



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

## Sevalaya's News Letter

**October - 2004**

**Dear Friends,**

Friday evenings – it means different things to different generations. If you ask the previous generation in India, Friday is a very auspicious day and Friday evening is reserved for visiting temples. One of my traditionally minded relative went to see a girl, the first step in any arranged marriage. When the girl started talking about Friday evenings, this boy first assumed that she is going to talk about visiting temples. But she said that Friday evenings are for relaxation and she wants to have couple of beers and dance on Friday evenings. The boy fled from the scene.

The present generation's concept of Friday evenings, weekends, relaxation, have all changed. More exposure to other cultures through television, cinema, highly competitive environment in work place, more money to spare have all contributed to these changes. To cater to the needs of this new generation crowd, many night clubs and the like have started functioning in traditional cities like Chennai.

We had a disturbing accident in Chennai recently. A girl on two-wheeler was chased by four boys (one of them still in school) in a car, in the middle of 'Friday night'- all were under the influence of alcohol, and the girl was run over and she died. While we have all the sympathy for the girl's family, we have to also mention that this is the kind of price one has to pay, while adopting a different culture. Any culture comes with positive and negative points. It requires great mental strength to take only the positive from

anything and carefully leave out the negative. This is not possible for the common majority.

We have some young people visiting Sevalaya during weekends. They are students from colleges, employees of software organizations, some employed in other industries also. They come; spend time with the children and old people. Some of them take regular classes for the children. Some work in the agricultural fields, planting trees etc. Some just sit and talk with the old people. Some of them sit our library and read books. But these numbers are small. May be there are such people going to other organizations like Sevalaya and spending their weekends.

These people have spare time and some of them have extra money to spare. So they contribute both time and money. At the end of the academic year, when the results are out, these people know that they had a role to play in Sevalaya's 100% result. When they see the growth of the school building, when they see the trees grow, when they see the smile on the children's faces, when they see the old people holding their hands with warmth they get their week-end relaxation! Alcohol and nightclubs fade in comparison.

Volunteering and helping to do good work will give you lot of satisfaction and re-charge your batteries for the coming week. Try this one weekend.

Any weekend plans?

Thanks & Regards

**Murali**



### Study Circle Meetings

Date	: 04/09/04
Book	: Art of Teaching
Author	: Mr. Wilson Gilbert
Speaker	: Mr. K. Mohan
Venue	: Sevalaya Service Centre
Date	: 24/09/04
Book	: 100 anecdotes from the life of Swami Vivekananda
Author	: Mrs. Ganga Ramamurthy
Speaker	: Mr. G. Chitti Babu
Venue	: Sevalaya Administrative Office
Date	: 25/09/04
Book	: Manudathin Mahakavi
Author	: Mr. Nalli Kuppaswamy
Speaker	: Ms. V. Chitra
Venue	: Sevalaya Service Centre

### Inter School Competitions

Every year Sevalaya organizes an inter school oratorical, essay writing and poetry competition on the occasion of the Birth Anniversaries of the three luminaries – Mahakavi Bharathiyar, Mahatma Gandhiji and Swami Vivekananda with the sole aim of carrying the ideals of the great men to the future generation. This year it turned out to be a mega event with above 450 students from 40 institutions including some from Chennai participating. The competitions were held at Sevalaya Service Centre on 03/09/2004. Prizes were distributed to the



winners of the competitions and participation certificates were issued to all participants at the function organized on 18/09/2004 coinciding with the Vinayakar Chaturthi Celebrations. Mr. Tiruppur Krishnan, noted journalist was the Chief Guest and he lauded the efforts of Sevalaya in sowing the seeds of great ideals which is sure to reap a rich harvest in the years to come taking our country to greater and new heights.

### Club Activities

The English Club of the school met on 10/09/2004 for a poetry reading session when the poems of Wordsworth were read out and discussed. Later few longer words in English were given to the 2 groups of the clubs and they were asked to make as many words as possible using the letters in the given words. The students quickly got interested in the game and coined many words competing with each other and at the end of the day the vocabulary of the students was enriched.

### Leaders Meeting at Sevalaya

The various Unit Leaders of Sevalaya and the Trustees had a meeting on 12/09/2004. Accounts up to 31st August were reviewed and measures to cut costs were discussed and decided upon.

### Winning Scholarships...

R. Yamuna Rani & Krishnamurthy of IX standard won the scholarships awarded by Ullas Trust of Polaris. They were among the successful candidates who





took the scholarship test conducted by the Trust. The Trust also awarded them Young Achiever Certificates.

### **Making our Mark in Sports too...**

In the Inter Zonal Volley Ball tournament conducted on 11/09/2004 between Thiruvallur Education District and Ponneri Educational District at Pothatturpettai our sub Junior Team were the runners up. The junior team reached upto the Semi Finals Level.

### **Our teachers on the AIR...**

Ms. Annapurna Narayanaswamy and Mr. R.Vijayaraghavan conducted classes for the Educational Broadcast of the AIR for the X Std students. Mr. R.Vijayaraghavan conducted a History class on the topic "Reformers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" and a Civics Class on the Topic " Indian Election Commission". Ms. Annapurna Narayanaswamy conducted a Poetry class teaching the students the poem " The Road not Taken" and a lesson from the Supplementary Reader on Aung San Sui Kyi. Our students B.Jeevanandam, V.Gomathy, D.Gowthami and B.Sathya accompanied the teachers. The programme was broadcast in 3 parts on 07/ 09/ 2004, 11/09/2004 and 21/09/2004.

### **Reaching out...**

Managing Trustee Mr. V.Muralidharan was the guest at the live tele- interview broadcast by AIR's FM Rainbow on 11/09/2004 at the popular Programme Vannak Kalanjiyam by Dr. Seyon. The listeners got first hand information about the various activities of Sevalaya, its aims and objectives.

### **Old Students Association**

The old students Association was formally formed in Sevalaya on 19/09/2004 thanks to the efforts of our former student Mr. Ilayaraja, a software engineer. Many old students participated. They promised to visit Sevalaya on all Sundays and during all functions and take part in all the activities. They will act as our ambassadors and spread the message of Sevalaya.



### **Training Programme By Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW)**

The Indian Council for Child Welfare conducted a 1 - day training Programme for our teachers on 11/09/2004 on " Teaching Methods" and "Learning Difficulties among Children" and methods to handle the same. The faculty comprised of Dr. Anbumani, Child Psychologist, Children's Hospital, Egmore, Ms. Kameela Nasser, Child development expert, Ms. Jaya Prasad, Co ordinator of the Quality Institutional Care and Alternative Care of the ICCW, Ms. Pavitra of ICCW and Ms. Thendral, Trainer from ICCW.

### **Switzerland comes to Sevalaya!**

In an innovative programme organized by TCS Maitree, a team of TCS-ers and their families led by Mr. Ravindra of TCS Chennai visited Sevalaya and screened a slide show for the children - prepared in a novel way with the photographs clicked by them during their days at Switzerland. The children learnt all about the history of Switzerland and the important places in the country. The enthralling scenic beauty of the country captured by the cameras captivated the hearts of the children and they learnt more about the country from this programme than they could ever learn from their textbooks. The team had also prepared a special album containing coins from all the countries of the world – a rare collection, which they generously donated to Sevalaya.

Our special thanks to the team and TCS Maitree and Ms. Savithri Jayaram of TCS who coordinated the programme...

### **Sevalaya attracts Students, Volunteers...**

Two students of Masters of Social Welfare, as a part of their course project work, come to Sevalaya on alternate Sundays and volunteer their services. Mr. Murali, a software Engineer from Covansys Technologies is also our new volunteer who takes part in the activities of Sevalaya on Sundays regularly.



## Education for Emancipation

There is a vast reservoir of resources in this country in the form of children. It is pathetic that most of these are destroyed, unutilised or under-utilised. What a criminal waste!

There are street children, rag pickers, destitute and orphans whom nobody would care. Poorer sections would send their children in bondage, or, better to work in the fields, factories or teashops rather than send them to schools. Even for the more fortunately placed, what they call education is kilo loads of books, oppression by home-works and corporal punishments in the name of discipline. We have mostly, not schools, but teaching shops rather keen on counting money than countenancing the problems of children. We can swear as Bharathi did, in forty thousand temples that there is no gingilee seed worth of benefit!

Addressing the school run by Maria Montessori in Italy, Gandhiji averred that the real Peace for which the whole world is hungering would be possible only if we begin with the children. Bharathi was no less emphatic when he said that the liberation of mankind was possible only with the liberation of India for which the sole key was national education. Swami Vivekananda deemed neglect of the masses as a national sin and held every man a traitor who having been educated at their expense paid not the least heed to them.

Bharathiyar wanted a school to be opened for every two or three households in a village, (not even half-an- anna is to be charged as fees; books, dress and food to be provided free as far as may be possible.), Swami Vivekananda wanted his disciples to go from village to village, and door to door, spreading education.

The question then arises as to what type of education is to be given. What is good education? Swami Vivekananda provides the

answer: we cannot teach a child more than we can grow a plant. What we can do is to unveil the knowledge within. We should give positive ideas. Education that does not help the common mass of the people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring one strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion. Is it worth the name? . Education is that by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. The end of all education should be man making. Fearlessness, service to the needy, dignity of labour, courage of conviction and other good values have been prescribed by all the three as forming good education .All of them were emphatic that education should be through the mother tongue. Gandhiji had no manner of doubt in regarding the village handicrafts as the pivot and centre of education.

In Sevalaya, we have as of now, 130 orphan destitute children in our Home. Nearly 530 rural, poor, children in all are given textbooks, note books, uniform etc, besides free education without any fees. The medium of education is Tamil, the regional language. Corporal punishment is banned in the institution. The educational curriculum includes values of our three guiding stars. The thrust is on imparting good values like fearlessness that were preached by them. We train our children in crafts like tailoring, handicrafts, screen-printing, binding etc. In addition, they are trained in different skills like music, dance, yoga, painting, sports, agriculture, Computers etc. -All that our inspirers would applaud as Man making and life supporting.

May the Trio bless us and give us the strength to carry forward!

**For Free Circulation :**

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