



It all started with castles in the

Bhagya Rangachar returned to India after living in the US for over 30 years to start an interesting programme for children in Jakkur villages.

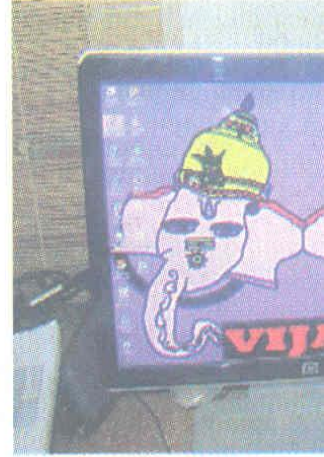
By Barnali Pal



Bhagya Rangachar, Founder and Managing Trustee of CLT India.



Children from the government schools of Jakkur village in the Computer Club House at CLT in Bangalore.



A student's creation.

Bhagya Rangachar, Founder and Managing Trustee of CLT India, lived in the US for over 30 years before she returned to India. In the US she worked as a software professional and was also involved in social work, so the desire to do something for her country was very strong in her. Back in India, everyday she would watch the children of construction workers build castles in the sand.

“That was how the initiative came to be christened as Children’s Lovecastles Trust (CLT) India. The children would

never cease to arouse my interest,” says Bhagya Rangachar, Founder and Managing Trustee of CLT India.

The organisation was given shape in 1997. “There is a need for alternative development models that score high on the sustainability quotient, and are scalable and replicable. In the emerging scenario few development programmes address the needs of the child in a holistic manner. Our approach lends itself to impacting the child’s

development from their immediate environment (family) to their progressively wider environs (community), including institutional settings (schools in this case). With a focus on long-term sustainability, CLT does not believe in replacing existing mainstream models, rather, it endeavours to strengthen them with informed support systems and structures that would greatly enhance their efficiency and effectiveness (the adoption of Government schools),” she

adds. Children should be engaged in the process of learning: this is the underlying principle behind all the education programme designed at CLT whether they are pedagogical practices or content development.

“At the CLT Learning Centre, we bring in the Integrated Learning approach, which sets forth a ‘Chain of Learning’ wherein all fields of knowledge are linked in a harmonious manner. Here kids are exposed

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At CLT India, one is struck by the sight of a whole bunch of happy kids from the nearby government schools of Jakkur village working animatedly and with ease on computers, creating computer-based projects. “We have set up something called the ‘After School Initiative’ where we give kids an out-of-school environment which provides them with an open-ended learning platform. It is popularly known as the Computer Club House Model for which we have part-

nered with MIT Media Lab, Boston Media of Science and Intel Foundation. Students get hands-on experience on multi-media practices,” she said. Kids from 9 to 19 come here. They are allowed to compose their own digital music and burn CDs! “The kids are encouraged to work on the computer themselves and create their projects. A few teachers are there to guide them on how to use the software,” says Bhagya. Though these kids come from govern-

ment schools, it does not stop them from dreaming big. Kritika, a student of Class IX, Jakkur Government School, is busy creating a project of her own school using the software Google Sketch Up. What are your dreams? Pat came the reply, “I want to be an IAS officer.” There are other kids like her who also want to succeed in the field they choose for a career.

Byra, a student of Class IX Government High School, who is a

member of th his own music is my passion. make a care fetched idea ri studies now. Class VIII, a v the Compute because he wa his own age. “ this Club Hou lot from our p