

## Katral Thiruvizha - 2018

Azim Premji Foundation is a not-for-profit organization working towards the cause of a just, equitable, sustainable and humane society. We support the government school system given its role in ensuring access to quality education for the underprivileged sections of the society. We support the long-term capacity building of the system through teacher professional development, school leadership, research and advocacy.

The Learning Festival or Katral Thiruvizha organized by us, too, was an event conducted to attain this objective.

### Why conduct a Learning Festival?

Learning is best when it is socially relevant. This kind of learning helps students to recognize themselves as citizens of a global community. Also, education in its truest sense is not restricted to students' classroom learning-teaching experiences.

In order to draw the social relevance of education and to engage students meaningfully, an opportunity to learn, participate and draw experiences from diverse streams, should be given. Science exhibitions do a fair bit of contribution in this regard.

However, a common platform that includes varied learning experiences ranging from hands-on activities in arts and crafts to experiments in applied sciences and math, including various other streams like language, science, ecology, social sciences, and social-emotional learning, is rare.

### Building the Common Platform

Azim Premji Foundation, in association with the Education Department, Puducherry, brought this ideology to fruition in the form of Katral Thiruvizha that was organized from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, 2018. The festival, which was a first of its kind, brought together resource persons from various organizations, who conducted learning sessions for Primary and Upper-Primary students.

The venue of the event was GPS Indira Nagar for the Primary group participants and GHSS Indira Nagar, Puducherry, for the Upper Primary group.

### Some statistics:

Total number of zones/blocks participated:	5 zones; 3 blocks	
	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Upper-Primary</b>
Total number of schools participated:	101	71
Total number of students participated:	2559	2192
Total number of teachers participated:	127	114
Total number of stations conducted:	42	42
Total number of resource people/organizations involved:	42	42
Total number of resource group teachers:	14	14
Total number of PET masters deputed by the Department to ensure the safety of students	9	
Total number of B.Ed student volunteers (from Pope John Paul II College of Education):	100	
Total number of Azim Premji Foundation members:	40	
Total number of vehicles used for transportation:	12 buses; 1 mini-bus	

Every day, 2 Head Teachers from each zones were present the whole day to co-ordinate the escort teachers.

We had sought the support of medical/first-aid officials, risk management and security officials (police and fire service) and ensured their availability during their event.

During the course of the event, DDW, DISs, JD and the Director visited and inspected the sessions and the overall conduct of the Festival.

### A day from the Katral Thiruvizha

A typical day from the festival was scheduled and implemented in the following manner:

07:00/ 07:30/ 07:45 hrs	Students and teachers were picked from their venues by Azim Premji Foundation members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The venue and the time of pick-up was communicated in advance for each school attending the Learning Festival</li> <li>Students were grouped into approximately 20 batches for a day – each batch containing 30 students</li> <li>A group of 4 batches was combined together to form a cluster – forming 5 clusters per day.</li> <li>Each cluster is a combination of thematically selected sessions, suited to meet the learning outcomes expected of a group.</li> <li>(The nature of these themes have been discussed in the ‘Session-wise Details’ section of the document.)</li> </ul>
08:30 hrs	Students arrived at the venue.
08:30 to 09:00 hrs	Students were given boost and biscuits.
09:00 to 09:45 hrs	Batches are sent for their 1 <sup>st</sup> Session.*
09:45 to 10:30 hrs	2 <sup>nd</sup> Session
10:30 to 10:45 hrs	Morning break Teachers, Resource Persons and Volunteers were offered tea and banana; Students were given a banana
10:45 to 11:30 hrs	3 <sup>rd</sup> Session
11:30 to 12:15 hrs	4 <sup>th</sup> Session
12:15 to 13:00 hrs	5 <sup>th</sup> Session
13:00 to 14:00 hrs	Lunch Break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers, Students, Resource Persons and everybody present at the venue were provided lunch.</li> <li>The lunch for students was offered by the Department of Education</li> </ul>
14:00 to 14:45 hrs	6 <sup>th</sup> Session
14:45 to 15:00 hrs	Primary students assemble at the ground for the common session
15:00 to 16:00 hrs (for Primary grades)	7 <sup>th</sup> Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students witness the ParaiAatam, Oyilaatam dance sessions</li> </ul>
15:00 to 16:30 hrs (for Upper Primary grades)	Students are taken along with their escorting teachers + 1 volunteer teacher + 1 Azim Premji Foundation member for Exposure Visits (An Exposure Visit was a field trip organized to a location of relevance. The nature of these visits and the learning outcomes have been discussed in the ‘Session-wise Details’ section of the document.)
17:30 hrs	Teachers and students were dropped at their schools/respective venues by an Azim Premji Foundation member.

\* While most of the first sessions were 45 minutes long, some batches had longer sessions, lasting 1 and half hours. In such cases, the batches attending these longer sessions attended a total of six sessions.

## Session-wise Details

A comprehensive detailing of the different sessions conducted in the Learning Festival is included below:

### For Primary Grades

The sessions conducted for Primary grades can be grouped into the following themes:

Arts and Crafts; Life Skills; Mathemagic; Small Science; Storytelling; Theatre and Creative Writing

Themes	Resource People/Organizations	Expected Learning Outcomes
<b>Arts and Crafts</b>	Clay Fingers	The sessions focussed on igniting the creativity and imagination – some key abilities that play a vital role in students' learning experiences. Crafts act instrumental in deviating students from the traditional, rote-learning practices and acts as a suitable medium for all levels of learners. During the session, students participated in activities related to clay modelling, making beads & shell crafts, watercolour drawings and greeting card making.
	Marutham	Some life-oriented education in the form of jewellery-making, weaving and making toys were taught in the sessions conducted by this school. Using simple materials, students learnt to make useful objects. Students made colourful earrings and baby looms and took them back as souvenirs from the event.
	BharathiarPalkalaikoodam	Clay modelling, drawing, balloon masking, making craft works using waste materials were taught in these sessions.
	Prasanna Handicraft	Using clay and potter's wheel, students engaged in making lamps and other objects of interests in clay. These sessions were aimed at developing social awareness amongst students, helping them analyse that education was refrained to classrooms and books. A sense of community awareness and belonging was instilled through these sessions.
	PST Umapathy Seliamedu	The teacher conducted a session on making interesting crafts using waste materials of coconut and palm trees.
<b>Life Skills</b>	Paasam	These sessions aimed at building public speaking abilities in children. Most students do not fail because they lack the abilities to achieve something but because they lack in self-esteem and self-belief.
	Marutham	The necessity of physical activities is known to influence the neurological functioning of the brain, too. By reiterating the importance of this, these sessions conducted a series of games activities that aimed at building the physical agility of students.

<b>Mathemagic</b>	Azim Premji Foundation	Resource people from APF conducted measurement and tangram related activities that helped children creatively learn the subject and realize its significance for everyday life.
	Natura Foundation	Students learnt to make different origami works using colourful papers.
<b>Small Science</b>	Puvudham School	Students learnt to make <i>kanji</i> and herbal tea using natural ingredients.
	Pitchandikulam Forest Consultants	Students were exposed to the different forms of living organisms inhabiting the Pitchandikulam Forest through interesting activities.
	Arvind Gupta Toys	Few B.Ed student volunteers and resource group teachers who had been trained by the resource organizations, taught students on how to make toys using <i>maida</i> and colours. The sessions focussed on activities that students enjoyed doing.
<b>Storytelling</b>	Meticulous Master	The storytelling sessions included interesting stories, dramatically told to students, by also using some props. Traditional folklore, anecdotes and some classics were some of the genres.
	Nana Nanbargal	
	Katha Kamamishu	
	Mithra Theatre	These sessions seemed interesting and engaging to students and informative to teachers as they understood the pedagogy of storytelling and the relevance of it in a language-teaching classroom.
	Kathai Kathayaam	
	Indian Storytellers	
	Freelancer – Kanagadurga Ramesh	
<b>Theatre and Creative Writing</b>	ACE Teachers and Students	Some of the teachers who have been implementing ACE pedagogy (a training they had undertaken in the previous year) in their classrooms, conducted sessions to enhance language competency amongst students. Teachers were able to witness how language acquisition seemed to be done in an effortless yet productive manner. Students also engaged in choreography during this session. Few classroom diaries of ACE teachers, learning aides and classroom works of students, too, had been displayed. Classroom works of students included individual descriptions of pictures, creative writing and more. Few newsletters of teachers and magazine articles too had been displayed.
	Buddha Kalaikuzhu	A team of Parai Attam/Oyilattam dancers conducted common sessions for all the batches of primary students attending the Festival. Values and socio-cultural awareness, apart from simple techniques to enhance Tamil language acquisition were shared in these sessions.

#### For Upper-Primary Grades

Theme	Resource person, Organization	Session summary
Arts and	Bharathiar Palkalaikoodam	Clay Modelling - Demonstrating and training students to

crafts		create clay sculptures
		Waxing - Using wax to make wonderful paintings.
		Paint Marbling - Demonstrating and training to student about how paint marbling is done.
		Collage work - Creating collage art work from waste colour papers.
	Kavin art gallery	Hands on craft work using coconut shell and items to make decorative items.
Life skills	Passsam	Training students on Public Speaking and helping them step out of stage fright.
	The Narrative - InduDivya	Story telling sessions featuring personal stories to recognise the internal stories we tell ourselves and re-scripting them into empowering ones to help achieve goals.
	Shanmugasundaram	Mind Mapping & Learning Techniques to help organise key concepts and recall better.
	Value Integrated Teaching And Learning (VITAL)	Interactive sessions to develop life skills through concepts in math, science, social, language and stories.
	Global Leadership And Development (GLAD)	Social Emotional Learning through role play and energising games making students reflect upon their deeds.
Hands-on Science	Ravi Aluganti	Aravind Gupta Toys that are made using easily available, low cost material to induce curiosity towards scientific principles.
	Puvudham school	Demonstration of the process of making soap.
		Demonstration of the process of making toothpowder.
	Aravind Gupta toys- Origami	Children created crafts using ordinary paper without the usage of glue or cello tape. Creating shapes like flexagon made children understand the basic geometry in math.
	Aravind Gupta toys- Paint making	Students created organic paints using easily available materials. This paint was then used to make beautiful works of art.
Story Telling	DebjaniBadhuri	Instilling values, developing character, confidence, social skills by incorporating humour and drama through stories from different cultures.
	M. Pandiarajan	Values through story telling
	Mr.Alvin	Values through story telling
Make Science	TechShiksha	Making robots by knowing the functions of their various parts and understanding their correlation to human beings Students were offered a do-it-yourself kit to make their own robots.
	Pondicherry Science Center	Mobile Science van
	Pondicherry Science Center	Observing celestial bodies through a sun filtered telescope.
	Pondicherry Science Center	A description about different air pollutants followed by discussions on their various sources

	KrishiVigyanKendra	Bio-filters- Filtering water using biotic elements like plants was demonstrated using an aquarium setup.This was followed by a discussion on the working principles of bio-filters employed in fisheries.
	KrishiVigyan Kendra	Soil Testing- Making children aware of the alkalinity and acidity of soil and testing it using a pH meter and conductometric methods. This resulted in a deeper understanding of the pH metric in determining acidic-alkaline nature of substances.
	Omkar Foundation	Sustainable fishery, marine conservation and the importance of conserving vulnerable species was discussed using videos, pictures and models. In addition, techniques to improve breeding of fishes were shared. Displaying the gadgets used during scuba diving and allowing students to wear them excited students.
	PayirSchoolArvind Gupta Toys (Upper Primary)	After a discussion on unhealthy food habits and junk food culture adopted by the society today, children were introduced to many of the healthier cereals and pulses that were long forgotten.Waste materials like straw, paper, cycle tube, matches were used to make various toys that could easily demonstrate the basic science and math concepts.
	SEVAPayir School	Students were informed about the necessity of conservation of agricultural biodiversity and methods to do it. After showing them a variety of herbs, they were informed about their herbal preparations for preventive and curative treatment of livestock diseases.After a discussion on unhealthy food habits and junk food culture adopted by the society today, children were introduced to many of the healthier cereals and pulses that were long forgotten.
	STEMSEVA	Students learnt to tinker using seven segment displays to display their own name.Students were informed about the necessity of conservation of agricultural biodiversity and methods to do it. After showing them a variety of herbs, they were informed about their herbal preparations for preventive and curative treatment of livestock diseases.
	TATA Institute of Social SciencesSTEM	Removing the fear of mathematics through hands-on experience of ICT modules on geometric reasoning and proportional reasoning. Activities involving Tangram, origami and mind reader helped students understand the embedded mathematical concepts in these materials.Students learnt to tinker using seven segment displays to display their own name.
	Azim Premji Foundation – Bangalore TATA Institute of Social Sciences	Various hands on activities helped students visualize the concept of pi, the relationship between area & perimeter and deeply comprehend concepts related to proper & improper fractions.Removing the fear of mathematics

		through hands-on experience of ICT modules on geometric reasoning and proportional reasoning. Activities involving Tangram, origami and mind reader helped students understand the embedded mathematical concepts in these materials.
	Pondicherry Science Forum Azim Premji Foundation – Bangalore	Breaking the myths and superstitions in our society by emphasising the refinement of some of our cultural practices through logical and scientific reasoning Various hands on activities helped students visualize the concept of pi, the relationship between area & perimeter and deeply comprehend concepts related to proper & improper fractions.
Mathemagic	ManimaranPondicherry Science Forum	Cultural activities that included folk dance, telling of folk tales, and even some information traditional percussion instruments were signified. Students were allowed to use and practice with these percussions. It gave a varied experience and learning of folk music and its connection to real life. Breaking the myths and superstitions in our society by emphasising the refinement of some of our cultural practices through logical and scientific reasoning
	Raja Ravi Verma, Dean, Theatre, Pondicherry universityManimaran	Simple games and activities were conducted to improve student's cognitive & creativity skills, thinking capability and attention span. Cultural activities that included folk dance, telling of folk tales, and even some information traditional percussion instruments were signified. Students were allowed to use and practice with these percussions. It gave a varied experience and learning of folk music and its connection to real life.
Science for Life	Thandapaani and Amudhan shadow puppetryRaja Ravi Verma, Dean, Theatre, Pondicherry university	Developing environmental awareness through drama using puppetry Simple games and activities were conducted to improve student's cognitive & creativity skills, thinking capability and attention span.
Theatre and Creative Writing	BharathiarPalkalaikoodam Thandapaani and Amudhan shadow puppetry	Demonstrating and training students in kolaatamDeveloping environmental awareness through drama using puppetry
	BharathiarPalkalaikoodam	Demonstrating and training students in harvest danceDemonstrating and training students in kolaatam
	BharathiarPalkalaikoodam	Demonstrating and training students in harvest dance

### Exposure Visits

The upper-primary grades were taken on field trips to some locations of educational value. These included:

1. The French Institute of Pondicherry

2. Heritage walk through Puducherry - By Guru Design Studio & INTACH,
3. Sri Aurobindo Hand-made Paper Factory
4. Old Port
5. Bharati Textile Mills
6. PerunthalaivarKamarajarKrishiVigyan Kendra
7. PONLAIT
8. Radio Station, All India Radio
9. Police Station
10. Railway Station

During these field visits, students interacted with some of the officials and gathered information by themselves, too. The All India Radio and the Police Station, are special mentions, as they engaged children by answering all of their queries and helped in widening their learnings.

### **The Impact**

The *KatralThiruvizha* set the stage for creative engagement with students and teachers alike. Various resource organizations and people were brought together to give students an opportunity to go beyond their curriculum and classrooms; and to engage in meaningful activities that further helped them understand their social relevance.

There were instances where some sessions – like the session on making terracotta crafts – captured the interest of many and the session was conducted in more stations on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> days, upon requests from teachers.

The feedback collected from escorting teachers and the documentation of the various sessions unanimously reflect the many benefits the event had for them. Teachers shared with us on how they felt the event to have offered diverse learning opportunities in one platter. They also said, that they saw how efficiently they could engage students as they found them to grasp some of the techniques conducted in the sessions, very easily. Students, too, seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed the event where learning was offered through fun activities. Their teachers reported to us as having seen them sharing their experiences and learnings in their classrooms, too.



Some glimpses from the Festival...

























