



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

MARCH - 2003

Dear Friends,

What else can I write this month other than the cricket world cup? The Indian team started very badly which provoked strong protest by the fans in India. After that, they have won couple of matches and there is some considerable improvement in their performance.

I wonder if any of the players, in any game at the international level, have come up from institutions like Sevalaya. To my knowledge, there is no one. May be there are some of them who have come up from poor families, but they will be very few in number, if at all there is someone. Why? Lot of money is required to buy good bats and balls etc., the coaching is very expensive; you need to pay for the ground rent, and many more expenses. With all this, it becomes very easy for the people with money to participate in serious sports (no doubt they have to perform well), and the poor are left to watch the game on the TV sets! (May be their own, or go the village panchayat common TV!)

For the poorer sections of the society, if at all they go to the school, doing well in the studies is the only thing the parents look for. Any other extra curricular activity will cost more, as the schools ask for more money for these things. Hence it is better to confine to the studies alone, as there is no other choice for them.

Sevalaya's school is a full free school. If we have any extra-curricular activity, that should

be also done free. How do we do it, if coaching is so expensive? We found some noble hearted souls, who have agreed to do free service. Ms .Meenakshi, is now conducting free Bharathanatyam (Indian classical dance) classes. She has learnt dance from the famous Kalakshetra. Ms.P.Bharathi has started teaching carnatic (Indian classical) music. Mr.R.Purushothaman is conducting free Hindi classes. He has been sent by the Hindi Prachar Sabha. Mr.R.Jayaraj who is an artist, trained by Ajantha arts school, is teaching drawing to our children. Mr. P.D.Narayana swami is teaching Yoga. Mr.Gopal is teaching Mirudhangam and harmonium (Indian classical musical instruments). All these volunteers come once in a week and conduct various classes, free of any charges. Some of them are not very well off themselves! They will not be able to donate any money to Sevalaya, but can only donate their time. Children welcome them with their big smiling faces and go with them to the various classes and learn. If they excel in each field, that will be the only 'Guru Dhashina' (money to be paid the teacher) we will be paying them.

Sevalaya's volley ball team won the first prize in Thiruvallur district this academic year. With more and more help coming from good volunteers, I am sure we will be able to produce Tendulkars, Srinaths, Padma Subramaniam, M.S.Subbulakshmis, Ravi varmas, and more.

Thanks & Regards

Murali

Talent Promotion

All the children in the Home have been grouped according to their interests and potentials. Classes have been organised with a view to encouraging them and promoting their talents. The groupings are: Yoga, Dance, Painting, Literature, Games, Hindi, Music, etc.

Study Circle Meetings

Date : 11.1.2003
Speaker : A.Ganesh kumar
Book : Basics of Good Health
Author : Swami Sahajananda

Date : 1.2.2003
Speaker : R.Vijayaraghavan
Book : Maanbumighu Memory (Tamil)
Author : N.C.Sridharan

Date : 8.2.2003
Speaker : L.Anusuya
Book : Great Power of Thought (Tamil)
Author : Gnanamurthy

Date : 22.2.2003
Speaker : A.Arockiaraj Kingston
Book : Students
Author : M.K.Gandhi

National Service Scheme Camp

Punjab Association's Gill Adarsh Matriculation School, Chennai, conducted a Special Camp Programme at our Campus. The camp was for 10 days commencing on 29.01.2003. The activity in the morning was field work in our campus as also in adjoining villages. The topics covered in the afternoon lecture sessions are; The achievements of Mahatma Gandhi (a slide show) by Mr.G.Rammohan, First Aid-ABC of treatment by Mr. Chandran of St.John's Ambulance, Philosophy of Sevalaya by V.Muralidharan, Public Discipline by CT.Chidambaram, Dt.Liaison Officer, NSS, Bharathi for Youth by Saravanan of Sevalaya, Role of Youth by A.Mohan Doss of Madras School of Social Work, Rain Water Harvesting by M.Soundararajan of Chennai Metrowater Board, and Drug Abuse by P.K.Visveswaran, Retd.Principal of Madras School of Social Work.

The inaugural address was delivered by Dr.N.Lalitha, Educational Advisor, Adarsh Schools. Jayashree Padmanbhan, Principal, and Uma Parvathy, Vice Principal, addressed the inaugural and valedictory functions. A.Annamalai, Trustee, Sevalaya was the Guest of Honour in the Valedictory function.

Such camps help the students from the Metropolis to realise that there is some other side of the world and that they should repay their social debt by rendering what little service they can do to the hapless and miserable lot of Humanity.

The Story Of Gandhi

Kothamangalam Subbu is a renowned poet and story writer of Tamil Nadu. He had rendered Gandhi's Life Story in popular Ballad form and has been conducting discourses in Villu Pattu style through the length and breadth of Tamilnadu. After his demise, his son Kothamangalam Viswanathahan is carrying on this mission with unflinching zeal. Committed as we are to the cause of spreading the message of Gandhi in rural areas, we arranged for his performance in the adjoining Pakkam village on 1.2.2003. The programme was well received by the villagers, particularly the womenfolk. Mr.Shanmugham, President, Pakkam Panchayat Union graced the occasion. Earlier, there was a cultural show of Dance –A folk dance variety—Karaga Aattam, and a drama," A Day with Gandhi " staged by Sevalaya children.

Bharathi Tamil Ilakkiya Manram (literary forum)

Mr. Malan inaugurated the above forum at our Mahakavi Bharathiyar High School on 21.2.2003. The renowned journalist, and author, in his speech mentioned that poverty is not a hurdle to any man in his path of achievement, to have self-confidence, and to inspire others. Bharathi was a classic example of this , he added. Mahakavi Bharathi lived in abject poverty throughout his life but was the personification of courage, confidence, patriotism and love of humanity.

His poems inspired people, inculcated thirst for freedom and infused confidence, he added, summing up his brief speech. Earlier Children of Sevalaya presented their poems which were very much appreciated by the chief-guest.

Science in Action

An exhibition under the above title was inaugurated at our School by Ms. J. Uma Maheswari, Joint Director of Elementary Education on 28.2.2003 at 10.00 AM. Models and experiments explaining the application of scientific principles in day-to-day are being displayed in this exhibition.

The show will be for three days and Mr. Kannan, Director, Elementary Education will be delivering the valedictory address. On 2nd March, 2003.

Health care

A free medical camp based on Siddha system led by Dr. Jeyaprakash of the Government Siddha College, Chennai, was organized at our campus by Sri Satya Sai Seva Organizations, Thirumangalam, Chennai, on 16.2.2003. Belying the general belief that there are not much takers for our ancient and effective system of medicines, there was an over whelming response from the villagers and there were about 350 entries. We have been for quite a long time contemplating that we should provide medical help through the indigenous system in our medical center named after the Mahatma. The time seems to be ripe for it. We will do something about it in the next financial year.

Three doctors accompanied by Ms. Malavika, our Nutrition Consultant, visited the campus and conducted a general health check up of our children.

I.C.F. Visit by our Children

25 children escorted by two teachers visited Railway Integral Coach Factory at Perambur on an educational trip. Shri Ramiah of ICF explained to the children that the institution was inaugurated in 1954 by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, as a small unit. It has traversed a long distance then and has grown to greater heights, providing

employment for 16000 people and rolling out 1500 coaches a year. At the moment of the visit, coaches were being manufactured for use in Andhra Pradesh. They were taken round all the sections right from the sheet metal section where raw metal sheets were the input, to the Main assembly section, where the finished Coaches were churned out. They also enjoyed the visit to Indian Railway Museum where vintage coaches were exhibited.. They also had a Joy Ride in a toy-train.

Now in Television too!

We had happily reported the presentation of a feature by our children, earlier. Happier are we that a delectable Programme was performed by our children in the Podhigai Channel of Doordarshan in the feature entitled "Kanmani Poonga" (Darling's Park) on 21.2.2003.

Sportsfolio

12 of our children participated in the inter-school Volley Ball Tournament conducted at Veltech School, Vellanur, Avadi on 22.2.2003

In Words of mouth, Heroes, they !

Devoid of strength in mind
And quality of fairness, even
Deceit would they talk- O, Parrot,
In words of mouth, heroes, they!

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Their own brothers—
In misery, they die
Seeing it yet in Mind they do not melt—
O, Parrot,
Fairness they forgot!

They with their eyes do see
Like worms the Bharaths die,
In famine and pestilence—O, Parrot,
But they in lethargy die!

The famine which the mother doth slay
They do not check
But with open mouth, o, parrot
Vainly do they say—

Vande matharam, Bow I to thee Mother!

(Bharathi's own rendering of his Tamil Poem)

MULTI-LINGUISTS ALL

Recently we have started special classes in Hindi for our students at the Mahakavi Bharathiyar High School at the Sevalaya campus. The students are showing great enthusiasm to learn a new language; and equally enthusiastic are the teachers, who are volunteers nominated by the Dhakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha. As it is, all our students learn Tamil and English in their classes. Quite a few of them have Telugu as their mother tongue, and know that language also. Now with Hindi lessons being added, we count on soon having a number of our students being fluent in three or four languages. This is not at all surprising, seeing that the three guiding lights of Sevalaya, namely Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Mahakavi Bharathi, were all multi-linguists who held mastery over many languages.

Swami Vivekananda was a brilliant orator and writer in many languages. Early in his boyhood, along with his mother tongue Bengali, he also learnt Hindi. His family stayed for two years at Raipur in the Hindi heartland at that time, and the bright young teenager picked up fluent Hindi. In school and at the university, he studied English and Sanskrit as part of the curriculum, and gained great proficiency particularly in English. In the year 1887, after taking *sannyasa*, Swamiji undertook a holy pilgrimage tour of India. He wandered for over six years, covering the country from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, and doing much of his travelling by foot. He spent time at the ancient centers of learning, like Kasi, Haridwar and Mathura, and built up his knowledge of Sanskrit language and the complexities of its grammar. He studied the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma-sutras*, the *Itihasas*, the *Puranas* and the *Agamas* and gained a deep understanding of *Vedanta*. He became a fluent speaker of Sanskrit language, which helped him in having discussions with the great *Vedantic* scholars he met during his wanderings. When he addressed meetings in Madras in the year

1893, his audience was astounded that "he could speak of Valmiki, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti and in almost the same breath of Homer and Virgil, and Shakespeare and Shelley"!

Mahatma Gandhi was also a great lover of languages. In school he studied English as the first language, his mother tongue Gujarati as the second language, and also some Sanskrit. When he went to England to study law, he first took the London Matriculation examination, for which he studied two new languages — Latin and French. He became so proficient in Latin that he could read Roman Law in the original Latin when studying for his bar examinations. When he went to South Africa and came into contact with Indians from various parts of the country, he learnt Hindi, Urdu and Tamil in order to get closer to his people. He devoted considerable amount of time during his jail terms, and on long ship journeys, studying Tamil. He could speak Tamil "quite well" during his later years in South Africa, but his knowledge got rusty due to loss of touch after his return to India in 1914. When his son Devdas married a Tamil girl Lakshmi in 1933, he was hopeful that he would be able refresh his Tamil. But alas, Lakshmi learnt Gujarati in no time, and denied her father-in-law the privilege of talking to her in Tamil!

Mahakavi Subrahmanya Bharathi is no doubt the greatest of modern Tamil poets – but he knew other languages as well. He could speak Hindi so well that, with his Sikh type turban, he was very often mistaken for a Punjabi Hindu. His English was flawless. He was also a scholar in Sanskrit, and translated the Bhagavat Gita and some other Sanskrit works into Tamil. Such was his scholarship in Sanskrit and English that he detected some errors in Swami Vivekananda's English translation of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*! But he has left us in no doubt as to which language was his first love. Sang he:

Of all the languages I know There is none as sweet as Tamil !

For Free Circulation :

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