

Bala Mandir Research Foundation



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About Us

The Bala Mandir Research Foundation (BMRF) is an adjunct of the Bala Mandir Kamaraj Trust (BMKT). Inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Bala Mandir was established in 1949 by S. Manjubhashini and K. Kamaraj. It is a premier welfare organisation, which has sheltered thousands of children over the years and continues to be dedicated to their care, education, health, vocational training and rehabilitation.

In 1983, Bala Mandir, using its experience with child care, began formal studies on holistic childcare and established the Bala Mandir Research Foundation, which has since grown steadily in its vision and work.

Vision

Putting children first and serving as a coordinating body of similar organisations in the field.

Mission

To address and ameliorate the disadvantages of poverty, neglect, abandonment and absent parents, with an open-door policy and a total commitment to the rights of the child.

Objectives

- To promote good parenting practices among parents and all those in a parenting role
- To conduct research and document studies on the situation of children in different strata of society
- To operate a Resource Centre offering training, counselling, resources and reference materials, and serve as a forum for discussions, meetings and seminars

The Bala Mandir Institutional Experience

Bala Mandir plays a unique triple role - of parent, teacher and community, and serves as a natural teaching and learning model for BMRF's parenting initiatives, focussing on the care and holistic development of the child, without distinction of caste, creed or gender.



Key projects, linked to Learning Through Play (LTP), within Bala Mandir:

- Early Childhood Care in Institutions
- Home Visitors' Programme - Keeping in touch with parents
- School Health Programme - Introducing developmental assessment
- Enhancement of play activities and School Readiness in Kindergarten

Other support programmes:

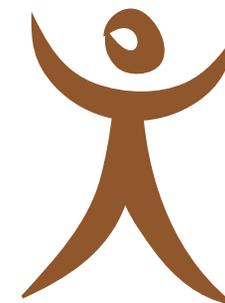
- Primary School - Teachers' understanding of the psycho-social aspects of child development and parenting by teachers and parents
- Adolescent - Understanding and raising
- Learning Support & Behaviour Counselling and Life Skills for Adolescents
- Enhancing the capabilities of orphan and destitute children of Bala Mandir

S. Manjubhashini Memorial (SMM) Seminar Series

Smt. S. Manjubhashini, a true pioneer of the 20th century, devoted her life to the service of others. She selflessly involved herself in India's freedom struggle. She continued in her efforts to help bring social and economic freedom to the people of India, particularly orphans, abandoned and destitute children and women. She passed away in 1996, leaving behind an enduring legacy of love, dedication and care.

In commemoration of her memory, BMRF conducts annual, topical seminars relating to child welfare.

- 1999 - Enriching the Life of the Institutionalised Child
- 2000 - Parenting the Young Child (Birth to 3 years)
- 2001 - Child Rights & ECCD
- 2002 - Adoption - Creating a Nurturing Environment
- 2003 - Kindergarten - Learning Through Play (3 to 6 years)
- 2004 - Network for Information on Parenting
- 2005 - Dynamic Inclusion - Accepting Diversity
- 2006 - Every Child Needs Parenting
- 2007 - Adolescence - Journey into Adulthood
- 2008 - TAO of Schooling - School Readiness
- 2009 - Parenting the Primary School Child



Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD)

In 1997, BMRF entered into a partnership with Hincks-Dellcrest Centre, Toronto, Canada, to establish the Learning Through Play (LTP) Programme in India. The aim of the LTP Programme is to support parents in their ability to stimulate holistic and healthy child development. The LTP calendars (Birth-3 years) and (3-6 years) informs parents about the psycho-social aspects of early childhood development and encourages parent-child bonding, parental involvement, and organising the settings for creativity and self-expression in children. The LTP Calendars (LTPC) have proved to be a valued educational tool given its visuals, simplicity of messages and cross-cultural applicability. For over a decade now, the LTP programme has been widely accepted in India, crossing regional, cultural and socio-economic boundaries.

Key on-going initiatives

- Partnerships with Government and NGOs in different regions and across socio-economic levels
- Orientation and training programmes and dissemination of knowledge
- Translations of the LPTC and support materials into various local languages
- Development and adaptation of tools
- Using the tools to focus on inclusion
- Focussing on cultural adaptations - Flip charts and parenting songs including Health, Hygiene, Nutrition, Safety, Special Attention, Parenting, Values and Skills in Child Rearing



Research

The life spirit of the BMRF is in documentation, research and analysis of the situation of children, and the enhancement and dissemination of effective parenting and childcare practices. The Foundation gathers together a voluntary team of child development experts, medical professionals, psychologists, social workers, special educators and others interested in childcare. It has also established partnerships and networks with various ECCD, research, educational, social and service organisations in India and internationally.

Key projects and studies are based on the following:

- Psychological problems of foundlings, orphans, deprived, deserted and disabled children and enhancement of their mental and physical health, through a stimulating environment
- Effect of personalised parenting attention on the mental and physical development of children, promoting holistic child development
- Specialised mental and physical care under Ayurveda and Homeopathy, counselling and psychotherapy

Publications

Over the years, BMRF has developed a resource pool of publications, research papers and materials. They cover the many projects, studies and programmes conducted by the Foundation, while reaching out to a wide spectrum of social and demographic groups.

The early studies focussed largely on the institutionalised child.

The nature and types of publications have grown systemically with the expanding work and scope of the Foundation and include peer assessments and a tracer study to evaluate outcomes.

Tri-series publication relating to childcare and parenting - 2009:

- A Cultural Series
- Monographs
- Reports of Projects and Programmes



Resource Centre

In an effort to reach out to the community and disseminate information on effective childcare and parenting, BMRF inaugurated the Resource Centre in 2005. The Resource Centre is open and accessible to all, especially parents, members of voluntary organisations, teachers and social workers.

Its purpose is essentially three-fold:

- Counselling and consultation - Parents and caregivers can approach a panel of experts for counselling and advice on a range of their children's psycho-social or academic problems
- Discussions and meetings - The Resource Centre has a well-equipped Conference Room to host meetings, seminars and talks. Discussions and the open exchange of ideas among professionals and workers in this field are being facilitated
- Resource and reference materials - The Library, which is open to the public, offers a modest selection of reference materials, books, videos and films on effective childcare and parenting practices



Network for Information on Parenting (NIP)

The Network for Information on Parenting (NIP) evolved out of a peer group review of the Learning Through Play Calendar (LTPC) in 1999. The meeting highlighted the need for a holistic approach to childhood and parenting, with a value for diversity and inclusion.

The Network and its activities have since grown organically. Today, the NIP is defined by a marked sense of purpose, and is characterised by conviviality and diversity, without geographical or professional boundaries. Members include child development experts, educationists, teachers, special educators, social workers and health professionals spread out across various states. BMRF is presently the Secretariat of NIP.

Vision:

To be a guiding force in the dissemination of information on responsible parenting across diverse socio-economic and cultural settings

Mission:

To redefine parenting, promote effective parenting practices catering to the holistic development of the child, and build the capacities of parents and communities

Objectives:

- To promote and enhance good parenting practices, irrespective of age, class or gender
- To provide a forum for debate and sharing information on children's issues
- To advocate the rights of children

