

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

# FEATHERS



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**Special Education**



**Art Integration**



**Early Intervention**



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Special Education



Art Integration



Early Intervention



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## Annual Report 2022-23

### Overview of the Year 2022-23

FEATHERS is a not-for-profit organisation promoted in 2016 to work among the children with special educational needs (SEN), particularly from the disadvantaged communities. It started its work with children identified with developmental delays, Children with special needs, Children with special educational needs. FEATHERS envisions “building an inclusive society with enshrined values of enabling, excellence, equality, equity, and humaneness. Its mission is "Laying Foundation for Enabling Action to Transform Human Excellence with Resilience and Self-reliance’. Our objectives are to:

- Reach out to children with special needs requiring professional assistance and offer on-campus and off-campus remediation services
- Create awareness among the parents for identifying special needs in their children, seeking timely and appropriate medical and rehabilitation support.
- Provide education and training to aspiring youth and mothers of children with special needs on rehabilitation, care and support.
- Work with like-minded individuals and institutions to further the cause of children with special needs through research, training, and policy initiatives

Initially FEATHERS had set-up a Centre at Madurai City, and later we realised that the rural poor families with these types of children are left with no option, and we decided to shift our work from Madurai City to rural area and we have chosen Thirumangalam, which is an agrarian block with rainfed farmers. After initiating community-based activity, we started our intervention in Children with learning difficulties and children with learning disabilities at Government Primary Schools with the permission of CEO, Madurai district and did Early intervention services at Thirumangalam FEATHERS office itself.

We started our community-based intervention with the support of Wipro Fellowship and began intervention at five Government Primary Schools in Thirumangalam. First, we had initial discussion with headmistress and class teacher and identified children facing difficulties in the classroom. We conducted a baseline assessment and confirmed the children who had learning difficulties and a few children with specific learning disabilities. We have completed this initial assessment during March and April 2022 itself. Also, we have made home visits and collected all basic family and educational environment details during May 2022. After school reopening, we have started our remedial education in five schools. We have conducted remedial classes through one-on-one session. Currently, we are working

with 73 children from five primary schools. The major challenge is insufficient space in the primary schools, due to which our teachers are finding it difficult to carry on one-on-one sessions. Sometimes, headmistress do not give much importance to our work, they often remedial teachers for doing their regular class works. There are caste discriminations observed in the Government Schools.

Our plan for coming three years will be to expand our interventions with learning difficulties and learning disabilities from five schools to fifty schools, continue our intensive work in early-intervention for the children with development delays and Children with Special needs at Thirumangalam block. We also have a plan to expand our work nearby another economically backward and aspirational district, Virudhunagar.

The team in FEATHERS is actively working on resource mobilisation, as it is an imperative for FEATHERS to expand and sustain its efforts. It has to work significantly towards attracting new donors, convince them with the concept and write proposals. Secondly, the challenge is handling social media / online platform effectively to reach out to the parents and well-wishers. As we feel this as an important activity to position our works and it will help us connect with the general public, philanthropic individuals, and institutions. We require guidance, capacity, and support in these aspects. We see both these domains are connected to each other and we would like to augment our skills in these domains in the coming years to enhance the reach and impact of our works.

## Progress During the Year 2022-23

### Karka Kasadara



Children with learning disability may have difficulty in reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling and/or organizing information. They are often pushed out of schools due to academic underachievement. Feathers works with the mainstream school education system

to provide specialized care and attention to those children with appropriate remedial education and training at Primary Level.

FEATHERS has obtained permission from the Chief Educational Officer, Madurai to work with all the Primary Schools of Thirumangalam Block and we began our work with 15 schools around Thirumangalam. We are directly working with 5 Government Primary Schools with 73 children with learning difficulties and learning disabilities. Apart from this, 10 Children are attending remedial sessions at our Centre at Thirumangalam. This programme is managed with the support from Wipro Education Fellowship.

### Vaanavil



Vaanavil is an Art Integrated Learning approach promoted by FEATHERS, wherein the kids are facilitated to explore creatively at their individual pace both in visual (drawing and painting, clay modelling, pottery, paper crafts, mask and puppet making) and performing arts (music, dance, theatre, puppetry) for better understanding and construction of knowledge about different concepts. This Programme is done with the financial and material support from Individual Philanthropists and volunteers.

### Poonthalir

Community Based Early Intervention Programme of FEATHERS intends to assist the children diagnosed with developmental delays to improve their delayed milestones through physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and special education for improving their cognition, activity for daily living, adaptive skills, social and emotional Skills. At present 11 children with various issues of development delays are coming for Early intervention to our Centre.



### Poovanam

The Special School run by FEATHERS offers rehabilitation, therapeutic interventions, and special education to the children with special needs. It extends early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, early intervention, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy and parent counselling and training. The Special School is managed by special educators. Therapists provide physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy through fixed weekly schedules. There are Three Students with special educational needs enrolled in the Special School. We are working with those Children to provide give Special education and Skilling on Activity for Daily Living. This programme is managed with the Contribution from Parents and well-wishers.



## Impact of Interventions

In the beginning of this year, we have started working with 73 children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Three remedial teachers are handling classes to those 73 children.

Sl.No	School Name	Total Children	Children with learning Difficulties
1	Municipal Primary school, Thirumangalam	48	15
2	Government Kallar Primary School, Sengulam	60	14
3	Municipal Primary school, Chathiram, Thirumangalam	43	14
4	Panchayat Union Primary School, Sungurampatti	29	8
5	Panchayat Union Primary School, Vidathakulam	101	22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>73</b>

We could focus on specific learning achievement for 73 children during this period. Our assessment revealed the following difficulties in reading & writing. They exhibited difficulties in

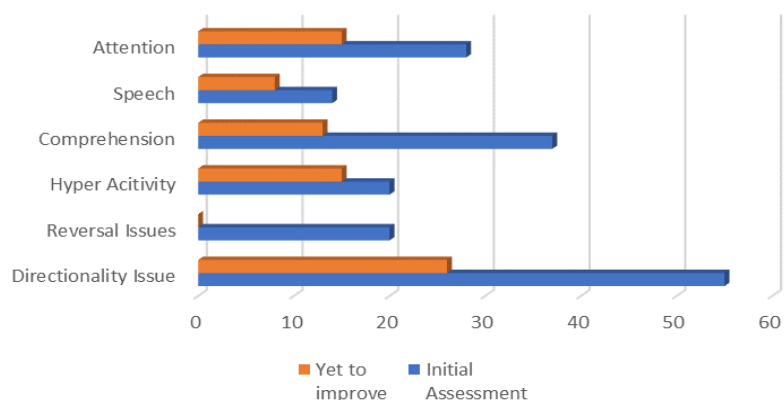
- Spelling,
- visual and auditory discrimination
- Identifying consonant letters in Tamil
- Phonic sounds in English alphabets
- Differentiating capital and small alphabets
- Recognition of numbers in two and three digits
- Basic arithmetic skills such as place value, before and after numbers, big and small numbers, simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

We have developed a format for assessing the improvements of the Children concurrently, who have been undergoing remediation process implemented by the remedial educators placed by FEATHERS in the Panchayat Union Primary Schools. A baseline assessment of all the children was done in the beginning and in March 2023, another assessment was done against the baseline. Analysis of changes in the level of improvement in the children was made. We have assessed the improvement of the children in the five major area such as Issues related to learning, Improvement in Tamil, Mathematics, English and in writing. The concurrent reports of the teachers were analyzed and the outcomes of the analysis are as followed:

ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES RELATED TO LEARNING			
Issues Assessed	No of Children		% Change
	Baseline	Yet to improve	
Directionality Issue	55	26	53
Reversal Issues	20	0	100
Hyper Activity	20	15	25
Comprehension	37	13	65
Speech	14	8	43
Attention	28	15	46



### Assessment of Issues related to Learning



Children with learning difficulties and disabilities have exhibited Directionality issues, Reversal issues, Hyper Activity, Comprehension, Speech, and Attention issues. These associated issues hinder their learning. For remediating such issues, we have provided brain-gym exercise among children at the beginning of each session. Due to such activity, we could find out remarkable positive changes. We could find out 25% to 100% positive changes in rectifying such issues.

### Remediation in Tamil

Students who are able to	During Assessment	Present Status	% Change
<b>Recognize Vowels</b>	49	73	100
Read-Vowels	42	73	100
Write -Vowels	43	73	100
Recognize Consonant	6	69	95
Read-Consonant	5	70	96
Write-Consonant	4	68	93
Read one letter word	4	63	86
Write one letter word	4	63	86
Read two letter word	3	61	84
Write two letter word	3	61	84
Read three letter word	2	55	75
Write three letter word	1	56	77
Read four letter word	1	45	62
Write four letter word	1	44	60
Read short sentences	1	39	53
Write short sentences	1	20	27
Read short paragraph	1	28	38
Write short paragraph	1	11	15

The children with whom our teachers engaged in remediation are studying in Tamil medium at government schools. Our primary focus is on mother tongue, followed by Mathematics and English. During our initial assessment, these children struggled even in Vowels and Consonant letters in Tamil. We taught children from beginning of recognizing Vowels and Consonant then reading and writing up to simple sentences and paragraphs. Due to our remediation process, most of the children could learn Tamil Vowels and Consonant. The assessment shows that there is an improvement in the basic aspects of the language such as recognizing, reading, and writing vowels, consonants, one lettered and two-lettered words. Improvements could be seen in reading short sentences (53%) and reading short paragraphs (38%). However, there is a need for improvements in writing sentences and paragraph, in which the students have exhibited marginal improvement. Our team members need to give much focus on intervention in the area of reading and writing of sentences and paragraph in the coming quarter.

### Remediation in Mathematics

Improvement in Mathematics			
Students are able to	During Assessment	Present Status	% Change
<b>Numerical</b>			
<b>Recognise numbers up to 50</b>	47	73	100
Read up to 50	40	73	100
Write up to 50	40	73	100
Write number names up to 50	2	60	82
Recognise numbers up to 100	40	67	92
Read up to 100	26	66	90
Write up to 100	25	67	92
Write number names up to 100	0	31	42
Recognise numbers up to 1000	3	52	71
Read up to 1000	4	53	73
Write up to 1000	2	50	68
Write number names up to 1000	1	14	19
Recognise numbers up to 10000 (for 40 children)	2	18	45
Read up to 10000 (for 40 children)	2	17	43
Write up to 10000 (for 40 children)	2	17	43
Write number names up to 10000 (for 40 children)	0	16	40

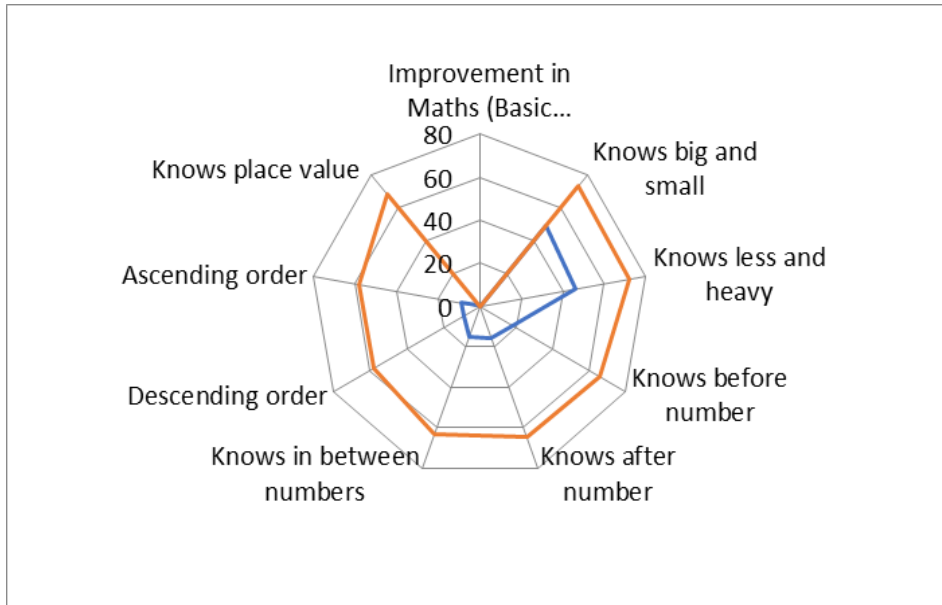
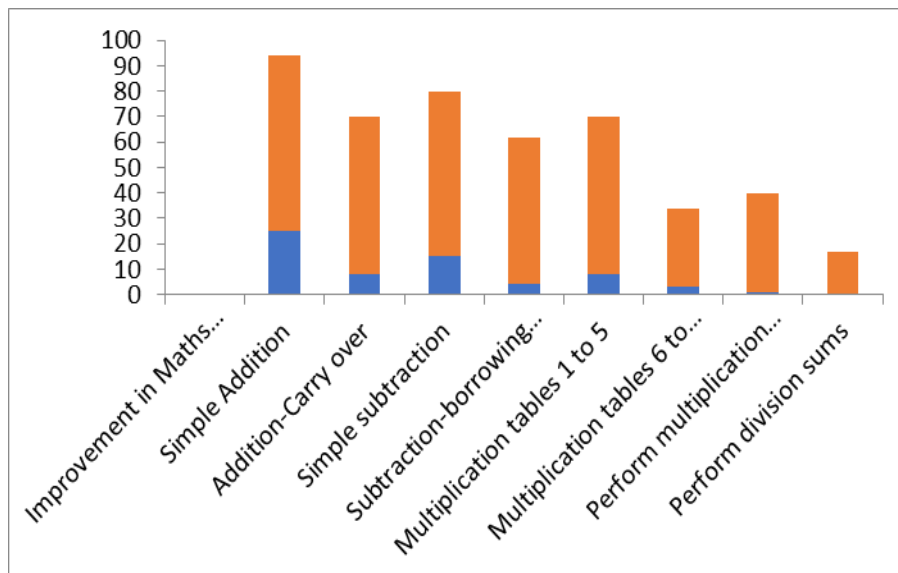


Figure: Improvements in Basic Concepts of Maths



Improvements in Basic Arithmetic Skills

In Mathematics, there were encouraging improvements in recognizing, reading, and writing even single digit to three-digit numbers. Still they need much improvement in four-digit numbers and writing number names. Much improvement has happened in understanding and performing basic concepts. In Arithmetic, they could improve significantly in simple arithmetic aspects like simple addition, subtraction, much improvement was there except in doing multiplication and division sums. In the coming year, our team members will give more focus in those aspects.

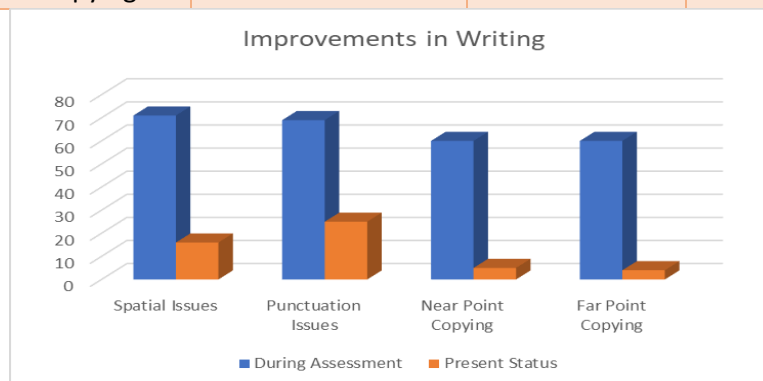
## Remediation in English

Improvement in English			
Students are able to	During Assessment	Present Status	% Improvement
Follow Phonic Sounds	1	62	85
Recognise Alphabets in capital	13	73	100
Read-Capital Alphabets	9	73	100
Write Capital Alphabets	8	73	100
Recognise Alphabets in Small	6	64	88
Read-Small Alphabets	5	65	89
Write Small Alphabets	3	64	88
Read two letter words	2	59	81
Write two letter words	2	53	73
Read three letter words	2	43	59
Write three letter words	2	32	44
Read four letter words	1	24	33
Write four letter words	1	11	15
Read Short sentences	1	8	11
Write Short sentences	0	0	0
Read short paragraph	0	0	0
<b>Write short paragraph</b>	0	0	0

In English, during our initial baseline assessment, children struggled even to recognise, read, and write capital and small alphabets. Now, there is a significant improvement in the basic aspects of recognizing, reading, and writing alphabets. However, there are improvements needed in the areas of reading and writing three lettered words, four lettered words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.

## Improvement in Writing

Improvement in Writing			
Particulars	During Assessment	Present Status	% Change
Spatial Issues	71	16	78
Punctuation Issues	69	25	66
Near Point Copying	60	5	93
Far Point Copying	60	4	95



During our assessment we have observed issues in writing such as Spatial issues, Punctuation issues, and issues in near point and far point copying. Our children had difficulties in writing letters within the spaces, had confusion for placing punctuation mark, omit lines and words even near point and far point copying. After remediation, those issues were drastically reduced. We have observed positive changes from 66% to 95% in the issues pertaining to writing.

We have intensified our Community Based Early Intervention Programme. We have obtained support from Wipro Foundation to add therapy equipments for physiotherapy and occupational therapy during this year. Addition of these equipments would help us further our programme in the disability domain. We have identified volunteers to work in the villages to identify and bring the children identified with development delays for early intervention. Already, we are implementing our school based remedial education programme for the children with SLD and learning difficulties. We will continue to implement all our interventions in Thirumangalam block to develop a comprehensive model for inclusion.

### Intervention Design

We began our intervention as a Centre based programme. Our interaction with the Department of Education, Madurai, brought us an idea of initiating our work in Thirumangalam Block, a backward block with the farmers engaged in rainfed farming. Also, we have got permission to work with all the Primary Schools of Government at Thirumangalam block. To engage intensively with the Children and focus all our efforts in one block, we moved our physical office from Madurai City to Thirumangalam, block headquarters. We have decided to work in depth in one block and bring more learnings for refining our approach in remediation of children with special needs.

In Thirumangalam block, our Remedial Centre is located near bus stand, which is more accessible to our educators and volunteers. This block has 89 Government Primary Schools and 14 Government aided Schools taking to a total of 103 Primary Schools. We have obtained permission from CEO, DEO and also AEO offices. We have chosen 5 schools initially to begin our programme. We have identified 73 children requiring remediation support and initiated our programme with the volunteers placed in each school.

### Reach and Coverage

- Five remedial teachers are working with Five Government Schools. Three teachers are working directly with 73 Children at Government Schools. One Special educator is involving by preparing worksheet for knowing children's improvement and one anchor, Special Educator is involving mainly for giving training and take model classes for teachers and involve counselling for Children's parents.
- 10 Government School teachers are involving in training regarding learning disabilities

- We are working with 73 Children with learning difficulties as well as learning disabilities at 5 Government Primary Schools in Thirumangalam block
- We are doing Art integrated learning programme, Vaanavil at five Government Primary Schools

In the first phase, we have chosen 15 Government Primary Schools for rolling out our remedial education programme. At present we completed assessment at 7 schools and started remediation programme by Volunteer teachers. Totally we have screened 300 students, out of these 75 students have been identified with the issues in learning difficulties as well as SLDs. We found out that even fifth grade child was unable to write and recognise basic Vowels, Consonant in both English as well as Tamil language and not knowing reading even simple two letter as well as three letter words. In maths, they could not execute even simple addition, subtraction, and tables. As per data says children with learning difficulties range from 10 to 15%. But in reality, they are ranging from 10 to 32%. It may be due to the following reasons.

- a. Due to pandemic situation, the children were kept out of school for nearly two years
- b. Children did not have educational exposure by online mode
- c. Lack of follow-up at the family level
- d. Pushing slow learners from private school to government schools
- e. Two teachers handling 1st to 5th grade students could not provide individual attention

## Educational Intervention

The Executive Director of FEATHERS, Ms Nageswari is a trained Special Educator with specialised knowledge on early childhood care and education (ECCE) and remediation of children with specific learning disabilities. She works with the primary schools directly along with a team of teachers, who were trained by her in these domains. She trains the volunteers in remediation process and gives them hands on training to handle children requiring support in the classrooms in the identified schools. She demonstrates them how to handle classes, how to use educational aids, how to design and prepare IEP and analyse children's improvement. Every Saturday, Centre level training is conducted to our volunteers mainly in the aspects of remediating Children with Learning disabilities and Special needs.

She also attended many workshops conducted by ATMA such as Organisational Development and a session on Accessibility by Samarthyam. She has got much clarity on how to develop an organisation and importance of Inclusion and how to create inclusion through providing appropriate accessibility. By attending such programmes, FEATHERS did Accessible audit with support of APD team at Vidathakulam Government Primary School and the Centre level also.

Two of our board of trustees have attended the accessibility audit conducted by APD in the school. They interacted with the APD team and understood the process of inclusion and importance of creating accessible environment for Children with special needs.

To deepen the engagement of Trustees in the implementation, one of the trustees volunteered to acquire formal training in learning disability domain. He enrolled into the Diploma in Learning Disability Programme offered by the Azim Premji University. He is currently undergoing the first certificate programme facilitated by Dr. Aruna Sundararajan and Dr. Bhuvaneshwari. He has committed that he would devote his time fully to FEATHERS after the completing / obtaining the diploma.

## Genesis and Growth of FEATHERS Approach

While the core team that promoted FEATHERS has had long years of experience in building Women SHG Federations and Farmers Institutions, our journey into the institution building for education theme took some time to conceive and develop this idea. We have asked Nageswari, one of the core team members to get academic training in special education and teaching students with learning disability from reputed institutions.

With the education and insights that we gained, we have promoted FEATHERS, a public Trust in Madurai with a vision of making it a centre of excellence in research, training and implementing remedial programmes for addressing the issues of learning difficulties and specific learning disability exist among the underprivileged students, who are often neglected by the mainstream school education system. For transforming our initiative into an institution, we want to seek guidance from the experienced leaders, who have had opportunity to build, lead and transform institutions.

In the course of undergoing the field programmes, where the children from the poor and vulnerable households in the drought prone southern Districts of Tamil Nadu were left uncared if they under achieve in their school studies. They were labelled as lazy and unintelligent children and most of the time they got dropped from school. The school teachers were unable to pay exclusive attention on those kids and they were often pushed out of schools after 8th or 9th standard before going for 10th Standard.

Our enquiries revealed that the students were suffering from mild to moderate Learning Disabilities, which was not noticed by the teachers. Our interaction with the teachers of government schools further revealed that there is no adequate attention on those children and often they are left uncared in a situation where they had to pay attention to the children who are normal in their studies. While they admitted the situation openly there was no remedy from the mainstream educational initiatives by the Government.

This situation motivated us to encourage Nageswari to undergo specialised education in Specific Learning Disability and starting an exclusive programme for the children with LD.

After getting specialised training from the Madras Dyslexia association, under their Intensive Teacher Training Programme, we have initiated the programme in FEATHERS.

Running this remedial programme for the children with the SLD in the past one year has revealed that there is a real need for the children from all levels of economic strata. However, the families with middle- and higher-income strata are ready to spend money for the remedial intervention and even they did not mind spending considerably for their children once they are diagnosed with SLD. Whereas, the families from poor background, are unable to comprehend the issue of SLD and spending money for the specialised one-on-one care is beyond their reach and affordability.

We, therefore wanted to evolve a simple and decentralised model, wherein we can work with the mainstream schools in the rural areas to address their needs. We began our programme in Thirumangalam Block with the idea of model building and advocating merits of the model with NGOs and Governmental Programmes.

As a team, we are open to learn and grow with the ever-changing field of special education and rehabilitation science. We strive hard to provide homely and motherly care and enabling environment for the children to learn and perform. We motivate the children not just to fulfil their academic endeavours, we also encourage them to explore their innate potential and brilliance to set goals for unleashing them despite their physical and psychological inadequacies.

### Localised Assessment Tool

Most of the learning disability assessment tools have been designed keeping English Medium students in mind and using the tools as such for the Tamil medium students is inappropriate. Therefore, we have designed an assessment tool on grade basis in Vernacular language (Tamil) which comprises of the following tests:

- Assessing children's reading and writing skill
- Visual Motor Integration (VMI) test
- Spelling test
- Test for mirror image as well as directionality issues,
- Test for spatial issues, punctuation issues
- Test for auditory issues and sequential issues,
- Test of problem in near-point and far-point copying and find out problems in maths

### Our remediation practices

Our remediation approach puts the children at the centre. Every child is unique. So are their learning styles, problems in learning, and remediation strategies. We strongly believe in enabling approach that includes child centred instructional planning, individualised education programme appropriates to child's special needs, continuous assessment for evaluating the progress. We work equally with the parents and children to design



intervention, execute, and monitor the progress. While the children encounter their learning disability playfully, their parents often exhibit a myriad of emotions upon diagnosis, including anger, grief, and denial. We work hand-in-hand with the parents to focus on initiate the process of helping their child with special needs achieve their fullest potential. Teachers in the schools are the important stakeholders, with whom we will work for identifying students with learning difficulties and SLD, interact continuously to exchange feedback on the progress of the students who are undergoing remediation process. In the process we will strive to influence the administration at the school level, at the district level to initiate such interventions with a long-term perspective.

The Volunteer Teachers identified, trained, and placed for the school-based learning facilitation programme undertake the following set of activities:

- a. Assessment for identifying children with learning difficulties and learning disabilities
- b. Set child specific goals and prepare IEP
- c. Conducting regular brain gym exercise for the children
- d. Remediation by one-on-one method
- e. Use multisensorial approach for remediation

During our intensive engagement with the Primary Schools in Thirumangalam, we could enhance capacity of our team members in the aspects of handling remedial classes to children, preparing teaching learning materials (TLM) and counselling to parents. Their understanding has improved in the aspects of mainstreaming children through the process of remediation. Due to constant training to our team members their skills also improved a lot.

## Capacity Building of Leadership and Team

Capacity building is done through on-the-job trainings to impart hands-on skills to the newly recruited teachers. During the week days, the teachers attend the designated schools to carry-out remediation programme for the children identified with the learning difficulties. The Executive Director, Ms Nageswari, who is also an anchor of the remediation programme visits the schools along with the teachers and provide training through demonstration for assessment, handling assessment tools, evolving IEP and implement the remediation programme according to the IEP set for each student.

On Saturdays, the team meets at the Centre in Thirumangalam, where the Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their experiences gained during the week, shortcomings, and best practices. There is an exchange of experiences and learnings. They are clarified on the concept and teaching practices. The incremental performance of the students is presented individually and feedback are given to them on enhancing the teaching-learning outcomes.



During this year, the FEATHERS team attended / facilitated following capacity building programmes.

- Attended a training programme conducted on Strategy of organizational development by ATMA. Also, participated in Accessibility and Inclusion online Workshop Conducted by SAMARTHYAM. Due to attending workshop, Our organisation is involved conducting Accessible audit at Vidathakulam Government Schools and FEATHERS Centre.
- Participation in the programme titled “The Coaching Approach-Empowering Caregivers to promote their Child’s Development” conducted by Amar Seva Sangam helped us understand the importance of Community based Early Intervention. Due to such workshop, we have launched and Early Intervention programmes in our Centre itself.
- Participation in the online programme “Environmental Education, Practices, Developments and Debates” conducted by Wipro Foundation helped us learn the basics of environmental education, different approaches in environmental education, showcasing practitioner’s perspectives in environmental education.
- Participated and presented a paper on Perspectives and Practices of Community Based Early Intervention for children with Developmental Delays based on our experiences at the Annual International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation organised on December 17 at Chennai.
- Participated in the Partner’s Forum of Wipro Education Partners at Pune. We have attended the thematic conversation on Science and Nature Education opened up possibilities of developing a shared vision on nature and science education. The

session on 'Working towards Inclusive Education' gave us a new understanding of an inclusive learning space, efforts and contributions of other partner organisations, possibilities, and challenges for working towards inclusive education. Similarly, in the session on 'understanding the disability eco-system' we explored the interconnectedness of our work, multiple approaches, and diverse models.

### Internships and Trainings

Six students doing B.Ed. in Special Education from Mother Teresa University, Kodaikanal came for an internship for one week with FEATHERS. They came mainly for knowing Early intervention and observing remediation for children with learning disabilities. In Early intervention, we gave training on using UPANAYANA scale and trained them on remediation for children with learning disabilities.



### Participation in Wipro Partners Meet

Executive Director and one of the trustees of FEATHERS attended the Wipro Partners Meet that comprises over 130 organizations at various stages of their organizational journeys, working on a range of educational issues and approaches. They have attended the side events and dialogues that brought us a lot of insights. Attending the thematic conversation on Science and Nature Education opened up possibilities of developing a shared vision on nature and science education. We resolved to continue our engagement as a group to exchange our experiences in building scientific temperament with the children.

Participating in another parallel session on 'Educating Hearts, Minds and Bodies' and dialoguing with Lobsang Phuntsok, Jhamtse Gatsal Children's Community helped us understand the needs, ways and means of touching the lives of the children with the wisdom and compassion. The session on 'Working towards Inclusive Education' gave us a new understanding of an inclusive learning space, efforts and contributions of other partner organisations, possibilities, and challenges for working towards inclusive education.

Similarly, in the session on ‘understanding the disability eco-system’ we explored the interconnectedness of our work, multiple approaches, and diverse models.

Listening to the experiences of organisational journeys from Chitra Ravi, Shabnam Virmani Srishti School of Art, Design & Technology, Suhel Quader gave us strength and confidence to build a stronger organisation for deeper impact. Arvind Sardana (Eklavya), Atanu Sain, Ujjwal Banerjee shared their perspectives on the past, present and future course of education landscape. Panel Discussion on Civil Societies and its evolving roles with Ashish Kothari, Vijay Mahajan, moderated by Hriday Kant Hardy, Azim Premji University helped us reflect on FEATHERS and how to transform it to meet the emerging challenges of non-profits. As a whole, the 20th edition of Wipro Education Partners’ Forum was an insightful event with a mix of opportunities to learn, reflect, exchange, appreciate and network.



## Accessibility Audit

Based on our request, Wipro Foundation has asked an expert team from Association for People with Disabilities, based at Bengaluru to undertake an accessibility audit at the early intervention centre of FEATHERS as well as a Panchayat Union Primary School at Vidathakulam Village, Thirumangalam Block, Madurai District. There are THREE Children with physical disabilities. One male child, 8 years old, studying in 2nd standard is having Congenital talipes equinovarus (CTEV), also known as 'club-foot'. Another female child, 7 years old is studying in the 1st Standard. She has Cerebral Palsy. We have set-up a resource room in this school, wherein the Remedial Educator is handling 22 children (slow learners

with learning difficulties). This school is open for accommodating children with any kind of disability. We have referred two children to get enrolled in this school. FEATHERS will ensure that children from nearby villages are enrolled in this school.

During October 2022, a Team comprising of 9 members from APD undertook an elaborate assessment at both the places and shared a detailed accessibility audit report. We have gone through the recommendations, observations and possible solutions for the gaps



identified by the team. They were highly informative, thought provoking and actionable. Based on the recommendations and suggestions, we have made discussion with the School administration and the Parent Teacher Association. Also, we have consulted an architect to provide suitable alterations and additions at the School Premise, visited with him again to the School with the report shared by APD. FEATHERS will continue to admit more children with disabilities in this school to make it a model inclusive school.

## Organizational Development

FEATHERS is a Trust governed by a 5-member Board of Trustees Chaired by Mr. Ramamoorthy. The members of the Board carry more than 2 to 3 decades of experience in development work in various thematic interventions. They bring their expertise to the Trust to design and implement field-based programmes. The Board meets once in six months and advises on the matters of the Trust, which is managed by the Executive Director with rich experience in the field of development and education. Currently, we have **FIVE Board of Trustees**, governing the institutional affairs of FEATHERS. Since all the Trustees are based at Madurai, we consult them regularly and getting their advice.

We publish our annual reports with all the necessary financial disclosures. These reports are published in the website of FEATHERS, and all our statutory information are placed in the website for the public scrutiny. The reports can be accessed from the website: <https://feathers.org.in/annual-reports-1>

**Legal Status:** FEATHERS is a Registered Trust and it has all the requisite registrations for income tax concessions in the form of final approval for 12A, 80G, and obtained CSR1 registration to execute CSR Projects. We have duly updated the organisational details in the NGO - DARPAN Portal.

**12A:** FEATHERS is registered under 01-Sub clause (i) of clause (ac) of sub -section (1) of section of 12A. The URN for 12 A is: AAATF6558QE20214 with effects from 24-09-2021. The Trust has been registered for the assessment years starting from AY 2022-23 to AY 2026-27.

**80G:** FEATHERS is registered under 11-Clause (i) of first proviso to sub-section (5) of section 80G. The URN for 80G is: AAATF6558QF20212 with the date of approval on 24-09-2021 from AY 2022-23 to AY 2026-27.

**CSR1:** FEATHERS has been registered for undertaking CSR activities with the Registration number CSR00012431, which has been issued by the Office of the Registrar of Companies, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Gol.

**NGO-DARPAN:** FEATHERS has been registered under NGO DARPAN of NITI Ayog, Government of India and our DARPAN ID is: TN/2021/0274239

**FCRA:** We have applied for FCRA registration in the year 2021, and we have completed the field enquiry process. Our application is under process with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Our email enquiry twice was replied by the Ministry that our application is under process and asked us to wait. We are looking forward to its clearance any time.

**Annual Audit and Income Tax Filing:** We have conducted the annual audit of FEATHERS by a Chartered Accountant. Audit Statements and Return of Income have been filed with the Income Tax Department. For the Financial Year 2021-22, our income tax return has been

accepted and approved. We have also prepared the accounts for the year 2022-23 and which under audit by our Chartered Accountant.

## Human Resource Development

We have formed a team of **SIX** full time staff including five teachers and an associate along with the Executive Director. The **Three**-member team is currently managing the remedial education programme with government schools.

1. Remedial educators at Government Primary Schools – 3
2. Early intervention – 4 (Physiotherapist, Therapy Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Speech Therapy assistant)
3. Remedial Educators at Centre – 3 (Special Educators)

During the current year, 2 new staff joined our team to strengthen our early intervention programme.

## Financial Overview

All our books of accounts are audited by a Certified Statutory Auditor and the audit reports are filed with the Income Tax Department. The Statements are published along with the annual report and these reports are placed in our website. So far, the works of FEATHERS have been supported by the individual philanthropist's ad well-wishers of FEATHERS. We were able to meet the cost of operations at the limited scale with which we are operating at Thirumangalam. We have approached a few CSR Organisations for support, while they appreciated our work and proposal, they looked for past CSR donors. The fellowship provided by Wipro Foundation could not be reflected in our financial statement. Fortunately, we have got starter support in the form of a one-time grant for adding a few therapy equipments from Wipro Foundation.

## Institutional Collaboration

### Government Partnership

FEATHERS has a strong functional relationship with the Department of Education, Government of Tamil Nadu in Madurai District. When we approached them, they readily accepted our proposal of working with the Primary schools in Thirumangalam. We devised a strategy to work with the Government Primary Schools in a Block, involving the teachers in the process of remediation, identifying children with SLD and initiating IEP for them and providing them remedial education in the school itself through trained volunteers. For accomplishing this strategy, we have approached the Chief Educational Officer, Madurai. After several discussions and persuasions, we have got approval from Chief Educational Office and District Education Offices for working children with learning difficulties and learning disabilities in all the primary level Government School located Thirumangalam block. We have obtained the consent from the Elementary Education Department starting from CEO to Block Education Officers to work with the Panchayat Union Primary Schools in the Block. Also, we have rolled out our programme with the help of locally recruited team of teachers and volunteers.

## Academic Partnership

FEATHERS has built a collaboration with the Department of Special Education, Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal. Students of B.Ed. Special Education in Intellectual Disability regularly undergo internships and exposure programmes with FEATHERS. We also seek guidance and support from the faculty of the University for our early intervention programmes.

## Institutional Events

### 6th Foundation Day of FEATHERS and World Mental Health Day

During this year, we have celebrated our 6th Foundation Day of FEATHERS and World Mental Health Day in a grand manner. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the FEATHERS attended the event. Dr.U.Kalpna, BHMS spoke on importance of Mental Health especially children with special needs. Mr.Selvanathan spoke on the role of



exercises, pranayama and yoga in keeping good Mental Health. Ms. Navaraji spoke on maternal health during prenatal and post-natal phases for delivering healthy babies without problems. Ms. V. Santhy, Mental Health Counsellor spoke on the stigma of mental health issues and reaching out professionals for timely diagnosis and remediation. Our Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Adhinarayanan, spoke on importance of mental health in overall wellbeing of a person and a family. Parents of all our Children attended the event and interacted with the resource persons.

### Christmas and New year Celebrations

Celebrations unite the parents of our Children. We are creating opportunities for them to come together and talk to each other, share their experiences. Also, the celebrations help the children to get engaged with the peers and learn from the activities. This year, we have celebrated Christmas and New Year. We involved all our children with special



needs and their parents. As part of the Celebrations, we have conducted games, art-activities for improving fine motor skill and social participation skill.



## Institutional Plan

In the coming years we will invest substantially into expansion of our initiative.

- Horizontally, we will expand our programme in Early Intervention in nearby Virudhunagar Town in Virudhunagar District, which is an aspirational district. We have got some preliminary acceptance for our proposal from a local CSR Organisation. In Thirumangalam, we will expand our programme by establishing a Community Learning Centre with the Rag-pickers community in the outskirts of Thirumangalam Town.
- Vertically, we will deepen our initiative by way of enriching our capacity in designing and implementing the remedial programmes for addressing the issues of learning difficulties and SLDs. We will work in collaboration with the like-minded institutions and resource agencies to reinforce our capacity. We will evolve and design locally relevant teaching and learning materials, conduct training programmes for our volunteers and teachers from other schools. By the end of third year, FEATHERS would have emerged as a resource centre with the potential for excellence in the field of education.

In the year 2023-24, our focus will be on the following outcomes:

1. Expanding/Deepening of our Remediation Programme in 15 Panchayat Union Primary Schools
2. Recruiting and training 3 more qualified educators in remediation process and deploying them to reach out to 150 children, identified with learning difficulties.
3. Mobilising resources to run the full-fledged remediation programme to the tune of Rs. 25.00 lakhs.
4. Initiating Community-based Early Intervention Programme with an outlay of Rs. 35 lakhs to benefit the entire block of Thirumangalam.
5. Regularising Art-Integrated Learning Programme in all the working schools.
6. Conducting one Capacity Building Programme for the working teachers on Learning Disability, benefiting 20 to 25 teachers from other schools during this summer vacation.
7. Conducting in-house capacity building programme for the Teachers in FEATHERS on advancements in remedial education tools and methods. Conducting FOUR structured training programmes, at least one in each quarter.
8. our interventions in nearby Virudhunagar by writing and sharing with relevant philanthropic institutions.

## PROFILE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### **R RAMAMOORTHY - CHAIRPERSON**

Ramamoorthy is an Electrical and Electronics Engineer. After encountering an accidental damage to his spinal cord, he became paraplegic. Undeterred by this set-back, he determined to serve the needy by way of transferring his knowledge in mathematics to children. In spite of being confined to wheelchair, he is busy tutoring students in mathematics and motivating them to get rid of math-phobia. Teaching has become his passion, pastime, and profession. His philanthropic heart brought him closer to many non-governmental initiatives benefiting differently-abled and downtrodden. He is an inspiration for the entire initiative of FEATHERS. As the Chairperson of this Trust, he continues to provide guidance and support in all the programme interventions of FEATHERS.



### **S MANAVALAN - SECRETARY**



Manavalan is a Post Graduate in Physics and a Bachelor of Education. He has over 25 years of experience in diverse fields such as human resource development, administration and public relations, product promotion and marketing. He was instrumental in promoting a Social Enterprise - Kalanjium Thozhilagam Limited, which has facilitated enterprise promotion and development among the Women SHG Federations. He has played a key role on building linkages between SHG and Farmers' Federations, NABARD and commercial banks. During his tenure as HR Manager of Hi-Tech Arai Limited, anchored HR audit, staff-welfare and legal compliances. Organic Farming is his passion and he is currently involved in promoting organic farming among new-generation farmers across Tamil Nadu.

### **R ADHINARAYANAN - VICE CHAIRPERSON**

Adhinarayanan is a graduate in Agriculture and Post Graduate in Environmental Science. He started his career as Agronomist with M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. Subsequently, he worked with DHAN Foundation as a Programme Leader for more than 20 years and coordinated the water conservation programme at the regional and state level. He was instrumental in designing tank-based watershed development programme for Andhra Pradesh Government during his leadership. He anchored the climate change adaptation theme of DHAN Foundation and led the Agricultural Bio-diversity Community, an international network. He also served in PRADAN as Project Leader to implement community-based tank restoration programme in Tamil Nadu.



### **P KRISHNAMURTHI - TREASURER**

Krishnamurthi is a Graduate in Agriculture and Post Graduate in Psychology and Yoga. For two decades he worked with DHAN Foundation as Programme Leader of its Communication Programme, involved in promoting communication as a tool for enhancing field action and facilitating policy advocacy in the themes of water, financial literacy, agriculture, livelihoods, and women empowerment. He has written and produced a number of reports and publications, directed several audio-visual productions, established community radio stations for women and farming community. As a member in the national and international networks of community radios, he visited many countries to further the community radio movement.



### **A KALAIMANI - TRUSTEE**



Kalaimani is a Post Graduate in History and obtained Master of Special Education in Intellectual Disability and Post Graduate Diploma in Ethics from Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal. She is a Certified Montessori Teacher. She has worked as a Special Educator and worked in the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). She also had a hands-on experience in early intervention. She worked briefly in Children's Village of the Reaching the Unreached (RTU) among vulnerable children. She is currently involved in remedial education at the grassroots level and providing advisory services to various community based early intervention programmes.

### **NAGESWARI R, Executive Director:**

Nageswari is a graduate in agriculture, who began her career as a development professional in a not-for-profit organisation in Madurai. After spending over one-and-a-half decade in executing and coordinating grassroots level development programme for women, she realised the huge vacuum in providing quality education for the children with special needs. Later, she took up an intensive study and practice in the field of special education. She is specialised in the field of special education by undergoing the following educational programmes:



- Bachelors and Masters of Education in Special Education (Intellectual Disability)
- Master of Philosophy in Education
- Master of Studies in Educational Management
- Certificate Programme in Montessori Method of Education
- Certificate Programme in Learning Disability
- Post Graduate Diploma in Ethics

She is a registered practitioner in special education with the Rehabilitation Council of India. She has attended a number of seminars and workshops in the relevant fields of education and rehabilitation. She is currently pursuing her doctoral research in Community Based Early Intervention and she is working with a number of research and training institutes in the field of special education.



# **Financial Statements**

**2022-23**



**P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT**

No. 3/5, LAKSHMI NARAYANAPURAM AGRAHARAM  
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI – 625 001  
CELL: 9443799731, Email: srinivasanaca@gmail.com

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have examined the consolidated Balance Sheet of **FEATHERS**, 114 E.M.S Nagar, Madakulam Main Road, Ponmeni, Madurai – 625 016, Tamil Nadu, India (Permanent Account Number: AAATF6558Q) as at 31 March 2023 and the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date which are in agreement with the books of account maintained by the said Trust.

This financial statement is the responsibility of the Trust's management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statement based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in India. Those standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. I believe that my audit provides a reasonable basis for my opinion.

I have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of my knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of the audit subject to non-confirmation of balances.

In my opinion and to the best of my information and according to the information given to me, the said accounts give a true and fair view:

- i. In the case of the consolidated **Balance Sheet** of the state of affairs of the above-named trust as at 31 March 2023 and
- ii. In the case of the **Income and Expenditure account** of the **Excess of Income over expenditure** of its accounting year ending on 31 March 2023.

UDIN: 23219094BGUAJV8391

Place: Madurai

Date: July 26, 2023



*P. Srinivasan*  
**CA.P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com.,FCA.,  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT**

3/5, Lakshmi Narayanapuram Agraharam  
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI - 625 001  
Membership.No: 219094

## FEATHERS

114, EMS NAGAR, MADAKULAM MAIN ROAD, PONMENI, MADURAI-625 016.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT			
			(In Rupees)
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED	SCH	31-Mar-2023	31-Mar-2022
<b>INCOME</b>			
Donation received			20,93,600.00
Individual Donations		33,75,500.00	-
Wipro Foundation		4,25,100.00	-
Service Charges		-	-
Interest on Income Tax Refund		630.00	-
Bank Interest		1,238.00	605.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>38,02,468.00</b>	<b>20,94,205.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Educational Aids Printing		1,33,850.00	5,145.00
Training to Teachers		2,17,300.00	-
Salary to Teachers		13,08,391.54	7,11,838.00
Travelling Expenses		3,58,056.00	2,57,000.00
Educational aids distributed to Children		2,59,276.00	2,76,394.00
Learning Assessment Campaign		2,34,500.00	90,000.00
Early Intervention Services to Children		2,40,980.00	-
Folklore Workshop for Children		1,84,500.00	1,98,000.00
Rent & Electricity		2,77,753.62	2,24,466.00
Audit Fee		10,000.00	10,000.00
FCRA Application Fee		-	10,012.98
Administrative Expenses		45,053.84	-
Bank charges		158.12	188.80
Depreciation	2	1,66,580.59	1,29,645.53
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure</b>		<b>3,66,068.29</b>	<b>1,81,515.69</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>38,02,468.00</b>	<b>20,94,205.00</b>

Schedule 2 annexed hereto form part of the Income & Expenditure Account

"Vide my Report of even date attached"

For FEATHERS

*R. Rethy*  
Chairperson

*W. J. J. J.*  
Treasurer

*R. Nagarajan*  
Executive Director

*P. Srinivasan*  
**CA.P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT  
3/5, Lakshmi Narayanapuram Agraharam  
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI - 625 001  
Membership.No: 219094

Place: Madurai  
Date: 26 July 2023



## FEATHERS

114, EMS NAGAR, MADAKULAM MAIN ROAD, PONMENI, MADURAI-625 016.

BALANCE SHEET				(In Rupees)	
AS AT	SCH	As at 31-Mar-2023	As at 31-Mar-2022		
<b>LIABILITIES</b>					
CORPUS and CAPITAL Fund	1	9,00,307.98	5,34,239.69		
Total		<b>9,00,307.98</b>	<b>5,34,239.69</b>		
<b>ASSETS</b>					
Fixed Assets (Contra)	2	7,48,733.08	4,01,329.67		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS, LOANS AND ADVANCES</b>					
Bank Balance - Punjab National Bank, Ponmeni		65,574.90	37,910.02		
Cash in hand		1,000.00	1,000.00		
Advances Receivables	3	85,000.00	85,000.00		
TDS Receivable		-	9,000.00		
Total		<b>9,00,307.98</b>	<b>5,34,239.69</b>		

Schedule 2 annexed hereto form part of the Balance Sheet

"Vide my Report of even date attached"

For FEATHERS

*R. Rathy*  
Chairperson

*V. V. V. V.*  
Treasurer

*R. Nagarajan*  
Executive Director

Place: Madurai  
Date: 26 July 2023



*P. Srinivasan*  
CA. P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT  
3/5, Lakshmi Narayanapuram Agraharam  
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI - 625 001  
Membership.No: 219094

## FEATHERS

114, EMS NAGAR, MADAKULAM MAIN ROAD, PONMENI, MADURAI-625 016.

SCHEDULES TO BALANCE SHEET				
(In Rupees)				
	AS AT		Mar 31, 2023	Mar 31, 2022
<b>Schedule - 1: Corpus and Capital Fund</b>				
<b>Corpus Fund</b>				
Opening Balance		1,000.00		1,000.00
Add: Current year receipts		-	1,000.00	
<b>Capital Fund</b>				
Opening Balance		5,33,239.69		5,33,239.69
Add: Excess of Income over expenditure		3,66,068.29	8,99,307.98	5,33,239.69
<b>Total</b>			<b>9,00,307.98</b>	<b>5,34,239.69</b>
<b>Schedule - 3: Advances Receivables</b>				
Advance Given to Office			85,000.00	85,000.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>85,000.00</b>	<b>85,000.00</b>

For FEATHERS

*R. Rathy*  
Chairperson

*V. V. V. V.*  
Treasurer

*R. Nagarajan*  
Executive Director

Place: Madurai  
Date: 26 July 2023

*P. Srinivasan*  
**CA. P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT  
3/5, Lakshmi Narayanapuram Agraharam  
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI - 625 001  
Membership.No: 219094





FEATHERS

114, EMS NAGAR, MADAKULAM MAIN ROAD,  
PONMENI, MADURAI-625 016.

SCHEDULE ANNEXED TO AND FORM PART OF THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AND BALANCESHEET AS ON MARCH 31, 2021

Schedule 2: Fixed Assets and Depreciation

SI No	Description	Value as on 01.04.2022	Addition	Deletion	Gross Value as on March 31, 2023	Depreciation		Net Value as on March 31, 2023
						Rate %	Amount	
1	Digital Board	23,987.00	-	-	23,987.00	15.00	3,598.05	20,388.95
2	Classroom Furniture	42,930.00	-	-	42,930.00	10.00	4,293.00	38,637.00
3	Teaching Equipments	1,28,146.77	68,000.00	-	1,96,146.77	15.00	29,422.01	1,66,724.75
4	Physiotherapy Equipments	46,962.50	2,91,536.00	-	3,38,498.50	15.00	50,774.78	2,87,723.73
5	Speech Therapy Equipments	17,715.70	-	-	17,715.70	15.00	2,657.36	15,058.35
6	Occupational Therapy Equipments	15,867.55	1,54,448.00	-	1,70,315.55	15.00	25,547.33	1,44,768.21
7	Computer	1,25,720.16	-	-	1,25,720.16	40.00	50,288.06	75,432.10
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,01,329.67</b>	<b>5,13,984.00</b>		<b>9,15,313.67</b>		<b>1,66,580.59</b>	<b>7,48,733.08</b>

For FEATHERS

*R. Rathy*  
Chairperson

*Wifeh*  
Treasurer

*R. Nagarajan*  
Executive Director



Place: Madurai

Date: 26 July 2023



# FEATHERS

104/37. Jawahar Nagar 4th Street,  
Thirumangalam - 625 706, Madurai  
Tamil Nadu, INDIA

Phone: +91 4549 359413

Mobile: +91 94861 48212 / 93420 03063

Email: [feathers4change@gmail.com](mailto:feathers4change@gmail.com)

Website: <https://www.feathers.org.in>

