



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 2 **Sevalaya's News Letter - May 2007** Serve 2 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

Many top ranking Indian students always dream of going to United States to pursue higher education. Right from the time I was a student, till today, I find that the topper in the class has always aimed to go to a US University. Many of the top institutes in India are considered as gateway to USA, by such students. When we were students, right from the day one in our institute, there was a talk about which exam to write, how to prepare, which professor's reco will have value in which US University, so on and so forth. It looked as though the only aim of top Indian students in their life is to study in a US University.

I am sure such a passion is there in all countries world wide. We see top students from all over the world getting admission in US Universities and they come with a great urge to do well in academics. When that is the background, it is very difficult to understand what happened in Virginia Tech University. The student who decided to kill as many as possible and ended up taking 32 lives, should have been also a first bencher in his home country, should have been very good in academics, only then he would have got admission in US University, then why did he behave like this?

Is there no connection between brilliance in academics with handling once life, handling tension, handling situations in life? Then what is education? I can understand shoot out happening in Jail or in battle filed, but not in a university campus. Is education teaching how to lead a peaceful life, how to be at peace with others and nature or are

we just teaching how to make money, how to kill competition, how to defeat others and move forward?

Recently a group of donors had come to Sevalaya and after talking to the children they started distributing candies to them. As many donors were distributing in parallel, it was not done in perfect order. Hence the smallest boy in the first row, was about to get a second candy. But the boy clearly told the donor that he has already got his candy and in fact picked up the candy from his shirt pocket and showed it to the donor, just to prove that he has already got it. He refused to accept a second candy. For a five year old boy to say no to a second candy is indeed remarkable. He clearly knows that the donors might have brought just enough candies for all the kids and if by mistake, he is given two, then it means that some other kid will be deprived of it. When I saw a five year old behaving like this, I was sure that Sevalaya's value education is working.

As the kids grow up, there will be 'candy substitutes', depending on their age, their position in life and the situations they will be facing. If we can teach them to understand what is their 'share of candy', if they can say no to 'more candies' with a smiling face, if they treat others 'kids' as people who have a right to 'candies' rather than just 'competition', then we can say we have given education. If that happens then absence of 'candies' will not result in bullets.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Easter Celebrations

Events

Easter was celebrated at Sevalaya on 08/04/2007. Mr. P.V.Raman, Retd. Senior Editor of The Hindu and Editor of Sub Urban Week was the chief Guest.

The students who completed their X Std Board Examinations were taken on a one day tour to Chennai on 12/04/2007. They visited Bharathiyar's House, Swami Parthasarathy temple in Triplicane and the Marina Beach.

On 17/04/2007 Tamil New Year's Day was celebrated at Sevalaya. Mr. G.D.Rajasekaran, President of Peiyar Vegetables and Fruits Merchants' Association was the chief Guest. He conveyed his best wishes to the children of Sevalaya and assured continuous support to Sevalaya on behalf of his Association. The Association provided a feast to the residents of Sevalaya.

Sevalaya, Pammal Aravind Sai Eye Hospital and the Thiruvallur District Administration jointly organized a mega free eye camp at Sevalaya campus on 22/04/2007. Nearly 250 Villagers



Eye Camp



Sai Bajan at Sevalaya

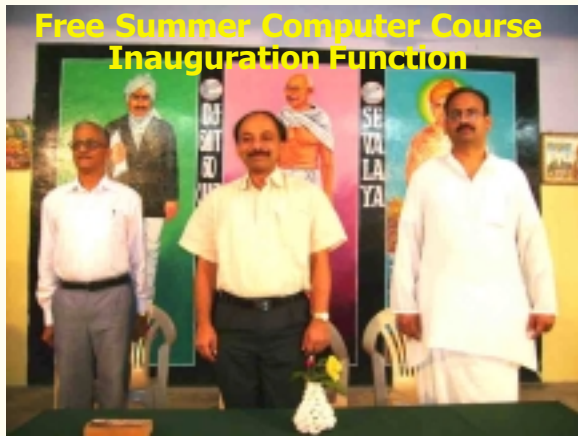
came for check up. Free cataract surgeries were performed by Aravind Eye Hospital for 6 people.

One month free computer course for the poor village youth is a regular annual event at Sevalaya. Sevalaya has a well equipped computer laboratory with 30 PCs. Best use of the lab is made during the academic year by the students of Class III onwards. During the summer vacation instead of keeping the lab idle, Sevalaya every year organizes a free 1 month computer course for the village youth. The students are given training in Basic computer applications and MS Office. A test is conducted at the end of the course and certificate is issued. This increases the employability of the village youth. This year the Course was inaugurated by Mr. K.Ananthkrishnan, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer of Tata Consultancy Services, Chennai on 29/04/2007. 80 students enrolled for the course.

Three day aided camp at Camp Tonakela in Avadi for 60 children of Sevalaya is also a regular annual feature. The camp will be held immediately after the school annual examinations are over. This year the Camp was organized on 24/04/2007 to 26/04/2007. The camp was inaugurated by



Tamil New Year Celebrations



Free Summer Computer Course Inauguration Function

Lion K.Govindarajan, Secretary of Camp Tonakela association. A one hour lecture on each day of the camp on the lives and works of the Trinities of Sevalaya Mahatma Gandhiji, Mahakavi Bharathiyar and Swami Vivekananda was arranged. Many sports events and competitions were held for the children. Staying in tents amidst natural surroundings was a refreshing experience for the children and they wholly enjoyed the 3 days camp. Mr. Ratan Chand Sharma of Venkateswara Jewellers, Avadi presided over the valedictory function and distributed prizes to the winners of the various events held during the camp.

Ms. Nirmala Raju (Nila), Editor of the Tamil e-magazine Nilacharal visited Sevalaya on 27/04/2007. She spoke to the students of higher classes about handling negative emotions. It was very well received by the students. The session was very interesting, interactive effective and the students developed an instant rapport with the speaker.

External Event where our children participated...

The 125th Birth Anniversary of Mahakavi



Ms. Nirmala Raju (Nila), Editor - Nilacharal

Subramanya Bharathiyar was celebrated by an organization Bharathi 200. A programme named Bharathi Dharshan was organized on 29/04/2007 at Bharthiyar House on Triplicane. Sevalaya's Managing Trustee V.Muralidharan was the chief Guest for the occasion. There was a cultural programme where Sevalaya children sang some Bharathiyar songs and danced for select Bharathiyar songs.

Study Circle

Gandhiji's Ahimasa Dharmam was the Book reviewed by Ms. B.Nirmala on 07/04/2007. On 10/04/2007 Ms. Amulu spoke on a book on Swami Vivekananda. by Mr. A.Palanisamy spoke on 21/04/2007 about Swami Vivekanandar's Gnana Deepam (Book IV). Mr. P.D.Narayanaswamy spoke on the book "Reversing Heart Disease" by Dr. Dean Ornish on 28/04/2007.

Temple Visits

On 21/04/2007 hostel girls went to the Vinayagar Temple at Ramanatahapuram. On 07/04/2007, 14/04/2007 and 28/04/2007 hostel boys went to Vinayagar Temple at Ramanatahapuram.



Labour Leader Gandhiji

It is May Day today. Workers rededicate themselves to the cause of working class unity. Our greetings to them.

While various facets of Gandhiji's life and activities are well known, many may not know about his role as a labour leader. It is an interesting fact that in his struggle in favor of workers, Gandhiji had to stand up against Ambalal Sarabhai. Readers familiar with Gandhiji's life will remember this name. Gandhiji admitted a Harijan family in his satyagraha Ashram. There were protests from donors and well wishes. People have stopped support. Gandhiji was almost thinking of closing the Ashram and moving to a Harijan colony with all his inmates. At that time, unsolicited, Sarabhai came and helped with a substantial sum to tide over the crisis.

Conditions of labour in Ahmedabad textile Industry were poor. Wages were low and the labourers had for long been agitating for an increment. Gandhiji found that the workers' case was strong. Anasuyabai, the labour leader, had to fight against her own brother, Ambalal, who led the fray on behalf of the mill owners. As Gandhiji's relations with them were friendly, fighting with them became rather difficult for him. He held consultations with them and requested them to refer the matter to arbitration. But, the mill owners refused to recognize the principle of arbitration. Gandhiji advised the workers to go on strike. Before he did so, explained to them the conditions of a successful strike.

1. Never resort to violence.
2. Never to molest blacklegs.
3. Never to depend on alms. And
4. To remain firm, no matter how long the strike continued, and to earn bread, during the strike, by any other honest labour.

The workers understood and accepted the conditions and pledged that they would not

resume work unless the mill owners agreed to their terms or the mill owners agreed to refer the dispute to arbitration. There were daily meetings and peaceful processions. The strike went on for 21 days. Strikers began to show signs of flagging. Their attitude towards the blacklegs became more and more menacing. Gandhiji feared an outbreak of rowdiness. Attendance at the daily meetings began to dwindle by degrees. Despondency and despair were writ large on the faces of those who did attend. The strikers had begun to totter. Gandhiji was groping and was nonplussed. He announced that unless the strikers rallied and continued the strike till a settlement was reached, or till they left the mills altogether, he would not touch any food. The labourers were thunderstruck, and Anasuyabehn, with tears in her eyes, pleaded forgiveness and assured that the workers would remain true to their pledge. Gandhiji did not relent. He was well aware of the plight of workers. Labourers were given paid work in the Ashram for construction of a weaving school. Anasuyabehn led the way by carrying a basket laden with sand in her head, and soon there was an endless stream of workers similarly employed. The labourers were infused with renewed enthusiasm.

Anasuyabehn and a number of workers shared the fast with Gandhiji on the first day, but with some difficulty, he was able to dissuade them from continuing it further.

As a result of the fast, an atmosphere of good will was created all around. The hearts of the mill owners were touched, and they set about discovering some means to settle the issue. An arbitrator was appointed and Gandhiji called off his fast after three days of commencement. The mill owners celebrated the event by distributing sweets to the labourers.

Will it be amiss to call Gandhiji the pioneer of labour movement in India?

Published by: [Bhuvanewari Muralidharan](#) and owned by / on behalf of [Sevalaya](#) and published from [F2, Jains Eden Park, 4 - Judge Jambulingam Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004](#) and printed by: [S.Kannappan @ Gem Offsets, 24 \(Old no.-20\), Swami Achari St., Royapettah, Chennai - 600 014.](#)
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