

Guruji once said 'giving does not impoverish and withholding does not enrich.' He lives by his words. Since the time he has committed to improve the quality of life in Bellur, his birth place, he has been working very hard towards his goal. He along with the other members of the Bellur Trust have been working to see this vision fructify. On January 6-7, 2006, Guruji was in Bellur to inaugurate the free eye camp. Guruji was personally supervising the arrangements and ensuring that all went well during this camp. Yoga Rahasya reports on the progress that has been made in Bellur in the recent past.



Smt. Ramamani



Sundara Raja Iyengar

HOSPITAL

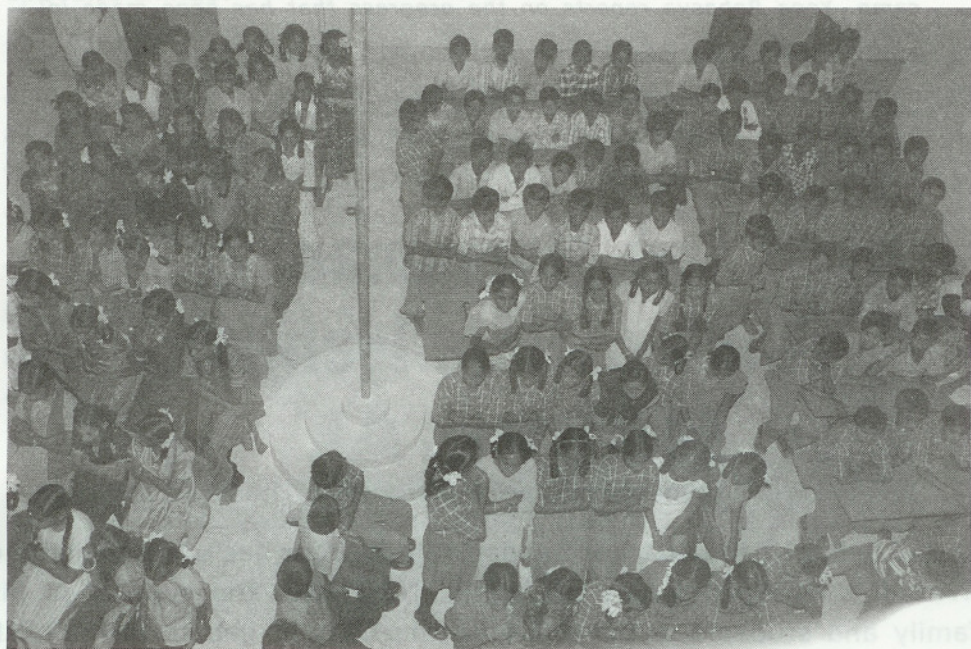
Ramamani Nagar, Bellur Village

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

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

A lot has been achieved by the BKSSNT in the last few years. Some of these achievements have been reported in the earlier issues of Yoga Rahasya. To summarise, a hall has been built over the children's primary school, which serves multiple roles ranging for a classroom to a yoga room to a room for social get together. A water storage tank was constructed to provide clean drinking water to the villagers. Nearly 16 acres of land was purchased to accomplish the other objectives. This entire complex has now been named as Ramamani Nagar in the memory of Guruji's beloved wife Ramamani.

Ramamani Iyengar High School



School children in the quadrangle!

The foundation stone for this school was laid in January 2005 and the first group of students registered in June 2005. This school had 180 admissions for the eighth grade in last academic year. 170 of them have now continued with their education and progressed to the ninth grade. Another 160 students joined the eighth grade of the school for the academic year 2006-2007. This is a record number of admissions in the entire district. There are equal number of boys and girls. The Trust

bears the entire expenses for the uniforms, books, school material and of course the running of the school.

Having seen the barren land just about 18 months ago, it was quite a joy to see the well designed and well maintained school building. Bellur is surrounded by stone quarries. To see this fine school building on this stony land was a real pleasure for the eye. The building is well designed to make a very conducive and pleasant environment for the students. It has 4 buildings with a quadrangle in the centre, where the children assemble for their morning prayers and special functions.

In addition, they have a pleasant yoga room, which is equipped with ropes and awe-inspiring photographs of Guruji in various postures.

The Guest House



Adjacent to the school building is the guest house specially constructed to provide accommodation to the visitors to Bellur. These may include yoga students with a desire to pay their respects at the Patanjali temple, teachers and even guest

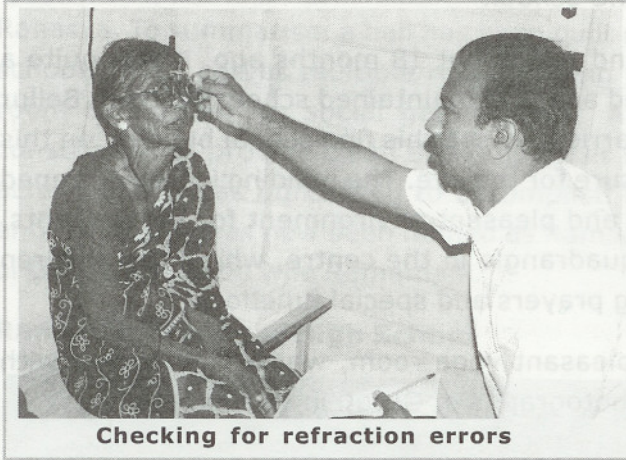
faculty for the school. The building has a very pleasant ambience with self sufficient rooms. The environment around is quite pleasant and could soon become a chosen destination for short holidays.

Ramamani Iyengar Hospital

It was proposed to build a hospital to take care of the basic and emergency health needs of the villagers. The Hospital building was scheduled for inauguration in May 2006. But, the event was postponed due to the untimely demise of the ex-treasurer of BKSSNT, Mr Narasimhan. The Hospital building inauguration is now scheduled for November.



Free Eye Camp



Checking for refraction errors

On June 6 and 7, 2006, a free eye camp was held in Bellur. This camp was organised by the BKSSNT in collaboration with Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai, Essilor and the Devraj Urs Medical College.

Sankara Nethralaya, is one of the premier eye institutions in the

country. They have 80 ophthalmologists with varying super specialities on its board. They were also the first to introduce tele-ophthalmic medicine in the country. Senior doctors, optometrists and information technologists came to Bellur to provide their services for the eye camp. They came with all the equipment including their own satellite. On-line communication was set up between the camp site at the Ramamani Hospital, Bellur and the Sankar Nethralaya consultants in Chennai. Thus, the villagers of Bellur could get free consultations with some of the most experienced ophthalmologists in the country, free of cost, sitting in their own village.

It was indeed a good blend and representative of the contrasts and diversity that India is! A village which till last year did not have even a high school could now avail the best in technology, in tele-medicine!



Villagers awaiting their turn



Guruji undergoing a blood test at Bellur

About 800 villagers participated in this camp to test for refractive errors. The most common methods of evaluating refractive errors is the use of eye charts. One needs to bear in mind that most of the villagers were illiterate. Special eye charts were therefore used for them.

Diagnosis of refractive errors was not enough. The villagers would have taken the prescription for glasses back home and forgotten all about it. They are possibly accustomed to live with compromised vision. Glasses cost money and that is not their priority!! It is not uncommon to neglect the diagnosis unless it is absolutely essential. Therefore, Guruji ensured that these people with compromised vision went home not only with a prescription but also glasses.

This was accomplished with the technical assistance of Essilor, one of the world leaders of spectacle lenses. Essilor provided India's first mobile refraction unit. A mobile van equipped with glass grinders and other equipment making it possible to make prescription glasses within a few minutes. The cost of the glasses for all those who needed them was borne by Guruji's family Trust, Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Trust. About 180 people needed glasses.

Most of the villagers had possibly not undergone an eye examination before. Not only were they ignorant of refractive errors but also other major eye disorders. So, when required blood pressure, eye pressure as well as blood sugar was also checked. About 40



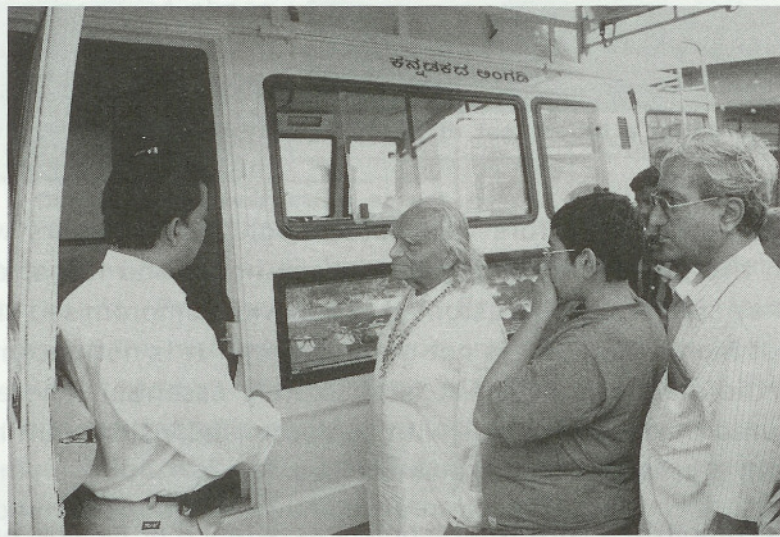
My gratitude!



patients were detected with cataract and were immediately transported to the Devraj Urs Hospital for surgery.

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

Inauguration of the mobile refraction unit



The mobile refraction unit

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

Although the hospital is scheduled to open in November 2006, its functioning has commenced with this eye camp – one which saw a great collaboration between doctors, information technologists and philanthropists!