

Love 3 Sevalaya's News Letter - April 2008 Serve 1 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

The 'big bonanza' election year budget is out. Our finance minister has tried to satisfy all sections. The big news is that Rs 60,000 crores of farmers' loan is written off. No doubt, we see many news items that poor farmers, unable to bear their poverty are committing suicide. They definitely need support. Also the fund allocation for defence expenses have crossed Rs 1,00,000 crores, for the first time.

The allocation for education is around 30,000 crores. This is just 50% of the written off loans and one third of the defence expense. Government has its own priorities. But we feel that education should be the number one priority of any Government. It is not just farmers, but many people in many walks of life, commit suicide, may be because of poverty or for any other reason. But the basic flaw is that education has not equipped them to face life when confronted with difficult situations. Are we doing enough to inculcate such skills to our next generation? Are any resources alloted to do research in this field and come out with new ideas, new solutions? If farmers are unable to make profit, and repay their loans, are we doing enough research in the field of agriculture to see that farming becomes a profitable venture? Are we spending more on agricultural education and research, as still we claim that we are predominantly an agricultural country?

Wars start only in the minds of the people first. This later escalates into full fledged conflicts. Arms and ammunitions have to be used and many lives are lost. This is the land of Mahatma Gandhi and the entire world keeps talking about his philosophy of non-violence. If enough resources are allotted to spread the doctrine of non-violence, if we can think of

'Ahimsa education', may be wars can be reduced. As per Gandhiji's wish, we should have been a country without an army! The entire 1,00,000 crores would then have been available for constructive and creative work. But in today's situation, this may look impossible. The point we are trying to make is that we are willing to spend three times more on war than on education.

There are many improvements required at basic levels in many village schools, to improve the quality of education, access to education and many other aspects. Lots of funds will be required for this. If we don't correct this root cause, we can keep waiving off loans year after year, which will make good political sense in an election year, but will do very little to build a self respecting nation.

Thanks & Regards Murali



Mrs. Bhuvaneswari Muralidharan, Hony. Correspondent and Mr. V.Muralidharan, Founder & Managing Trustee of Sevalaya receiving the Satguru Gnanananda Award 2008 for "Families in Social Service" at the hands of Swami Nityanandagiri of Tapovanam.



Events

On 02/03/2008 Mr. J.Murali Krishnan conducted a Career Guidance Programme for 10th standard students. About 70 students participated.

08/03/2008 - "International Women's Day" was celebrated in Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Hr. Sec. School when the children presented a thematic cultural programme on the need to educate Girl Child and the need for equal rights and opportunities for women.

Easter was celebrated on 22/03/2008. Mr. D.Samuel Chelladurai (In-charge DEO, Thiruvallur) was the Chief Guest on this He spoke about Christ's occasion. resurrection for the welfare of mankind. On earth man should rise above his lowly nature and attain heights of immortality. He also said that truth always triumphs. In spite of the cruel crucifixion, Christ's divinity was revealed. So too, lies and dishonest allegations always come to an inglorious end and the truth cannot be trampled upon. Mr. P.Subramani, Sub- Inspector, Vengal Police Station also participated in the function. He distributed the prizes to the winners of the debate conducted by the Social Science club.





On 26/03/2008 a Career Guidance Programme for 12th standard students was conducted by Mr. J.Murali Krishnan. Nearly 90 students participated.

A Farewell function was organized for the outgoing 12th standard students on 26/03/2008.

External Events

Mrs. Bhuvaneswari Muralidharan, Hony. Correspondent and Mr. V.Muralidharan, Founder & Managing Trustee of Sevalaya were the recipients of Satguru Gnanananda Award 2008 for "Families in Social Service" awarded by Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhini Trust, at the hands of Swami Nityanandagiri of Tapovanam. The Award function was held at Shanmukhananda Chandrashekara Saraswathi Hall, Mumbai on 08/03/2008. The function was presided over by Dr. (Mrs) Indu Shahani, Sheriff of Mumbai.

Mr. V.Muralidharan, an alumnus of P.S. High School (North) at Mylapore, Chennai was the Chief Guest for The Annual Day Function of the school held on 20/03/2008.

Mr. V.Muralidharan, was the chief guest for





the "Compsem" function held at Annamalai University, Chidambaram on 27/03/2008.

Sevalaya participated in the "Seva Mela 2008" organised by CIOSA on 15/03/2008 & 16/03/2008 at Valluvar Kottam, Chennai and set up a stall highlighting the activities of Sevalaya and displaying the products of Sevalaya's Kasthurba Craft Centre. 17 students participated in the various competitions held on the occasion and won prizes.

20 years have passed since Sevalaya started functioning. It is a time to pause, ponder and plan the future course of the institution. With a view to having a personal interaction with the donors who are the lifeline of Sevalaya, a Donors Meet was organized on 23/03/2008 at Anna University Alumni Club, Chennai. A power point presentation tracing the growth of Sevalaya, highlighting the milestones, achievements and awards received and presenting the success stories was screened. It was followed by a discussion, when many useful suggestions were made by the donors.

Clubs

On 18/03/2008 the Social Science Club





conducted a debate on whether the Society aids development of an individual. Mr. Rajaram was the moderator. 2 groups of students put forth their arguments in favour of and against the topic.

Staff Study Circle

The 12th Chapter of Bhagavad Gita was discussed by Mr. Gnanadikkaraj on 01/03/2008. Mr. M.T.Anandan shared what he read in the 30th to 36th Chapters of The Holy Quran on 08/03/2008. On 15/03/2008 Ms. R.Ethal Priya spoke about The Holy Quran - 24th to 26th Chapters. The 13th Chapter of Bhagavad Gita was discussed by Ms. G.Muthulakshmi on 22/03/2008 while Mr. A.Raj took up for discussion the 37th to 43rd Chapters of the Holy Quran on 29/03/2008.

Students Book Review

On 01/03/2008 U.Ganapathiram spoke on Madan's "They Came; They Conquered" a Tamil book on the Moghul Hoistory in India. A.Arthi shared what she read in the book "The Scientists who Changed the World" (Tamil) authored by Mr. Jayakanthan on 08/03/2008.



Police encounters - (with a difference.)

Mahatma Gandhi was in the thick of public and political activities for well over 50 years of his life and there is no wonder he had several confrontations with the Police and other law enforcing agencies. Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiyar was in exile from the British India in the erstwhile French territory of Pondicherry. He, a few other compatriots and admirers were severely harassed by the British Police which had almost besieged Pondicherry to nose in on the activities of a few patriots like Bharathiyar, Sri Aurobindo, V.V.S. Iyer and others. The posse of Police posted at Pondicherry numbered 200 under a deputy Superintendent of Police and included 2 Inspectors under whom several sub Inspectors, head Constables and constables worked...just to watch the activities of patriots who numbered less than ten. There were several funny and ridiculous exercises made by this force which we will see some time later.

But what did the Police force have to do with a wandering monk like Swami Vivekananda? Yet, there were a few occasions when the Police had encountered Swamiji. These instances have been recorded by Shri Nagendra Nath Gupta in his "reminiscences."

Swamiji was in Bihar when there was great excitement in that province on account of the marking of mango trees with lumps of mud mixed with vermillion and seed grain. In a number of districts in Bihar many mango trees were marked in this fashion. The British Government sensed some evil designs of a mutiny in this and they associated with this the moving about of sannyasis in the Province. In these circumstances, a mounted Police officer followed by some Policemen, accosted Swamiji and made enquiries about him. Suddenly the officer became rude and accused that all sadhus were roques and threatened to arrest Swamiji. Swamiji asked him calmly, how long he would be put in jail. The officer replied, "For about a month." Swamiji went near him and in an ingratiating and appealing voice, said,

"Only for a month? Can you not put me away for six months?" To the surprised official, he explained, "Life in jail is much better than this. The work there is not hard compared with this wearisome tramp from morning till night. My daily food is uncertain, and I have often to starve. In the jail I shall have two square meals a day." The official abruptly ordered Swamiji to go away. It is an interesting sidelight that the marking of mangoes was merely by way of an agricultural mascot for a good mango!

Another encounter took place at Calcutta. One day Swamiji met a police officer who was a family friend. He was a superintendent of Police in Criminal Investigation department. He invited Swamiji for dinner at his residence. When Swamiji went there, there was no sign of dinner. The host was dragging on with several inanities and suddenly told Swamiji abruptly, "Come on, you had better make a clean breast of it and tell me the truth. You know you cannot fool me with your stories for I know your game. You and your gang pretend to be religious men but I have positive information that you are conspiring against the Government..." Swamiii was amazed and indignant. He confronted the officer to come out with the facts if he knew any thing. The Officer raised his voice, and said that he would be arrested as he was the ring leader. And if he became an approver, he would be let off. Swamiji was unperturbed. Rising from his seat, he quietly closed the door. He said, "You have called me to your house on a false pretext and have made a false accusation against me and my companions. That is your profession. I, on the other hand have been taught not to resent an insult. If I had been a criminal and a conspirator, there would be nothing to prevent me from wringing your neck before you could call out for help. As it is, I leave you in peace." And Swamiji opened the door and went out, leaving the redoubtable police officer speechless with ill concealed fright.

That was the last encounter Swamiji had with the Police!

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