



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 3 **Sevalaya's News Letter - February 2009** Serve 11 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

January 30th was a busy day for us at Sevalaya. We assembled very early in the morning, around 6:30 AM at Mahatma Gandhi statue, on the Marina beach. Our children sang Gandhian Bhajans in the presence of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, ministers of the state and other officials. After this ten of our students joined a cycle rally and visited many educational institutions in the city and enacted a skit to emphasize the message of 'co-existence or no existence.' Some of us went to the Chennai central prison at Puzhal and Mr.G.Ram Mohan, gave a slide show presentation on the life of Mahatma Gandhi for the benefit of the prison inmates. Mr. R.Nataraj, IPS, Director General of Police (Prisons), inaugurated a 30 week program on Bharathi, Gandhi and Vivekananda for prison inmates, coordinated by Sevalaya. Then in the evening we had an inter-religious prayer in the city.

All this was done to observe the "Sarvodaya day", the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Sixty-one years ago, on the same day, he was shot dead. Like the "life" of Mahatma Gandhi teaching us lot of lessons, the "death" of Mahatma Gandhi also teach us important lessons.

Once there was a saint doing penance in the banks of a river. He noticed that a scorpion was caught in the river water. He got up and put his hand in the flowing water and picked up the scorpion, to save it. But the scorpion stung the hands of the saint. As it was very painful, the saint shook his hands and in the process the scorpion again fell into the river. The saint ran along with the water and caught the scorpion again and lifted it up. But the scorpion again stung his hand, and this process was going on for a couple of times. A man who was watching

this came up to the saint and asked him "Are you mad? The scorpion keeps stinging you and you keep lifting it again." The saint replied "Stinging is the nature of scorpion. Helping others is my nature. Both of us will not change our ways".

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ came into this world to teach us love and compassion. We know what he got in return for this from the world. He was crucified on the cross, along with criminals. Did the "saint" change his nature? Mahatma Gandhi lived in this very world, "generations to come will find it difficult to believe", but he again practiced and preached Ahimsa and Truth. What did he get in return? He was shot point blank.

In addition to singing bhajans and lecturing about Gandhiji on the "Sarvodaya" Day, let us get the lesson from his death very clearly. The world is made up of many scorpions and few saints. The saints should not change their "nature".

Thanks & Regards
Murali

The 30 week course on Bharathi, Gandhi & Vivekananda coordinated by Sevalaya at the Puzhal Prison II



**Rally against Jallikkattu flagged off by
Thiruvallur District Collector**



Events

Staff of JAK communications, Avadi organized Pongal Celebrations at Sevalaya campus on 08/01/2009. Lion B.Jayaraman, Chairman, JAK groups presided over the function. The function was celebrated in a traditional way. Sevalaya children, OAH inmates and staff from JAK communications participated in the function. The entire celebrations were filmed and telecast in JAK TV on 14/01/2009.

On 12/01/2009, Thiruvallur District Collector Mr. G.Sundaramoorthy, IAS flagged off the Mini Marathon and the Walk organized by Sevalaya to create awareness on Smoke Free Bogi. Sevalaya students and students from nearby schools in Thiruninravur participated in the run. Placards with slogans like "Let's create a smoke free world and live healthily" were carried by the students to create awareness among the public and student community on celebrating Bogi in a smoke free manner. Banners & placards depicting the cruelty perpetrated on animals in the name of Jallikkattu were also carried and an appeal was made to the youth not to conduct/encourage or participate in Jalli Kattu. The district collector gave away the prizes to the students who finished in the first ten places in the Mini-Marathon.

Vivekananda Jayanthi was also organized on 12/01/2009, at Sevalaya campus. Prizes were distributed by the district collector to the winners of the state level open book examination conducted for students of VI to XII on "Vivekananda Life".

On 14/01/2009, Mr.Venkatesa Mudaliyar of Puliur inaugurated the Pongal celebrations by lighting up the mud oven on which decorated new earthen pots were placed. Pongal, a sweet dish made of milk, rice and jaggery was cooked and offered to Sun God in the traditional way. Mr. K.Mohan (Sub Post Master, Thiruninravur), and Mr. Navakodi Narayanan (Sub Post Master, Pakkam) were the Chief guests on the occasion.

**The district collector Mr.G.Sundaramoorthy
IAS gave away the prizes for the state
level winners in the Vivekananda Exam.**



On 15/01/2009, on the occasion of "Mattu Pongal" a volley ball tournament was organized for village youth. 26 teams from the villages took part in the tournament. Hindu club of Anna Nagar, Pattabiram walked away with the first prize while the runners up were Velliyur Jai Friends team. Puliur temple trustee Mr. G.Thanikachalam distributed the prizes and inaugurated the Pongal celebrations at Goshala.

61 students from Biology and Agriculture groups went to aquaculture at Guruvayal on 16/01/2009.

Mr. Ravichandran, Sub Inspector, Vengal police station hoisted our National Flag at Sevalaya on the occasion of the 61st Republic Day. On 26/01/2009. A colourful variety programme highlighting the unity of India in its diversity enthralled the audience.

On 29/01/2009, Mr. Ravichandran, Sub-Inspector, Vengal Police station conducted a training programme for 9th & 11th std. on "Road Safety".

External Events:

On 07/01/2009, our school participated in Awareness programme about Swami Vivekananda for college students arranged by Yuva Sakthi to celebrate National Youth day at Kumararani Meena Muthiah College, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar. Sevalaya organized a pictorial exhibition on Swami Vivekananda's life and thoughts, on the occasion.

On 12/01/2009, Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Mylapore celebrated the "National Youth day" by conducting many competitions for students. I.Narmatha, R.Baby and R.Vijaya Kumar from Sevalaya participated in the quiz programme and won second prize.

26 members from Sevalaya Interact Club, participated in the 2 Days camp on 'Rotract Youth Leadership Award' organized by Rotary club of Madras Silver Beach and Rotary Club of Madras Presidency in Singarampillai Mat. School, Villivakkam

Lion B.Jayaraman, Chairman, JAK groups in Pongal Celebrations at Sevalaya campus



on 10&11/01/2009. Many competitions and cultural events were organized in the camp. Sevalaya student R.Devi got 1st prize in song competition.

28 students and a staff visited the 32nd Annual Chennai Book Fair at St. George Anglo Indian School on 17/01/2009. They actively participated in the interactive session with Mr. Mayilsami Annadurai, Project Director, "Chandrayan-1".

On 28/01/2009, 40 students and 2 staff from our hostel participated in 'Music & Meditation for Global Peace' with His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji at Teachers' college ground, Saidapet, Chennai.

On 30/01/2009, Sevalaya students sang Bhajans at Marina Beach near Gandhi Statue on the occasion of Sarvodaya Day. They also participated in a cycle rally carrying the message of peace and harmony. Our students presented a kit highlighting the message of 'co-existence or no existence'.

Sevalaya paid Homage to the Father of the Nation on his 61st Death Anniversary in a unique and meaningful way. The 30 week course on Bharathi, Gandhi & Vivekananda coordinated by Sevalaya was inaugurated on 30/01/2009 at the Puzhal Prison II Dhyana Mandapam at 11:00AM by Mr. R.Nataraj, IPS, DGP (Prisons). Mr. G.Ram Mohan, Retd Railway Safety Commissioner and a Gandhian Scholar presented a one hour slide show on the Life of Mahatma Gandhi which was well received by the audience.

On 31/01/2009, Mr. V.Muralidharan, Managing Trustee of Sevalaya presided over the TAFVA South Zone NGOs Consultation Meeting at Madurai.

Visits to other schools

On 24/01/2009, Primary school staff visited Sriram Matric. School, Thiruneermalai for observation. On 30/01/2009, 6 teaching staff went to Navadisha Montessori school, Velachery, Chennai for

Sevalaya students sang Bhajans at Marina Beach near Gandhi Statue on the occasion of Sarvodaya Day



observation and on 31/01/2009, the High school staff went to Sriram Matric School, Thiruneermalai for observation.

School Club Activities

On 26/01/2009, Mr. Subramani, Asst. Head Master, Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Vengal gave a speech on "How to prepare for Board Exam for Social Science?", in Social Science Club meet. He gave prizes for the toppers in social science, in the half yearly exam.

Staff Book Review:

On 03/01/2009, Mr. Marimuthu spoke on "Memories of Bharathiyar" (Tamil) by Yadugiri Ammayar. "Hail Bharathi!" (Tamil) by Kaviya Pavalar Pannan was taken up for discussion by Mr. K.Palani on 10/01/2009. On 17/01/2009, Mr. J.Selva Nayagam shared his views on Panjaali Sabatham written by Bharathiyar and on 24/01/2009, Mr.K.Senthilnathan spoke on Bharathiyar Essays written by Bharathiyar. On 31/01/2009, Ms. Romansa Mary spoke on "Bharathi's India" (Tamil).

Students Study Circle:

On 03/01/2009, V.Saravanan spoke about the book "Lead The World" (Tamil) written by Mr. V.Muralidharan.

Temple Visit

On 01/01/2009, Hostel boys and girls went to Thamaraiykkam Shiva and Sir Yadevi Amman Temples. On 10/01/2009, the senior citizens went to Pakkam Siva Temple for Aarudra Dharsanam. The Hostel boys went to Pakkam Shiva and Anchaneya Temples and the Hostel girls went to Ramanathapuram Vinayagar temple on 23/01/2009. On 30/01/2009, the Hostel girls went to Pandeshwaram Perumal temple and Hostel boys went to Ramanathapuram Vinayagar temple.

All play and no work...

Work-life balance is a term much discussed nowadays. Many employees particularly in the corporate sector work much longer than the scheduled hours, to the extent that one of the corporate leaders had to advise that it was not necessary to do so, and working within stipulated hours would be adequate to deliver the goods on time, efficiently and effectively.

Leave alone sitting late hours, many youngsters nowadays find their jobs so strenuous and stressful that during weekends they find the need to de-stress and unwind themselves. Were we not even in our Primary classes taught that all work and no play made Jack a dull boy? But the pity is that many of these people resort to habits which are detrimental to their health and lasting happiness. On the other hand, we also find several of them, for a change from their routine work, visit places like Sevalaya and spend their time usefully and selflessly for the benefit of the less fortunate.

The point is how to make our work itself a source of joy? Swami Vivekananda says how. Doing work with cleverness is a science. Attachment to results and selfish interests shatter our nerves, disturb our minds and accomplish very little work. "Work like a master; not like a slave", he commands! By doing the duty on our hand well, with single minded devotion, we make ourselves stronger, and rise to a position to attain more honored duties in society. Working selflessly, with single minded devotion and love brings happiness in work, he concludes.

You must have heard this story. Yet it is worth repeating in this context.

A saint met three persons who were working in a temple construction site. The terrain was

rough and the weather was harsh. All of them were sweating it out. He asked them what they were doing. The first worker said, "I am laying the bricks." The second worker said, "I'm earning my livelihood." the third one replied, "I am building a magnificent temple". No need to say that the third worker with a broader perspective, envisioning the end result of his toil, enjoyed his work.

What about Gandhiji? Let us hear Eknath Easwaran, a U.S. based philosopher, who has written a book, "Gandhi, the Man".

"Once when I went to Gandhiji's Ashram, as I walked about in the neighbourhood of his little cottage, I saw the unending stream of political leaders from Britain to India who came to him throughout the day. I was wondering how he was able to bear the pressure of these significant interviews which would change the relations of two great countries, and in the evening, I expected to see a tired, irascible, very impatient man coming out. In stead I saw a smiling figure that looked as if he had been playing bingo with children all the day. I could not believe my eyes, because I was used to the idea that if we work 8 hours, we should be tense and ready to be irritated by anybody who tries to be nice to us. But he was completely untouched by his action."

"Mr. Gandhi, you have been working for 15 hours a day for 50 years for those helpless millions of India. Why don't you take a long holiday?" some westerner put this question to Gandhiji. Gandhiji smilingly replied, "I am always on a holiday!"

Do we have anything, even a very little, to learn from Gandhiji?

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Editor: [T.S.Venkataramani](#)

Send your comments to: [Sevalaya, Kasuva, Pakkam \(P.O.\), Near Thiruninravur - 602 024, Tamil Nadu, India.](#)

Phone Nos. : [9444346699](#), [9444620286](#), [9444620289](#), (044) [26344243](#).
E.mail : sevalaya@vsnl.com visit at: www.sevalaya.org