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TAMIL NADU

112-year-old school gets a new lease of life

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Local community comes forward to rejuvenate it

It was named Hindu Primary School by the Christian family that started it in 1904. The school, located at Pannai Moondradaippu village in Tiruchuzhi taluk in Virudhunagar district, was functioning with four teachers and over a hundred students till the family of a Sourashtra Christian, known till now only as 'Peria Vathiyar,' was running it.

Age began to tell on the school building and hence the student strength dwindled to around 30 in recent years. Determined not to lose this pre-independence symbol of secularism and camaraderie, the local community came forward to rejuvenate it. M. Balakrishnan, a US-based engineer, the first among many engineers produced by the school, offered to fund the construction of a new building in place of the dilapidated one.

The new building, which was declared open recently, is aesthetically designed to provide adequate air and light for the children, besides individual chairs.

Apart from Mr. Balakrishnan, many people belonging to the village have contributed to its new look in one way or the other.

The function to open the new building itself was an occasion for Pannai Moondradaippu to demonstrate its camaraderie and unity, cutting across religious, caste, class and political lines.

Most of the elderly persons of the village had started their education at the Hindu Primary School, where children from all sections study.

“I had to walk 10 km for my high school education. But I want the children of my village to get quality education at the primary level itself,” says Mr. Balakrishnan, who stayed in the village to oversee the construction.

A trust, Pannai Moondradaippu Educational Trust, has been formed to provide English education and computer training to the children. Now, the school has 35 children and two teachers, with classes from 1 to 5.