



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

## Sevalaya's News Letter

OCTOBER - 2003

Dear Friends,

Chennai was the venue of a spectacular air show last month. As usual the show was great, but the basic arrangements for the show, called for lot of improvement and planning. As the planes moved swiftly in the air, the bi-cycles and the two wheelers and the cars on the roads were moving at snails pace, as the traffic arrangements for the show was very poorly managed. Naturally there were lot of children in the crowd who had come to witness the show. Many of them were lost in the crowd, as the parents and teachers were also busy staring at the skies. After the show, there was chaos everywhere as the traffic on the road wanted to move at full speed, as the parents realized that the children were missing etc. Fortunately many parents and teachers were able to find their kids and go home after a long wait. But one child went missing and could not be located.

Two days later it was found that a road side cobbler couple was taking care of this lost child. The cobbler found this child on the streets, after all the crowd that came to watch the air show slowly walked away. The child was unable to give its address or the name of the parents. The cobbler not knowing what to do with the child, went on a bi-cycle ride through the streets and lanes of the city, expecting that at some location the child will be able to identify its home! The couple took care of the child for two days most probably a family, which will find it difficult even to feed its own family members this new child would have been an extra burden. But they didn't mind it! After he failed in his efforts to locate the parents, based on the advice given by

others, the cobbler has approached the police, who in turn located the parents and handed over the child. It is quite understandable that the cobbler was hesitant to approach the police in the first place, as there is always an understandable fear in the mind of poorer sections of Indian population with regard to police.

This cobbler is not running any organization for the welfare of the children, he is not a member of any club, he is not after popularity (even his name was not reported in the press!), he would not have attended any seminar on child welfare, but he has done the right thing at the right time. Making a tour of Chennai on bi-cycle for two days, in the hot Sun, with a child on the back seat, is a major task. For a poor family to accommodate one more person for two days in their house, if they have a house, is a much bigger task. And all this was done without expecting any reward or recognition.

Selfless service is a message we often find in the writings of Mahatama Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda & Mahakavi Bharathi. Service to others need not always involve millions of dollars and sacrificing one's life for it. Simple service as rendered by this cobbler family, if done by all, then there will not be even a need for 'organized service'.

Doing your duty, even going beyond the call of duty, without worrying about the 'fruit of the action' is the central message of Bhagavat Gita. This cobbler family has shown us an example of such an action.

Thanks & Regards  
**Murali**

**STOP PRESS : City Bank Cards are accepted towards Donations**

### Sevalaya completes fifteen years in service.

" It is indeed a great achievement that an NGO without any Government grant has successfully



completed fifteen years in high quality service. I am proud that software community in general, and Tata Consultancy Services in particular, have contributed a lot to the growth of this organisation." said Mr. Ravi Shah, Head of Chennai operations of TCS while releasing the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of Sevalaya on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2003. The first copy was received by Mr. S.Manoharan, Proprietor, Murugan Idly Shop, Chennai. Mr. M.Somasundaram who is co-ordinating the Adult Literacy Programme of TCS also spoke on the occasion.

Certificates were distributed to 28 villagers who completed the Adult Literacy Programme jointly conducted by Sevalaya, TCS and Pakkam and Palavedu Panchayats. Certificates were also issued to 10 village women who successfully completed the Tailoring Course conducted by Sevalaya. Mr.Muralidharan in his welcome address described the abysmal condition of the villages, to whom Sevalaya is determined to render succour. He congratulated the Old Age Home inmate Mr.Subramanian for offering himself as a free faculty for the Tailoring Classes.

Mementoes were distributed to all staff members and the three top rankers of the School in 10<sup>th</sup> Standard. Master Vinod Kumar, 'School Topper', expressed his gratitude to Sevalaya. But for the intuition, entering a school would have been a daydream for children like him, hailing from a very poor family.

### Achievement Day Function

" I have read and heard about the services of this Institution and am happy to be here to day; the services rendered by this Institution are laudable." said Mr. Chandra Mohan, District Collector, Tiruvallur in a functin organised on 20<sup>th</sup> September to celebrate the achievement of 100% results in the 10<sup>th</sup> standard Examinatons, April 2003. Thasildar, Panchayat Presidents of Pakkam and Palavedu Assistant Educational officer, and Principal of Government Blind School at Poonamallee High Road also felicitated the students and the teachers.

### School Clubs

2.9.2003: There was a debate on the subject whether the Television wields a good influence or bad on the society.



3.9.2003: A meeting was organised by the Bharati Tamil Ilakkiya Manram of our School on 3.9.2003. Mr. Bharathi Suraj spoke on Bharathi A holistic perception. Mr. Kavimamani Ilayavan spoke on Sardar Vallabhai Patel. Mr. Kumari Chezhan, a noted Tamil Poet and a senior level Government Officer, spoke inspiringly narrating his own life story explaining how he had to walk several miles to go to school and work on borrowed books.

### Study Circle Meetings. Service Centre

6.9.2003: Mr.T.Nagaraj

"The most essential recipe for success is Self Confidence "Thannambikkai Tharum Vetri-Mr.P.C.Ganesan

13.9.2003 Mr.T.S.Venkataramani

" A Practical guide for fulfilment of your dreams" Seven Spiritual Laws of Success- Mr. Deepak Chopra

20.9.2003 Ms.B.Nirmala

" Come along with me through the eighteen steps for a value oriented life." Kooda vaanga - Mr. Mathi Oli

27.9.2003Mr.C.Saravana moorthy

Collection of short stories depicting moral values" Uyarndha Ullangal -S.Govindasamy

### **Administrative Office.**

5.9.2003 Mr.T.R.Sarathy

"The road to success is always under construction. "  
Vetri Padi Kattu-Bala Sandilyan

12.9.2003- Mr.P.Selvam

"Story of a life dedicated to Philanthropy"  
Pachayappan- Dr.Mu.Varadarasanar.

19.9.2003 Ms.V.Chitra

"The story of Scientists who changed the face of the world"  
World Scientists-C.P.Chitrarasu

26.9.2003Mr.T.S.Venkataramani

"Awareness, Attitude, Action, the three traits that make a Quality Person"  
Uyar manithanai Uruvaakkum Gunangal-Dr.M.S.Udaya murthy.

### **Training and Development**

2.9.2003-4.9.2003: Mr. C.Saravana Moorthy attended a Programme on effective teaching of Biology conducted by Botany Department of Stella Maris College, Chennai.

7.9.2003; Monthly Leaders Orientation Meet Discussion on Administrative and Accounts matters.

12.9.2003: Mr.T.S.Venkataramani attended a one day workshop on Human and Institutional development issues in NGOs organised jointly by HID Forum Bangalore, and Sparks Development Group, Chennai, at Chennai.

15.9.2003 Mr.T.R.Sarathy and Mr. S.Saravanan attended a 10 day camp on Vipassana Meditation.

19.9.2003: Ms.R.Vijaya attended a training programme on Health Care conducted at Pakkam.

19.9.2003: Mr.Thanikaivasan attended a cyber teaching training programme conducted at Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya.

21.9.2003 Mr.T.Nagaraj and Mr.A.Arockiaraj Kingston attended a session of Art of Living training conducted by Sage T.G.Narayanawami at Chennai.

### **Developing the children**

6.9.2003 and 7.9.2003: Rotaract Club of Akash, Chennai conducted a two-day Personality Development Programme for children of Higher Classes.

14.9.2003: Student group leader D.Gouthami presented a book she had read entitled The Story of Edison.

### **Educational Tours and Camps.**

Mr.Kesavan and Mr.Kingston handling Computer teaching in our School and students of +1 Computer Science Group were taken on a conducted trip to Sholinganallur Complex of Tata Consultancy Services, on 6.9.2003.

### **Health-care**

Doctors from Primary Health Centre, Pakkam visited our School twice this month and conducted check-up of all children. They also distributed medicines.

### **Reaching out**

8.9.2003: Mr.S.Saravanan speaks at Kilambakkam Government Higher Secondary School on Swami Vivekananda.

10.9.2003: slide show on Mahatma Gandhi by Mr.G.Rammohan at Johnson Matriculation School, Tiruninravur.

13.9.2003: Our mobile library visited Komakkambedu villages. There were 32 readers utilising the services.

### **In the media ....**

AMN TV telecast a feature on Sevalaya and an interview with our Managing Trustee, Mr. V.Muralidharan this month. Earlier the same channel telecast a feature on one of our Study Circle meets.

A feature participated by our children telecast on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2003 in the National Channel of Doordarshan in their programme " Kanbom;Karpom" ( Let us watch and learn. )

### **From Croatia to Kasuva**

Mr. Marco Smirkinic (30) from Croatia has arrived at our Campus on 8<sup>th</sup> September for a five-month's stay and service. A graduate in Law, and a brief period Civil Military person, now Marco devotes himself to the service of orphan and poor children. His services include emotional engagement of deprived children and helping them in their every day routine like feeding, clothing, developing their motoric skills through Games. His interests are in Yoga, Oriental Philosophy and Sathya Sai Baba's teachings.



Vinayagar Chaturthi



Mobile Library

## THEIR SISHYAS

All of us at Sevalaya, be they Trustees or teachers, little children in the foster home or senior citizens at the Old Age Home, are taught to look upon ourselves as humble students of the lives and teachings of our three preceptors Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Mahakavi Subramaia Bharati. Ideally, we should be able to describe ourselves as their disciples or to use the Indian term, 'their sishyas'. But given our woeful shortcomings, we know that we are nowhere near reaching that exalted state. We are content to remain their humble students and that is honour enough for us.

But there have been great persons in the past who came very near to, or were even actually called as, the sishyas of our preceptors. Swami Vivekananda had such a sishya. He got the sishya when he was on a lecture tour in England in November 1895, and he was delivering a series of lectures on Vedanta in London. He noticed a young woman who was invariably seated in the front row, extremely attentive to the lectures and was an enthusiastic participant in the 'questions & answers' sessions that followed the lectures. When Swamiji said in one of his lectures "Selfishness, ignorance and greed of individuals are the evils that bring suffering to the world", the words pierced her mind and heart. The young Irish woman, whose name was Margaret Nobel, decided to follow the Swamiji and go to India. Swamiji told her that there would be a tremendous amount of work for her to do among the women of India, and she gladly agreed to take on the burden.

She landed in India in January 1898. In March Swamiji initiated her to sannyasa, and gave her the name 'Nivedita' meaning 'one dedicated to God'. Sister Nivedita took to the simple life of a sannyasini, and started working for the upliftment of the Indian women. When Swamiji died in 1902 she felt added responsibility. She started writing and lecturing on the problems of India and her women. She realized that political freedom was the essential first step if India were to reach her

destiny of greatness and power, and worked tirelessly to inspire Indians to win their freedom from foreign rule. She emphasized the need for unity among Indians. Unfortunately, the pressures of tireless campaigning started telling on her health, and she died in 1911 at the age of 44.

Mahatma Gandhi had such a galaxy of great men as followers that he had not one but many sishyas. There were men like Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, Rajaji, Maulana Azad and Rajen Babu who left lives of wealth and comfort to become his sishyas in politics, and suffered innumerable hardships, including long terms of imprisonment. Among them, Nehru was Gandhiji's own choice for the number one slot. Speaking at a meeting of the All India Congress Committee in January 1942 Gandhiji said: "Not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor. ... When I am gone he will speak my language". It is now well known history that Nehru successfully carried on the torch handed over to him by the Mahatma and built India into a united and democratic nation that stands poised today for a great future.

Subramania Bharati's life was so short and 'hurried' that there was hardly any time for him to choose a sishya in his lifetime. There were always groups of followers and admirers around him but hardly anyone to qualify as a sishya. One of them even took on a name that can be roughly translated as "One In Humble Servitude Of Bharati" but neither his poetry nor the politics he followed later in life justified such a name. One who came nearest to being Bharati's sishya was the great Tamil poet Namakkal Ramalingam Pillay. 'Namakkal Kavignar' as he is popularly known, was a product of the Gandhian era of India's freedom struggle even as Bharati was of the Tilak era. Famous for the stirring lyrics of his emotion-laden poetry, Namakkal Kavignar wrote on the eve of the launch Gandhiji's Salt Satyagraha:

A battle without sword and bloodshed is coming!  
Join ye all who believe in the eternity of truth.

### **For Free Circulation :**

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