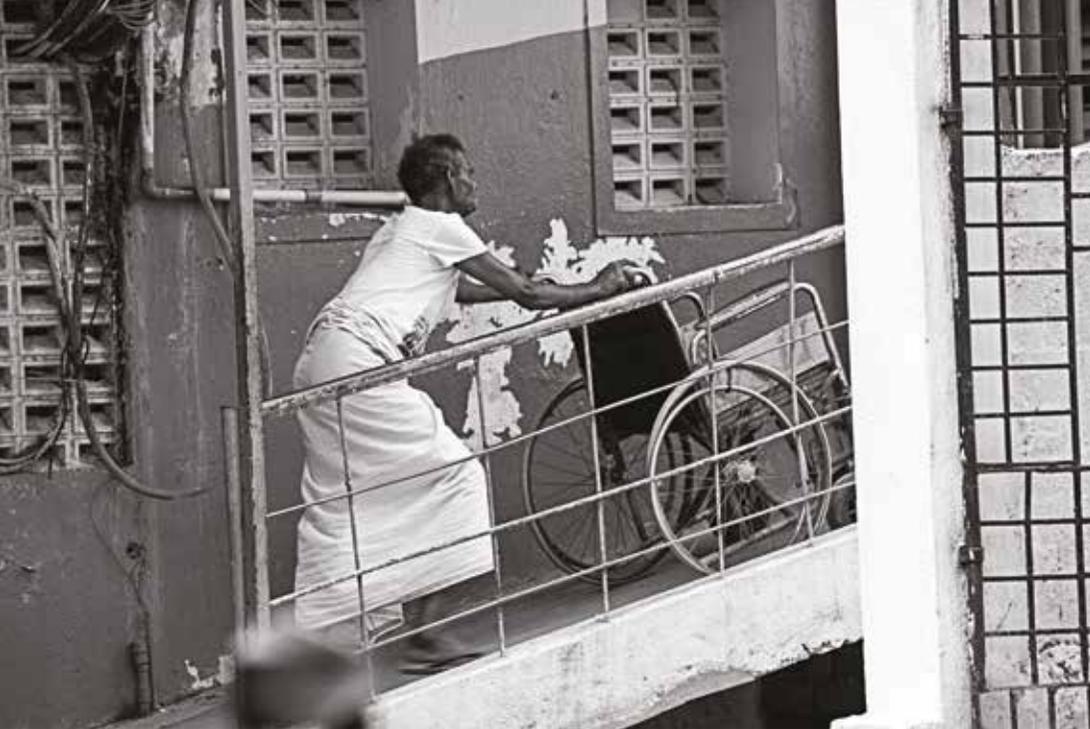




*Ocean of compassion*

LITTLE DROPS



All these with one motive – providing the basic necessities to the marginalized communities.

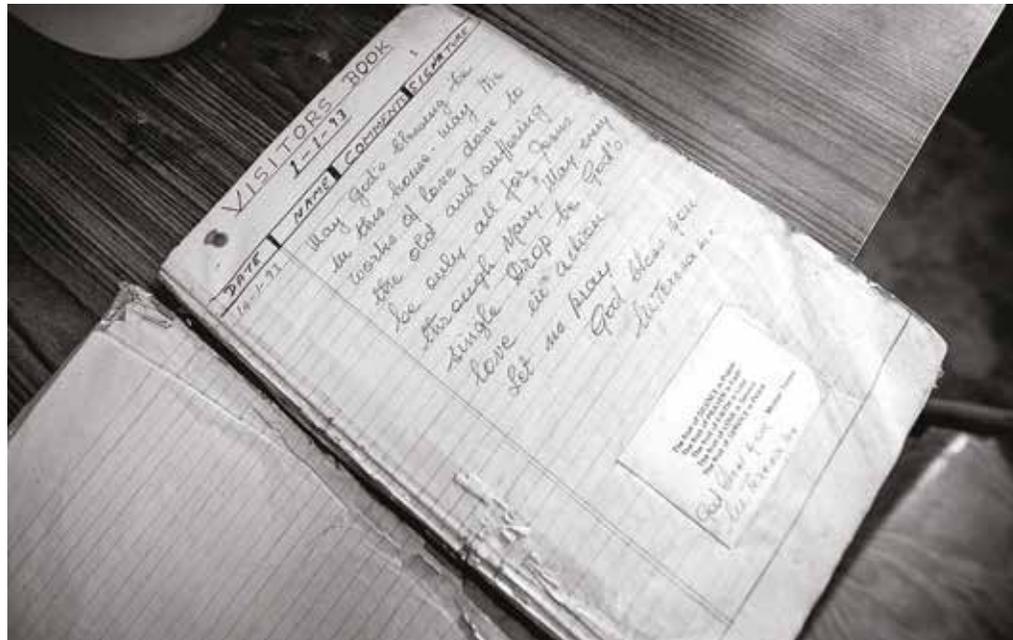
**IN CONVERSATION WITH EDGAR JONES PAUL**

Belonging to a family of 7 siblings, who migrated from Kerala to Tamil Nadu in 1966, Edgar Jones Paul went through a difficult childhood, after his father succumbed to injuries from a tragic accident.



stability kept increasing. This raised a lot of questions on, why there is a disparity in equal accessibility and availability of even the basic necessities.

Did the universe conspire to make a wish come true? Edgar Jones Paul, was inspired by one of Mother Teresa's quote: "We know only too well that what we are doing is nothing more than a drop in the ocean. But without the drop, the ocean would be poorer". The depth of understanding, that every human relationship is important moved the duo so much that they decided to name their organization, Little Drops. Subsequently, a few months later, Paul heard about Mother Teresa's Chennai visit. At that time, Paul was working for a renowned aviation company, which helped him indirectly reach-out to her. When he briefed her on their initiative, Little Drops, she gladly agreed to visit the organization amidst her busy schedule. There's a beautiful picture of Mother Teresa with the Little Drop's team from 1991, and a handwritten letter, wishing the best and blessing them. Since then, what began as a rescue and rehabilitation organization for the abandoned and elderly - today has grown to rehabilitate widows and deserted women, provide quality education to poor children, a clinical lab for the financially weak, vocational training to school dropouts and launching intensive social awareness campaigns.



Little Drops has 8 shelter homes, 1 subsidiary children's home, 4 rehabilitation centers and 3 Little Angles schools.

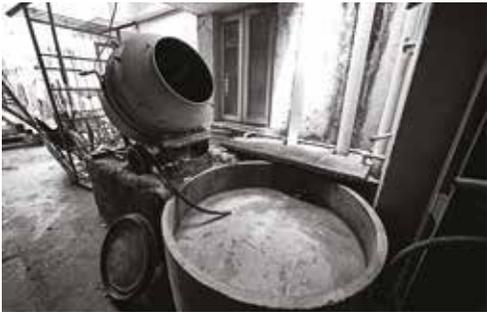
The economic situation of his family made it challenging for him to complete his education, as the need for financial

Hidden away from the city's rush, at No.1, Kalluri Salai, Koluthuvanchery, Paramiputhur, in Chennai, is Little Drops, a service based organization that was founded on January 21, 1991 by two childhood friends C. Selvaraj Bovas and Edgar Jones Paul.

Both Bovas and Paul strongly believe that every individual has the right to basic care & necessities without disparity. The Little Drops Shelter at Paramiputhur, is the registered office, and roughly houses around 246 senior citizens (both men and women), 40 staff and 23 children.

**THE BEGINNING: TWO LIVES, TWO STORIES**

Around late 1980s before Little Drops had begun, Edgar Jones Paul along with his wife, Sheila, had taken shelter in a bus stand on Poonamalle High Road to avoid getting drenched in the rain. As they were waiting for the rain to stop, there was a sudden movement beside them. Looking close, they saw a woman lying beneath layers of paper, in a cloth bundle, infested by cockroaches. Shocked by what they saw they approached her, to enquire



the importance of immediate action, and the urgency with which one must act when it comes to rescuing someone.

A few years later one evening, Paul and Bovas came across an old man - Rahim, on the streets of Royapuram in Chennai. He was about 80 years old, painfully starved and covered with sores. Taking the help of a 'Missionaries of Charity' ambulance (The Missionaries of Charity is the order started by Mother Teresa in India), they carried the old man home. They fed him and cleaned his sores, but even then, Rahim only lived for 48 hours, post rescue. Even though both Paul and Bovas, were prepared to help the abandoned, by providing them the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter and medicines, one thing they were not prepared for, was death. The demise of Rahim came as a shock to them, but it indeed helped them learn the process to be followed. Once the doctor certified Rahim's death, he was taken to the burial ground in a horse cart (as no one was willing to take a coffin), and the funeral was over by midnight. A few days later, Rahim's son contacted Little Drops, after viewing a newspaper notice. Later they learnt that Rahim was diagnosed with dementia and had

wandered away from his family, while they were at the railway station. These two incidents, even though were tragic in their own way, seem to have laid the foundation for Little Drops. Today, there are many such men and women, under the care of Little Drops, each with their own story, who have found solace, through the care and warmth of the institution.

As Edgar Jones Paul narrated the incident and their learning, I couldn't help but think of these lines from Paul Kalanithi's book 'When Breath Becomes Air' -

*"Human knowledge is never contained in one person. It grows from the relationships we create between each other and the world, and still, it is never complete."*

### INGENIOUS CREATIONS

Did it ever occur to you that a concrete mixer can be the replacement for a washing machine? The in-house team at Little Drops are always on their feet when it comes to creating sustainable, effective, and senior citizen friendly technology.

### MODIFIED WASHING MACHINE

Clean, sun dried clothes are one of the primary hygiene factors. Housing more than 100 senior citizens at each of their shelters, washing clothes can become a huge task. Since most of the residing senior citizens have minimal control over their bladder and bowel movements, the bed covers had to be frequently changed to maintain hygiene. To tackle the situation, the Little Drops team, innovated a sustainable washing machine from a concrete mixer. This machine model was successful as it could wash up to 100 kgs at a time. At present all the shelters that house more than 100 senior citizens have the modified washing machine in place.

### BED & BATH

The uniquely designed bed, on concrete base, has an inbuilt toilet facility and attached faucet. This helps the senior citizens'

with limited mobility to access toilets & bathe from their beds. This has been a very effective model as it keeps the place clean and odor free.

### AN ELDERLY PERSON IS NO DIFFERENT FROM A CHILD

Edgar Jones Paul beautifully states how the emotional need of an elderly person is almost like a little child, who frequently craves for attention and emotional support. The people rescued by Little Drops are desperate for love, and over the years both Paul and Bovas, have realized that even though all the basic necessities are being provided, the elderly need emotional support. As everyday passes, their care increases, but their health is on a constant decline. Providing emotional support has by far been the biggest challenge. Especially if the rescued individual speak a different language other than Tamil, English or Hindi.

In the recent past, increase in volunteer participation from some of the renowned educational institutions, various IT companies, and individual contributors have been acting as the bridging gap. The financial needs of the shelter home are met only through donations and subscriptions from friends and well-wishers. These donations are either in cash or in kind – focused more on supply of urgently required items, sponsoring a resident, student, a staff member, providing meals, supply of drugs and medical supplies etc.

Over the years Little Drops has grown to not only be the helping hand, or the shoulder to cry, but a big family bound by love. There have been many instances of families reuniting with their own, and yet there are those still waiting... hoping for that day to come.

*"Never lose sight of the fact that old age needs so little but needs that little so much."*  
- Margaret Willour.

Sugitra Jeevanandham