



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 6 Sevalaya's News Letter - March 2012 Serve 12 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

One more year has gone by and one more ASER report has been released. In the last seven years, this detailed report on the status of Education in India is getting published. It is not about IIT entrance exams, how many get admission in overseas universities, cent percent results, or any of such high profile items. It is about students in grade 5 being able to recognize single digit numbers, alphabets, to do simple subtraction and read simple story. The survey is conducted only in rural India. Year after year, the survey results show that more than 50% of students are not able to pass such simple test. The problem is same in both Government schools and private schools. And every year, the problem is going from bad to worse. This clearly shows whoever has to take action on such findings are doing nothing about this; in many cases, they are not willing to accept the findings, they don't want to understand the real issues, but just want to sweep the garbage under the carpet.

We may feel happy looking at the enrollment data which says 99.1% of all school going children in India are in school. And the attendance data for both children and the teachers are also good. All children are enrolled and they come regularly to school and teachers also come to school, but children in grade 3 to 5 struggle to identify single digit numbers! Are we wasting everybody's time? We talk about students understanding the subject very well, getting hands on experience, more activity in the class room, character building education, moral education, life skill education etc., but all these are just talk in the air! If basic alphabets and numerals are the problem, what is the use of talking about many types of education methodologies?

There is a talk now that the rule of "no detention up to 8th grade" is a mistake and children don't care to learn as there is no fear of failure. We feel that the "all pass up to 8th grade" is a positive step. We have to remove the fear of exam from young children; instead there must be curiosity to learn. But the issue is so far teachers have been only preparing the children to pass the exam – they are used to training the children to learn the lessons by mugging up right from grade 1 and if exams are out of the way, the teachers have no clue as to what to do in the class. No training has been given to them to bring learning to the centre stage; they are used to exams being in the centre stage for years. Now the stage is empty and we end up in wasting everyone's time.

If children are taught how to learn by mugging up and pass the exam, no one is going to give them a job matching that skill. That is why we have a huge employability problem and no private organization is willing to give any credit to university degrees and they conduct their own written tests and interviews. The ASER report clearly points out that the root cause of all these problems is the poor quality of primary education.

After seven years of being left un-noticed and not acted upon, let us hope that at least this year the authorities will take note of the ASER survey report and act on it. This is a matter affecting the future of our country. Let us demand action.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



**Inauguration of Sevalaya Training Institute
for Sustainable and Natural Farming
by Mr. Raja Krishnamoorthy**



**Sevalaya's art Exhibition at
Russian Cultural centre**

Public Relations

Flying Towards a Better Future- Art Exhibition

Mr. Vladimir Mariy, Vice Consul and Director of Russian Cultural Centre inaugurated the two day Art Exhibition "Flying towards a Better Future" by Sevalaya at Russian Cultural Centre, Chennai on 20/02/2012. Ms. Charlotte Chapman, a volunteer of Children's Art Village worked on an environmental project with 600 high school students, teaching them to make birds out of old plastic water bottles and old newspapers, gift wrappers and flyers. Sevalaya's Art teacher Mr. Andrews Jesudoss also worked on this project encouraging students to make colourful creepers, flowers, bangles and facemasks out of the plastic pieces of the bottles that remained after cutting out the birds. All the art pieces created by the students were on display at the Art Exhibition. The students also presented a demo on how they made the birds.

Puthiathalaimurai Foundation, Thiruvallur council meeting

Puthiathalaimurai foundation's monthly council meeting for Thiruvallur district was held in Sevalaya campus on 19/02/2012. Mr. V. Muralidharan chaired the meeting.

Bharathi Team

Events

As a part of the GSP (Global School Partnership) project organized by The British Council three Teachers from Cunningham Hill Junior School were on a weeklong visit to Sevalaya. They arrived on 06/02/2012. Students welcomed the visitors and presented a small cultural programme of dances and a skit. The teachers of both schools worked on the ongoing joint project titled 'Vasudeiva Kudumbagam'. The project started in 2009 and since then five teachers from Sevalaya's Maha Kavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School have visited Cunningham school at St. Albans in two batches and five teachers from UK have come to India so far.

On 08/02/2012, five MSW I year students from various colleges, organized a Career guidance Programme for 11th Std students by Mr. Joshua Suresh Kumar of St. John's Mat. Hr. Sec. School, as a part of their a Community Service Programme.

On 10/02/2012, 50 students from 9 schools, teaching staff and 2 employees from TERI visited Sevalaya to see the greening activities in the campus, which included organic farming, bio-gas plant, vermicompost plant, solar lighting and solid waste management.

On 11/02/2012, Chinmaya Mission, Thamaraipakkam conducted a training session for 9th & 11th std students on multiple intelligence.

Participation in competitions, programmes, events outside Sevalaya...

On 12/12/2012, 8 students participated in Drawing competition conducted by Vasantham Memorial trust on the theme of Cancer Awareness at K.K.Nagar, Chennai.

On 18/02/2012, 26 children from Sevalaya participated in the programme "Vivega 2012" – Interschool competitions on elocution, poetry, creative writing and drawing conducted by Anna University. Sevalaya won the overall championship for the third year in row.

On 19/02/2012, 11 students and 4 staff participated in Vivekananda Jayanthi Celebrations at Thiruninravur. The programme was organized by Mr. A.C.Ravi, Thiruninravur.

Volunteers

Ms. Beverley Logan from UK arrived in Sevalaya on 06/02/2012 for volunteering her services. Beverly who has come through Project Trust is teaching English to elementary school students.

On 08/02/2012, volunteer Ms. Carol conducted Table Tennis Tournament for 8th, 9th and 11th standard students.

Volunteers from Cunningham School UK and Ms. Carol from China shared their experiences at the farewell function on 09/02/2012.

Trainings, Workshops...

On 09/02/2012, 2 teaching staff attended TERI workshop at Maharishi Vidya Mandir at Kilpauk, Chennai.

On 18/02/2012, 18 primary school staff participated in CRC training in Pakkam & Veppampat, organized by District Elementary Education Officer, Thiruvallur.



The launch of 'Every Child Can' campaign



Cultural Programme by Sevalaya students and Cunningham Hill Junior School teachers



Study Circle

On 04/02/2012, S. C. Suresh reviewed the book "Capital of Success" (Tamil) written by Kavi Gnayiru Thara bharathi. On 11/02/2012, K. Suveetha shared her views on the book "Wings of Self Confidence in children". On 18/02/2012, S. Jayaseeli reviewed the book "You Can" written by Mr. R.K.Rasu. On 25/02/2012, R. Uma Shankari reviewed the book "Arise; Succeed" written by Swami Vimurthananda.

Gandhi Team

Events

Sevalaya's Training institute for sustainable and Natural Farming was inaugurated at Vinod Sharma Memorial Campus at Kattiympandal Village, Uthiramerur at the two acres of land donated by Mr. Kannan & Mrs. Satyabhama Kannan on 03/02/2012. Mr. Raja Krishnamoorthy, Film Artiste and Natural Farming enthusiast inaugurated the centre and Former Vice Chancellor of Gandhigram university Mr. D.K. Oza, presided over the function. A two day training on organic farming was also conducted. 15 local farmers participated in the training conducted by Mr. Engles Raja of Vanagam and Mr. A. Ramesh, Head of Gandhi Unit of Sevalaya.

Mobile library

Sevalaya's mobile library visited Melakondaiyar Village on 05/02/2012.

Vivekananda Team

Mr. V.Muralidharan was the chief Guest at the Wedding of Mr. Yazh vendan, son of Mr. Iyappan a donor and Well wisher of Sevalaya on 05/02/2012. The residents of Sevalaya Old Age Home participated in the celebrations.

On 11/02/2012, 20 staff from HP, Olympia Tech Park at Ikkattuththangal, Chennai spent a half day with Sevalaya residents and organized Puppet Show, games, Magic show etc.

On 12/02/2012, 25 residents of the old Age home participated in Vallalar Festival at Veppampat, organised by Jana Kalyan Trust, Chennai.

On 13/02/2012, NSS volunteers from Anna Adarsh College, Chennai visited Sevalaya.

On 13 & 14/02/2012, resident of Old Age Home Mr. Gundurao, attended the training programme on Sensitisation for the family Caregiver of Demented Elderly at Chennai, organized by Heritage Foundation. He is also attending on one month certificate course on basic issues in Geriatric Care at Hyderabad organized by Heritage Foundation, National Institute of Social Defense and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt of India from 20/02/2012 to 21/03/2012.

On 16/02/2012, 100 staff members from Asian PPG visited Sevalaya as part of their CSR program, conducted many games for the children and senior citizens and provided lunch for all residents.

On 18/02/2012, Ms. Anandhalakshmi and Ms. Subashini, psychologists from SCARF visited Sevalaya Children's Home and Old Age Home and conducted training to staff to identify the mentally depressed.

On 19/02/2012, Ms. Saraswathi and friends from Ambattur presented a Bhajan Programme for Sevalaya residents.

On 19/02/2012 50 boys of Sevalaya Boys' Home attended a programme of Rajasthan Cosmo Club foundation at Avadi and received free dresses from the club.

Mr. B.V.Ramanaa, Hon'ble Minister for environment created an Endowment in the name of Dr. J.Jayalailthaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamilnadu to provide special meals to the residents of Sevalaya on the occasion of her birthday on Feb 24th every year. This year special meals were provided to all the residents on 24/02/2012 on the occasion of the Chief Minister's birthday in which many local volunteers participated.

25 staff members from TCS Ambattur branch, visited Sevalaya on 25/02/2012 and took part in various campus activities.



Doing good to the world

Essence of Karma Yoga is helping others; doing good to the world. Swami Vivekananda poses the question, "Why should we do good to the world?" Without keeping us waiting, he answers the poser in the same breath, "Apparently to help the world; but really to help ourselves." While helping the world should be the highest motive in us, which impels us to act rightly and gain tremendous moral strength, we should also understand that the world does not need our help at all. He concedes that there is lot of misery in the world. The best thing that we can do is to go all out to help others. But he says that in the long run, we would find that helping others is only helping ourselves. He tells us an instance from his boyhood days. "As a boy I had some white mice. They were kept in a little box in which there were little wheels, and when the mice tried to cross the wheels, the wheels turned and turned, and the mice never got anywhere. So it is with the world and our helping it. The only help is that we get moral exercise."

The world is neither good nor evil. Life is good or evil according to the state of mind in which we look at it. He deflates our ego by bluntly saying, "Be perfectly sure that (the world) will go on beautifully well without us, and we need not bother our heads wishing to help it."

Here are the words of Swamiji. "Yet we must do good. The desire to do good is the highest motive power we have.....it is a privilege to help others. Do not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents in your hand and say, "Here, my poor man," but be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by making a gift to him you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver...Let us all give up this foolish talk of doing good to the world. It is not waiting for your or my help; yet we must work and constantly do good, because it is a blessing to ourselves. An anecdote from the life of Swamiji well brings home this point.

John D. Rockefeller never had an intention to meet Swamiji. But somehow pushed by an impulse, he straight went to the house Swamiji was staying. Not waiting to be announced, he entered in to Swamiji's study and was much surprised, to see Swamiji behind his writing table not even lifting his eyes to see who has entered. After a while Swamiji told Rockefeller much of his past that was not known to many but himself, and made him understand that the money he had already accumulated was not his, he was only a channel and his duty was to do good to the world—that God had given him all the wealth in order that he might have an opportunity to help and do good to people.


Rockefeller was annoyed that anyone dared to talk to him .that way and tell him what to do. He left the room in irritation, not even saying good bye. But about a week after, again without being announced, he entered Swamiji's study, and, finding him the same as before, threw on his desk a paper which told of his plans to donate an enormous sum of money towards the financing of a public institution.

"Well, there you are," he said. "You must be satisfied now, and you can thank me for it."

Swamiji didn't even lift his eyes, did not move. Then taking the paper, he quietly read it, saying: "It is for you to thank me." That was all. This was Rockefeller's first large donation to public welfare.

(Source: The Life of Swami Vivekananda by his Eastern and Western Disciples).

SPONSORSHIP DETAILS

SPONSORSHIP	CHILDREN HOME		OLD AGE HOME	
	Contribution(Rs)	Endowment(Rs)	Contribution(Rs)	Endowment(Rs)
FOOD				
Milk(One Time)	500	7000	200	3200
Breakfast(one day)	1000	14000	500	7000
Lunch/Dinner	2000	28000	1000	14000
Lunch/Dinner with sweet or fruit	2500	35000	1250	20000
Full day food Expenses	3500	50000	2000	28000
Full day food Expenses with sweet or fruit	5000	70000	3000	42000
 <p>Cultural program by Sevalaya children at the Vivekananda day celebrations at Thiruninravur</p>				
Residential Expenses for one Child/one child/one Grandpa/year	6000	80000		
Maintenance of One Cow/year	6000	80000		
Education Expenses for one Child/year	6000	80000		
Salary for one staff per month	5000	850000		
Funeral Expenses for one Grandpa/one Grandma	5000	70000		
Cultural Expenses for one child/one Grandpa/one Grandma	1000	14000		
Medical Expenses for one child	500	7000		
Medical Expenses for one Grandpa/one Grandma	5000	70000		
Educational Aids Educational Kits	500	7000		
Sports Expenses for one child per year	500	7000		
Camps and Tours, Temple Visit for one child/one Grandpa/one Grandma	1000	14000		
Higher Education	20000	300000		
Professional Higher Education	50000	700000		
Workshop/Training/for one Staff	2000	28000		

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DONATION FORM

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Please make your donation payable by cheque to **SEVALAYA** and send to:

SEVALAYA,
63/32, I Main Road, Gandhinagar, Adyar, Chennai 600020

(Donations to School, Children Home and Old Age Home qualify for 100% exemption under section 35 AC and Rest 50% under section 80G of Income Tax Act, India)