



**THE RETREAT - DON BOSCO  
YERCAUD**

# **View Point**

**VOL. 6 NO. 4**

*September & October 2023*

*View Point, the e-magazine, showcases a comprehensive report on the various social interactions and activities carried out by the SPS India Foundation and its sister Organization, Shevaroyhills Tribal Development Institute (STDI), at the Retreat Don Bosco in Yercaud.*

# Celebrating a Remarkable Milestone

*The SPS India Foundation of the Retreat Don Bosco in partnership with DFT and generously funded by PwC embarked on a journey to empower women through basic and advanced sewing training with the valuable support and assistance from the Vidivelli Don Bosco Centre @ Kalavasal in Virudhunagar district. This initiative has been instrumental in training over 200 women in basic sewing skills and approximately 60 women in advanced sewing techniques.*

*This impactful social outreach program has now reached a significant milestone with the opening of a pop-up stall showcasing the products crafted by these talented beneficiaries. The primary goal of this endeavor is to empower women, enabling them to contribute to their families' income. It is a collective effort to transform individual earnings into family resources, ultimately leading to the betterment of entire households.*

*The establishment of this initiative marks a crucial step toward fostering a more empowered society of women. During the inauguration, both guests and beneficiaries expressed their delight and appreciation for this inspiring initiative. The beneficiaries extended their heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in this noble endeavor and shared their personal experiences in learning the art of tailoring. Their stories served as a source of motivation for all involved, from the beneficiaries themselves to the generous donors and dedicated program implementers.*



# Empowering Underprivileged Tribal Students- DB1990 Charitable Trust

*The SPS India Foundation extends its profound appreciation to the DB1990 Charitable Trust for uniting in a shared mission to offer educational assistance to underprivileged tribal students. The DB1990 Charitable Trust demonstrates a heartfelt commitment to enhancing the livelihoods of individuals by providing educational support to both school and college students. The trust graciously accepts students who are recommended by the SPS India Foundation, thereby making a significant impact on the tribal community.*

*DB1990 Charitable Trust extends its help to students who harbour a genuine enthusiasm for education but face obstacles due to challenging family circumstances. Their benevolent contributions, made without any expectations, reflect a profound kindness aimed at fostering the development of these students.*



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# Empowering Tribal Communities: The Educational and Healthcare Commitment of SKS Hospital

*SKS Hospital in Salem has maintained a longstanding partnership with the SPS India Foundation, dedicated to extending educational support to college-bound students through a scholarship program. This assistance is designed to bridge educational disparities and empower tribal students, leaving a positive imprint on their lives. The increased accessibility to education has paved new avenues for these students, with scholarships playing a pivotal role in making education more attainable.*

*Furthermore, SKS Hospital, in collaboration with SPS, actively engages in spreading awareness about health within the tribal community. In addition to supporting the educational aspirations of young tribal individuals, these collaborative efforts also encompass conducting numerous medical camps and offering discounted medical treatment to underprivileged and ailing individuals.*

*This dual approach of fostering higher education and addressing healthcare needs exemplifies SKS Hospital's unwavering commitment to the mission of education and healthcare, ultimately empowering the tribal population. Their comprehensive strategy is instrumental in promoting community development.*



# Prizes to Sotcho Boys for their better results in Quarterly Examinations

*The Sola Tribal Children Home feels that encouraging someone to be entirely himself is the loudest way of loving him. In this regard, we believe that a young mind is full of potentialities and capabilities. Thus, the Sotcho boys who came out with flying colors and distinctions, and also those who performed better and had improved results in the quarterly examinations were given prizes as a sign of appreciation and encouragement. This act of encouragement is a reward for their hard work. We believe many more students would follow their good example of putting their hearts and minds into performing well in their studies.*



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## Charity begins at Home

*On 1st October 2023, the oratory youngsters of Solur village gathered together as one family to lend their helping hand to the poor, marginalized, and abandoned people. They summed up a small amount of money from their savings to help the poor. They had a kind of helping tendency to fulfill the basic needs of the poor people. Thus, they came forward voluntarily to help the poor old people staying at SSGY Anbu Illam, Yercaud. This selfless initiative united them and worked for the welfare of the elderly. The enthusiasm and spirit displayed by the Solur village youngsters during this event were truly remarkable. It was a testament to their ability to work cohesively and harmoniously as a group. This small yet meaningful act of kindness not only brought them together but also left a lasting impact on both the givers and recipients alike.*



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# Parent Meeting at Sola Tribal Children's Hostel (SOTCHO)

*SOTCHO, affectionately known as Sola Home, is a haven for tribal children hailing from remote villages in and around Yercaud. Currently, it provides care and protection to sixty boys. On October 2nd, 2023, the hostel opened its doors to welcome parents for an important meeting with the management.*

*Fr. Wilson, the administrator, passionately addressed the parents, emphasizing the importance of holistic development for the children. He shared valuable insights on how parents could actively support their children's intellectual pursuits. Following this, Fr. Selvakumar, the director, informed parents about the hostel's rules and regulations and provided an overview of the daily timetable.*

*During the interactive session with parents, both parents and children expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Salesians for their dedicated care and love. They joyfully conveyed their satisfaction with the hostel's functioning and wholeheartedly appreciated the service provided for the growth and well-being of their children.*



# Computer and Beautician course completion

The SPS India Foundation in partnership with the Desai Foundation Trust has successfully organized a basic computer course for three months and a beautician course for one month for the tribal women in Yercaud. The primary aims of these initiatives were to empower the tribal women and make them self-sufficient. These initiatives had their completion with the concluding program on 6th October 2023, during which the candidates were given certificates acknowledging their effort and hard work. Fr. Maaran, SDB was the special chairperson for this program and gave a wonderful speech for the beneficiaries, and he made everyone proud by giving certificates. Fr. Selva Kumar, project director of the SPS India Foundation, has played a pivotal role in making this program happen.



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# Sustainable Livelihood Training

*On October 29, 2023, the SPS India Foundation, in collaboration with Your Backers Foundation and Desai Foundation Trust, organized a sustainable livelihood training at Retreat Don Bosco, Yercaud. This program, primarily aimed at women, sought to empower them, promote self-employment, and transform their lifestyles in alignment with their interests. Approximately 60 women from various villages in and around Yercaud actively participated in this initiative.*

*Commencing with a prayer song, the event was inaugurated with a note of welcome given by Fr. Selvakumar, the project director of the SPS India Foundation. Throughout the program, the various speakers and chief guests emphasized the importance of empowering women by enhancing their skills and fostering self-employment, ultimately contributing to their financial strength and helping them overcome personal fears.*

*The focal point of the event was the sustainable livelihood training conducted by Mrs. Priyadarshini, a knowledgeable individual with expertise in M.A. Tamil literature, acupuncture, mooligai maruthuvam, and vaasiyogam. Mrs. Priyadarshini guided the participants in creating various products using natural ingredients such as lemongrass, butter fruit, coffee powder, avocado, borax, alum, and more. The beneficiaries actively engaged in the practical session, where they learned to craft items like sambar powder, kuzhambu chili powder, tooth powder, face pack powder, natural soap, hair oil, masala tea, etc. The session not only imparted practical skills but also raised awareness about utilizing locally available resources.*

*The palpable energy and enthusiasm of the participants were evident during the practical session. The event concluded on a positive note with the distribution of refreshments. Overall, the sustainable livelihood training was a significant step toward empowering women and fostering self-sufficiency in the Yercaud community.*



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# Medical Camp at Thepakadu

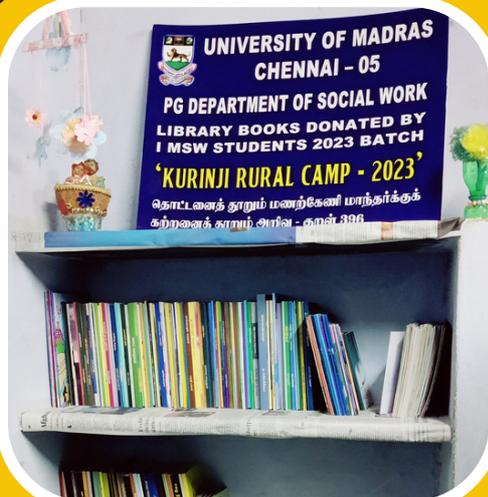
A medical camp, assisted by the Retreat – Don Bosco was held in Thepakadu, Yercaud. It was the sole initiative and encouragement of the young people of the two villages, namely, Thepakadu and Gundur; they were supported by the brothers from the Retreat who regularly visited the villages on Sundays for youth ministry. The medical camp was held on 29th October 2023 on Sunday from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. The people who benefitted from this medical camp expressed their sincere gratitude for the medical facilities provided to them in their place. There were around 200 people who availed themselves of general checkups and basic treatment of their eyes. To name some youngsters, Mr. Sathish, Mr. Vengadesh, and others were fully involved in making this day meaningful and useful to the people of their village. These youngsters came forward to prepare tea and lunch for all the medical staff who came over to their village. They expressed a deep sense of contentment for having helped out in the medical camp; and extended a gesture of gratitude to the Retreat for making this even successful.



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# Openings of New Libraries at Murugan Nagar and Sola Illam

*“The only thing that you have to know, is the location of the library,” says Albert Einstein. Books are the best companions and more so are guides to students who aspire for greater things in life. So, we must inculcate in the young the habit of reading books so that they may grow in their imagination and creativity in the mind-limiting search box of the internet. The Retreat Don Bosco is immensely delighted to encourage students of evening night-school centers and SOTCHO to read subjects apart from their school curriculum and go further to widen their knowledge of the world. As a first step, along with the PG Department of Social Work, University of Madras, we have set up and inaugurated two libraries in Murugar Nagar night school and SOTCHO on the 30th and the 31st of October respectively. At both inaugurations, Fr. Selvakumar, Director of Social Ministry, introduced the students and staff from Madras University – highlighting their marvelous work towards the students of Yercaud. One of the MSW students came forward and explained their experience of collecting needed funds for their contribution. This great initiative was possible with the help of the PG first-year students of social work from Madras University who contributed 507 books to set up libraries. We are grateful for their involvement in inculcating in the young the habit of reading. The students will surely benefit from this great act of imparting knowledge.*



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# Giving Rain Courts to Night School and SOTCHO Students

*“No one has ever become poor by giving.” The Retreat – Don Bosco constantly extends its helping hand to the needs of the young and is especially concerned about the education of the current generation. The students of the night school and the boys from SOTCHO are the direct beneficiaries of our social ministry. The Retreat – Don Bosco has encouraged the PG Department of Social Work from the University of Madras who came over to Yercaud to have their “Rural Camp” to contribute to the material needs of the students. The PG first-year students of social work were generous in providing to all the night school students and the boys from Sola Illam, numbering 175 (One Hundred and Seventy-Five), a rain court each. This great act of kindness would help the students to protect themselves from rain as they walk forth and go to school. The students are very much grateful to the benefactors for their generous hearts and thoughtfulness. The MSW students visited each night school and interacted with the staff and students. They came to know about the lifestyle of the tribal people in and around Yercaud. The students from Madras University promised that their studies and life would continue to help the underprivileged.*



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# The Renovation of the Study Centre at Jarina Nagar

*Some people look for a beautiful place, others make a place beautiful. The renovation of the study centre at Jarina Nagar is yet another initiative from the Retreat – Don Boso to assist the students of that locality for betterment in their studies and learning skills. The environment very much helps students to concentrate and study well; so, many have contributed to this project of renovation; some are PG first-year students of social work from Madras University, Mr. Ravi, the former vice-chairman Yercaud Union, and Mr. Rajan, the ward councilor of the section. The Renovated Study Centre was inaugurated by Fr. Arnald Mahesh SDB, on the 1st of November at 6.00 p.m. in the presence of the leaders of the Gram Panchayat, other members of the Panchayat, and the people of the locality. A big thanks to the students of the MSW, from Madras University for their presence and sense of service. The well-wishers and parents at Jarina Nagar are very much happy and grateful to all who contributed to this initiative for they can confidently send their children to the study centre so that they grow in discipline and knowledge.*



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