



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 1 **Sevalaya's News Letter - March 2007** Serve 12 Price-Re.1

## Dear Friends,

February 14<sup>th</sup> is celebrated all over the world now-a-days. Valentines day, as it is called, is named after a saint called Valentine. But when one looks at the way the celebrations go on, no one can even imagine that there is a saint involved in this whole thing. This day has been renamed as 'lovers day' in Tamil and the whole campaign goes around as if love is possible only between a young man and a young woman. The mother's love, father's love, brother's love, sister's love are all forgotten. Lots of money is spent in buying expensive gifts to ones valentine (Valentine is a saint!), time is spent in merry making and all cinema halls and parks and beaches are full on that day.

It also attracts the 'cultural police' who resort to violence against these young people. They say such celebrations are not part of our culture, as if mindless violence is our culture! In the past few years, this Valentines Day has become a tense day, as both parties try to prove their point.

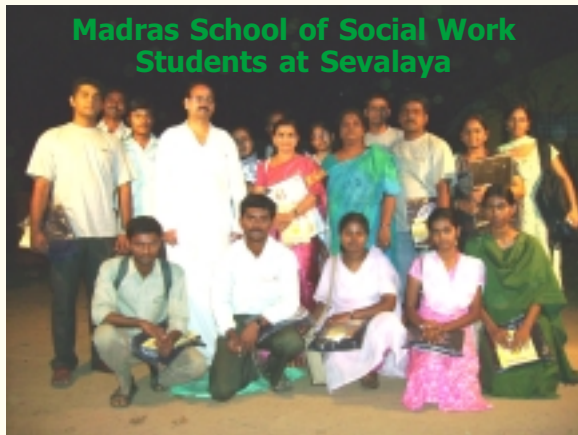
When we look at all the children and old people residing at Sevalaya, and also watch what is going-on on Valentines Day, we are not sure if we have to laugh or weep. There are children who have been forgotten by their parents and there are parents who have been forgotten by their own children. A man comes and wants to admit a small boy, stating that he found the boy on the streets, but when you probe further, you will find out that this particular man is the real father of this kid! Same is the case with old age home admissions. Own grandmas get admitted in our home, stating that she was a

cook in their house and as she is unable to work, needs a shelter! Before we findout the fact, the grandson runs away. For many children and old people, the near and dear never even visit them. They are just dumped with us and forgotten. Even when old people die in our old age home, on many occasions, the son or daughter, when informed, don't come for the funeral and say that they don't have time. Sevalaya has conducted many such funerals in the past.

We have seen cases where a father finds a new 'valentine' and the mother also finds her own 'valentine', they both run away, leaving the child behind. Such children are brought to Sevalaya by the grand parents or uncles or the public. One of the girl child was severely beaten up by her grand mother, as she thought the child is imposed on her by her parents – some of Sevalaya's well-wishers saw this and brought the child to Sevalaya. Even after few years, the child needs medical attention and we are providing that.

To indicate close relationship, we say 'blood relations'. We also say blood is thicker than water. Well, in the past eighteen years in Sevalaya experience, we have seen blood getting diluted and relationships getting meaningless. 'Petra Thai Thanai Maga Marandalum, Pillaiai perum Thai Maranthalum' (If the child forgets the mother, or the mother forgets the child), both land up in Sevalaya. If Valentines Day is celebration of love, where is that Love?

Thanks & Regards  
**Murali**



**Madras School of Social Work Students at Sevalaya**

### Events

The Annual Sports Day was celebrated at Sevalaya on 13/02/2007. Different sports activities for the children, various field events, matches, events for parents, inmates of old age home and teachers were conducted. The prize winners in the various categories received the prizes from Mr.R.Dhanasekaran (Asst Commissioner of Police, Pattabiram Range, Chennai) who was the chief guest on the occasion.

AXA, the Multinational Group has entered the Indian Markets – not just on a business venture. True to its proclaimed commitment of Corporate Responsibility which attest to AXA's desire to contribute to the sustainable development of the communities in which the Group does business, the AXA group has entered into a Social Partnership with Sevalaya. AXA aims to concentrate on providing support in the field of education for the poor. Mr. Ian Pinnock, CIO of the AXA group visited Sevalaya on Monday the 19/02/2007 and formally made the announcement about AXA's social partnership with Sevalaya. Mr.Adrian Cottington, Mr. Pete Reed, Ms. Amy Hudson, Ms.Liz Mckay senior officials of AXA, UK were present on the occasion. As a first step AXA has agreed to sponsor 60 children of the Balwadi section of Sevalaya and support them right through their school and university education, till the time they are able to support themselves.

Sevalaya organised an Awareness Campaign



**AXA - CIO presents a cheque to Sevalaya**

Programme against alcoholism by students of Madras School of Social Work on 17/02/2007. The students highlighted how alcohol destroys families, keep the families of the alcoholics permanently chained to poverty, and acts as the root cause of degeneration of society through street plays and other cultural events at Pakkam Village. Ms. Hamsa Rajan, President of Pakkam Panchayat was the chief guest on the occasion. Ms. Fatima Vasanth, Principal, Madras School of Social Work and Ms. Vadani, Lecturer, Madras School of Social Work and Mr. Madhavan, Vice President of Pakkam Panchayat also participated.

The members of the "Kottu Murasu" cultural Troupe of Sevalaya organised a cultural programme at Periyapalayam Village on 10/02/2007. Sevalaya's cultural group presented a programme highlighting BGV (Bharathi, Gandhi & Vivekananda) values. Mr. Arumugam, President, Aathuppakkam Panchayat presided over the function. Mr. Velu Mayil, President, Parents Teachers Association, Government Higher Secondary School, Periyapalayam also participated.

### Events/Programmes where Sevalaya Participated...

Students appearing for X Std Board Exams from Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School wrote revision exams in Science, Social Science and Mathematics conducted by The Science Forum on 02/02/2007 at campus itself.



**"Sports Day" Celebrations**

10 children from Sevalaya participated in the Carnatic Music Appreciation Programme conducted at Rani Seethai Hall, Chennai on 10/02/2007.

### **School Clubs**

The Social Science Club met on 19/02/2007. There was a lecture about the different states of India, the life of the people, their occupation, the festivals they celebrate, etc.

The Science Club met on 06/02/2007 and 22/02/2007. Quiz based on Science was conducted. Basic scientific principles were explained to the students by simple experiments.

### **Study Circle**

Mr. Selvakumar reviewed the Book Gnanadeepam by Swami Vivekananda (Vol 4) on 03/02/2007. On 10/02/2007, Mr. Bharathidasan shared his thoughts on the contents of Vol 19 of Mahatma Gandhiji's Complete Works. Personality Development –



**Special Prayer at Pakkam Anchaneya Temple**



**Blood Group Screening Camp**

a compilation of Swami Vivekananda's thoughts was Mr. Soundararajans choice for the study circle meet on 17/02/2007 while Mr.Madhavan shared the stories he read from the book "Stories from the Life of Mahatma Gandhiji" (Tamil) authored by Ra. Shanmugam.

### **Medical Camp**

Indian Red Cross Society, Thiruvallur conducted a camp on 03/02/2007, to identify the blood group of all students studying in Mahakavi Bharathiayr Hr. Sec. School.

### **Students Study circle**

E.Govindarajan of Std XI, spoke on the Biography of Thomas Alva Edison (Tamil) by N.C.Deivasigamani on 03/02/2007. R.Ragu of Std XI, spoke on the Book "Eternal Path of Life" (Tamil) by Yovan on 10/02/2007. S.Premkumar of XI Std spoke about the book "500 ways for Long Life" by S.Lakshmi Subramanian on 17/02/2007. On 24/02/2007 R.Ramachandran of Std XI "Don't Search for Success Outside" (Tamil) authored by V.Natarajan.

### **Temple Visit**

Old age home residents got a special darshan when they went to Karumariyamman Temple at Thiruverkkadu, Chennai on 10/02/2007. Ln. B.Jayaraman, Chariman, JAK Groups, Avadi arranged for the special darshan. On 04/02/2007, special prayers were offered at Anchaneya and Siva Temples, Pakkam before start of the Board exams for 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> standard students in March 2007.

## Gandhiji is alive and vibrant

A book under the title, "Let's kill Gandhi" has hit the stands. It has been written by one of the descendants of Mahatma Gandhi. The title is intriguing and set us thinking. Who killed the Mahatma, anyway?

Mahatma Gandhi's vocabulary contains wider meaning for words than found in the lexicon. For him Ahimsa, is not only non-killing, but it denotes all pervasive, universal Love. Brahmacharya does not mean mere abstinence, but not having carnal thoughts in mind. Stealing means possessing things which are not, or, more than, required. Swadeshi means supporting and helping the near-at-hand. Purna Swaraj to him is the emancipation of the poor and the downtrodden. We take this cue from Gandhiji and venture to have a wider meaning for the term Killing.

In this we seem to have the authority of the Mahabharatha. Arjuna was filled with remorse over having killed Karna. He expresses his grief to Lord Krishna. The Lord chides him and says that it is because of his ego he thinks that he has killed Karna. Karna had been killed several times before Arjuna pierced his mortal sheath. Karna was killed earlier, like when — Kunti extracted a promise from him that he will not fight to kill any of the Pandavas other than Arjuna; Karna pledged to Indra that he will not use the Sakthi Astra more than once; Parasurama cursed that he will forget the use of Brahmastra at a crucial moment; Indra disguised as a Brahmin, got as gift the shield protecting Karna's body.

Taking that killing does not mean mere annihilation of the physical frame, how many times have we killed Gandhiji, before and after his becoming a victim of the Assassin's bullet? Gandhiji, believing that he was still in command of things, said that, the country could be partitioned only over his dead body. He was killed when he was presented with the agreement to partition as a fait-accompli. He was killed again and again when partition not merely meant geographical division, but exodus of people from one territory to another, and when this resulted in massacres, rape, looting and arson.

He was killed-when the constitution of the free country did not have a word about Grama Swaraj and when prohibition, which he said he would implement if he is to rule even for a day, became a toothless directive principle, a sentiment which need not be followed and which is not justiciable.

He is killed when liquor flows through the country, instead of the milk and honey that was promised, and for the Governments, income from Alcohol becomes a Kamadhenu to yield money for their lavish and unmindful spending. Gandhiji is killed when places of religious worship, trains, buses and residential areas become targets of bomb-attacks and the innocents are killed by the hundreds. He stirs in the grave to see the pathetic eyes of the horror-stricken victim face to face with mob attack and murder. He is killed with the suicide of every farmer.

He is killed every time a self serving leader utters his name and swears by his principles; every time we glorify his assassin and justify his killing in the name of freedom of expression. He is killed when we decry him spreading salacious and untrue stories about him, and read or browse through such stories in idle curiosity.

All this is on the down side.

But we see Gandhiji living and vibrant—with every act of kindness and compassion by poor, innocent, individuals we have had occasions to discuss in this journal; when people rush to the succour of those in distress, at times of enormous calamities. He lives with the several voluntary organizations that selflessly support orphans, poor, distressed, disabled, aged, and terminally ill and the like.

We on our part are able to hear Gandhiji breathing close to us and blessing us in our efforts. For we have with us the Talisman given by him.

"Whenever you are in doubt, recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you have seen and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him."

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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](#) & [26346162](#).  
E.mail : [sevalaya@vsnl.com](mailto:sevalaya@vsnl.com) visit at: [www.sevalaya.org](http://www.sevalaya.org)