



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

MARCH - 2005

Dear Friends,

Twelve years ago, in a regular staff meeting at Sevalaya campus (that time we had only few staff members), when I told the group that we are planning for a school building, which will house nearly 1000 children, with four floors, fully equipped laboratories, big auditorium etc., I am sure many of them were laughing inside. It is very difficult to imagine, such a school building, in a village where there was no education before Sevalaya entered the area. Also such an infrastructure will cost more than one crore rupees (nearly 250,000 USD) – where will a small organization like Sevalaya get such funds?

Sometime just after this meeting, we got a call from Ratna Rao Wisdom trust, offering to sponsor the construction of first class room in this school building. We received the donation in the Wisdom annual award function that year, and went ahead and constructed just one classroom. We also had a function to inaugurate that single classroom and also started using it. Then came, Mr.Rajagopalan from Germany, who sponsored the next four classrooms. Friends from CTS in Chennai sponsored the next classroom. TCS friends from Q West project and Mr. Jack Harding from USA sponsored the next three rooms. German government, through the efforts of Mr. Rajagopalan and friends, sponsored the auditorium and the first floor laboratory. Each TCS project sponsored one classroom. Mr. Ron Radice from USA and ASHA Chicago sponsored more classrooms. Families of Mr.Kanakaraja in France and Uma Madhavan in USA sponsored one classroom each. One of our friends made a personal contribution for one classroom and wanted to remain

anonymous. With all this, nearly 60% of the school building was complete as of last year.

Meanwhile the school was doing well. Our students' strength touched 500. Not just in quantity, we excelled in Quality too. A free school, run just for the benefit of orphan, poor and destitute children, got 100% results in the last two years, catching the attention of the district collector and the education minister of the State. We also got the attention from Chennai Willingdon trust. The trust members visited Sevalaya and expressed their willingness to sponsor the rest of the school building and also furnish it fully. With this generous contribution, the school building is nearing completion now. We hope by the beginning of the next academic year, the twelve-year-old dream will become a reality in Sevalaya.

More children from economically backward families and also children, who have no economy or family, will find a place to get education absolutely free. We will also push further to improve the quality of education, make it a joy for children to learn, not just getting good marks!

Of course this development is going to put more strain on Sevalaya's running expenses in the next academic year. We have to find sponsors to provide uniforms, books, notebooks etc. for more children. We need to employ more teachers to handle the new classes. For all this money has to again come from people like you, the well wishers of Sevalaya.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



NSS PROGRAMME

Study Circle Meetings

Date : 05/02/2005
 Book : Life – It is in our hands (Tamil)
 Author : Ms. Kamala Kandasamy
 Speaker : Mr. G.Madhavan
 Venue : Service Centre

Date : 12/02/2005
 Book : Some ideas for success (Tamil)
 Author : Mr. P.C.Ganesan
 Speaker : Ms. L.Anasuya
 Venue : Service Centre

Date : 19/02/2005
 Book : Mind, Relax please
 Author : Swami Sugabhodananda
 Speaker : Ms. Sundari
 Venue : Service Centre

Date : 26/02/2005
 Book : Thousand ways for Peace (Tamil)
 Author : Mr. Kuzhandaisamy
 Speaker : Mr. G.Chittibabu
 Venue : Service Centre

Students Study Circle at Service centre

Date : 07/02/2005
 Book : Life Stories of 50 Leaders(Tamil)
 Author : John Durai
 Speaker : E.Satish



CLASS ROOM INAGURATION



BANGALORE & MYSORE TOUR

Date : 12/02/2005
 Book : Short Stories for Children (Tamil)
 Author : T.Vijayakumar
 Speaker : Govindaraj

Date : 19/02/2005
 Book : Philosophers (Tamil)
 Author : Mr. Veda Narayanan
 Speaker : P.Silambarasan

Date : 26/02/2005
 Book : Dew Drop stories (Tamil)
 Author : Mr. Malayappan
 Speaker : M.Arun Kumar

Events at Sevalaya

02/02/2005: Our Old Age home entered the fourth year of its existence. The inmates offered a special prayer on this occasion.

06/02/2005: Sun TV Fame Ramesh Praba, a motivational speaker & writer conducted a programme "Success- For Sure" for the X Std and XII Std students. His speech infused confidence among the students gearing up to write their public examinations. He stressed on the importance of self-confidence, hard work and also gave them a glimpse of various fields of study open to them to pursue Higher education.



DENTAL CAMP



SPORTS DAY

20/02/2005: A class room sponsored by Ms. Nalini Mahadevan and Ms. Uma Gopalan in memory of their late parents Smt. S. Jayalakshmi & Sri. S. Mahadevan was inaugurated.

26/02/2005: Sports Day was celebrated with Mr. M. Rajagopalan, Centre Head, Tata Consultancy Services, Ambattur and Mr. M. Manoharan, Centre Head, Tata Consultancy Services, Sonex Towers as the Chief Guests. Mr. Ramar, Asst. Educational Officer, Thiruvallur District also participated in the functions. Many Sports events and competitions were conducted for the students, staff, parents and senior citizens on 25/02/2005. Prizes were distributed to the winners of the various events.

27/02/2005: Dr. Vetrivendan and his team of doctors conducted a dental camp. Screening was done for hostel Children and senior citizens.

External Programmes, training ...

04/02/2005: Ms. Vijayanandini & Ms. Vijaya, staff of Sevalaya attended the 1 day training conducted by Government Horticultural Department in raising medical herbs and marketing them.

25 students and two staff members took a



SUCCESS FOR SURE



SPORTS DAY

break from the routine and were the guests of TCS Bangalore for 4 days from February 11th to 14th. They toured Mysore, Bangalore, Belur and Halebedu.

Temple Visits

13/02/2005: 20 members of the Old Age Home were taken on a trip to Srirangam.

The hostel boys were taken on a visit to the Vinayaka temple at Ramanathapuram village on 25/02/2005.

Seeking Divine Grace...

26/02/2005: Students of the X std and XII Std appearing for the Tamilnadu Public Examinations visited the Sivan Temple & Hanumar Temple at Pakkam to offer prayers and seek the Divine Grace of the Gods for better performance in the examinations.

NSS CAMPS

04/02/2005: The Gandhi group of NSS students went on a door to door campaign to create awareness about the harmful effects of Plastics and to request the villagers not to dispose plastics in a careless manner. Printed handbills were distributed by the students.



OAH - ANNUAL DAY PRAYER

The Epic March

Plans are afoot to re-enact the Dandi Yatra of Gandhiji to commemorate its 75th anniversary in March this year.

Gandhiji set out on this 'salt March', on 12th March 1930 with 72 inmates of the Sabarmathi Ashram on a 241 mile-route from Sabarmathi to Dandi. This was part of the Civil Disobedience Struggle to press the demand for Purna Swaraj, and was with a view to demanding the repeal of the unjust Salt Tax, which heavily oppressed the poorest of the poorest, and the lowliest of the lowliest.

Gandhiji has been exercised over this for over forty years, as evidenced by his article in the Journal of the Vegetarian Congress in London (1891) and in the Hind Swaraj (1908) where he had made a passing reference to this atrocity. According to Salt Act, 1837, indigenous manufacture and sale of salt was an offence punishable with imprisonment and fine. This was only to facilitate selling at a huge profit (costing 2400 % of the actual cost to the consumer) Liverpool Salt, which came to India as deadweight in ships.

Following up an eleven-point charter submitted to the British, Gandhiji wrote a letter to Viceroy Lord Irwin pointing out the injustice perpetrated by the regime on Indians. He highlighted the Salt Tax and referred to the high cost of Administration.

The viceroy drew 5000 times the average income of an Indian, while even in Britain, the Prime Minister's salary was only 90 times that of an average Briton.

He asked him with "bended knees" to ponder over this and avert the agitation. He received only stone in the place of bread, in the form of a curt reply from the viceroy's personal secretary. Hence Gandhiji had to proceed on the March as proposed.

The march was well planned including the minutest of details. The participants had to sign a pledge affirming faith in Purna Swaraj and the fight towards the same by non-violent and legitimate means. No body enroute has to join without prior permission. (Still, there was ever increasing numbers.) The volunteers were exhorted to "cultivate the strength

of will to see that a fist holding salt did not open even if the wrist should be cut off."

Dandi was reached on 5th April. After prayers, at the early hours on 6th, Gandhiji scooped up a handful of salt to the cry of "Hail Deliverer" by Sarojini Naidu. The Government, which, initially, did not think much of the agitation, sat up and arrested the leaders and the civil resisters all over the country. Gandhiji himself was arrested on May 5th. At dead of night and taken by a bus to Yerawada jail.

After due notice, there was an attempt to raid Dharsana salt depot. For a band of over 300 volunteers, a very strong Police contingent under Robinson, Deputy Superintendent was set in motion. Volunteers moved toward the Depot, batch by batch. People were beaten up severely, Steel-spiked bamboo lathies thudded on the unprotected heads, White Khadi dresses turned crimson with blood. Infuriated, not knowing what to do, the police acted mindlessly and mechanically.

Batch after batch, volunteers moved only to be beaten up mercilessly and be carried away in blankets. Web Miller, an American Journalist brought this to the notice of the world through the columns of United Press. He wrote that the Satyagrahis were well trained and none of them raised his hand in defence. Reporting for 18 years from 22 countries he had never seen such horrid scenes anywhere else.

The result of all this was, all the leaders including Gandhiji had to be released. and much to his chagrin, Winston Churchill had to put up with the "alarming and nauseating sight" of the half naked fakir striding up the steps of the vice-regal palace to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor.

As Louis Fischer would say, the Indians became virtually free from then on and the element of fear was gone forever.

The re-enactment of the Dandi march will be fruitful if we could regain the spirit of intense patriotism, self-effacement and discipline.

Jai Hind!

FOR FREE CIRCULATION :

Send your comments to: Sevalaya, #3, First Link Street, Karpagam Gardens, Adyar, Chennai-600 020.

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