

Madurai Chapter Annual Report 2023-24

Collection Of INTACH Chapter Library Books

Tamil Newsletter 'MATHIRAI' and English Newsletter 'MADURAPURI' of the Madurai chapter were released for the first three months covering the chapter programmes and heritage related information. Our member Dr. Ponmeera assisted in providing information for the newsletters. In the national newsletter Virasat, April-June 2023, article on Panguni Pongal written by our member Pr. Nalini is featured under Lesser Known Heritage.

Books to enrich INTACH Madurai collection for library were purchased at the Annual Madurai Book Fair and INTACH Delhi. Palakkad Convenor Mr. Arun Narayanan and member Ms. Sanusha visited Madurai during Chithirai Festival 2023. Our centennial commemorative booklet 'Attitude In Attire' was given as a compliment to them. Mizoram Convenor, Mr. Rin Sangha handed over their publication of 'Built Heritage of Mizoram' as a compliment to Madurai Chapter during our Convenor Vani C Chenguttuwan visit to their Land of Hills in May 2023.

Commemorating Events were conducted.

- 1) **18/4/23 Heritage Day** - Visit to the newly opened Archaeological Museum and Site Visit at Keezhadi (Sivagangai District) near Madurai. The focus was on **Maritime Trade Heritage**. After which the Panchayat President Mr. Venkatasubramanian was able to share the **Limelight Impact of Keezhadi Village** over a decade of continuous archaeological discoveries.
- 2) **International Year Of Millets 2023 - 23/7/23** Member Family Meet - '**Millet In Meals**' provided by Indian Foods Innovations Private Limited, Madurai at their Riverside Campus. Information about Millets and related Quiz, Word Search activities kept the event lively.
- 3) **15/8/23 Independence Day** - participation in an Inter-Chapter online programme, '**Chapters of a Shared History**'. The content of the webinar giving relevant valuable insight of the regional independence movement was lauded by many. In order to reach more an ebook of the regional pre-independence stories has been sanctioned by INTACH Delhi.
- 4) **National Heritage Conservation Week - 26/11/23** Live Public Interaction through Kodai FM 100.5 radio programme on visiting and conserving heritage places - '**Paarambariya Idangalai Paarpom! Paadhukaappom!**'

Educational Events were conducted.

- 1) Guhan Matriculation Higher Secondary School Heritage Club Student Members were given a project activity of identifying **Traditional Motifs**, which they presented in a collection of images. Our member Mrs. Hema Arun encouraged their activity. Complimentary books were given to the participants.
- 2) **26/7/23** Orientation to a batch of Architecture Students at Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai. It was an introduction to **Listing of Heritage Structures in Old Madurai** organised with the help of our member Pr. Ayyappan.
- 3) **17/8/23** Joint Event along with CII Madurai in organising visit to the only **Biodiversity Heritage Site of Tamilnadu, Arittapatti in Madurai** district for the biology students of E.M.G. Yadava Women's College, Madurai. Our members Dr. Badri Narayanan and Mr. Nithan Chandrasekaran along with botanist Mr. Karthikeyan and Arittapatti Ravichandran of Ezhumalai Pathukappu Sangam led them. Our members Pr. Ayyappan and Mrs. Gowri Pavithran volunteered too.
- 4) Conducted both the HECS projects for schools which is organised across the country.
 - a) In **August and September 2023**, schools were chosen to give opportunity for students in Madurai city, Thirumangalam town and Arittapatti village to compete in Heritage Quiz. Our member Ms. Deepika assisted in framing the quiz questions. After a preliminary written quiz first for all the students of grade 7-9., the best of them were teamed in twos for a final oral contest. MEPCO Schlenk Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Thirumangalam came third in the State Level Competition. Timely voluntary service of Mr. Nithan Chandrasekaran and Mrs. Hema Arun was of immense help.
 - b) In **January and February 2024**, posters sent by HECS for schools were handed over announcing Poster Competition. On **12/2/24**, the venue for the inter-school competition was provided by our institution member Jain Vidyalaya School, Madurai. Cartographer and Mural Recreator Mr. Rathina Baskar addressed the young artists from 11 schools in the city and 2 schools from Thirumangalam The overwhelming response was well managed by the Education Committee: Mrs. Hema Arun, Pr. Nalini, Mr. Nithan Chandrasekaran. It is the only team that can be recognised for joint effort. Our member Mr. Nicholas Francis also extended his support. The theme '**My Monument Search**' on less recognised monuments presented by Grade 7-9 students as posters with slogans were inspiring. One student from Mahatma Montessori CBSE School and another from The TVS School have been chosen as one of the best entries in the regional category. Lunch was provided for all participants and accompanying teachers. Press coverage was done

Literary Legacy Activities is a major project undertaken with the inaugural series of events delivered by '**Ilakkiya Semmai**' Madhusudanan Kalaichelvan on **29/4/23 & 30/4/23**. There was a press coverage.

- Session 1 was '**Vaniga Koodal**' - a sneak peak into Ancient Trading and Traders of Madurai as gleaned from Sangam Literary Works at Thiagarajar College of Arts & Science.
- Session 2 followed with '**Al Angaadi Ulaa**' - an Experiential Walk at Theppakkulam, Madurai.
- Session 3 was at Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareaswarar Temple the next day - '**Madura Thamizhisai**' programme had a rendition of classic verses from Madurai Pathigam by Othuvar interspersed with details by the literary exponent .

The series could not be proceeded further due to lack of support. In order to publicise further and generate commitment fund-raising option was sought out from Maduraites who have settled elsewhere and wish to contribute for the legacy of the city.

As an architect too, the guest speaker Mr. Madhusudanan Kalaichelvan interested in temple structures has offered to write on Azhagarkoil, which has been his desire for a long time and requested our chapter to publish.

Placemaking Convenor Vineeta during their Madurai Conference in February 2024 suggested we can work along with Madhusudanan Kalaichelvan, in appropriate public utilisation of Ezhukadal Street. This will involve highlighting the literature from Thiruvilayadal Puranam, basis for the prominence of the legendary street.

A field course of Brahmi script found in the hills of Madurai region - the largest cluster of the Tamil Brahmi, one of the oldest scripts in India is awaiting to be launched.

There are other books conceptualised on Mythic Motifs and Landmarks of Madurai, to be worked on.

A Heritage Trek and a Walk were organised with nominal registration fee. Our member Mr. Ramanathan assisted in the registration.

- **18/6/23 Puli Malai Rock Art Trek** was led by Ms. Devi Arivu Selvam, Temple Architecture & Silpa Sastra Scholar who had discovered this art located in a natural cavern. This adds onto six other Rock Art Sites so far found in Madurai region.
- **16/7/23 'Veedhi Ulaa'** - the Heritage Walk around the Temple City of Madurai had its own appeal for a mixed group of locals and a visitor. Our member Pr. Ayyappan assisted in promoting the event.
- During February second week Heritage Walk organised for Placemaking Conference delegates on **10/2/24** was extended for four more walks in and around Madurai subsequently. The coordinator was able to link us with Ms. Subha, representative from Madurai Corporation regarding **Conservation of Raya Gopuram**, Madurai.

Heritage Walks were organized by founder institution members DHAN Foundation as part of Heritage Literacy in collaboration with INTACH Madurai Chapter among various stakeholders. Eleven Community Heritage Walks were curated by them from May 2023 to March 2024 in the historically significant Heritage Villages of Madurai and Sivagangai Districts: Melavalavu, Keelavalavu Heritage Circuit (May 14), Keeladi Circuit (June 10), Valavugal Circuit (July 8), Keelakuilkudi Circuit (August 12), Peraiyur Circuit (September 9), Piranmalai Circuit (October 14), Thenur (November 12), Thirupuvanam Cluster (December 19), Pongal Festival at Keelakuilkudi with Ministry of Tourism (12 January 2024), Yanaimalai Circuit (10 February 2024) and Poongundram (24 March 2024).

Contributions, Grants, Membership Fees and Acknowledgements

1. Received Rs. 25,000/- from INTACH Delhi for on time submission of accounts of the previous year.
2. Received Rs. 30,000/- from INTACH Delhi for conducting HECS projects at schools.
3. Liberal contribution of Rs. 20000/- received from our member Mr. Gunasekar for organizing guest speaker, Mr. Madhusudhanan Kalaichelvan, a renowned young scholar, to start off the Literary Legacy Series 29th & 30th April 2023. We acknowledge his generosity in covering the conveyance expenses too.
Our Co-Convenor Mrs. Shanthi hosted the stay at their hotel The Nook. We were supported by Ex-Convenor Mrs. Uma Kannan who provided us the venue for the first session at their Thiagarajar College of Arts & Science.
4. Received Rs. 45,000/- towards Literary Legacy Fund from several hearty Maduraites living elsewhere - initiated by our Convenor Mrs. Vani C Chenguttuwan.
5. M/s Mepco Schlenk College was added as a member after receiving a membership fee of Rs. 10000/-
6. We acknowledge contributions from our members Mr. Arun Amarnath and Mrs. Hema Arun towards designing and printing certificates for school students who participated in Heritage Activities.
7. We acknowledge the contributions of our founder members Mr. M.D. Vel and Mrs. Bhavani Vel on hosting 'Millet In Meals' at their lovely venue Ondraha.
8. We acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Mathan Raj of CBRA helping with online presence of INTACH Madurai.
9. We acknowledge our founder members Mr. Arun Vijaymalli and Mr. R. Krishnamoorthy who have supported us by providing venue at Cheese Corner and Madurai Theosophical Society respectively.
10. We acknowledge the voluntary contributions of the office bearers and UrbanSPiCE Terrace Lounge of our Treasurer Zafar for conducting our meetings.