

# Migrant Voice

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**DON BOSCO MIGRANT SERVICES  
PONGAL CELEBRATION IN SADYAN  
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**EDITORIAL TEAM**

**EDITORIAL**

**Fr. Simolin, SDB**  
Director DBMS, Editor  
boscomigrants@gmail.com

**Fr. Lourdu, SDB**  
Asst. Director DBMS,  
Sub-editor

**DESIGN**

**Meril Anand KJ**  
Art Director,  
85273 33989



Designed @  
**SIGA STUDIO,**  
Kilpauk, Chennai-10

# **DON BOSCO MIGRANT SERVICES PONGAL CELEBRATION IN SADYAN UPAM AND BARMA NAGAR**



**14,16 JANUARY, 2024:**  
**SADYAN UPAM, BARMA NAGAR**

## **Introduction:**

**P**ongal, also known as Thai Pongal, is a significant Hindu harvest festival celebrated by Tamils. Widely regarded as one of the most important festivals in South India, particularly in Tamil Nadu, it holds cultural and traditional significance. In the northern regions of India, it is celebrated as Makar Sankranti. This multi-day festival occurs in winter, according to the Hindu calendar, signifying the sun's transition from the southernmost point of the hemisphere to the northern one.

## **Event Overview:**

The Pongal festival was joyously celebrated in Barma

Nagar on January 14, 2024, and in Sadyankupam and Irular Community on January 16, 2024. The festivities were organized by Don Bosco Migrant Service and sponsored by Sathyam Films, with resources amounting to 638 Rupees allocated for the event.

## **Participation:**

The Pongal celebrations witnessed enthusiastic participation, with over 50 individuals from Sadyankupam, another 50 from the Irular Community, and a gathering of 100 persons in Barma Nagar.

## **Activities and Highlights:**

Various engaging activities were conducted, including running races for boys, uria-dithal, lemon-in-the-spoon races for girls, and cultural dances.

Prizes were awarded to the winners by the esteemed chief guest, Sathyaseedan and Fr. Lourdu.

## **Community Involvement:**

The celebration brought together community members in an atmosphere of joy and camaraderie. The games and activities provided a platform for interaction and cultural exchange.







### Conclusion:

The Pongal festival celebration in Sadyankupam, Irular Community, and Barma Nagar was a resounding success, fostering a sense of unity and celebration within the communities. The support from Don Bosco Migrant Service and the sponsorship from Sathyan Films contributed to the vibrancy

and joy of the event. The participation of esteemed chief guests added a touch of honor and recognition to the festivities, making it a memorable and fruitful celebration for all involved. The Pongal celebrations exemplified the rich cultural tapestry and community spirit prevalent in the regions, emphasizing the importance

of preserving and celebrating traditional festivals for future generations.

### Chief Guest

Fr. Lourdu  
Sathyaseedan

### Participation

**50** individuals  
from Sady-  
ankupam Sathyaseed-  
an

**50** from the Irular  
Community

**100** persons  
in Barma  
Nagar.



## GRAM SABHA MEETING

**07 JANUARY, 2024:  
BURMANAGAR**

**T**oday, on the 7th of January 2024, the Jeevan Nirman Chennai Team orchestrated a Gram Sabha meeting at Burmanagar at 3 p.m. The esteemed chief guests in attendance included Fr. Lourde SDB, Sr. Madhu Kispotta, Thiru. Selvaraj (Village Administrative Officer - VAO), Thiru. Rumbal (Assistant VAO), Thiru. UdayRajendra (Ward Member), Ms. Madhusmita (Anganwadi Teacher), Mrs. Sushma (Senior Lady from Bihar), and Mr. Naresh (Representative from Uttar Pradesh). A total of 173 participants were present for this significant meeting.

The meeting commenced with a formal introduction, followed by an overview of Caritas India, emphasizing its mission and objectives. The Jeevan Nirman Program was then introduced, outlining its

purpose and initiatives. The rationale behind the ongoing survey and data collection activities was elucidated, and information was disseminated on the Migrant Resource Center (MRC) and how individuals could utilize its services.

Plans for future support and engagement were outlined, emphasizing continuous assistance, and the need for support from Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) leadership was discussed. Key focus areas, such as Safe Migration, Entitlements, Child Education, Registration in the Integrated Social Management (ISM) Portal, and Compensations, were thoroughly deliberated.

Thiru. Selvaraj, the VAO, reassured migrants regarding their safety and security during their stay in the village, emphasizing the effective implementation of MRC. The meeting provided a platform to discuss and address the

pertinent issues and challenges faced by migrant workers. In conclusion, the laborers expressed their happiness and gratitude to Caritas India for providing accompaniment during various challenges, contributing to the betterment of their livelihoods. The Gram Sabha meeting in Burmanagar served as a comprehensive platform for dialogue and discourse on crucial issues related to migrant workers. The presence of distinguished guests and the active participation of 173 individuals underscored the importance of the event. As a token of appreciation, refreshments were provided to all participants at the conclusion of the meeting. This event stands as a testament to the commitment of Jeevan Nirman Chennai Team and its partners towards facilitating positive change and sustainable development within the community.





# GRAMA SABHA AT MAMBAKKAM

**26 JANUARY, 2024:**  
**PSRIPERUMBUDUR, MAMBAKKAM.**

**S**ituated in the Sriperumbudur ward, Mambakkam Village exemplifies the significance of grassroots governance through its recurring Grama Sabha meetings. These assemblies serve as pivotal components of participatory democracy, providing a platform for collective deliberation and decision-making. The Grama Sabha held on January 26, 2024, at 11 a.m., in the Sriperumbudur block, specifically at Mambakkam Village, stands as a testament to the community's commitment to substantive discourse on matters integral to its welfare.

Presided over by President Venkatesan, with Ananda as the Clerk, the leadership team, including the Vice President, Village Administration Officer, and Headmaster, contributed their expertise. Two police officers ensured a secure environment for the assembly. Fr. Simolin, the Director of Don Bosco Migrant Services, and Sr. Punitha, serving as the Legal Adviser, provided valuable insights. Mr. Saurav Mondal of Caritas India played a pivotal role, facilitating the program for the community, along with 60 migrant workers. Mr. Gopal, the field coordinator of DBMS, added to the overall development goals.

Education found representation through students from var-



ious institutions, contributing diverse perspectives. Gokulraj from the Madras School of Social Work, Sanjay Kumar and Moses Immanuel from Mar Gregorios College of Arts and Science, and Antony and Joe from Loyola College actively engaged in discussions, reflecting the commitment of the younger generation to community development.

The Grama Sabha discussions unfolded, with President Venkatesan skillfully facilitating, ensuring all voices were heard. The collective effort addressed immediate concerns and long-term development goals, with Fr. Simolin providing guidance

on aligning community initiatives with broader developmental strategies.

The meeting transitioned into an interactive session initiated by Clerk Ananda, where villagers expressed the need for transparency through an annual report. Responding to concerns raised by Fr. Simolin, Mr. Saurav, and migrant workers, President Venkatesan was requested to address these needs formally.

Recognizing the need for inclusivity, President Venkatesan engaged in a constructive dialogue, offering valuable suggestions on integrating migrant



workers into the community. Fr. Simolin proposed a structured solution, wherein Caritas India would support registered migrant workers with a shared responsibility model, addressing immediate needs and facilitating integration.

A series of meetings, organized by Fr. Simolin and Mr. Saurav, aimed at building connections and understanding migrant workers' needs. Discussions covered topics such as local culture, housing, healthcare, education, and the support offered by Caritas India. Migrant workers expressed a desire for quality education for their children, and Fr. Simolin assured steps would be taken.

The proactive approach of President Venkatesan in organizing these meetings showcased a commitment to inclusivity, social integration, and community well-being. The decision to engage Fr. Simolin and Mr. Saurav reflected a focus on meaningful connections, understanding individual narratives, and fostering a sense of community among all residents.



The meetings not only facilitated information exchange but also symbolized a collaborative effort to bridge the gap between the established community and recent arrivals. Fr. Simolin's empathetic approach, coupled with Caritas India's comprehensive support, aimed to create a community where everyone could thrive and contribute.

The Grama Sabha, under President Venkatesan's leadership, became a dynamic platform for community engagement and inclusive development. The response to migrant workers' challenges showcased proactive leadership, fostering unity

and prosperity. The commitment to register migrant workers under Caritas India emphasized shared responsibility and a sense of belonging within the community.

In conclusion, Mambakkam Village demonstrated the strength of community bonds and the potential for positive change when diverse stakeholders come together. The principles of compassion, collaboration, and shared responsibility will continue to guide the village towards a thriving, integrated, and harmonious community in its journey of sustainable development.



# AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR METRO CONSTRUCTION LABOUR

**19 JANUARY 2024:  
SRIPERUMBUDUR.**

**A**n awareness program focusing on the welfare and safety of metro construction labor was organized in Sriperumbudur by Caritas India. The program, held on January 19, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., aimed to educate participants on labor safety, dengue, malaria, HIV, and government entitlements. The event witnessed the participation of 120 individuals.

Distinguished resource persons, including Mr. Deepak (Community Educator), Sr. Madhu (Don

Bosco Migrant Service Staff), and Sr. Punita (Advocate), were invited to address the attendees. Fr. Simolin and Dr. John, alongside Mr. Saurav, directed the awareness program for migrant workers at the metro construction site.

Prior to the event, Mr. Gopal (DBMS) and Mr. Saurav meticulously planned and extended invitations to safety manager Mr. Kalairaja (LNT), the police department, and local leaders. The official invitation

was also extended to migrant workers and contractors.

Mr. Kalairaja, in his capacity as the safety manager, played a pivotal role in organizing the event, collaborating with both LNT and Caritas India. The safety awareness program, executed with the use of visuals, captivated the migrant workers, and they actively engaged in the session. Following the safety program, legal is-

120  
labourers  
attended this  
event







sues were elucidated by Sr. Punita, providing valuable insights into legal procedures and assistance.

Mr. Deepak shed light on government entitlements, schemes, and subsidies available for migrant workers, emphasizing Caritas India's commitment to supporting them in future programs. Fr. Simolin, the Director of DBMS, underscored the collaborative efforts of Don Bosco Migrant Service and Caritas India in aiding migrant workers over the past five years.

Expressing continuous support, Fr. Simolin urged all migrant workers to enroll voluntarily with the NGO for safety migration, promising comprehensive assistance in legal matters, job safety, payment



concerns, health safety, and cultural adaptation.

The program concluded with a refreshment session and a vote of thanks. Subsequently, Mr. Kalairaja convened a follow-up meeting in his office, ex-

pressing enthusiasm for organizing more such programs for migrant workers at construction sites. Fr. Simolin and Dr. John pledged their commitment to conducting further programs in the ensuing days.



# ENGAGEMENTS IN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES AND BRICKKILNS

**30 JANUARY, 2024:**  
**PUDUVOYAL**

**O**n This report provides an overview of engagements and activities conducted by the team in various migrant communities and brick kilns, aiming to understand and address the challenges faced by migrant workers.

The team commenced its field visits with exploratory trips to government schools and brick kilns in Pudukkottai, Peruvoyal, and Keelmadalmedu. The objective was to acquaint two Sisters, Sr. Veronica and Sr. Premcila, with the conditions in these locations and engage with migrant families in brick kilns.

Subsequent visits includ-







ed an exploration of night tuition centers, discussions about the upcoming Pongal Celebration, and introductions to night schools and teachers. The team also made visits to brick kilns to interact with owners, managers, and families, gaining insights into the livelihoods of migrant workers in these settings.

The team engaged in discussions with Thiru. Sugumar (VAO) of Gumdippoondi to seek permission for surveys in Gumdippoondi and Pudupettai villages. Collaborative efforts with local authorities and communities were emphasized to effectively implement Jeevan Nirman Programmes.

A notable visit to brick kilns at Arani and Pondavakkam highlighted discussions on child education, elections affecting labor arrivals, and labor welfare. Plans for the commencement of school for brick kiln children were laid out.

Further visits to Arani areas and Puduvoyal involved discussions with kiln owners about



child education and family welfare programs. Challenges related to late arrivals of laborers were acknowledged, prompting ongoing efforts to collect details of migrant children and workers.

The team visited Pudupettai and Gumdippoondi to coordinate survey work and engaged with Thiru. Murti (AVO) of Pudupettai to discuss Jeevan Nirman programs. The involvement of agents and volunteers in survey activities was initiated, and plans were made to address the edu-

cational needs of migrant children.

The report also encompasses visits to Parvayal Government School, where discussions with school teachers sought information on lists from brick kiln chambers. Subsequent visits to various brick kiln chambers involved discussions on children's lists and coordination with owners, supervisors, and workers.

In the latest update on January 30, 2024, the team visited Puduvoyal School, where three chambers had sent 100 children to school. Efforts were made to encourage another chamber to send children for enrollment.

These cumulative engagements underscore the commitment of the team towards understanding and addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by migrant workers. Collaborative efforts with local authorities, engagement with communities, and initiatives for child education and welfare programs form the core of the team's endeavors.



# SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND INTEGRATION

**D**on Bosco Migrant Services (DBMS) recently hosted an enlightening orientation program, specifically crafted for the first-year Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students from Stella Maris College, along with novices of the FSJ congregation. The meticulous design of the orientation sought to provide an in-depth elucidation of the various functions and humanitarian efforts carried out by DBMS.

Complementing this theoretical foundation, the program included a strategic field visit, allowing participants to observe and engage with the real-world application of social work principles. This practical exposure was intended to consolidate their understanding of the theoretical knowledge imparted during the orientation by witnessing the direct impact of DBMS's work

on the migrant community.

Moreover, the orientation served as an enlightening educational tool, especially for those previously unaware of the complex challenges faced by migrants hailing from diverse states.

It emerged as a powerful instrument for a w a k e n - i n g , offering novel insights into the a s s i m i - l a t i o n of these individuals into our societal fabric. The initiative proved to be a pivotal step in cultivating a more empathetic and supportive ethos for the inclusion and assistance of new societal members.



In addition to raising consciousness, the program advocated for a holistic approach to social work education, emphasizing the significance of empathy, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to translate theoretical knowledge into practice.

With the insights gained from both the orientation and field visit, participants are now better equipped to contribute meaningfully to the collective effort of building a society that not only recognizes but also cherishes the value of every individual, regardless of their origin.