five years he built his career in the Koperasi Nesa Pelbagai Bhd.

He served in several organizations such as:

Education and Welfare Research Foundation (EWRF)  
Malaysian Co-operative Insurance Society (MCIS) and  
Malaysian Co-operative Commission (MCCS)

He married Kandhimathy and has a daughter, Dharshini.

Rajannan passed away on September 12, 2021.



**DATUK K. SELVARAJAH**

Former CEO of SOCSO

*4 Sept 1954 - 23 May 2022*

Born in Segamat, Johor, on April 4th 1954, He had his early education in Melaka and obtained his degree in Bachelor of Economics from University of Malaya and MSc in Industrial Relations, from the University of Bath, United Kingdom in 1988.

Selva was the past CEO of SOCSO (Social Security Organization). He started his career as a Pegawai Tadbir Diplomatik PTD officer, serving in the Ministry of Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Trade & Industries, Pensions Department, Negotiations Division of Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam Malaysia JPA, The Chemistry Department and Institute Tadbiran Awam Negara INTAN.

Selva was given much recognition in his long outstanding career, among others he was awarded:

- Hon. Fellow of Faculty of Occupational Royal College of Physicians (Ireland)
- Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang Kementerian Kehakiman (1993)
- Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang, Jabatan Kimia Malaysia, Kementerian Sains, Teknologi & Inovasi (2005)

Datuk Selva, is a long-serving Board Member of RSSF and was its Treasurer from 1994 to 1999. He has been largely responsible for the success of the Form Six project at the Vivekananda Ashramam, as he was the warden and likened to an older brother to the 14 students. In addition, he was actively involved in several fund-raising activities of RSSF.

After his retirement, he served as a director on MySkills Foundation. He passed away on May 23, 2022 after a short illness.

THE CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

## A MEETING OF THE RSSF BOARD



*The meeting held on Jan 28 2019 when it was resolved to publish this book to mark RSSF 'S 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*

*From left to right :*

**Dato Ramanujam , Errakiah, Pasupathy,  
Prof. Dr.Sankaran,Venkateswaran, Hon. Sec. Segaran,  
Chairman Dato VL Kandan, Datin Viji,  
Sarojini(hostess) Puan Sri Tina, Girijah, and Venkatagiri .**

## CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Chairman  
**Dato V.L.Kandan**

Hon Secretary  
**Segaran Mathavan**  
Advocate and Solicitor

Treasurer  
**Balakrishnan Ramasamy Pillai**  
Businessman

### MEMBERS

**A.Navamukundan**  
National Executive Secretary, National Union of Plantation Workers

**Prof Dr. P. Agamuthu**  
Professor,  
Jeffrey Sachs Center for Sustainable Development, Sunway University

**Dato' Dr. R.Thillainathan**  
Economist

**Prof Dr. Sankaran Ramanathan**  
Principal, Mediaplus Consultancy, USA

**P. Kandiah**  
Intellectual Property Lawyer

**Venkateswaran Sankar**  
Accountant

**Dato Dr. P. Ramanujam Murthy**  
Film Producer and owner of RamaVision Sdn Bhd

**Dr. N. Rajanaidu**  
Fellow, Academy of Sciences Malaysia

**Pasupathi Sithamparam**

Advocate and Solicitor, Founder-Director, MySkills Foundation

**Sarojini Ruth**

President, National Association of Women Entrepreneurs in Malaysia (NAWEM)

**Errakiah Sannasi**

Education Consultant (Kalvi Chudar)

**Girijah Balakrishnan**

Lecturer in English Language & Literature (Rtd)

**Puan Sri Datin Tina Suganthi**

Founder Member Bakti, Patron- Osai Foundation

**Venkatagiri Balakrishnan**

Investment Banking, and Business Development

**Ragumaren Gopal**

Advocate and Solicitor

**Prashant Pathmanaban**

Director of Melaka Manipal University College, Malaysia

**Kumar Karthigesu**

Director of Music Department The Temple of Fine Arts

**Prof. Dr Uma Rani Sinniah**

Lecturer, Universiti Putra Malaysia President, National Seed Malaysia Association,

**Dr. Letchumanan Amaippen**

Board Director of Cooperatives MCIS & NESA

**Dato' Thirumoorthy Nadesan**

Director, Team Force Security Sdn. Bhd

**DATO V L KANDAN**

*The million dollar man*



No doubt, RSSF was shrouded in gloom over the demise of Balakrishnan but the Board believed that Dato V. L. Kandan, their legal advisor, was the best choice to continue the mission. On Dec 2, 2009, Dato Kandan was persuaded to take over as the third chairman.

Unlike Pathma, Subra and Bala who had deep roots in the plantation soil, Kandan was an urban boy who lived on the fringes of an estate in Klang. He had heard his father, Vengadasalam Pillai, speaking of his adventure of his migration to Malaya on his own and landing with a clerk's job in Raja Musa Estate in Kuala Selangor under a British manager. But soon the Manager had him evacuated from the estate for his professed loyalty to Mahatma Gandhi, the anti-British, pro-independence activist in India. He moved out and set up a sundry shop which grew into a busy shopping centre for the local Indians in Klang.

Kandan was born in August 8, 1937, in Klang. Upon completing school in 1954, he was selected to undergo training at Teacher Training College in Kirkby (UK) in 1955. He worked as a teacher for a while before he left for the UK again in 1965, this time to read law at Lincoln's Inn in London. He was the first pupil under the tutelage of Dato Mahadev Shankar and began his legal career in Shearn Delamore & Co. after being admitted to the Malayan Bar, in Sept 1965 and the Singapore Bar in 1993.

On hindsight, it was a blessing in disguise that the British evicted Kandan's family from the estate. As a result, Kandan emerged qualified as a lawyer from the very land of that British planter!

Kandan's elder brother, Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam who had entered politics at a very early age, was elected leader of the MIC in 1973. He was the Minister of Labour and Communications, in the Malaysian Cabinet. He encouraged young professionals like Pathma and Subra, to enter politics to help the backward Indians. When Pathma and Subra also became Ministers, Kandan was reluctantly sucked into politics and went on to win a State Assembly seat and become a Selangor State Exco member.

As a politician, Kandan saw the poor condition in the estates. He learned how Indians in plantations were brought in as indentured labour and left behind like *'tragic orphans'* when the British left. He then helped to convert the squatter areas in Jalan Kelang Lama and the 8th mile Jalan Puchong to proper housing quarters as recommended in the MIC Blue Book. In recognition of his services, a village along Jalan Puchong has been named Taman Kandan.

He left politics in 1982 and concentrated on his legal career. Today he is known internationally for his work in the field of Intellectual Property which is his forte.

Rama Subbiah sought Kandan's assistance to establish a legal framework for ISSF. Kandan drew up the constitution and had it officially registered. Kandan also redefined the whole structure and formalised the roles of members and introduced the administrative measures that have helped oil the wheels of the operation of the Fund.

Although a stickler for rules and regulations Kandan was willing to consider any idea, however outlandish, provided there were cogent reasons to justify it.

On one occasion, it was brought to his notice that there were persistent defaulters in loan repayments. He agreed to a suggestion by RSSF secretary, Segaran, to employ Presanya Krishnan to help sort out this issue. Presanya set to work and RSSF was able to collect nearly RM50,000 over a period of time from the loan defaulters.

To top up the funds, Kandan organised fund raising events. In 2012, Kandan, fascinated with a Telugu musical movie Sankarabharanam, got the approval and help of the Board to stage the same, but with local artistes. It was followed by Down Memory Lane, a dinner event with live music, in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary. Both the events were well patronised and successful.

Kandan noted that after 50 years, RSSF coffers was far short of one million. He set a target for himself and the Board to increase it to RM1 million.

Kandan then approached Datuk Tan Hian Tsin, a philanthropist and a close friend of his brother, Tan Sri V Manickavasagam.

On hearing of the excellent work of RSSF and Kandan's involvement in it, Datuk Tan generously contributed RM250,000. Target achieved!

## A PAGE OF THE ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION

### INDIAN STUDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP FUND

#### AIMS

The Fund shall be utilised by the Board for the purpose of providing or awarding such number of studentships, scholarships, study grants or study loans or any other award as the Board may from time to time determine to be provided or awarded to persons hereinafter mentioned to enable such persons to pursue such course or courses of Education as the Board may think proper.

This shall apply to any person who is

- (a) a person of Indian extraction (including a person of Ceylonese extraction)
- (b) a Citizen of Malaysia and
- (c) (i) a person admitted for any degree or diploma course in the University of Malaya
- (ii) by virtue of his circumstances or other reasons requires in the opinion of the Board to be provided with or assisted by an award.

#### Postal Address

c/o DR. RAMA SUBBIAH - Department of Indian Studies  
University of Malaya — Kuala Lumpur



**SEGARAN MATHAVAN**

Segaran Mathavan was born in Kluang, Johor on Dec 10, 1964. He has three younger siblings, a sister and two brothers. His father was a field conductor in Chan Wing Estate, Chaah, Johor, and his mother, a housewife. Segaran attended his primary schools in Bahau and Paloh from 1971 to 1976 and completed secondary school in Chaah in 1981. After his Form Six in Vanto Academy (1982 to 1984) he worked in Leong Hup Poultry Farm in Muar. Though it was a difficult task for his parents to provide education for their children, they never failed to encourage them to excel.

Segaran studied law part-time (1987 to 1988) and on completing part of his course in Malaysia, he left for the UK in 1989 to complete the course. In 1992, he was called to the Bar in Lincoln's Inn. One of the first recipients of the RSSF loan to go overseas to further his education, he was introduced to the scheme by a politician, Dr. Gnanabaskaran in 1986. He remembers that he then received encouragement and help from other Board Members and how Kalimuthu gave him some law books. It was an unconditional act of kindness. The care and trust they had in him without any expectations inspired him to not only repay his loan in double quick time but also to later volunteer to be the RSSF Hon. Secretary, a post he has held for over 20 years. Such is Segaran's commitment, dedication and loyalty to RSSF which is housed in the premises of his legal firm.

Segaran extends his gratitude by not only serving in RSSF but also taking a personal interest in the scholarship loan applicants. However busy he may be with his legal practice, he has never failed to turn up for meetings or events. He has been sympathetic, empathetic and efficient in efforts to ensure repayment of loans so that more deserving students could be helped.

He is delighted to see many former recipients come back to contribute, especially during the cultural shows of Rajnikanth,

Revathy, Alarmel Valli, Sankarabharanam and Krishna Swetha which involved substantial financial outlays. He particularly mentions recipients Pasupathi and Tankaraju who gave significant donations during these events.

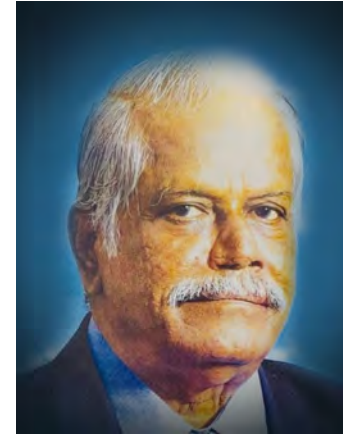


**BALAKRISHNAN RAMASAMY PILLAI**

Balakrishnan came to know of RSSF and learned of the Form Six Pilot Project in the Vivekananda Ashramam in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. Though he was not one of the 14 who attended the course, he benefited from the tuition classes at the Vivekananda Ashramam and PPN Hostel. He hails from Batu Arang, Selangor. He graduated with B.A.Hons degree with double majors in Indian Studies and Economics from University of Malaya in the year 1983.

Upon graduation, he worked in a private firm and later was appointed by Subra as his Private Secretary from 1989 to 1993.

In 1994 he obtained a franchise to operate Shell petrol stations at Jalan University, Petaling Jaya, Kelana Jaya and Kuala Kubu Baru. He has successfully maintained his businesses to date.



**A. NAVAMUKUNDAN**

Navamukundan is a co-founder member of ISSE/RSSF. He was born in Regent Estate in Gemencheh, Negeri Sembilan. His parents came as indentured labour. His father was given RM2,000.00 as a token of appreciation upon his retirement by Dunlop Malaysian Estates Ltd. He used part of the money to support Nava for his education. When Nava entered University of Malaya in 1967, the staff members contributed his first year's tuition fees.

Nava received accommodation at P.P.N hostel and financial aid from Indian High Commission to complete his studies at the University of Malaya. Thanks to the effort of NUPW General Secretary Dr P.P. Narayanan who was involved in helping Plantation Workers' children with residential facilities, in Petaling Jaya. He graduated in Indian Studies and Economics with Honours in 1970.

He was employed as a temporary teacher at Sekolah Munshi Ibrahim, Labis before he left for postgraduate studies to the University of Leeds in the UK with financial aid from Tan Sri Manickavasagam. He was also helped by Martin Collier, Managing Director of Dunlop Estates Bhd. and Dr.J.S. Lowe of Dunlop Research Centre. The British Council assisted in paying his fees. He graduated with a Master's degree in Economics in 1973.

He worked as an Economist at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex under the supervision of Prof. Michael Lipton. He was lecturer at the Faculty of Economics, University of Malaya from 1974 to 1983.

Inspired by Dr P.P. Narayanan then Nava decided to dedicate his life to serving plantation workers as National Executive Secretary of the National Union of Plantation Workers. He has also served on the Board of Directors of SOCSO, on the National Labour Advisory Council and the Minimum Wage Consultative Council and other committees related

to economic and social well-being of workers. In 1989, he served as Chairman of the Workers' Group for the Plantation Committee at the International Labour Organization, Geneva. In 2003, Nava was engaged by ILO Geneva on research regarding Decent Work in Agriculture in Asia.

In the RSSF fund-raising activities, Nava worked closely with Chairman Bala and members including Govindan,

Masilamany and student Asokumaran from University Malaya. He was involved in organising Chitti Babu's Veenai recitals, AKC Natarajan's Clarinet recitals and Sundaramoorthy's folklore dance and Alarmel Valli's performances. He and his team were responsible for managing the revenue and the logistic aspects, which they executed well with the support of other Board members.



**PROF. DR. AGAMUTHU PARIATAMBY**

Prof. Dr. Agamuthu completed his primary school education at Edensor Estate, Mentakab Pahang and then moved to Temerloh to complete his MCE (now SPM). He remembers the great floods of 1967 when he had to walk 8 km from Mentakab to Temerloh to write his examination.

He was given accommodation for the night at his Chinese friend's house so that he could be in school the next day to sit for his examination.

For Prof, to attend Form Six in Kuantan without financial aid was near impossible. It was a colossal challenge for his parents, who were rubber tappers to manage the family of four children.

Prof. Agamuthu came to know of Rama Subbiah when he moved into PPN Hostel. He was exposed to many activities at PPN Hostel, one of which was rural service initiated by the Tamil Language Society. Naturally, Prof. identified his Edensor Estate, Lanchang Estate and Sg. Kawang Estate as possible recipients. Prof and the PPN boys were very committed and proceeded to set up a kindergarten for the children of the estates.

Fortunately, he received scholarships from the Indian High Commission and the South Indian Labour Fund to continue his studies. He enrolled at the University of Malaya in 1970 to read for his first degree in Plant Physiology.

He subsequently completed his Master's Degree in 1978 and his PhD in 1983 both in Environmental Biotechnology, at University of Malaya.

Among many of Prof respected roles are:

- Professor, Jeffrey Sachs Centre on Sustainable Development, Sunway University
- Fellow, Academy of Sciences, Malaysia
- Visiting Professor, Zhejiang University of Technology, Hangzhou, China.

Professor Agamuthu shares his expertise with several institutions, organizations and universities in Malaysia, China and the Pacific Islands.

Prof. Agamuthu and wife have two children. His son is an engineer and daughter, a medical doctor.



**DATO' DR. R. THILLAINATHAN**

Dato' Dr. R. Thillainathan, who is from a working class background had a good fortune to grow up in the middle class home of his foster parents, the Arunasalams. He is one of the leading economists in Malaysia.

An economics graduate (First Class Hons), he earned University of Malaya's gold medal, as the best all-round student of its 1968 graduating class. He obtained his MSc and PhD from the London School of Economics in 1970 and 1976. He was appointed an Associate Professor in 1977 at University of Malaya. He joined the private sector in 1980.

Better known as Thilli, he is now an Independent Non -Executive Director of Genting Berhad since July 2009 and also a member of Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS). He serves as an Independent Non-Executive Director of Allianz Malaysia Berhad and has served on an Independent Non-Executive Director of Petronas Dagangan Bhd and Bursa Malaysia Bhd.

He was a President of the Malaysian Economic Association from 1996 to 2002. Thilli was a Member of the Malaysian Accounting Standards Board, the Capital Market Advisory Council and the Taxation Committee in the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce & Industry. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Bankers Malaysia.

Thilli has published extensively on affirmative action and financial economics. He continues to be a researcher and has undertaken several studies for the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). He is also a founding member of RSSF.

He is married to Datin Dakshayani and they have two children Sudharsanan, a senior lawyer and Priyadarshini, a senior HR manager with Grab Singapore.



**PROF. DR. SANKARAN RAMANATHAN**

Prof. Sankaran served for 30 years at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) as senior lecturer and five years as Head, Special Projects, Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Subsequently, he set up Mediaplus Consultancy, operating first from Singapore and Malaysia and now, from the USA. Prof. Sankaran holds a BA (Hons. in History) from University of Malaya (1963), Post-Graduate Diploma in Education from University of Malaya (1966), Master of Science in Journalism (Cum Laude), Ohio University, USA (1974), Certificate of Training for Trainers, International Institute for Journalism, Berlin (1981) and PhD from University of Malaya (1997).

He has published over 191 publications, including authorship/co-authorship/editorship of 10 books. He is listed in Linked-In and frequently cited in Google Scholar. Among honours he has received are for Long Service and Excellent Service (UiTM) and elevation to the Court of Fellows, Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (FIPR). He is also accredited in public relations (APR).

He has been actively involved in RSSE, since 1975 as Chairman, Klang Branch, then as Secretary/Treasurer from 1980-1984, and as Board Member, from 1985 to 1986 and from 2011 till now. He has worked with all three RSSF chairmen on various fund-raising projects, and also with EWRE, HINDRAF and other similar organizations dedicated to helping Malaysian Indians.



**P. KANDIAH**

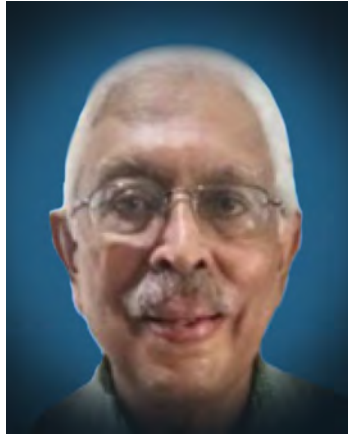
Kandiah grew up in Klang where he completed his secondary school education at High School Klang in 1966 and attended Form 6 in St. John's Institution in Kuala Lumpur. His father was a gardener in the same school. It is commendable that his parents saw their six children through University. As the eldest child in the family, Kandiah had to be a role model for his siblings to motivate them to excel in their studies.

Today Kandiah is the Founder and Managing Director of KASS International, a leading intellectual property rights service and consultancy firm.

He is married to Indrani, and they have three children. The eldest son is a corporate lawyer with a large multinational firm in Singapore. His second son is a consultant gastroenterologist in London and daughter, a lawyer who works with KASS International.

P. Kandiah holds a Bachelor's degree in Science and LLB from the University of Buckingham.

He was identified as one of Asia's leading business lawyers in the Asia Law Leading Lawyers Survey. As a resourceful person for the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), he shares his expertise with many countries including Mongolia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Fiji Islands, the Philippines, Indonesia and Bangladesh.



**VENKITESWARAN SANKAR**

Venkiteswaran Sankar (Venki) was born in Kuala Lumpur, in 1946 and was educated at the Pasar Road English School (1) and later the Victoria Institution. In May 1971, he completed the MICPA professional examinations and worked with Price Waterhouse & Co, Kuala Lumpur.

He was transferred to their London office where he was attached till May 1973. On his return, he was promoted as an Audit Manager in 1975.

In 1976, he was transferred to their Penang office, as the Branch Manager and served there till the 1979. In 1980, he joined Plantation Agencies Sdn. Bhd. as their Chief Accountant. In 1981, he joined the Datuk Keramat Holdings Group to head their Finance Division. He returned to Kuala Lumpur in 1986 and joined his brother who was then in practice as a Public Accountant under the name of Sankar & Co. He continued to manage Sankar & Co till 2020.

His involvement with the RSSF started early in the 1980's while in Penang, as he was member of the committee organizing the shows in Penang by the visiting entertainers. He is grateful to the Late Dr. R. Karthigesu for bringing him in as a member of the Board. Venki married Vijaya, in 1976 and they now live in Petaling Jaya. They have two children.

The eldest, is a daughter Sumitra, a Psychiatrist, now living in Melbourne, Australia with her husband and only child. The second is a son, Harish, who is conductor of Classical Western music for orchestras in Germany and lives in Minningen.



**DATO' DR. P. RAMANUJAM MURTHY**

Ramanujam, one of the senior RSSF Board members was from Rubana Estate where his father was a senior conductor and his mother a housewife. He comes from a family of nine. His father worked hard to get him primary and secondary school education in Teluk Anson. He had to cross the Perak River daily in a boat from the estate and travel another five miles by bus to get to school during primary education.

After school in 1966, he joined the public sector in the Dept of Inland Revenue and later joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He served in the Embassy of Malaysia, in Hanoi from 1977 to 1978. In 1981, he moved to the private sector and set up Sri Ramavision Sdn. Bhd. providing advertising and video production and media services. He has produced corporate videos and programmes for RTM, TV3, as well as for musicals and sports for public and private sectors.

He was honoured for his public services and awarded the DSNS by Yang di Pertuan Besar, Negeri Sembilan, carrying the title Dato in 2007. Later in 2008 he was awarded an honorary PhD degree in Business Administration by the Overseas International University of Complementary Medicine, Colombo.

He was knighted twice. The first award was at an investiture ceremony in Kuala Lumpur on April 26, 2009. On May 22, 2011, he was elevated to Knight Commander of Ecumenical Medical, Humanitarian Order of Knights of St John of Jerusalem Knights of Charity (KCSTJ) at an investiture ceremony in Prague Czech Republic. Both the awards carry the honorific title of Sir.

Together with Govindan and Nava he was very involved in almost all cultural shows and events organized by RSSF Board. In particular, he was involved in the staging aspects for Alarmel Valli's performances, Alley Cats, Super Star Rajinikanth Show, Revathy Dance performance and Shankarabharanam Musical.



**DR. N. RAJANAIDU NOOKIAH**

Born in 1945, in Slim River Estate, Perak, he was brought up by his father's brother, Mr. Nookiah. He still vividly recalls how he used to assist his mother in collecting latex at Bristol Estate, Kuang.

His humble beginnings shaped his work ethics and were instrumental to his success in his career.

He completed his primary education at Bristol Estate Tamil School and lower secondary in Rawang. For his upper secondary education, he obtained South Indian Labour Fund and Wesley Church Scholarships to study at the Methodist Boys Secondary School in Jalan Davidson Kuala Lumpur.

He received a National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW) Scholarship to complete his degree in Agricultural Science at University of Malaya. He obtained his MSc in Plant Genetic Resources and PhD in Genetics, from University of Birmingham in the UK, with financed support from the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) and the Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia (PORIM) respectively.

He went on long expeditions from 1973-2010, into the deep interiors of Senegal, to Angola in West Africa and Tanzania and Madagascar in the eastern continent of Africa. He collected wild oil palm germplasm from Central South America, covering Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Brazil. Although they were highly risky, challenging ventures, it was rewarding and memorable.

A total of 100,000 palm seeds were planted at MPOB Oil Palm Genebank at Kluang, Johor. All the detailed data were stored in MPOB Breeding Information System and the findings were later published to Rajanaidu's credit in *The Nature*, one of the world's leading

science journal. In 1983, he played a major role in establishing the International Society for Oil Palm Breeders (ISOPB) and shared his knowledge and experience with MPOB oil palm breeders and local universities. He mentored a number of Masters and Ph.D. students local and overseas.

Elected as a Fellow of Academy of Sciences (ASM), in 2001 he was conferred a KMN award and a Lifetime Excellence Award, Palm Oil Industry (LEAP), from the Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC) in 2016.

Rajanaidu helped to organize RSSF cultural shows in Kluang, Johor.

Rajanaidu is married to Sarojini Devi Apputhurai and they have two children Ganesha in Sydney and Subhadra in Auckland with grandson Theodore Raj Speer.



**PASUPATHI SITHAMPARAM**

Pasupathi was among the 14 students under the Form 6 project. The late, Mr. N. Kalimuthu who was his Form 6 General Paper Lecturer at Tuanku Abdul Rahman College introduced him to the Form 6 Project in January 1978.

He later received a Public Service Commission Scholarship to study at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia from where he obtained his BSc (Hons) degree in Chemical Technology.

Later, he joined the Income Tax Department as a Tax Examiner and later took unpaid leave to pursue his law degree in University of Wales in Aberystwyth. Upon passing his Certificate in Legal Practice in 1990, he resigned from the government service and joined Messrs Ram, Rais and Partners, a law firm in Kuala Lumpur.

After three years with Ram, Rais and Partners. He was involved in attending to more than 100 pro-bono cases involving minor offenders. He was the President of Educational Welfare Research Foundation (EWRF) from 2006 to 2010. He was a founder member of the Tamil Foundation and later its President from 2010 to 2014.

Sometime in 2010, together with Dr. Shanmugasiva, Datuk K. Selvarajah (RSSF Board Member) and many others, he established MySkills Foundation to give a second opportunity for Tamil school dropouts.

He affirms that the Form Six project, in 1977/1978 had inspired him to set up MySkills Foundation.

In fact, he has named the main meeting room in the MySkills Campus at Kalumpang, as Dr. Rama Subbiah Meeting Room. A plaque, with a short write-up on Dr. Rama Subbiah, now hangs on the wall of this room.



**SAROJINI RUTH**

Saro is the founder of Data-Tech Sdn. Bhd. that provides data digitization services including data capture, data outsourcing, data cleansing and storage.

During Malaysia's computerization process, Data-Tech was a front runner in the industry and assisted many Government agencies and statutory bodies in data digitization. Her clients included private enterprises in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Saro bursts with enthusiasm and passion when she gets involved in projects that make a difference to the lives of others, particularly, those in dire need of help from women entrepreneurs to B40 folks.

Currently, she is the President of the National Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Malaysia, a multi ethnic organization, where membership ranges from experienced business women and corporate heads to new entrants in businesses.

Under her able leadership, NAWEM has become well-recognised for its endeavours in assisting women in business and has hosted many international conferences for women including IR4.0 and The Future Work – Growing Malaysia's Digital Economy and Talent Conference that was held in Kuala Lumpur and Kuching in 2019.

The Asia Foundation (TAF), a US-based NGO has selected NAWEM to be an implementation partner in Malaysia for numerous projects that are women-centric. Saro has extended her knowledge and experience in NGO management to other organizations. They include ROTI Malaysia and Selangor Indian Association (SIA), where she is the Treasurer and Vice President III, respectively.

She is a Board Member of Stepping Stones Living Centre, a shelter for women & children. In the government affiliated agencies, she has earned her position as a Board Member, in Small Debt Resolution Committee (SDRC) Bank Negara, Board Member, Department of Skills Development (MPKK), an agency under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resources and the Productiviti and Innovasi Committee, SME Corp. Malaysia.

Saro's vision for Malaysian women is that, they should break the glass ceiling and aspire to take on leadership roles, side by side with men to make an impact in both public and private sectors both in national and international arenas.

Saro is married to Sunthar Raj, who supports her endeavors. Her children, a son and a daughter who have equally successful careers, wholeheartedly support their mum's efforts.



**ERRAKIAH SANNASI**

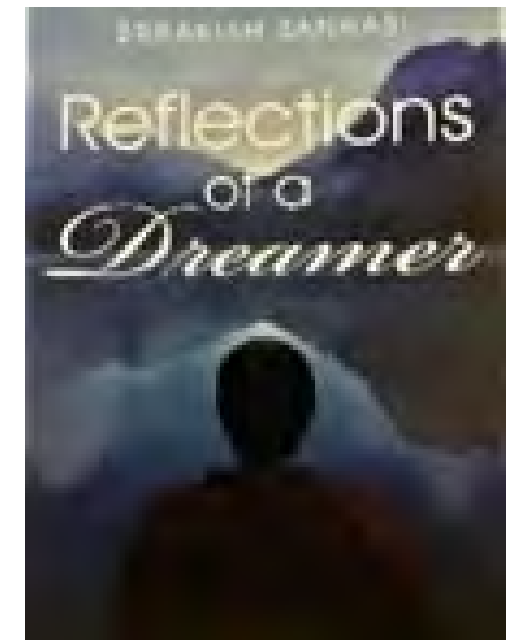
Errakiah was born on July 17 1949 in Buluh Akar Estate Parit Perak. He completed his primary education in Bruas and his secondary in Ipoh Anderson School.

Despite the loans he received from MIC and the National Land Finance Cooperative Society (NLFCS) and his savings, Errakiah fell short of the required amount to enter University of Malaya. He met Chairman Bala and N Govindan who introduced him to RSSF that topped up the required amount to enter University.

He entered University Malaya in 1970 and obtained his BA Hons degree and later his Diploma in Education. He worked as a teacher for five years and became a lecturer at Teachers' Training Colleges.

His fascination with books and reading certainly slotted him into the right place. This wordsmith, began jotting down his impressions and memories from his younger days. He was the Head of the Library Science Department in the Teachers' Training Institute in Pantai Valley before he retired in 2005.

The English language, was hardly spoken among the estate workers. It was a tremendous effort on his part to study the usage of words and phrases in English and employ them to extend his ideas and beliefs. With much exposure and experience in his later life, he reviewed and rewrote short



poems touching on all aspects of life and eventually published the collection entitled Reflections of a Dreamer in 2018.

In 2009, he became the Education Consultant for Makkal Osai's Educational Supplement called 'Kalvi Chudar' and thereafter 'Maanavar Osai' from 2010 onwards which prepared students for public examinations like UPSR, PT3, SPM and STPM. It was a project supported by RSSF.

He has been appointed a Board Member of RSSF and with Secretary Segaran, assists in interviews and processing of applications, He has also been a Board Member of Koperasi NESA.

Errakiah married Jokamalar, a teacher, in 1982 and they have a daughter Nalayeni, a medical doctor, and two sons Srinivasa Rao, an acturist, and Jegathesa Rao who has completed school education.



**GIRIJAH BALAKRISHNAN**

She is the daughter of the late Mr. M. R. Naidu, Deputy Commissioner of Labour, and Vasantha Pankajam. Born in Ipoh, she first attended school at Convent Teluk Anson. And thereafter completed her schooling in Convent Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur and subsequently opted to go to Brinsford Lodge Wolverhampton, United Kingdom for teacher-training in 1959.

Girijah takes after her father who had a great passion for Indian classical music and dance. She learnt both Barathanatyam and Indian Classical music under Guru Selvarathnam Pillay from India.

She has performed classical dances and Carnatic music recitals in Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Ipoh and Teluk Intan.

She married Bala, the Head of Indian Service in RTM, in 1965. After having three children, she opted to further her studies at the University of Malaya in 1969, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree with (Hons) and continued her teaching career at Maxwell Road School, Kuala Lumpur. After retirement, she obtained a Certificate in Teaching Business English and did corporate training for the Sunway Hotel staff and the Sime Darby staff. She also taught Business English, at the Elite College, as a bridging course for students from China, to enable them to pursue their Accounting Course in Sunway College.

Having a deep interest in English language and literature, she dabbles in writing short stories and poetry. Today she spends much of her time in writing and painting. She has written Bala's biography in English with her grandson Sailesh Mukundala and contributed a few short stories in Tamil for the Tamil daily Makkal Osai. Two of them were "Deepavali Vanthathu" and "Paravaigal Palavitham."

After Bala's demise 2009, Girijah and her son, Venkatagiri were invited to join the RSSF Board in 2015. In the past, the wives did not play an active role in the Fund except for fund-raising and hosting of dinners for RSSF's events. She hopes the lady members would take more active roles to help in the education of women.

Girijah says that RSSF is a unique institution with not only a noble aim to enhance the academic achievements of the Indian community but also to promote its Indian arts and culture. She hopes that the newcomers to the Board would bring fresh ideas and suggestions which would take the Board to a higher level to meet the challenges of Indian students in the modern technological era.



**PUAN SRI DATIN TINA SUGANTHI**

Puan Sri Datin Tina Suganthi, who is a third generation Malaysian Indian was born in Johor and raised in Kuala Lumpur. After her secondary education, she left for Auckland, New Zealand, to further her studies in Business Management. In early 1970's she returned home and was employed by MAS (Malaysian Airline System), in the Personnel Department. From her early childhood she was involved in Bharathanatyam (classical Indian dance) and was under the tutelage of the Thiruchander Sisters. Tan Sri S. O. K. Ubaidulla was the Patron of her Arangetram (Dance Graduation). She also played the piano and liked sports, interior décor, travel, fashion and community services. This was an interest born whilst working alongside her parents and cousins who were involved in many social and charity organizations.

During her first year, in MAS, she met Subra who had started as an Administrator in the same department. Their friendship turned to love and they married 3 years later, in 1977. He was then a Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office. They have three children, Anand, Sunther and Priya who have returned from overseas after their education and now live in Kuala Lumpur. Tina has worked alongside Subra on many community projects, over a span of 30 years. At 25, she was a founder member of BAKTI (Badan Amal Kebajikan Tenaga Isteri) whose President then was Toh Puan Suhaila, wife of Tun Hussein Onn, then Prime Minister.

The years in Bakti, under wives of four consecutive Prime Ministers, have given her much experience and knowledge in politics and community work. She also held positions in many other organizations and NGO s throughout the many years and treasures the memories. To-date she holds dear her association BAKTI where her many friendships made then still endure. She is Patron of The OSAI Foundation, inspired by family members towards sheltering young Malaysian Indians. Tina has been actively involved in DRSSF fund-raising activities. Today, she lives a quieter life looking after family commitments and doing charity work. Tina enjoys reading and writing, music, cooking and catching up with friends.



**VENKATAGIRI BALAKRISHNAN**

Giri was born in Kuala Lumpur, the third of the four children of Bala and Girijah . He pursued his secondary education in the UK and subsequently obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting and Economics from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia.

He has spent more than two decades in the fields of investment banking, broadcasting and business development. He is currently pursuing an MBA degree while providing consultancy services to clients in the palm oil industry in Asia and Africa.

Giri was invited to join RSSF in 2015. Since then he has been involved in fund raising activities. He is glad that RSSF welcomes recipients to serve on the Board or as members, thus building a strong sense of belonging and identity for the betterment of society through the provision of avenues to educate and develop successful Indians. He is very proud to continue the good work of his father, Bala, who served as Chairman of RSSF Board for over 40 years.



**RAGUMAREN GOPAL**

After completing Form Six, Ragumaren took on a series of jobs that honed him to be a successful entrepreneur. He worked as a bookshop sales assistant, teacher, articled clerk(law), legal executive, and an account director of an established advertising agency. Later he set up his own agency, Creative Innovations, undertaking public relations, marketing and advertising services. His main clients among others included Celcom and Budget International. Eventually, he pursued a law course, graduated from the University of Wolverhampton with an LLB Hons and was admitted to the Malaysian Bar in 2004.

Ragumaren is noted for a landmark case which lasted 15 years in which he (together with other senior lawyers) successfully obtained judgement for the recovery of misappropriated monies which was to be paid to the Jakun Orang Asli as compensation for their ancestral land acquired by Johor State Government. The Federal Court upheld the High Court Judgement. The case was handled on a pro bono basis.

Not surprising, in 2018, Tan Sri Tommy Thomas the former Attorney General of Malaysia appointed Ragumaren as a co- counsel together with lawyer Dato’ Dr. Gurdial Singh Nijar, and the Federal Counsel from the Attorney General Chambers to file a claim for and on behalf of the Government of Malaysia against the Kelantan State and some private companies for encroaching into the Temiar Community ancestral land in Gua Musang, Kelantan.

Tan Sri Thomas in his book, Justice in the Wilderness wrote:

“.....Ragumaren was excited when I asked him for assistance. ....I must acknowledge, the fabulous work rendered by Gurdial, Ragumaren and his juniors in the Orang Asli case against Kelantan, performing world class services pro bono so cheerfully and happily”.

As a beneficiary of the Form Six Project he gets animated when he talks of RSSF leaders and members who opened his eyes to the real world. Ragu dreams of creating more educational opportunities like RSSF's Pilot Project to bring in more deserving students to acquire tertiary education.

Ragu is married to Alice Varkki and blessed with triplets, two of whom are lawyers working with him and the third son, is an Assistant Sports Administrator in an international school in Kuala Lumpur.

Ragu is thankful to Dato V.L. Kandan for inviting him to serve on the RSSF Board.



**KUMAR KARTHIGESU**

Kumar Karthigesu son of Prof. Dr. R Karthigesu and Puvaneswari, follows their footsteps as a music enthusiast. Born in Kuala Lumpur, he spent a significant part of his childhood years in Penang.

He also spent a few brief years studying in the UK. He describes his early childhood as regular, except that he was exposed and immersed in arts and Indian culture as these were the primary passions of his parents. Kumar obtained BA (Hons) Economics from the University of Pune, India and MA in (Performing Arts) from Middlesex University, UK.

Kumar studied music from the age of four and began learning sitar at the age of 10, based on the traditional 'gurukula' training under Ustad Usman Khan in 1994. Today he is an award-winning sitar performer and composer who is actively involved as a producer and teacher. He has been the Senior Sitar Teacher, at the Temple of Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur since 200. He has been appointed Director of the Music Department since 2008.

Kumar has lectured at the Cultural Centre, University of Malaya, and at the National Arts Academy (Aswara). His multiple national awards include Anugerah Seni Negara 2009 by the Malaysian Government and the National Living Heritage.

He is listed in the official Heritage Charter of Malaysia by Jabatan Warisan Negara. He has worked extensively in the Malaysian music industry and has tutored hundreds of students in sitar music and has performed all over the world in major music festivals. Kumar says his motivation in joining RSSF was to continue the work and legacy of his father. He hopes to contribute to the novel fundraising ideas and efforts of RSSF.



**PRASHANT PATHMANABAN**

The second of Datuk K. Pathmanaban and Datin Prema's three sons, Prashant spent his childhood in Bangsar, an urban suburb of Kuala Lumpur, while studying at St. John's Institution up to his completion of SPM in 1988. A keen sportsman, he forged many lifelong friendships through his participation in games. Prashant secured a Petronas Scholarship to further his studies. He obtained a BSc, in Electrical Engineering from Cornell University, New York, followed by a Master's degree, in Microwaves and Optoelectronics from the University College of London, UK. During the course of his career, he also undertook several management programmes by Harvard University and London School of Business.

Prashant began his career with the then newly formed Lucent Technologies, as a Systems Engineer in 1996. He broke away from the mould in 1999 and moved into the digital space as the dot.com boom took place, working at a start-up before taking on regional roles with Yahoo! and then Google. He built his career specializing in Digital Services, taking on local leadership roles at Astro Digital before his current role at Digi as the Head of Digital Products and Services. He has had the privilege of running the top digital destinations in Malaysia and also being part of the Malaysian digital economy and ecosystem.

Today, he not only continues to build digital businesses and products but also has a strong penchant for building teams and careers. Coming from a family that has deep roots in Malaysian estates, he understands how education is critical for a better future. He sees that today's youth face very different challenges and that merely providing access to funds should not be the end-solution. He believes that in the new digital era, there is an opportunity to re-engineer how funds are raised and distributed.

Prashant hopes to work with the RSSF Board Members in building on the success of the Fund and taking it to new heights. He believes the Fund should inspire recipients to "pay it forward", creating a sustainable ecosystem of mentorship and financial assistance that would ultimately raise its impact and longevity. He also believes we should look beyond formal education as we aim to produce success stories of tomorrow.



**DR LETCHUMANAN AMAIPPEN**

Born in Sungei Pelek New Village in Sepang, Letchumanan vividly remembers his early morning walk through the lush green oil palm plantation to his Teluk Merbau Group Tamil School. Born in October 13, 1952 he was the fourth child among six siblings. His parents, Amaippen Karumanan and Rasai Kaunder came into Malaya as indentured labourers to work in a coconut plantation. After Letchumanan completed his secondary school education in Sungei Pelek, he fulfilled his elder brother's dream and ambition by opting to do medicine in Manipal Medical College, Mysore University, Karnataka. He obtained his MBBS degree in 1983. On his return, he worked for a year in Kuala Lumpur General Hospital, then served as Acting Pengarah in Kota Belud Hospital, in Sabah. A year later, he completed his government service in General Hospital in Seremban.

In 1987, he was an independent General Practitioner in Teluk Panglima Garang, Kuala Langat, Selangor. In 2005, he was awarded the Fellowship of College General Practitioners (FCGP). In 2016, he was invited to join Koperasi NESA Pelbagai Berhad and has been Co-operative Director since then. In 2018, he served for a short period as Acting Chairman. Since 2019, he has been Co-operative Board Director in MCIS.

He has also served as Branch Chairman in the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) for 12 years and as committee member of the Selangor Indian Association (SIA) for 15 years. During his service in SIA, Letchumanan established a computer laboratory for SJK (Tamil) Telok Panglima Garang School. Under Bala's Chairmanship, Letchumanan served as RSSF committee member for five years. He was actively involved in collecting donations and today, after a long break he is back again to serve as a Board Member.

Letchumanan married Ngu Moi Kwe, a lecturer in Institute of Teacher Education, International Languages Campus, College Bahasa Bahasa Antara Bangsa Kuala Lumpur. They have a son in New York, pursuing a course in marketing at the Adelphi University in New York.



**PROF. DR UMA RANI SINNIAH**

Senior Lecturer, Universiti Putra Malaysia  
President of  
National Seed Association Malaysia Centre

Uma Rani Sinniah was born in Rubana Estate, Teluk Intan, Perak. She is one of three children of Mr P.R Sinniah, an Estate Conductor, and Madam Athilethchumy.

With a keen interest in Biology, particularly in plant science, Uma obtained a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science, graduating with excellent grades from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in 1992.

Uma then earned a scholarship to pursue her PhD in Seed and Planting Material Science at the University of Reading, United Kingdom. After completing her PhD in 1997, she was appointed lecturer at Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM).

Since then she has pursued her passion in teaching and research by supervising more than 30 M.Sc. and PhD candidates and publishing more than 100 papers in reputed journals. She has also authored and edited several technical books in the field of Agriculture. She is currently the Head of the National Seed Association of Malaysia.

Besides her quest for academic excellence, she has shown interest in community development programmes such as, *Be the Next Hero* in 2017 for school dropouts equipping them with skills and motivating them to become useful and successful in life. She has also served as Deputy Director of the University Community Transformation Centre, running many community development projects.

Uma was invited to join the RSSF Board in 2019. With her understanding of plantation life and of the dire needs of Indian youths, she hopes to serve for the betterment of the Indian community at large.



**DATO' THIRUMOORTHY NADESAN**

Thirumoorthy has had an extensive career in the security industry spanning over 22 years. He is highly regarded as an expert in this industry with not only his dynamic operational and management skills but also an outstanding astute business acumen with an ability to capitalize on industry requirements.

Thirumoorthy is actively involved as a patron, in Non- Governmental Organizations such as National Crime Prevention Network Association, where he organizes many events locally and globally, mainly related to crime prevention.

He is a Certified Member of the Council of International Investigators U.S.A. (CII) and was honoured with the Leadership Excellence Award by Middle East Business Leaders Awards (DUBAI) in 2014. He has also received the Global Leadership Award (MALAYSIA) in 2014 and 2015 respectively organized by The American Leadership Development Association (ALDA)

He is a visionary who never rests on his laurels. He always strives to upgrade his knowledge on security to ensure excellence in his service.

Thirumoorthy who has recently joined as a board member of RSSF hopes to share his knowledge and extend his expertise to assist RSSF reach out to the disadvantaged and aspiring youths of our community.

# 6

## FUNDS AND SUPPORT

Initially, RSSF was founded to help only students in the University of Malaya but since then, it has expanded its scope to provide financial assistance for students in other institutions.

RSSF Board Members provide free services to the Fund in addition to paying an annual subscription of RM120 each to cover administrative expenses. It all began with the monthly contribution of RM 5 monthly from each RSSF member. This was later increased to RM 10 each month.

From time to time, the Fund organizes cultural shows as part of its fund-raising activities. The RSSF Board has made it a condition that recipients must repay their loans as soon as they are gainfully employed. This also acts to serve as a bridge to connect them with other students in similar circumstances. It is hoped that this act will inculcate in them a sense of involvement to build an educated community that will be on par with the rest of Malaysians.

Prior to the formalization of ISSF, funds were collected on an ad hoc basis whenever the need arose. After ISSF was registered with the Registrar of Societies, proper accounting books and records have been maintained.

In the 1970s, as the fund of the last resort, RSSF initially disbursed RM 300.00 to RM 500.00 per student for one semester.

From the 1980s' till 2010, RSSF periodically increased this to RM 700.00 to RM 1,200.00 to RM 1,500.00 to RM 3,000.00 till the year 2010. In exceptional cases, the Board has disbursed higher amounts to deserving cases.

In the early years of 2000 there was an increasing demand for study loans but the loan repayment was discouraging. The Board Members then changed the conditions of repayment. An immediate family member of the recipient had to undertake to pay a minimum sum of RM 50 per month, starting from the first month after the release of the loan.

RSSF has resorted to various other means to collect the loans disbursed to students.

The Fund has from time to time appointed Administrative Assistants like and Kandhimathy Rajannan (1976 to 1982)) (Josephine Raj (2001 to 2003) to help the Board to manage the daily routines, particularly in collection of loans. In the year 2010, Presanya Krishnan, a Chartered Accountant was employed. She made significant contribution in collecting and managing loans and funds. She had tracked many loan recipients using

the social media, legal procedures and representing the Fund in the Small Claims Court. So far, more than RM 1 million has been disbursed to deserving students. RSSF has helped more than 593 students to complete their tertiary education and become professionals. It has managed to collect a sum of RM 520,000.00 as repayment to date.

RSSF is grateful to all involved who have contributed to its coffers generously or have offered office space gratis and administrative services.

DRSSF appeals to loan recipients to pay back as soon as possible so that more students in need can be assisted in the future.

### **ADMINISTRATION OFFICES**

Since there were no permanent premises for the RSSF office, the administration was carried out from temporary locations which included:

1970	PPN Students Hostel, Petaling Jaya
1970-1989	Wisma Tan Sri V Manickavasagam (MIC HQ), No.1, Jalan Rahmat, Kuala Lumpur
1989-1996	Tan Sri Dato S Subramaniam's Office
1996-2000	M/S Raki, Thomas and Ramanen
2001 to date	The Law Office of Messrs.S Mathavan & Nur Hafizah, Wisma Di-Cor, Subang Jaya.

### **RSSF ENDOWMENT FUNDS 1973-2005**

In 1973, Madam Thayammal bequeathed jewellery worth RM10,000.

In 1979, in memory of Ramani Ramanathan a sum of RM 15,000 was collected from well-wishers and was distributed to two beneficiaries.

In 2005, in Memory of Trade Unionist and politician V. David of Transport Workers Union, a sum of RM20,000 was donated by Mr Michael Sebastian, his close friend and former Director of Workers Institute of Technology, Pandamaran, Klang Michael Sebastian had served in International Labour Organisation in Turin and Geneva.

The Board and Members of RSSF are thankful to the donors, participants and recipients who have also contributed, for their generosity, cooperation and involvement in making the Fund successful.

RSSF wishes to see this bond among recipients grow and help more students to realize their dreams.

7

THE FORM SIX PILOT PROJECT  
1977 to 1978



*Vivekananda Ashramam in Brickfields with imposing statue of Swami Vivekananda, where the students were offered accommodation.*

The aftermath of May 1969 riots saw a consolidation of policies that included a quota system for entry into the University of Malaya, then the only public university in the country.

Although only 20% of the seats was allocated to non- Bumiputra students, Indian students were not competitive enough to gain admission into the university.

In the mid 1970s, Bala and Pathma dismayed by this fact planned to get more students to enter the University. The only way was to get more Indian students into Form Six. At that time not many were qualified to go to Form Six in Government Schools. There was only a handful of the target group that passed the Form Six Entrance Examination. The majority was unable to secure places in Form Six because of their poor performance in not only MCE(SPM) but also the Entrance Examination.

Consequently, those who were desirous of higher education and wanted to escape the cycle of poverty in the estates turned to jobs that did not require university degrees. Some applied to and were accepted into teacher training colleges. Others had little option but to enter the general job market as manual workers thus relegating themselves almost back to the poverty from which they desperately wanted to escape.

In 1977, Bala and Pathma quickly devised a plan to help more students move up the ladder. They started a scheme which would give a leg up for those whose grades were not eligible to pursue Form Six at Government schools. The scheme, simply known as the Form Six Pilot Project, was set up for those who had completed their Form Five and were keen on higher pursuits.

The project was advertised in a Tamil newspaper and by word of mouth. Fourteen students applied to join the programme and all were accepted. Nava initiated the discussion with the then Administrator, Mr Sivasampu of the Vivekananda Ashram (a spiritual centre). Mr Sivasambu was impressed with the project and gladly and willingly offered accommodation for the students.

The students were provided with basic facilities as well as free tuition ,transport expenses, pocket money and meals. Lakshmi Mess provided the meals.

The students attended Form Six classes at privately-run institutions, namely Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman (TAR College) Vanto Academy and Yayasan Anda Akademik.

Private tuition was given by dedicated volunteers who included Kalimuthu, Nava, Dr. Thillainathan, Selvarajah, Pandian, Mrs.Ampikaipakan, Ilango, and Gafur Khan. The tuition classes were held at the Ashram.

Other well-wishers who regularly came to give the students moral and academic support included Bala, Pathma, Subra, Govindan, V. Selvaraj, Kandiah and R.S. Maniam. The students were encouraged to think big, aim high, and realize their dreams.

Selvarajah, volunteered to be their warden and resided with them. He monitored, mentored and motivated them. He took the role of a big brother, to counsel them and bring them back on track when they lost heart and made sure they worked towards their goal. His dedication and care for the students earned him much reverence and affection.

Even the caretaker of the Ashramam, Vallipuram chipped in to help the students begin their day with the morning puja, conducted at the Shivalinga shrine, on the first floor. The students also participated in many other activities like football and other sports and organizing charity events. The Secretary of the Ashramam, Sivasambu, instilled discipline and provided encouragement.

Mr. R. S. Maniam of RTM who was not a member of RSSF came to know of the project and voluntarily joined in to help the students. He took great interest in the welfare of the students as if he were their godfather. He featured them in a programme called *Tumpuan Minggu* on RTM in which the Form Six Project was highlighted in 1978.

The then Minister and President of the MIC Tan Sri Manickvasagam also appeared on the show and congratulated the organizers and encouraged the participants. He highlighted the importance of education to the Indian community in Malaysia. One of the recipients, Regumaran, speaking on behalf of the students, thanked RTM and RSSF. He assured them that the students will not let them down.

The whole scenario seemed to shape up as if it was meant to be, and there seemed to be a cultural aura that guided the students throughout the two year programme. Other influential people from all walks of life who were devotees of the Ashramam also gave support and encouragement. They included Yoga teachers, religious speakers, and members of the Sai Baba group. His Holiness Swami Haridas Giri made an unforgettable impact on many of the students.

The students had a chance to mingle and participate in interesting conversations and some were even invited to their homes for meals. They learnt etiquette including socialising and having informed conversations with people of varied backgrounds and absorbed the spiritual ambience that prevailed. The exposure and interaction with the real world

opened new vistas for the students to discover, develop, and address challenges.

It was charity at heart and everybody who contributed in cash or kind, knew they were investing in a new generation of healthy, and educated progeny from the estates. Thanks to the foresight, the vision and the untiring efforts of the founders and well-wishers of RSSF the project was a resounding success.

Of the 14 students who took part in this pioneering programme, some entered the University while others moved on to find other avenues which have taken them to a level they could otherwise never have dreamt of.

Lifetime friendships were forged among the participants. In Dec 2020, a group of them paid a visit to Selvarajah's residence at Shah Alam (picture below)



*Datuk K.Selvarajah (second from left) and his wife Datin Sethra Devi at their home in Dec 2020. (from left) Ragumaren, Tankaraju Muthusamy, Anandan Krishnan, S.Pasupathi and Pannir Selvam.*



**PUAN SRI DATIN THAMAYANTHI  
AMPIKAIPAKAN**

Her contribution to the Form Six Project

In the early days, the Ashramam had a non-profit hostel for disadvantaged estate students to study in the nearby Vivekananda Secondary School till Form Three. There was accommodation for 35-40 out station students from places far from Kuala Lumpur. When the RSSF Sixth Form Project started, there was also room to accommodate the additional 14 students.

Puan Sri Thamayanthi, wife of Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Ampikaipakan, was introduced to RSSF in 1977. She volunteered to coach the students in General Paper twice a week. She encouraged them to converse only in English so as to improve their language proficiency.

She also took an interest in organizing social and recreational activities for them. She says, "It was a lot of fun as the students became quite proficient in English. Teaching has been my passion. I am sure every student who has benefited from the RSSF scheme has been able to realize his dream." Over the years, she has kept in touch with one student, Pasupathi, from the time he was studying law in the UK, during which period he worked double shift at a food outlet in Victoria Station to pay his tuition fees.

RSSF is very grateful Puan Sri Datin Thamayanthi and Tan Sri Dato Ampikaipakan for their support and contribution.



*(Top and below) Form Six students at Vivekananda Ashramam.*



*Group Photo of leaders and Form Six students at Vivekananda Ashramam Seated (from left): Datuk K. Pathmanaban, Tan Sri Manickavasagam, Tan Sri Dato S.Subramaniam, and Tan Sri G.K.Rama Ayer.*



*Form Six Students celebrating Deepavali Night with hostelites of Vivekananda Ashramam*

The life stories of participants in the Form Six Pilot Project are a proud testimony of how a visionary approach, timely help and the right attitude can make positive changes that will last a lifetime.

In a speech to these students, Tan Sri Manickavasagam said, "If you can go back and educate your siblings, that already sets the impetus of the process to draw the community out of its vicious cycle of poverty".

## 8

### PARTICIPANTS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## THE CHOSEN PATHS OF THE RECIPIENTS:



**ANANDAN KRISHNAN**

Anand was born in Jasin in Malacca. He has two sisters and two brothers. His parents Krishnan and Kamala were both rubber tappers.

He began his primary education in *Jasin Tamil school* and completed his secondary in *Jasin English School*.

On completing his Form Six in Vanto Academy, Anandan did not pursue higher studies due to family commitments. He began his career, working in Selangor Emporium as an Indoor Display Artist and soon was upgraded to Interior Designer, and later General Affairs Personal Manager in the retail business. His last post was as Departmental Store Manager in Kepong Branch.

He worked 11 years and picked up the ropes of the trade and soon ventured out on his own-trading, exporting and importing goods comprising kitchenware, personal care products. He distributed them to stores throughout Malaysia.

He retired as General Manager of Datta Shree Sdn Bhd. He is grateful to RSSF for his Form Six education which opened the window into the real world and that was value-added experience. He had those life-values ingrained in him to help him educate his siblings and see them all settled well in life. His two daughters are PhD holders, both having studied in the United Kingdom.



**ARUDRA ANGAPAN**

He returned home to Harvard Estate which is now known Jerai Estate in Kedah with his Higher School Certificate from RSSF's pilot project. His priority then was not to go to university but to educate his siblings and look after his parents. While waiting for a job, he gave free tuition to poor students in his area. He succeeded to help 30 students achieve the Sijil Rendah Pelajaran and six students to obtain the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia.

Though Arudra himself needed financial help, he did not regard tuition as his earning opportunity. Still, he offered his knowledge free of charge to children from impoverished backgrounds inspired by the noble objective of RSSF. That is the gift he brought home from RSSF's project.

With his Higher School Certificate (Thanks to RSSF) he obtained a job in Petronas. He was posted to Kedah where he worked for the next 11 years. Later he was transferred to Petronas headquarters in the Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur from where he retired in 2015.

He married Letchemyammah in 1983 and has two girls and a boy and they are all engineers.



**KRISHNAN A. PERUMAL**

Krishnan was from Rubana Estate. After his two year stint in Form Six at the Ashramam and obtaining his HSC, he worked as a mechanical draftsman in Hargill engineering firm in Shah Alam. He later joined as a Technical Supervisor in Research and Development in United Plantations Teluk Anson in Perak. Then he joined government service and became Pegawai Eksekutif in 1982.

He retired with a golden handshake and an Award for Excellent Service (Sijil Perkhidmatan Cemerlang) for the third time at the age of 60. Krishnan said, "Completing Form Six is only clearing the initial hurdle to move on in real-life. The decision to make something of your life is the greater challenge. Besides academic achievements, you need the dynamics that make life. These include using your abilities and capabilities to charter your course."

For him, that motivation was provided in the two years he spent in the Ashramam. Krishnan, among many, has undoubtedly put in a lot of hard work and perseverance from his Form Six educational experience provided by RSSF to move on in his career. He remembers how, while in the Ashramam and after tuition, his friends and he passed by Swami Haridas giving spiritual classes in the hall. They noticed the crowd swelling day by day, and curiosity pulled them in. Krishnan says he regretted not going earlier for he learnt that belief in oneself and the principles of life were what religion inculcated in you and guided you to be a better human being.

He credits his success in his ranking in government service to wholesome education which he received and later provided for his extended family members and two daughters. His two daughters are both university graduates. He has also helped Indians in rural areas. He was a Temple secretary; Branch Chairman of MIC and Advisor to Tamil Youth Bell Club and Benevolent Society in Mukim Kalumpang in Hulu Selangor. After retirement, he has dedicated himself to Saiva Samaya Mandram, serving as Secretary and Member of the Central Committee of the Saiva Samaya Peravai.



**MADHAVAN MARUDAMUTHU**

Madhavan, born on January, 26, 1958, hails from Banting, Selangor and has four brothers and two sisters. He completed his primary education in a Tamil school and continued his secondary in a government school in Banting. He saw the RSSF Form Six Project scholarship offer in a Tamil daily and applied to join thirteen other candidates in 1977.

Madhavan says RSSF was instrumental in shaping his future but more importantly, in providing exposure that allowed him to explore the world and understand people. Upon completion of his course, he missed the chance to pursue the intended University course due to lack of required merits.

However, the RSSF platform, where he found his feet, did not let him down. He continued his studies in management in a private institution. Though he did not choose the same path as his colleagues, he still found his niche in a multi-national Japanese Company NEC, Malaysia, as a Senior Manager. He is grateful for the opportunity, guidance and support that RSSF gave him.

He has three sons working as engineers and the youngest doing his Actuarial Science at Sunway University.



**MARIMUTHU IYAN PERUMAL**

He was born on January 22, 1958 to Alamelu and Iyan Perumal in Ladang Lian Hoe, Rantau Panjang, Masjid Tanah, Melaka. He used to cycle 17 miles to school. He completed his Senior Cambridge Examination in 1976.

He joined the RSSF Form Six Project in 1977. He worked as a temporary teacher until he joined Lembah Pantai Teachers Training College in 1984 and continued teaching till 1988 in Jasin. He Later joined the insurance industry. In October 1991, he married Puvaneswary a teacher and they were blessed with three daughters, Thanasila Nithya, Dishanthini and Ashwini who are all doctors and a son, Kavin Raj who pursued a course in Actuarial Science.

Puvaneswary says that when she married Marimuthu, she discovered to her surprise that he had previously adopted six boys who were staying with him. He took care of their basic needs and even did the cooking for them to pursue their schooling till Form Six. He continued this until his own family grew bigger. Marimuthu told her that the RSSF Form Six Project had influenced his attitude towards life and made him aware of the needs of young people. His fulfillment was to see the success of those boys he accommodated. She is proud of the contribution made to the community by her husband. He passed away in 2014.



*Marimuthu addressing staff of his insurance agency in Bahau(left) and his audience in 1995(right)*



**S. PANNIR SELVAM**

when Mr. V. Selvaraj of RTM brought the good news of the RSSF Form Six project to Pannir who applied for the programme. On completing his HSC, he joined a course in Business Studies at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

In 1983 he joined Bank Bumiputra Malaysia and spent 32 years in the bank and retired in 2015 as Director of Corporate Banking in CIMB.

He returned to RSSF and served as Treasurer. He left for the UK in 1994 to pursue his MBA. Pannir greatly appreciates his inclusion in the Form Six project which has taught him to respect and to honour the trust placed in him.

During his tenure as Treasurer, he also helped to organise the Alleycats Show in Stadium Negara and Revathy Barathanatyam roadshow. He is proud to have been part of the process of raising funds, to uplift more aspiring youths and giving back to RSSF in the form of service.



**PASUPATHI SITHAMPARAM**

Pasupathi's humble background and the values that the Form Six Project ingrained in him, had opened his eyes to the plight of our Indian youths. He never fails to mention his guru Kalimuthu who had introduced him to the Form Six Project and greatly revered Datuk Selva who was the warden in the Ashramam for the 14 resident students.

Datuk Selva played a pivotal role in mentoring and guiding not only Pasu but each one of the 14 participants in the Form Six Project. He helped Pasu secure his first employment in the Income Tax Department. And later encouraged him to read law in the UK. Pasu did not stop here. He chose 'the road not taken'.

He had a vision to create opportunities for needy Indian youths. This was a big dream to create a safe, inspiring environment that would transform these youths to become economically independent and responsible citizens. He worked hard and with his team networked with the private sector and government agencies to set up MySkills Foundation on its 34 acre campus in Kalumpang Selangor. Of the 1600 school dropouts who enrolled, 62 have since been gainfully employed and the rest are continuing their studies. Pasu did not forget to honor Dr Rama Subbiah by naming one of his meeting rooms after him in his campus in Kalumpang.

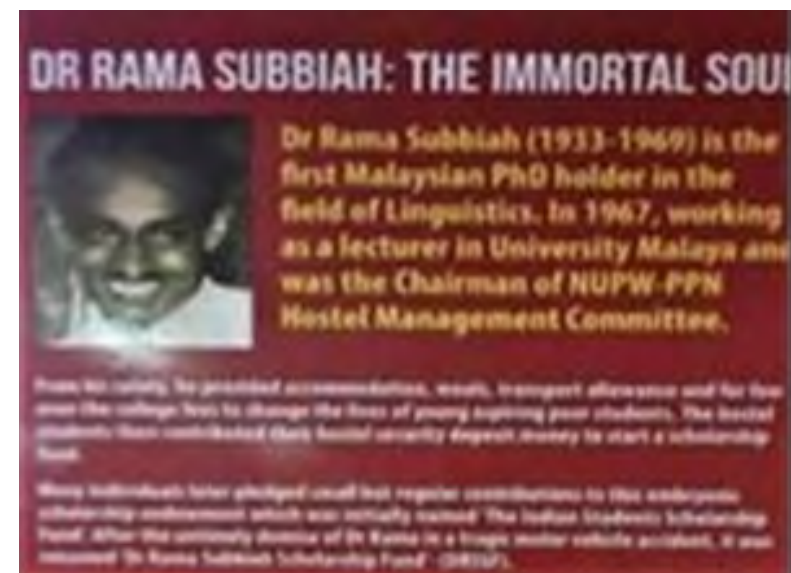
Datuk Selva continued to be Pasu's inspiration by being his friend and supported him as a Board Member of MySkills.

Pasu says in his Datuk Selva's eulogy:

"Datuk Selva, we will always remember you not only as a hardworking, clean, government servant but a great man who went beyond borders to change people's lives."



*A meeting being held in a room named after Dr. Rama Subbiah*



*The plaque above the Meeting Room.*



*MySkills Campus in Kalumpang Selangor*



## RAGUMAREN GOPAL

Ragumaren hails from Bukit Benut Estate Kluang and later his parents moved to Benut Estate Rengam, both under Harrisons and Crossfields in Johor. Ragu, born on September 16, 1959 is the eldest sibling among three brothers and three sisters.

As a young boy, he used to wake up at 4.30 am daily to help his mother tap rubber trees before going off to school about seven kilometres away from his home. His father was an estate foreman and a certified first class engine driver. When Ragu failed to secure a place in Form Six in the government school after completing Form Five in 1976, he accepted a job as a field conductor in Benut Estate. Despite the fact he was provided a bungalow house and was reasonably comfortable, Ragu still wanted to pursue higher studies.

One day in 1977, his father spotted a notice by RSSF in a Tamil newspaper announcing a Form Six Project that provided tuition and funds to complete Form Six education. He applied and was accepted. After his first, long journey away from Rengam to Kuala Lumpur, he was enrolled as a student at Tunku Abdul Rahman College for his Form Six classes. He was accommodated at the Vivekananda Ashramam and was overwhelmed by the care, counselling and support that RSSF members provided for the students. He is also grateful to his parents for encouraging him to further his studies though far from home.

He particularly remembers Mrs. Ambikaipagan, Dr. Thillainathan, Mr. Ghaffoor, Mr. John Doraisamy, Dr. Marimuthu, Dr Thambirajah who tutored the students. Dato Subra and Dato Pathma often came to motivate and inspire the students at the Ashramam. Others who provided immeasurable support include RS Maniam from RTM who took on the role of a foster father. Ragu was also taken up by the interest shown by community leaders and especially by the then Minister of Labour Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam, who appeared in a TV programme to encourage the students.



*Ragu with a Temiar boy at Kampung Parik RPS  
Kuala Betis Gua Musang*

Popularly known as Ragu, he is an Advocate and Solicitor, who lives in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur.

Ragumaren feels that the Form Six Project was a divine intervention that has made him a successful person today. He keeps in touch with some of the sponsors and all his colleagues and recipients of the Form Six Pilot Project. He dearly misses Marimuthu, one of the recipients who passed away in 2014.

Ragu owes his deepest gratitude to RSSF in particular Mr. Navamukundan for his leadership and commitment to make the pilot project a success.



**RAMACHANDRA RAO RAMA NAIDU**

Ramachandra's early education began in a Telugu school in E Block Estate Rawang Selangor. It was the only school available then. Fortunately, his father moved out of the estate to set up a provision shop in Rawang town where Ramachandra helped whenever he could after school hours. He completed his secondary school in the English medium and secured a place in Form Six at Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman. His father struggled to support him and his siblings.

Dr. Appa Rao, then President of the Telugu Association Malaysia, who was aware of Ramachandra's plight, introduced him to RSSF's pilot project. Ramachandra not only gained a valuable qualification but a world of experience and tremendous confidence as well. He was able to provide his family with the benefits of better education and life.

He joined UAB Bank (which later merged into CIMB Bank) as an administrative clerk. He was promoted as an Executive officer in charge of business loans.

His wife is employed in DRB Hicom. His daughter, a dentist is currently in Kuala Pilah Government Hospital and son, a Risk Consultant in Price Waterhouse Cooper in KL Sentral.

Ramachandra has since retired. He attributes his success to RSSF.



**RENGIAH MUTHUSAMY**

Rengiah Muthusamy hails from Bukit Asahan Estate in Malacca.

When his application to the project was accepted, he attended Yayasan Anda Akademi, founded by (Datuk Sri) Anwar Ibrahim. While the others, were educated in the English medium Rengiah went through the Malay medium.

He remembers his mentor Dr. Mary Yap Kain Ching who inspired and guided him.

Upon qualifying, he entered University of Malaya and obtained a degree in Indian Studies and Malay literature. He completed his Diploma Pendidikan in the University of Malaya in 1984 and served in Sabah for 33 years, some of the years he served as the Principal. He was awarded Pengetua Cemerlang several times;as

- Principal of SMK Kuhara 1985-1996,
- Principal of SMK Datuk Panglima Abdullah, Semporna, Tawau, 2008-2012
- Principal of SMK Umas 2013-2014;
- Pengarah at Kolej Vokasional, Tawau (2014-2018)

He married Mariayee Krishnan in 1987. They have three boys, all of whom are doctors and a girl, an engineer.

He strongly believes that if one child is educated in the family, the rest will follow suit and the whole family will move on to a more comfortable life. He is happy as he was able to impart knowledge to his students and make them appreciate the value of education.

Rengiah says RSSF has much to give Indians in Malaysia the key to have an identity of their own and to be respected as fellow Malaysians.



**SELVARAJU POONUSAMY**

Introduced to RSSF Form Six pilot project by his good friend Krishnan, Selvaraju was simply delighted to gain not only academic knowledge but also valuable friendship. He also learnt how to adapt to changes and challenges and to understand different characters and personalities and how to respond and react to them.

After Form Six, he moved into the plantation industry and pursued a course in Agriculture and later undertook a course in Personnel Management.

The confidence and courage that RSSF gave him, carried him through his career. He saw the epitome of success when his children graduated in Medicine, Engineering and Finance. Even his wife surprised him when she entered the corporate world to take up a new career.

He believes all that he learnt from the RSSF Project has had a snow-balling effect on his family. He has retired but has taken the offer to serve in the warehouse department in an oil and gas company.



**K. SREETHARAN**

Sreetharan was born in Rompin, Negeri Sembilan and the 4th sibling in a family of seven. Sreetharan was introduced to the Form Six Project by Nava and he is ever so grateful that he could study the two years in that environment.

Sreetharan did not complete his Form Six. The life and exposure he experienced in the Asharamam were the most critical elements that opened his eyes to the real world.

Sreetharan set up a stationery shop in Rompin and now supplies books and sports equipment to students in several schools in the vicinity. His only child, a son, Hariharan, has completed his degree in the University of Technology, Brisbane, Queensland.



*Sreetharan with his wife Usha in front of the stationery shop Syarikat Serbalengkap, Rompin.*



**TANKARAJU MUTHUSAMY**

Tankaraju was born into a family of seven in Kelan Estate, Kulai, Johor. His parents were rubber tappers. His father could read and write Tamil, and his mother was illiterate. Poverty prevented most of the estate children from going any further than the Lower Certificate of Education. Somehow he managed to complete his MCE, but he could go no further as Kulai was a small town and had no institution of higher learning.

Private schools were too far away and not affordable. By chance he saw the advertisement in Tamil Nesan calling for applications to enrol in the Form Six Pilot Project. He applied and was accepted. It was a big cultural shock for him to move from an estate environment to a city. For the first time in his life, he says he had well-balanced meals. Besides his regular classes at Vanto where he was enrolled, he was able to attend tuition classes organized at the Ashramam and PPN Hostel. He says there were a lot of activities with spiritual talks and participation in debates and speeches.

On completion of Form Six he enrolled himself at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and obtained a degree in Psychology. Tankaraju found the four years an uphill struggle as he was thrown into the deep-end to structure and apply himself based on his energy and intelligence. It was challenging work, but success was sweet. He feels his life in the Ashramam gave him the strength and motivation to succeed.

Tankaraju later obtained a Master's degree from Deakin University in Australia. Later he worked in CYMA College and was its principal for seven years. His last posting was as the Principal of Regent School of Economics. (Stamford College Group). With 19 years of experience, he opened his own private skills training centre in 2002. He provides Computer Repair and Maintenance training for many in the underprivileged B40 group who desire vocational education. There are courses in areas like Welding, Electrical, Culinary, Hotel management and Office Administration. At the end of this course, they

graduate with Malaysian Skills Certificate or Malaysian Skills Diploma. His efforts have earned his institution three Education Excellence awards from the National Association of Private Educational Institutions (NAPEI) and a 5-Star rating by the Ministry of Human Resources twice.

He also put aside 20% of his income towards charity and being a Rotarian he has contributed to charitable organisations like National Kidney Foundation, MySkills Foundation, Association of Science, Technology and Innovation, and Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund. He also gives substantial discounts to students who come from poor homes. He started a Vocational Training Institute called Institut CQ-TEC, and then moved on to establish Breyer College which has campuses in Taman Sri Gombak and in Jalan Raja Laut. Tankaraju dreams of educating every disadvantaged Malaysian youth.



*Breyer College*



*Napei awards to Breyer College*



VINAYAKAM ARUMUGAM

Born in 1955, in Strathmashie Estate, Bagan Datuk, Perak, Vnayagam completed his secondary education in Sungai Sumun. After completing Form Six sponsored by RSSF, he worked in Yeo Hiap Seng in Petaling Jaya. In 1981, he joined the Royal Malaysia Police.

In 1986, he took up an electronics and telecommunications course in Institut Teknik Polis, Pulapol. In 1987, he completed the course and continued his service with the Police Force. Married in 1985 he and his wife Theiva Sigamani have three daughters Tharishiny, a medical doctor; Subashini, holder of a Masters degree in Microbiology, and Jananie, a Chemical Engineer.

He feels that the two years he spent in the Ashramam changed his life and outlook and allowed him to mingle with people of various walks of life. He enjoyed hostel life with the understanding of caring and sharing that developed lasting friendship with his fellow students. Besides, he also had the chance to attend spiritual talks.

*Such are the success stories of the heroes who reached for the stars  
from the golden platform that RSSF visionaries provided.  
The effects of the Form Six project have not stopped snowballing.  
Taking into consideration the present circumstances, perhaps it is  
time to revive the project!*

## STUDY LOAN CHEQUE PRESENTATION

Below are pictures in sequence showing students from Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Malaya (UM) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) receiving their study loan cheques at the MIC Headquarters in June 1988.



*Prof. Dr Sankaran's mother, Mdm. Gomathy Ramanathan hands over the RSSF study loan cheque to a deserving student as Hon. Sec. Segaran and his staff look on.*



*Dato' K Pathmanaban presents the study loan cheque at the MIC headquarters to a student from Universiti Malaya.*



*Dato S. Subramaniam presents a study loan cheque to a student from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia at MIC Headquarters.*



**ASOKUMARAN**

Asokumaran had just completed Form Six at *Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman* and had a problem obtaining a loan to enter University of Malaya. Raghavan Nair arranged a loan of RM 600 from RSSF. It was then that Asokumaran landed in PPN hostel and chanced to meet Dr Rama Subbiah.

Asokumaran remembers the days when he used to see Dr. Rama Subbiah, a simple man, often looking thoughtful with a very friendly smile mingling with students more than with the other lecturers. One day, Ashokumaran noticed that Dr. Rama Subbiah was standing in line for his meal with the PPN students.

He was allowing each student behind him in the queue to move in front of him. Eventually, Dr. Rama Subbiah got his plate of food and sat with the students, chatted with them while the other lecturers had their meals in the staff dining room. Asokumaran was surprised, but this memory is etched in his heart never to be forgotten.

Asokumaran has also taken an active part in helping out in the events with Board members like Nava and Govindan. He remembers going to Ipoh and a few other towns to help organise fund raising events and other logistics before the celebrities arrived.

Soon after he completed his degree, he joined the Inland *Revenue Department* in 1973. In 1989, he completed law degree and his MBA in 1998. He retired as Director of Special Compliance Unit HQ in 2005 at the age of 56. Though he is retired, he still keeps in touch with his colleagues and his unforgettable Mr. Raghavan Nair's family.



**SIVAKUMAR V NAIDU**

Sivakumar s/o Varatharaju Naidu, better known as V Sivakumar is currently the Minister of Human Resources in the Malaysian Government.

He is a member of the Democratic Action Party(DAP) a component party of Pakatan Harapan (HP) whose head is currently Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the Prime Minister.

Born on 5 Dec 1970, Sivakumar was a former Speaker of the Perak State Legislative Assembly having succeeded Junus Wahid.

In the 2018 general election he was returned as Member of Parliament for Batu Gajah.

Earlier, as a university student, he was cash strapped . He said many students were forced to work part -time to afford the fees. He successfully applied for a loan from RSSF and completed his studies.

An outspoken and dedicated MP, Sivakumar is passionate about serving people who have been left behind economically.



**AGALYA J MUNUSAMY**

She is one of the few lady recipients who graduated with an Honours degree in law and is now an Advocate and Solicitor of the High Court of Malaya. That was not an easy task. It is laudable that she has the will and the ability to overcome any challenge.

Agalya completed her secondary school in the *Convent School in Klang* and joined *Brickfields Asia College* for her law course. Her very supportive parents heard of the loans given by RSSF to needy students through one of the fundraising events.

RSSF eventually granted Agalya's long-time dream with the timely help to complete her course, and she is grateful to RSSF for what she is today.



**INDRANI KOPAL**

This shining star was awarded a *Fulbright Scholarship* to continue her long journey of discovery into documentary filming, but she just needed a little more to realize her dream. RSSF was timely to offer help at a critical time as she stepped into the challenging world of film making. She is grateful to Mr. Nishan Veerakumar of Pemandu, who introduced her to RSSF.

Indrani, as her name implies, thinks independently and undoubtedly breathes, eats and sleeps creativity. She translates the very ordinary into an exciting piece to reckon with. She may be exploring the higher planes of creativity but does not miss the little ant carrying its burden precariously across the pavement. She uses her artistic talents to help the deserving secure a place under the sun.

She is an internationally recognized award-winning filmmaker. Her documentary, *The Game Changer* has been screened at 17 festivals and won many awards. She has also received the Meera Nair Award for Rising Female Film Makers 2018.

Indrani was a senior lecturer at the School of Media and Communication at Taylor's College, Petaling Jaya before migrating to Australia after her marriage.



**PANDURENGAN SUBBYAH**

Graduate Teacher (Rtd) Pandurengan was born in *Rubana Estate* about 10 km from Teluk Intan. He is the third of nine children. His parents, who were rubber tappers, worked and retired in the same estate. His father sent him to an English medium school, in *Teluk Intan* while his siblings went to the Tamil School in the estate.

He completed his early education in 1961, in the Horley Methodist Primary School and Secondary education at the Horley Methodist High School in 1971. He became a teacher.

In 1992, he heard of Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund from his seniors in University, He received help from RSSF to continue his tertiary education at University Putra Malaysia and obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Education (Hons). He is very grateful that RSSF had allowed him to achieve his dream of being a graduate teacher.

He retired in 2014.



**DR. VISHNI RAU JAGANATHA RAU**

This is yet another recipient of RSSF who pursued a course in medicine. She has two older sisters, one who is a lawyer and another, an Economics graduate. Both are working. Their father, Jeganatha Rau is an insurance agent who through sheer hard work managed to give his children University education.

Where Vishni is concerned he managed to get her into Kursk State Medical University in Russia. RSSF stepped in to help Jeganatha Rau financially with the little more to top up for the course and fulfilled Vishni's desire to become a doctor. She is grateful that RSSF was able to help her continue her course. Her decision to go through one of the most challenging and longest courses in a foreign country is proof that she is determined to make both her parents and RSSF proud of her accomplishments. She is currently doing her internship in Hospital Sultan Ismail Johor Bahru.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of recipients.

***RSSF helps to make your dreams come true.  
Likewise, help others to realize their dreams too***

**10**

## **RSSF EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS**

RSSF is continuously exploring ways to motivate children from disadvantaged homes to excel in their studies.

In pursuit of this aim, it collaborated with two dailies; *The New Straits Times* and *Makkal Osai* to introduce educational programmes for children in Tamil medium schools.

Specifically, it sponsored a programme in the *New Straits Times* in October 2005 to help Year Five pupils in Tamil schools to improve their English proficiency and communication skills through exercises and inculcating a reading habit in them.

Under this programme, a total of 17,000 copies of a 16-page tabloid were distributed to 543 Tamil schools nationwide.

This programme was underwritten by donations from well-wishers but after a while, they could not be sustained due to the high logistic costs transporting the papers to all the Tamil schools in Malaysia.

The newspaper is now considering posting the papers on the website so the schools can download the relevant papers for their students.

Four years later, RSSF launched a weekly supplement through *Makkal Osai* called *Kalvi Chudar*.

This project was the brainchild of the then Chairman of RSSF, Bala and Subra.

RSSF Board Member, Errakiah, was appointed Director and Coordinator of the project. He worked with the Tamil school teachers and the Editors of the paper to produce study guides and practice exercises for several subjects in the syllabuses for the UPSR Examination.

The project was also aimed at encouraging the school children to master the Tamil language and develop an interest in Tamil literature.

At the requests of parents and teachers this programme was extended to include Bahasa Malaysia, Science and Mathematics.

Errakiah also helped produce a weekly supplement called *Manavar Osai* which provided sample questions and answers for pupils sitting for SRP, SPM, and STPM Examinations. He worked on it for four years after which *Makkal Osai* took over the task.

The pupils responded enthusiastically. Not only did they have a chance to improve their language proficiency, but they were also made aware of the opportunities in the world outside.

The teachers too were energised to walk the extra mile for the children.



An article in *Makkal Osai*, Dec 2009.

See Translation Next Page

**TRANSLATION:**

Q: How well is 'Kalvi Chudar', education via newspaper, received by the public?

A: We have received overwhelming response from the public for this project launched by *Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund*.

Darshini Sankaran, a Form One pupil, is testimony to the impact of this programme. Darshini took the initiative to visit Makkal Osai with her father, Mr Sankaran, to donate RM 500.00 towards the programme. She is a pupil at Damansara Utama Effingham Primary School. She had completed her UPSR but did not benefit from Kalvi Chudar as it was not launched yet then.

She said:

*However, I worked very hard and obtained 7A s in UPSR. I wish to donate this cheque of RM500 towards Kalvi Chudar for the benefit of future students. I am sure they will benefit from their useful exercises and tips. At the same time, may I request that a copy of the newspaper be placed in every school for the benefit of the UPSR students.*

The representatives of Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund and the Newspaper Administrative Head were touched to hear that the RM 500.00 was what Dharshini received as an award for her academic achievement!

Hope Dharshini's gesture serves as exemplary for members of our Indian community.



**Photo :**  
*Director and Coordinator of Kalvi Chudar and RSSF Board Member, Errakiah Sanasi receives RM 50,000 donation from Guinness Anchor Berhad (GAB) for the Kalvi Chudar project (2009)*

**Text : English Translation**  
Guinness Anchor Berhad (GAB) has been assisting Tamil schools with donations to help them improve in the English Language and Sports Activities. So far, on record 280 Tamil school children have benefited from their financial support. Recognizing the excellent work carried out weekly by Makkal Osai, GAB donated RM 50,000 for the education programme Kalvi Chudar introduced by Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund.

The picture shows the cheque being handed over to the Director and Coordinator of Kalvi Chudar and RSSF Board Member Errakiah by the Public Relations Officer of Guinness Anchor Berhad, Ms Carolyn Shamini in the presence of Mr Periasamy, the Administrative Head of Makkal Osai.

FUND-RAISING EVENTS

As head of Indian service at Radio Malaysia, Bala had close connections with well-known musicians in India, as they would have performed or were invited to be recorded over the radio in the RTM auditorium.

They were performers of sterling quality and were invited particularly for classical music lovers in Malaysia where opportunities to meet such great musicians or listen to were rare. They received enthusiastic patronage.

The same crowd yearned for more of these performances. RSSF opened the doors for more music lovers who learnt to appreciate Carnatic music and Classical dances. The shows were always packed and performers well received and applauded.

Some of them followed the musicians from one town to another to listen to music or watch the dance performances.

But this was not a single man's effort. The Board Members, recipients from the Form Six Project and students from PPN Hostel all contributed their expertise, time and money to make them happen not in Kuala Lumpur alone but in Johor Baru, Kluang, Seremban, Kuantan, Ipoh, Teluk Anson, Klang and Georgetown.

Each Board member in different cities took the responsibility to identify a sponsor and was in charge of finance and hosting for the singer/dancer and his/her troupe. The artistes became part of the RSSF family and were comfortable staying with the hosts.

The co-operation among them was simply extraordinary, and the outcome was naturally outstanding not only in patronage but in the collection of funds.

## A SENSATIONAL MEGA SHOW!

### Rajinikanth and Kushboo

In 1995, Vice Chairman, Tan Sri Dato S.Subramaniam proposed a mega musical show by Rajinikanth and Kushboo. That was the time when famous movies Bashaa and Annamalai had just been screened.

It was a 40-member entourage of dancers, singers and supporting artistes. This in itself posed an astronomical challenge both logistically and financially to RSSF as it was a small voluntary establishment funded by the generosity of the public.

Aided by the publicity and help from friends, recipients and sponsors, RSSF rose to the challenge.

The show was held in Stadium Negara, and tickets were sold out. Security, though strategically placed to contain the crowd, found it incredibly challenging. The roads leading to the Stadium were also jammed with cars. The heart of Kuala Lumpur came to a standstill. All they wanted was to get a glimpse of Rajinikanth their hero, whose unique and distinct style simply thrilled the public. He always played the role of a social activist, who fought for the rights of the downtrodden, demonstrating his belief in people's power to effect change in the political arena.

The media went as crazy as the public in trying to get photographs of the hot stars even as they arrived.



*Superstar Rajini Kanth*



*Much loved idol Kushbu*



*Superstar Rajini Kanth garlands Tan Sri Dato S. Subramaniam on stage thanking him for inviting him and actress Kushboo.*

## CARNATIC MUSIC AND DANCE FROM SCREEN TO STAGE!

### *Sankarabharanam*

Sankarabharanam, a Telugu musical movie was released in 1980. It was directed by K. Viswanath and its music was directed by K. Mahadevan. The movie won many awards.

Its great role was highlighting the beauty and significance of Carnatic music and dance at a time when Pop Music was taking the world by storm.

The story revolves around a Carnatic singer who gives refuge to a prostitute's daughter, Tulsi. This creates a scandal following which she walks out of his life. Tulsi re-enters at a time when Pop Music makes the great singer irrelevant. She brings her son to become his pupil and makes the master a revered figure again.



The traditional *Gurukula* or *teacher –pupil* concept, respect for the art world of *Carnatic* music and Classical Indian dance, were all handled very skilfully.

In fact, throughout the movie, it is the divine spirit of the traditional music and dance that rises above the story and demands admiration and reverence. What's more- makes the audience feel privileged to have watched it.

Chairman Dato V. L. Kandan was fascinated with this film and had often spoken of staging it as a musical show. After a long period of absence of fund-raising events for RSSF, this idea blossomed like the desert flower.

Dr. R. Karthigesu, our RSSF Board Member, took the responsibility of staging it with collaborations of Temple of Fine Arts, Vaigarai Productions and RSSF. Dr. Karthigesu, with his meticulous stage management, produced an excellent show.

Vaigarai Productions is a local group of musicians with lead singers Dhuruvan Mariappan and Allimalar Manogaran who rendered the popular songs of Sankarabharanam, supported by their talented instrumentalists.



*Dhuruvan Mariappan and Allimalar Manogaran of Vaigarai Productions*

Specially choreographed by the students of Temple of Fine Arts, Bharathanatyam and Odissi were adapted to the original Shankarabharanam dances. Sitar played by Kumar Karthigesu and Kalpana Paramjothi simply enhanced the stage performance.



*Kalpana Paramjothi and Kumar Karthigesu of The Temple of Fine Arts*

## THE ARTISTES

The artistes, who performed in aid of RSSF, brought *'art to life'* with their talents in sensational cascading scores offered in delightful measures to an enchanted Malaysian audience.

The artistes were not mere entertainers. Many of them were doyens from the world of classical music and dance in their own fields and rights. They were not just violinists or vocalists. They were multi- talented, for they were great composers as well. They explored *ragas* and created their own combinations of unmatched rare pieces. For example, Dr. Sri Balamuralikrishna was not only a world-famous vocalist but a composer who also played several other instruments and did extensive research in classical music. He was an intellectual in Carnatic music.

Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman was a violinist but he too was a vocalist and composer. Both these maestros were exemplary of the great tradition of Carnatic music. All performers mentioned below are no less. In each performance, each piece of music rendered by these exponents was refreshingly appealing to the audience.

Bala was not trained in classical music but he had an ear for music and greatly appreciated the discipline, commitment and passion that these musicians showed in their rendering of fascinating performances. Through his professional network in radio, Bala was able to introduce these gems to the Malaysian audience. Attendance was only by invitation, giving the shows a sense of exclusiveness.

Bala's intention was that both the audience and donors should benefit from the shows. He wanted the donors to take home beautiful, unforgettable memory of the exquisite sound of music by famous vocalists and instrumentalists and visions of colourful poetry choreographed by the great dancers of Indian classical heritage. So the shows arranged were more meaningful and drew not only the audience but substantial donations.



*Alarmel Valli*



*Alarmel Valli (left) with parents, R Balakrishnan and others.*

Alarmel Valli was only 13 years old when she first came to Malaysia in 1970. By then, she had already been conferred the Natya Kala Bushan award at the age of 9 by the Indian Institute of Fine Arts.

Her transformation on stage can be best described only by her:

*My dance is the truest expression of who I am because, in it, all at once, a poet, a painter and a singer. But ultimately, for me, dance is a prayer with my entire being-a transforming experience, a joyous celebration of life.*

Alarmel Valli's arrival, her debut on stage and all her experiences in Kuala Lumpur are better related in a message sent to RSSF recently:

*June 1970 is an essential milestone in my life and career, for it marked my first dance tour abroad at the invitation of the then fledgeling Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund. During this visit, my parents and I forged close bonds that have seen decades and still go on. Thanks to RSSF's connections and Mr. R. Balakrishnan in particular.*

*"These happy developments were still in the hazy future on the day I arrived in KL. As I walked into the arrivals area with my parents as a frail, insignificant-looking 13-year-old clad in a short skirt and shirt, I created a sensation-for the wrong reasons. Bala, convinced by reports that I was a gifted Bharathanatyam dancer substantiated by glowing reviews and photographs of me in costume, where I looked much more mature than my years, sent me an invitation.*



*My mother, unlike me, looked every inch a dancer beautiful, elegant in a Kancheepuram saree and understandably, Bala walked straight up to her, greeting her as 'Alarmel Valli.' I still remember the stupefaction and dismay on his face and those of his companions, when they realised that I was indeed the dancer!*

*We all drove back to the city in grim silence. It was only after the huge success of the Kuala Lumpur performance, the next day, Mr. Karthigesu, our host, confessed that they had been in a state of panic at the prospects of presenting nine prestigious benefit performances across the country, featuring "a scrawny little school girl.*

*To everyone's infinite relief, the warm reception of the performance in KL followed by equally enthusiastic responses in other towns vindicated Bala's choice of a dancer!*

*Over the years, I have had repeat invitations to dance in aid of RSSF right up to my last visit in 2015 at the invitation of the Indian High Commissioner in connection with India Malaysia Festival 2015. I have very fond memories of those tours.*

*I thank Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund for the magical memories that I will always treasure.*

Alarmel Valli has won many international awards and among them, were *Padma Sri* from Govt. of India, *Padma Bhushan* from the President of India, *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettre* by the Govt. of France, *Kalaimamani* from State artist of Tamil Nadu and *Grande Meadville de la Ville de Paris* from the city of Paris.

RSSF Board is ever so grateful for her performances and contribution and salutes her as its ambassador.



*His Excellency T.S. Tirumurti (centre) with Alarmel Valli ( on his left) her dance entourage and Dato V.L.Kandan (fourth from right) and others.*

## PERFORMERS AND PERFORMANCES



*Seerghazi's performance watched by a mesmerised audience in Georgetown, Penang. Forth from right is Chairman R. Balakrishnan and on his left Philanthropist NTS Rengasamy Pillai.*

In Penang, when Prof. R.Karthigesu was at University Sains Malaysia with his team members Datuk N. Chandran and Venketeswaran Sankar, organised the shows by Seerghazi Govindarajan (vocal) and AKC Natarajan (clarinet) in Dewan Sri Penang in 1977.

Both Lalgudi Jayaraman (1972) and Balamurali Krishna (1981) also performed in Penang. Sometimes music lovers too volunteered to host the famous artistes.

In Kluang Dr. N. Raja Naidu was active in organizing the shows for RSSF in the 1980s.

In Seremban, Mr. N. Narayanan Iyer handled all the logistics for Balamurali Krishna's performance in 1981.

In Kuantan, the late R. Ramani was active during the time he was posted as Regional Director of the National Productivity Centre till his untimely demise in 1979.

Ipoh had a very active branch of RSSF assisted by lawyer M. Mathialagan. Shows were mostly run by scholarship recipients and Board Members.

Teluk Intan was the hometown of Bala and Ramanujam Moorthy. They had a strong group of friends and relatives who helped to put up the shows successfully.

Klang was active in the 1970s headed by Prof Sankaran and K. P. Ramachandran, who organized shows in Majlis Bandaraya Hall.

RSSF organised a local drama Manakkal produced by Muhibbah Arts (Malaysian organisation) to encourage local talents (October 1971).



**Lalgudi Jayaraman**  
*Violinist, 1972*

Jayaraman comes from a lineage of musicians, and he has played for formidable Tiger Varadachariyar and other leading Carnatic singers. His signature *gamakas*, *jurus* (ornamentation with oscillation of the notes) and mellifluity in rendering of the tunes or *ragas* are not easily forgotten. Carnatic music lovers enjoyed this rare treat.



**Kunnakudi Vaithyanathan**  
*Violinist, 1972*

His dexterity, versatility to switch from heavy Carnatic to light music, won him accolades. He was most innovative to have had the heavy, loud, *Thavil* by Valayapathy Subramaniam to accompany his elegant and gentle violin performances. It was a match of the opposites and certainly made a difference in presentation. What is more, his violin had a sense of humour too! He could make the bow mimic sounds like a train on the tracks, or a whistling bird, a crying child or even a person asking a question or begging for help all in the midst of a classical piece or a song from the movies.

He drew an amazing crowd that enjoyed his music throughout the western coast of Malaysia.



**K J Jesudas**  
*Vocalist, 1973*

His divine voice melts the listener. He is a world-renowned multilingual singer, excellent in Carnatic, devotional and film songs. Great music gurus fine-tuned him to be an angelic nightingale in the Indian music world. His voice though behind the silver screen has made an amazing impact beyond the actor and his acting talents.

He took Kuala Lumpur by storm with his performance and all classical music lovers thronged the halls to hear the heavenly songs from his magical voice.



**Dr Seerkazhi Govindarajan**  
*Vocalist, 1975*

Seerkazhi Govindarajan was a great asset to the Tamil language. His style focussed on crystal clear lyrical messages with an emphasis on crisp pronunciation of the Tamil language. His effective punctuation and pauses conveyed his messages in dripping Carnatic flavour. It was almost an emotional Tamil literary conversation with the audience.

Performances were held in Johor Bahru, Seremban, Penang, Kuantan and Petaling Jaya. His son, Dr Sivachidambaram, continues his father's unique presentation of Carnatic music on stage.

Among many leading artistes who came to perform in conjunction with the Second Telugu World Conference in Kuala Lumpur held from April 14 to 18, 1981 namely Dr Balamurali Krishna, Chitti Babu and Kudanari Shoba Naidu (Kuchipudi) performed in aid of RSSF drawing an overwhelming crowd resulting in a generous amount in donation.



**Dr. Mangalapuram Balamuralikrishna**  
*Vocalist, 1981*

Dr. Mangalapuram Balamuralikrishna, was a world renowned, legendary musician, an able composer, playback singer, poet, actor and multi-instrumentalist. Credited for having created many ragas and talas he was in a league of his own.

His melodious voice and presentation are soul-moving. Balamuralikrishna conducted extensive research into the depths of carnatic music. His cinema song from *'Thiruvilaiyadal'* *'Oru Naal Pothuma'* translated, 'Is one day enough?' was very popular and remains evergreen till today! Besides, it aptly describes Balamurali's own knowledge and skill, which cannot be all heard in one day!

RSSF was privileged to have the Maestro Bala Muralikrishna perform at various venues in Malaysia to the great enjoyment of numerous patrons who contributed significantly to the Fund.



**Chitti Babu**  
*Veena Player, 1981*

Chitti Babu, a maestro on his Veena, gave several performances in the main cities of Malaysia and particularly in Kuala Lumpur. His music evoked deep emotional responses. He drew large crowds to listen to his distinct style reproducing songs with almost vocal-like tonal quality on his Veena. His versatility and innovative rendering of music touched many hearts of classical music lovers. He also contributed an impressive amount to the coffers of the Fund.



**Revathi**  
*South Indian Actress,  
Bharathanatyam Dancer, 1988.*

RSSF had the pleasure of having Revathy perform Bharathanatyam for an overwhelming crowd in Stadium Negara in Kuala Lumpur.

Revathy, better known as a versatile actress, started her training in Bharathanatyam when she was seven. Revathy pursued her passion for dance and gave several performances even when she was at the peak of her career as an actress. Over time, though, she had to give it up. After a gap of almost 15 years, Revathy went back on stage for a Bharathanatyam dance performance for her dance school Sri Saraswathy Gana Nilayam's 80th anniversary. When she came to Malaysia she demonstrated her talent and love for her art in Ipoh, Johor Bahru and Penang shows for RSSF members and friends.



**Datuk David Arumugam and Loganathan**

*Alley Cats, 1985*

Introduced by Pathma to RSSF, the Alley Cats are homegrown musicians from Penang. They were one of the most popular bands in South East Asia. Their fluency in Malay, English and Tamil cut right across the multilingual, multi-cultural music lovers. It made a niche in the Malay Music market, topping the charts with unforgettable hits. Loganathan, the lead singer, is no more but Datuk David Arumugam continues with the same tradition and energy. Their performance drew a good crowd and a substantial collection of funds.

### **Bhueneswariah**

*Violin Performances, 1971*

A violin maestro from Bangalore performed at the University of Malaya, and in Seremban, Malacca, Johor Bahru, Sungei Petani, Penang, Taiping, Ipoh and Teluk Intan. Board Member S. Narayanan co-ordinated all the shows which was greatly appreciated by Carnatic music lovers in Malaysia.

### **Oru Inspector Vanthar**

*Drama, 1975*

In major cities in Malaysia, this drama was staged by Malaysian Cultural Organization led by Major V.I. Joseph. This was a great effort on the part of the organizers to promote local acting talents. It was encouraging to see that Malaysians appreciated stage acting which is fast losing its race against television and the enticing silver screen.

### **Sundaramoorthy's**

*Tamil Nadu Folk Dances, 1975*

This was a rather exciting and rare exhibition of the dying art of Indian rural music and group dances. But it was a treat to watch particularly Mayil Attam, Karagam and Puli Vesham with the whirring sound of Urumi Melam and Kollatam and Kummi commonly performed in temple grounds during festivals in India. It was held at the Experimental Theatre in University of Malaya.



**AKC Natarajan**  
*Clarinet player, 1976*

In the era of the British Raj, western musical instruments were introduced into Carnatic music. Unlike the violin, the clarinet lent its flexibility to Carnatic music with the “gamakams”- oscillations and “karvais” –long sweeping curves. The clarinet was disappointingly rather stiff and therefore deemed unsuitable by the hardcore conservative Indian classical artistes.

AKC Natarajan perfected the art of using the clarinet for Carnatic music as a challenge, proving the conservative artistes wrong. The Clarinet, introduced 200 hundred years ago to Carnatic Music was not only acclimatised but reinstated among other instruments used in Carnatic Music in India today. His shows were a tremendous success in Malaysia.

### **Uma Bharathi**

*Kuchupudi, 1977*

The three shows of Sundaramoorthy’s folk Dances and Uma Bharathi’s Kuchupudi were well organised with details of the logistics taken care of by Nava, Govindan and Masilamani all through the major cities of Peninsular Malaysia. Her shows were well-received.

### **Shantini Gopal**

*Bharathanatyam, 1978*

Shantini is an exponent of Bharathanatyam, performed for RSSF following the regular two-hour dance of a traditionally structured programme. Her amazing performances were well-acclaimed.

### **Krishnaveni Lakshmanan**

*Bharathanatyam, 1979*

Krishnaveni of Pandanallur Bharathanatyam tradition trained in Kalashetra Krishanveni is a soloist in dance dramas and has played the roles of Sita, wife of Rama, and Andal, a saintpoet, who wrote lyrics on Lord Krishna. Her performances were spectacular.

## FUND RAISERS EXTRAORDINAIRE



**Krishna Sweta**

*Bharathanatyam on roller skates, 2000*

Sweta was innovative and brave to break away from the ageold tradition and slide Bharathanatyam on roller skates. Skating movements set to traditional beats were an unexpected dimension to the dance. It was rather challenging to combine skating movements to Bharatha Natyam jathis and abhinayas.

She has been displayed in the Limca Book of Indian Records and The Guinness Book of World Records 1992/1993 for her Kuchipudi and Barathanatyam performances on roller skates among many other awards. Her performances in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Johor Bahru and Pahang were well received.

**RSSF maintains a great reputation for its quality shows which were organized and managed with the help of Board Members, recipients and sponsors.**



**Mr. Nadeson Chettiar**



**Dr. N.G.Baskaran**

Nadesan Chettiar and son Dr. N.G. Baskaran were Fund-Raisers extraordinaire.

The Dr. Rama Subbiah Loan Fund has been close to the hearts of both father Nadeson Chettiar and son, Dr. N. G.Baskaran. Nadesan who hailed from Johor Bahru was a leading businessman, philanthropist and a leader of several associations in Johor. He had known Dr.Rama Subbiah, since his University days in Singapore along with Mr.R.Bala and Datuk K.Pathma.

Nadesan's association with the fund grew when his close and beloved friend, Bala took over as Chairman of the Board. During the period he had been associated with the Fund, he was the organizer of all fund raising events or activities on behalf of the fund in the state of Johor.

One of the events was the classical dance performance of Padma Bhushan Alarmel Valli. Prior to this, he had brought one of the most famous classical and play back singer, Seerkazhi Govindarajan to Malaya for a nationwide tour of his performances in 1961. He helped to establish a close relationship between Seerkazhi and Bala.

Since Nadesan's passing in 1975, Dr Baskaran has been actively involved in organising the fund-raising events and activities especially in Johor Bahru. One of the events that he co-organised together with the late Mr.Subra Naicker a leading public figure and lawyer in Johor, was the dance event of Revathy in Johor Bahru. The event, patronised by Datuk K.Pathmanabhan raised RM 25,000 for the Fund.

Dr Baskaran writes:

*Both my late father's and my association with the fund have brought us close to several personalities of the Fund during the last 50 years or more. They were and are personalities of high calibre, moral ethics with a penchant to help the less fortunate especially in the educational field.*

*I thank Dato V.L.Kandan the present Chairman who fondly remembers the contributions of my father.*

*My ardent wish is for this Fund to grow manifold to help the many needy Indian students and to all those prominent and successful Indian Businessman to donate to this worthy Fund which is Tax Exempted.*

*To the many that have benefited from this fund, I say this: Do not forget your duty to the Fund and the hands that fed you during your hours of need.*

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## DOWN MEMORY LANE

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

15 September 2017

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, RSSF organised an event called Down Memory Lane, in Sept 2017.

It was a sumptuous dinner with a presentation of evergreen Tamil songs for the guests, some of whom had not seen each other in decades. It was a delightful evening when even some members of the audience went on stage to perform. The family members of the deceased Board members were given mementos and brochures with write-ups on RSSF activities with a list of founder members and current members.

At the event, Chairman Dato V.L. Kandan said in his speech:

*Every recipient should reimburse the loans given as soon as they secure a stable job and contribute towards helping the Fund to be a revolving fund and attain its objectives. It is not the mere donation, and it is also your valuable involvement that we seek, that will continue to give and draw out more of our aspiring students in need to pursue their education and break out of the vicious cycle of poverty. I invite you to keep the chain growing and become the significant link for yet another aspiring student to realize his dream". The excitement and happiness at the event lingered late into the night. RSSF is indebted to the late Dr. Karthigesu, Dato Ramanujam and Segaran Mathavan for producing this enjoyable remembrance of a milestone in the history of RSSF.*



*Remembering Fifty Golden Years of Service*



*Chairman Dato VL Kandan speaks of the Fund's 50 years of service to needy students*



*HE TS Tirumurti the High Commissioner of India is escorted by RSSF Secretary Segaran at NUPW Hall to "Down Memory Lane" function.*



*RSSF Board member and Exec Secretary of NUPW Navamukundan (centre), chatting with NUPW Gen. Sec. Dato Sankaran and RSSF Founder member D.Ramasamy who was Senior Exec.Officer MAS (Malayan Airline System)*



*Delightful singers rendering memorable hits from the 1950s.*



*Prof Dr. R.Sankaran and Dato R Vengadesan with HE TS Tirumurti. Dato V.L.Kandan*



*HE TS Tirumurti and Chairman Dato Kandan flanked by RSSF Sec Segaran and Board member Giri Balakrishnan.*



*RSSF Board member Sarojini Ruth Sundraraj with donor, Sharala Ayxd, CEO of CAD and recipient Anusuya Krishnan.*



*RSSF Board member Prof. Dato Dr. Thillainathan(extreme right) chats with Form Six project participants Ragumaren, Tankaraju and Pannir Selvam.*



*Dato V.L. Kandan (second from left) with Board members Prof Dato Dr. R. Thillainathan(far left) and ( on his left) Giri Balakrishnan,Dato Ramanujam and Kumar Karthigesu.*

13

THE FUTURE



The challenges of the working class Malaysians have been exacerbated by a world that is fast-changing, due partly to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We seem to have woken up to an exaggerated Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World' where new rules and orders are imposed on offices and educational institutions, and where socialising has become measured and disciplined.

Over the last couple of years, people have been struggling to keep afloat with basic needs. There have been food shortages, soaring prices of essential items, increasing dropouts in schools, and higher crime rates.

In the near future, people will also have to embrace new technologies, harness artificial intelligence, and acquire digital skills.

How will RSSF, 'the provider of last resort' essentially for Malaysians of Indian origin, respond to this unprecedented 'paradigm shift'? Does the role of RSSF change in this Black Swan scenario?

Will RSSF need to devise new strategies for raising funds, considering the fact that it is difficult to stage fund-raising events as in the past? We need to explore new ideas.

On what basis will RSSF provide scholarships or loans to deserving students? Should financial assistance be offered for the acquisition of tools needed for on-line learning and for individual tuition? Should RSSF fully fund only students pursuing professional courses and only partially fund those pursuing courses for careers that are less in demand?

To further explore these and other pressing issues, should we seek the assistance of the RSSF alumni?

Over the years, RSSF has built a strong chain of 'understanding, care and share' links of recipients. With a little help from RSSF, the recipients have made significant strides in fulfilling their aspirations. These important links can be the acorns whose essence should feed the less privileged who desire to be the oak tree.

RSSF has successfully carried out projects, encouraging and intensifying their learning skills in Tamil Schools.

We could hold brainstorming sessions with RSSF recipients, the Department of Indian Studies at Universiti Malaya, Tamil Writers Association and all bodies of Indian language and culture, government aided and other NGO's to help the underprivileged and Tamil schools.

Our Board Members with their rich experience and resources could come forward to devise ways and means to set up seminars or workshops to explore new avenues to motivate youths to:

- change their mind-set to grab every opportunity that comes their way
- reach out and be competitive in all areas particularly in education and sports
- inculcate civic-mindedness in them, with a desire to help each other
- instil family values and to respect and appreciate one's culture and traditional practices.

Together, RSSF and community leaders can come together to create a brave new world for our next generation.

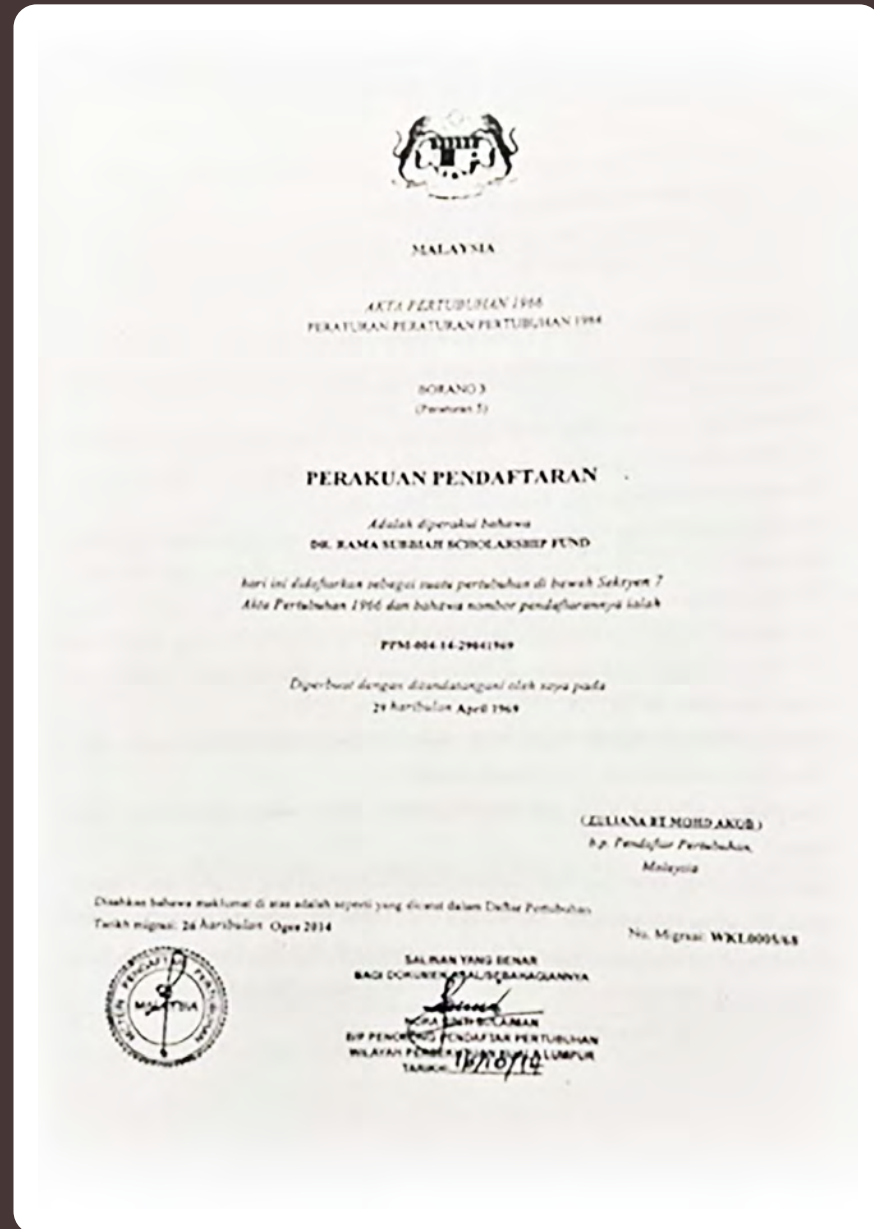
**GIRIJAH BALAKRISHNAN**  
EDITOR

***Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. It's the only thing that ever has!***

**MARGARET MEAD**  
An American, author and speaker

## APPENDICES

### RSSF Registration Certificate



## RSSF APPLICATION FORM



### DR. RAMA SUBBIAH SCHOLARSHIP FUND

No. 9, 2nd Floor, Wisma Dicor Jalan SS 17/1A, 47500 Subang Jaya Selangor Darul Ehsan  
TEL : 03-5611 1296 EMAIL: drssfund@gmail.com

### A. PERSONAL DETAILS APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE YEAR 20.....

(PLEASE FILL IN BLOCK LETTERS)

NAME : .....  
SEX : .....  
I/C NO : .....  
TEL : .....  
DATE OF BIRTH : .....  
PRESENT ADDRESS : .....  
PERMANENT ADDRESS : .....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....

### B. DETAILS ON COURSE OF STUDY

INSTITUTION OF STUDY : .....  
YEAR OF ENTRY : .....  
CURRENT YEAR OF STUDY : .....  
FACULTY : .....  
MATRICULATION NO : .....  
SUBJECT OF SPECIALISATION : .....

**TOTAL COST FOR STUDY**

COURSE FEES : .....  
LOAN CURRENTLY AVAILABLE AND FROM : .....  
.....  
.....

**C. FAMILY HISTORY**

NAME OF FATHER/GUARDIAN : .....  
I/C NO : .....  
OCCUPATION : .....  
PERMANENT ADDRESS : .....  
.....  
TEL : .....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....  
NAME OF MOTHER/GUARDIAN : .....  
I/C NO : .....  
OCCUPATION : .....  
PERMANENT ADDRESS : .....  
.....  
TEL : .....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....

**D. IF APPLICANT IS MARRIED PLEASE STATE**

NAME OF WIFE/HUSBAND : .....  
I/CNO : .....  
NO OF CHILDREN : .....  
OCCUPATION OF WIFE/HUSBAND : .....  
TEL : .....  
NAME OF EMPLOYER : .....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....

**E. DETAILS OF FAMILY INCOME (PARENTS AND SIBLINGS)**

1 NAME : .....  
RELATIONSHIP TO APPLICANT : ..... OCCUPATION : .....  
ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER : .....  
.....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....  
INCOME P.M. : .....  
DEPENDANTS : .....  
REMARKS : .....  
.....  
2 NAME : .....  
RELATIONSHIP TO APPLICANT : ..... OCCUPATION : .....  
ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER : .....  
.....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....  
INCOME P.M. : .....  
DEPENDANTS : .....  
REMARKS : .....  
.....  
3 NAME : .....  
RELATIONSHIP TO APPLICANT : ..... OCCUPATION : .....  
ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER : .....  
.....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....  
INCOME P.M. : .....  
DEPENDANTS : .....  
REMARKS : .....  
.....

**F. WHAT OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
HAVE YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR THIS YEAR?**

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS : .....  
AND RESULTS OF .....  
APPLICATION .....  
.....  
.....

**G. PROPOSED SURETIES FOR LOAN**

**1ST SURETY**

NAME OF SURETY : .....  
RELATIONSHIP TO : .....  
APPLICANT .....  
ADDRESS : .....  
.....  
.....  
ESTIMATED INCOME : .....  
P.M. ....  
SIGNATURE : .....  
PHONE NUMBER : .....  
H/P NO : .....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....

**2nd SURETY**

NAME OF SURETY : .....  
RELATIONSHIP TO : .....  
APPLICANT .....  
ADDRESS : .....  
.....  
.....  
ESTIMATED INCOME : .....  
P.M. ....  
SIGNATURE : .....  
PHONE NUMBER : .....  
H/P NO : .....  
E-MAIL ADDRESS : .....

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE : ..... DATE : .....

- PLEASE TAKE NOTE. ANY FALSE STATEMENT WILL DISQUALIFY FOR CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.
- PLEASE ENCLOSE PHOTOSTAT COPIES OF CERTIFIED CERTIFICATES AND IDENTITY CARD TOGETHER WITH THIS APPLICATION FORM

**NOTE : THE SURETY MUST BE A PERSON ACCEPTABLE TO THE BOARD AND WITH AN INCOME NOT LESS THAN RM2,500.00 PER MONTH (ENCLOSE SALARY SLIP).**

<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	
LOAN AWARDED/ LOAN NOT AWARDED:	
AMOUNT :	_____
CHEQUE NO :	_____
TREASURER :	_____
SECRETARY :	_____
REMARKS :	_____
	_____
	_____



**Dr. Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund  
(Est. 1969)**

**Donation Form**

Since its establishment over 50 years ago, Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund has been, and continues to be, a lender of last resort for students in need of funds to continue their tertiary education in Malaysia or abroad.

The Fund was able to play this role largely due to the generous support and contribution of friends, Board members and wellwishers upon whom we continue to depend to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

We appeal to you to kindly consider making a donation for this worthy cause.

Kindly complete this form and email it to:

**The Hon Secretary  
Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund  
No. 9, 2nd Floor, Wisma Dicor, Jalan SS 17/1A, 47500 Subang Jaya.**

**Tel: 03-56111296 | Email: drssfund@gmail.com**

Your Name as in IC : \_\_\_\_\_

House Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Office/House Phone (landline) : \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile No : \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Donation : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

*Please address cheque to*

**The Hon. Secretary Dr Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund**

We also welcome monthly pledges. Please state amount in your email. Your donation is tax exempt.

Should you have any query,

**please contact us at 03-56111296 or Email us.**

**THANK YOU**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

His Excellency Shri T S Tirumurti, Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and Former High Commissioner of India to Malaysia

S. Deva Kunjari, daughter of the late Tun V.T. Sambanthan and Toh Puan Uma Sundari Sambanthan

Dr Illavenil Rama Subbiah, Dr. Rama Subbiah's daughter Padmabhushan Alarmel Valli, Leading Barathanatyam Dancer and Choreographer

Padmasri Dr Siva Chidambaram, son of Padmasri Seergazi Govindarajan

Prof Dr A. Selvanathan, City University

Professors Dr Krishnan A/L Maniam & Dr Mohana Dass A/L, staff of the Indian Studies Department University Malaya

Kalyani Suba Annamalai, sister of Prof. Dr. Rama Subbiah

Dato A.Muthukumar (Kalimuthu's nephew)

Dato Dr. Baskaran Nadeson, President of MMA 2020

Agalya Perumal Senior Lecturer & Trainer, Monash University Foundation Programme (MUFY) Sunway College  
Annapoorani Chandrasekaran wife of late RSSF Founder member Prof. Dr. N. Chandrasekaran and his son Suresh Chandrasekaran

Arrasu Munisamy Executive Chairman, Quantum Accounting System

Asokumaran Sandaiah Rtd. Income Tax Officer

Gomathi Naidu Senior Lecturer Institute of Teacher Education, Technical Education Campus

Indrani Kopal, Taylor's College & Film Director

S.P. Nathan, Asst Gen Manager MetTube

Pandurengan Subbyah Rtd. High School Teacher

Puvaneswary Marimuthu (Form Six PP Late Marimuthu's wife)

Santokh Singh, Dr. Rama Subbiah's student

Sashi Sekaran Selvarajah son of Datuk K. Selvarajah

Tankaraju Muthiasamy owner of Breyer College

Sreetharan Nair owner of Serbalenkap Rompin

Students of My Skills Foundation Raam Chandra, Haritharan Jervanathan, Vignesh Naidu Palaniapan, Saravanan Sriram, Taarvind Suresh Nath, Periashini Uma Sangar and Kausalya Ramani.

Sundry Govindan wife of Late N. Govindan

S. Sundareson AMN Rtd Principal Asst Secretary (Finance) Ministry of Defence Kuala Lumpur

Shanta Raghavan Nair Wife of late Raghavan Nair Former Hon. Secretary of ISSF

Vasantha Ramachandran Wife of late. V.N. Ramachandran

Vijayaletchumi Maruthaveeran, Indian Studies Department Librarian, University of Malaya.

Vinayagam, Police Force (Rtd)

Ramu Rama Subbiah  
Vetrivel Consultancy, Accountant & GST Consultant

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*Under Bala's leadership, AIBD became a bustling hub of activities, training broadcasters in the region and sponsoring numerous conferences and seminars in the broader field of mass communication with particular emphasis on human and social development.*

***The Past Board Members,***  
***(Chapter 4)***

*It is a pleasure to read a thoroughly researched and carefully written monograph by Rama Subbiah. 'A Lexical Study of Tamil Dialects in Lower Perak' is certainly exemplary of the type of scholarly writing'.*

*A review of Rama Subbiah's work in the Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Thomas W. Gething*

***Dr Rama Subbiah, the founder of RSSF,***  
***(Chapter 3)***

*Perhaps RSSF can collaborate with schools, colleges and universities, healthcare providers and the government to provide holistic solutions.*

***The Future,***  
***(Chapter 13)***

# DR. RAMA SUBBIAH SCHOLARSHIP FUND

(EST. 1969)

## About This Book

Five decades ago, budding academician and visionary Dr Rama Subbiah started a modest venture called Indian Students Scholarship Fund (ISSF). After his demise in a tragic road accident in 1969, founder members renamed the Fund as Dr.Rama Subbiah Scholarship Fund (RSSF).

This book commemorates the remarkable journey of this noble venture and records milestones in its history.

Taking off with a summarized account of the life and achievements of the Dr Rama Subbiah, it describes the steady progress of the Fund under the able leadership of subsequent chairmen and board members, such that the little acorn has become a sturdy oak tree.

Apart from highlighting the lives of board members, past and present, recipients and supporters, it also describes the numerous fundraising and other activities that the Board has undertaken. Finally, the book examines new ways to help the community meet the challenges of the 21st Century.



ISBN 978-629-98977-0-5



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**DR. RAMA SUBBIAH SCHOLARSHIP FUND**  
Commemorating Five Decades Of  
Community Service