



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 1 Sevalaya's News Letter - August 2006 Serve 5 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

Sometime back we arranged a cricket match between Sevalaya school children and one of the city school children. The city school children came with proper cricket kit bag, with good bat, pad, etc. They were all dressed in white and white and when the team got down from the bus, it looked like a national under 12 team! When the match started, they were surprised to see that the Sevalaya team was not having any proper sports uniform; they wore no shoes and played bare foot; there was no cricket kit for each child; in fact the entire school (now 850 children) had only one bat and all had to share! On the contrary, the city school children were very particular to use their own bats, as that was of the right height and weight for them; their own individual kit and their own water bottles! Ofcourse, at the end of the day, Sevalaya School won the match!

Many city school children come to Sevalaya on NSS (National Service Scheme) camps. Some schools even stay on the campus for 10 days. When they interact with the children, they are surprised to know that there are kids who have lost parents at very young age, there are kids who live in small huts and there are even kids who don't know their parentage.

Such knowledge about poverty is well understood when the children from the 'both sides' of the world interact closely. One such child from city sent us contribution to sponsor food on his birthday, cancelling the

birthday party! One more child sent all her birthday presents to Sevalaya children.

This year we were hard pressed to organize note books for all the 850 children. Ofcourse we had contributions from donors like Bharata Mata Sangam and some other individual donors, we still needed more note books. We thought it will be better to appeal to the city school children. We sent out our appeals to many schools, requesting the children to buy one extra note book, when they buy note books for their own use, and donate it to Sevalaya. This evoked a very good response from many schools. They made an announcement in their assembly and note books started pouring in. In fact some of the schools arranged a trip for their school children to come in person and handover note books to their brothers and sisters in Sevalaya.

What a nice feeling it is to receive one note book each from each child – it is worth millions! We have given an opportunity for the next generation to practice the 'art of giving'; the children know that they can also give, as no donation is big or small; When given by one child to another, it is no more a DONATION, it is just sharing.

The Sevalaya children know, that each one of them, has a friend in need!

Thanks & Regards

Murali



18th Annual Day Celebration

Annual Day Celebrations

The 18th Annual Day Celebrations were held on 01/07/2006. The entire village wore a festive look with colourful rangolis decorating the road leading up to Sevalaya. Lion B. Jayaraman, Chairman, JAK Group of Companies was the chief Guest and he released the 18th Annual Report. The first copy was received by Ms. N. Latha, Chief Educational Officer of the Thiruvallur District. Mr. D.V.Venkatagiri of Bharatha Matha Sangam felicitated Sevalaya. The Sangam donated notebooks to the school children. It appeared to be a revisit of Santa Claus in July when Lion Jayaraman announced the grant of 2 sets of uniforms for all the children of the School, 2 colour TV sets with free JAK TV cable connection and contribution towards higher education expenses of the children.

The children presented a cultural programme. Mr.Appadurai, Village Administrative officer, Lion.B.Jeyachandran, Mr.Raveendra Naidu, Panchayat leader of Palavedu village, Mr.Krishnan, Panchayat leader of Sivanvoil village, Mr.Andhiridoss, Advocate and Mr.Sadagopan Advocate also spoke on the occasion and congratulated Sevalaya on its 18 years of selfless service. Awards were given to staff, who, had put in 5 years and 10 years of



Craft Training to Staff



Old Students Association Meeting

service. Prizes were given to the top 3 rankers in the X and XII Standard Board Examinations. 3 residents of the Old Age Home were also awarded prizes for actively taking part in the day to day activities of the organisation. Manuscript magazine, 'Vidiyal', prepared by the children of Sevalaya was also released on that day. Heads and teachers from many nearby schools also participated.

Events

As a part of their "Chennai – 365 Days " Programme, Sri Krishna Sweets arranged for recital of Lalitha Sahasranamam and a Bhajan session at Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Old Age Home on 13/07/2006 They sponsored special lunch for the residents of the student's Home and Old Age Home. Sri Krishna sweets management was kind enough to get a list from us about the snack items, what each grandpa or grandma would like to have and brought those items individually packed, for each one of them!

The "Kottu Murasu" Cultural troupe of Sevalaya presented a Programme at Kakalur (Thiruvallur District) on 15/07/2006. The children sang Bharathiyar Songs. They enacted a small skit highlighting how Sevalaya lends a helping hand to



TCS ers at Sevalaya

Thiruvallaur Zone Ball Badminton Match at Sevalaya



fulfil the aspirations of poor children who wish to study and provides shelter to the destitute senior citizens. The response to the programme form the public was terrific.

CSR visits by IT companies

This month the employees of two of the top IT companies in Chennai visited Sevalaya and interacted with the children and senior citizens. Nearly 20 associates from Cognizant Technologies visited on 15/07/2006 and 120 associates from Tata Consultancy Services visited the campus on 22/07/2006. They had brought sweets and snacks and distributed them to the residents. They spent the whole day in the campus, just chatting with the residents, and going around the campus. Both the IT companies have promised help and have agreed to visit campus on a regular basis.

Experience sharing with other NGOs

CIOSA is an organisation for networking all NGOs. CIOSA organised a meeting of NGOs engaged in geriatric care. Mr. P. Selvam represented Sevalaya at the meeting where many NGOs running Old Age Homes participated. They shared notes and exchanged their experiences in issues involved in running an Old Age Home.

NSS camps

On 18/07/2006, the Gandhi Group of NSS students visited Puliyur and were engaged in temple cleaning activities.

School clubs

The Science Club met on 21/07/2006. Students Revathy and Jeyalakshmi demonstrated the density of water and Need of Oxygen for burning by experiments.

"Vision" Programme at TCS office to Unit Heads



The Maths Club met on 11/07/2006. Mr. Senthilkumar, staff of Sevalaya taught the children easy ways to do multiplication.

Study Circle

Ms. Mariyammal spoke about "Essays of Poet Bharathi" on 08/07/2006. Bharathiar's Poems were taken up for discussion by Ms. Kavitha on 15/07/2006. Vivekananda's Life History – Part II was Mr. Sakthivelmurugan's choice for the study circle meeting on 22/07/2006, while Ms. Latha spoke about Vivekananda's Life – Part I on 29/07/2006.

Students Study circle

E.Ananthi of XI Standard reviewed the book "Our National Leaders" (Tamil) by U.Narasimhan.. D.Gowthami of XII Std spoke about the life of Raja Ram Mohan Roy based on the book written by Venkatram on 15/07/2006. S. Archana of XI Std spoke about the book "World Famous Orators (Tamil) by Lena Tamilvanan on 16/07/2006.

Training Programmes

Mr. Shiva of TCS conducted a half-a-day workshop on vision to Sevalaya's unit leaders and trustees. The concept of developing a vision, sharing it with all in the organization, passing on the passion from the founder to the rest of the team, innovative thinking techniques to deploy the vision, were the topics discussed. The participants enjoyed the lively session and thanked TCS for giving an opportunity to apply modern management concepts to a service organization like Sevalaya.

TCS administration department had made all the arrangements for the program, including providing a spacious conference room in TCS Chennai's corporate office, providing coffee, snacks and a sumptuous lunch.

Gandhi - The Assertive

"Don't say yes when you want to say No" is the title of a book on assertiveness. Gandhiji considers such behaviour untruthful. Here is what he has to write on the ashram observance of Truth.

"There was an incident I noticed yesterday... I was talking to a friend who wanted to talk to me aside, and we were engaged in a private conversation. Another friend dropped in, and he politely asked whether he was intruding. The friend to whom I was talking said: Oh, no, there is nothing private here." I felt taken aback a little, because as I was taken aside, I knew that so far as this friend was concerned, the conversation was private. But he immediately out of politeness, I would call it over politeness, said that there was no private conversation and said that he (the other friend) can join. I suggest to you that this is a departure from my definition of truth. I think that the friend should have, in the gentlest manner possible, but still openly and frankly said, "yes, just now, as you rightly say, you would be intruding," without giving the slightest offence to the friend if he was himself a gentleman-and we are bound to consider everybody a gentleman unless he proves to be otherwise." Gandhiji says that if we continue to say things like this we really become a nation of hypocrites. He continues, "I recall a conversation I had with an English friend. He was comparatively a stranger. He was principal of a college and has been in India for several years. He was comparing notes with me, and he asked me whether I would admit that, we, unlike most Englishmen, would not dare to say no when it was no that we meant. And I must confess that I immediately said yes ; I agreed with that statement. We do hesitate to say 'no' frankly and boldly, when we want to pay undue regard to sentiment of the person whom we are addressing. In this Ashram, we make it a rule that we say no when we mean no, regardless of consequences."

Management Gurus attribute three aspects to the quality of assertiveness. Respect for one's own self; respect for the opposite party; and openness. Lack of Respect for oneself will make him meek and submissive. Absence of respect for the

opposite party would make him aggressive which should be distinguished from being assertive. When there is no openness, one becomes a hypocrite. We know that Gandhiji has reduced himself to a zero, and self-respect for him is the self respect of the nation. His letter to Lord Irwin, the viceroy announcing his intention to embark on salt sathyagraha, would be a copy book model of assertiveness. In that letter he balances the respect for the nation, and his respect for the British represented by the Viceroy. None could have been more forthright in explicitly declaring that the British rule was a curse to India. The whole letter dated March 2, 1930 is worth reading by students in assertiveness. (Mahatma-by D.G.Tendulkar, Vol.111, pp.18-23) While the entire letter could not be reproduced here for paucity of space, the following passage will prove to be of interest to the readers.

"The inequities sampled above are maintained in order to carry on a foreign administration, demonstrably the most expensive in the world. Take your own salary. It is over Rs.21000/ per month besides many other indirect additions. The British Prime Minister gets 5000 Pounds per year that is Rs.5400 per month at the present rate of exchange. You are getting Rs.700 per day against the Indian average income of less than two annas per day. The Prime Minister gets Rs 180 per day, against Great Britain's average income of nearly Rs.2 per day. Thus you are getting much over five thousand times India's average income. The British prime Minister is getting only ninety times over Britain's average income. On bended knee I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon. I have taken a personal illustration to drive home a painful truth. I have too great a regard for you as a person to wish to hurt your feelings. I know that you do not need the salary you get. But a system that provides for such an arrangement deserves to be summarily scrapped. What is true of the Vice regal salary is true of the whole administration."

Do we need to assert that Gandhiji is one of the most assertive persons who walked this planet?

Published by: [Bhuvanewari Muralidharan](#) and owned by / on behalf of [Sevalaya](#) and published from
F2, Jains Eden Park, 4 - Judge Jambulingam Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004
and printed by: [S.Kannappan @ Gem Offsets](#), 24 (Old no.-20), Swami Achari St., Royapettah, Chennai - 600 014.
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