



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

October 2014

Value education book released

English version of popular Tamil book now available for free download

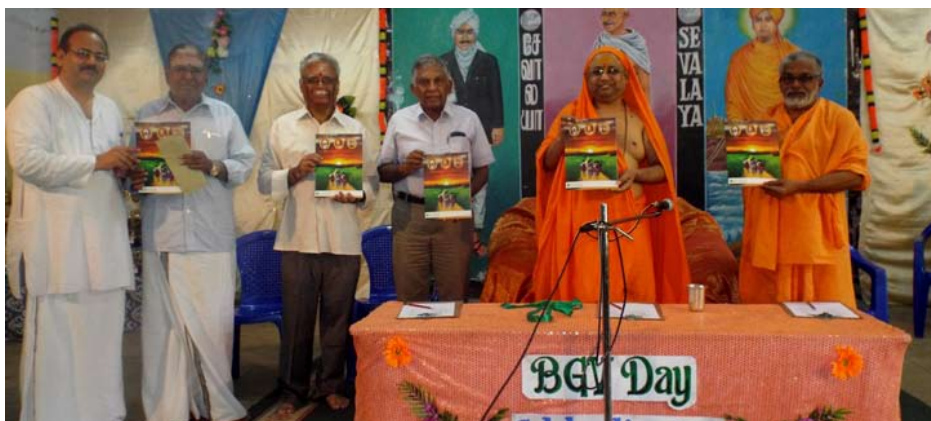
On 11th September 2014, the memory day of Mahakavi Bharathiyar, Swami Omkaranandaji Maharaj released "Virtuous and Victorious – Always", the English version of Sevalaya's Value education Book. The first copy was received by M. V. Subbiah, Managing Trustee, AMM Foundation.



Designed in-house, the book cover is an artwork by C. Andrews Jesudoss, Drawing teacher of the school. The 50 plus pages of the inside text have the visual support of articulate illustrations by S. Abhirami, a Sevalaya alumnus.

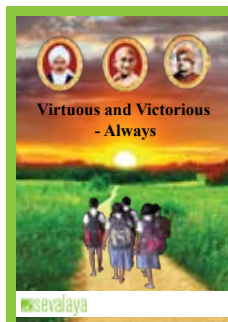
Prizes were distributed to 76 students from various schools who were the winners of various competitions on the lives and works of Sevalaya's trinity viz., Bharathi, Gandhi and Vivekananda, known as BGV in Sevalaya parlance.

(See page 2)



Swamiji appreciated Sevalaya's efforts in bringing out the book on values which he cited as the crying need of the hour.

Authored by Ramesh Gopalaswami, a Trustee of Sevalaya since 2011, the book draws from the lives of Bharati, Gandhi and Vivekananda, the trio who have been shaping and guiding Sevalaya's vision, mission and actions. Even as highlighting the values preached and practiced by these inspirational leaders, each chapter concludes with their applicability in Sevalaya's own experience and offers some advice on how the readers can practice them in their lives.



Both the English and Tamil versions can be downloaded from:
<http://www.sevalaya.org/downloads/>

Seva ratham for village service flagged off

On the same day, Swamiji also inaugurated the Seva Ratham which will travel to 20 villages around Kasuva. The ratham will travel to the villages organizing activities which will benefit the villagers in different areas of health, hygiene and social consciousness.

Spectacles were also distributed free to 200 villagers on the day. The beneficiaries were identified at the free medical camp conducted by Sevalaya in association with Udhi Eye Hospital.

(See page 2)



Joy of giving: the way of life

Dear Friend,
Wish you a very happy Diwali in advance!

Diwali (the festival of Lights), one of the major festivals of India symbolizes the triumph of good over evil.

As the festival approaches, there is a lot of celebration in the air, with people busily planning for the purchase of new clothes, sweets, savories and all the shops are flooded with new and novel varieties of clothes, sweets and of course crackers, to woo the people and make the occasion a memorable one!

As donors and friends of Sevalaya (www.sevalaya.org), we are sure that you have included your extended family of Sevalaya also in the preparation of your Diwali celebrations. This extended family has 2000 poor, destitute village children and 65 poor and destitute grandpas and grandmas.

These children are getting completely free education and doing very well in studies. Many of our students who completed school education have taken up higher studies and many of them are fully supported by Sevalaya. The grandmas and grandpas as well as the residents of the Children's Home which houses orphan and destitute children are given very

good, healthy and nourishing food, proper medical attention, love and affection.

We estimate at least Rs. 1000 as the expense for one person and we need support from all of you to have a great diwali for the 2065 people in the Sevalaya family. We are sure that as in the previous years, we will get your support.

With all your unstinting support the evils of poverty and destitution which plagued

these 2065 residents are being successfully overcome. We invite you to join hands and help us celebrate this victory on the auspicious day of Diwali!

Please do visit Sevalaya campus and join all our children and grandpas and grandmas for a grand Diwali celebration.

Thanks & Regards
Murali

How to make a donation

1. This year take an opportunity to donate via iGIVE page www.giveindia.org/iGive-SupportSevalaya - upto 15th Oct, Give India will match your contribution to Sevalaya! (conditions apply)

2. Cheques in favour of 'Sevalaya', or donations in kind like clothes, crackers, sweets etc., can be sent to our city office at Sevalaya, : F-B1, First floor, Old no 10, new no 24, Keshava Perumal West Street, Mylapore, Chennai – 600 004

3. Or money can be directly transferred to:

For Indian Donors:

Account Name: SEVALAYA

Account No: 218601000134

Bank: ICICI BANK

Branch: Mylapore

IFSC CODE: ICIC0002186

Account Name: SEVALAYA

Account No: 02910100008743

Bank: INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK

Branch: Dr. RK Salai Branch (EE Road Branch), Chennai - 600004

Branch IFSC Code: IOBA0000291

For Overseas Donors:

Account Name : SEVALAYA FCRA A/C

ACCOUNT TYPE: SB

Account NO 408048361

BANK : Indian Bank

BRANCH: DR. R.K.SALAI BRANCH, CHENNAI, 600004

SWIFT CODE: IDIBINBBMAS

BRANCH IFSC CODE IDIB000 D035

(Continued from page 1)



Seva ratham has been visiting villages ever since its flag off by Swami Omkarananda Maharaj Ji on 11th



K.Srinivasan, Puliur Panchayat President receiving the free spectacles on behalf of 200 villagers.

"We have seen only religious ratham so far, but this is the first time ratham is being pulled for the great leaders and with a cause."

M. Thulasi, Thottikalai Village

September 2014. Starting with Pakkam the same day, the ratham is scheduled to visit 20 villages in the vicinity of Kasuva and travel to Thiruninravur and Thiruvallur. In all the villages, the ratham

is received by the villagers with 'aarti', and the village presidents are taking the initiative to organize the activities. The villagers have welcomed the activities and aver that they were apt and useful

Focus on Medical camp, Diabetes screening and organ donation gave an in-depth idea to the people on the importance of health. Topics such as ill effects of tobacco, afforestation, child labour, care for elderly, education and child protection were also seen as very useful and relevant.

Dr. Nithyashree enthralled



In an enchanting programme on 6th September 2014, Dr. Nithyashree Mahadevan, eminent Carnatic musician,

enthralled the audience with choicest songs of Bharatiyar, one of the lasting influences on Sevalaya. The Programme

held at Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan was rightly titled, "Kali Theertha Kavithaigal".

In a brief interlude, Dr. Nithyashree applauded the services of Sevalaya and assured her wholehearted support.

V. Muralidharan, Founder Trustee of Sevalaya welcomed the gathering and thanked the artiste for her noble gesture.



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi's helping hand

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi of Besant Nagar has been a regular supporter of Sevalaya for the past 10 years. The samithi is now donating 90 kgs of nutritious flour every month for the hostel children. Earlier it was 25 kgs and as the need increased they increased their contribution.

Each year they take the students of Sevalaya on "Parthy Yatra", a trip to Puttaparthi the birth place of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The students serve as volunteers in The Ashram Campus for 10 days. The daily schedule at the Ashram, the regular Prayers, the opportunity to interact and serve devotees from all over India and the globe instill a sense of discipline and service in the minds of the students. In response to Sevalaya's appeal for cycles for the children coming to the school from long distances, the Samithi has also donated two cycles and have promised 10 more cycles in the future.

CAMS 'adopts' six sections of Sevalaya



Sevalaya PR receiving the cheque from CAMS

Computer Age Management Services, as part of their CSR activities, are sponsoring the educational expenses of 203 under-privileged students of Sevalaya.



GRT Jewellers sponsoring 11 children's education



GRT Jewellers donated education sponsorship for 11 Children, and the cheque was handed over by G. Rajendran, Chairman, GRT Group to V. Muralidharan of Sevalaya, at the inaugural function of their Poonamallee Showroom on 15th September 2014.

G. Rajendran of GRT Jewellers presenting the Cheque to V. Muralidharan, Founder and Managing Trustee of Sevalaya.

"Sevalaya helped me develop my skills" – S. Mariammal

S. Mariammal, Headmistress - Academics of Mahakavi Bharathiyar Hr. Sec School, Sevalaya, feels it a great honour to occupy the prestigious position, and is proud that she could achieve it in a relatively short span of time in her career! Teachers and students feel at home with her, as Mariammal is always pleasant and concerned about others. She speaks every word with a distinct musical flow and clear diction. Smiling and calm, she is also stern, with a strong determination. From a humble beginning, Mariammal has scripted her own and her family's ongoing progress, through sheer will power and determination!

Opportunity to grow

Mariammal feels very proud that her years with Sevalaya have strengthened her and provided a golden opportunity to grow. She joined in August 1999, as a young girl, fresh out of college, armed with a bachelors Degree in Zoology and B.Ed., After marriage, she continued till her second child's birth and then took a short break of 2 years in 2006, owing to family situation. Then, in 2008, she called up V. Muralidharan asking whether she could join back. She recalls the pleasant reception accorded by him, with an appointment letter to rejoin. With that she was determined to serve 'Sevalaya' her whole life. Encouraged to study further, as all the other staff members in Sevalaya are, she is now an M.A., B.Ed.,

and plans to continue her academic pursuits.

Mariammal's childhood dream was to become a nurse, with teaching the second option. Finally she chose teaching, and is happy for it. She credits her personal growth to her father and Sevalaya. "I was a simple and naïve girl. It was Sevalaya that helped me develop as a skilled person. I am myself amazed at my improvement in computer



S. Mariammal,
Headmistress - Academics

communications and public speaking skills, thanks to opportunities in Sevalaya"

All her pride in Sevalaya's Bharathiyar school notwithstanding, Mariammal did not admit her own children in that school. Her reason for that is admirable. "Thanks to Sevalaya, my living standards have improved and I did not want to

usurp the opportunity of two poor children," she explains.

Mariammal asserts that she has learnt a lot by reading and listening about Bharathiyar, Gandhi and Vivekananda and observing the live role model V. Muralidharan. When she joined Sevalaya, she did not know much about these three great personalities. Every month there would be some examinations, programmes or competitions on these leaders, giving her an opportunity to read books by and on the great leaders. She says, "Whenever Bharthiyar's poetry is recited or enacted, I feel emotionally triggered. A great sensation passes through my nerves!"

Praise in public, feedback in private

She ensures that she never hurts others. When her role mandates any confrontation or pulling up of a staff or teacher, "I do it privately and appreciate them for their achievements in public."

She is happy that she could balance her responsibilities as a dedicated wife and mother at the home front and a strong and capable headmistress in her career.

"I am lucky and I am happy, as I have a lovely family with a wonderful husband and two beautiful children and a highly satisfying career life"

**49% to 89%
in two years**

G. Thenmozhi,
Sevalaya alumnus and M.Sc student

Thenmozhi remembers nothing about her parents or her childhood as she grew up in an orphanage since she was 3 years old. She remembers R. Indira, the care taker, a lot. She has happy thoughts about Indira who took care of her like a mother. She joined Sevalaya Home when she completed X Std. Her elder brother Govindaraj had shifted to Sevalaya already.

The shift to Sevalaya proved life-changing for Thenmozhi. She put behind her



average academic performance till then including 49% marks in SSLC and started focusing on her studies. Her teachers motivated her to discover her full potential. She is particularly grateful to her teachers N. Annapurna and G. Jothi for their persuasion to study well and get good marks. She made remarkable progress and emerged the the School topper in class XII in Sevalaya School scoring 1070 marks (89%).

Thereafter life is on an up swing for her. After completing B.Sc., Bio-tech at VELs University, Thenmozhi is now pursuing M.Sc., Bio-tech at Sri Ramachandra Medical College, Porur. She wants to do research (Ph.D) in Cancer and serve the cancer-afflicted poor. She proudly states, "I owe every step of success and happiness to Murali anna (Founder & Managing Trustee), who is simply 'Great'. He never says 'No' to anything or anybody, especially children. He treats all of us, children of homes and students of the school, as his own family".

Asked about her future plans, she categorically states: "a career of serving people with cancer" and giving back to Sevalaya. Of course she blushes a bit saying, she hopes to get married and lead a family life, too.

Sai Seva Samithi support for Thenmozhi
Sri Satya Sai Seva Samithi, Besant Nagar, is supporting Thenmozhi's education with a scholarship of Rs. 20,000 towards her College fees.

Gandhi Team wins Annual sports championship



Annual Sports Meet at Sevalaya is one massive exercise, what with a total of 14 individual athletic events and seven games for students of Standard VI and above, divided into three groups each for boys and girls. Then there are fun games for the junior classes. With 14 sections for 1,900 children, the competitions are long drawn out, starting in August and building up to the Annual Sports day, this year, on 12th September 2014.

SCOPE International employees volunteered their time and sponsored the conduct of events and prizes. They have been regularly visiting the campus from first week of August and conducting the various sports events including individual athletic events as well as team games such as basket ball, volley ball and handball.

Grouped in three teams, Bharathi, Gandhi and Vivekananda, the children participate



Individual Champions

VI to VIII

R. Saravanan of VIII

R. Sangeetha of VIII

IX to X

S. Nithish of IX

S. Jayanthi of IX

XI to XII

M. Mohan of XI

L. Sandhya of XI

with verve, for individual and team honour. The final score of 242 points got Gandhi team the championship. Vivekananda came second with 240 points, followed by Gandhi team at 184 points.

As always, Sports day was a wonderful experience for the children. On top of the general excitement that is intrinsic to sports, winning and then climbing the winners podium bring unique exhilaration.

Two for State selections

The emphasis for sports at the school level has started yielding results.

R. Saravanan of Std VIII B has been selected by School Game Federation of India (SGFA) to the under-14 Handball team to play in state level handball competition. Saravanan will represent the district at the State selection trials on October 30. His was the lone selection out of the 70 players from Chennai and Tiruvallur district who attended the selection trials.

Saravanan was introduced to hand ball just 2 years back. Handball and volleyball were his favorite games. But the PT master motivated him to focus on handball. Saravanan hopes to do well in the game and get an engineering seat

through sports quota as the means to come up in life. If that does not happen, he will become a PT master.

His role model? Of course, his PT master A. Sankarapandian

M. Narayanan of Standard XI B was picked ed by the Thiruvallur Handball Association to represent Tiruvallur district . He represented the District and played the State championship on 13th and 14th September 2014 at Dindigul.

Narayanan started playing hand ball 4 years back. His main interest was athletics but after trying hand ball he got interested in the game and found the extra energy the game demanded, to his advantage, thanks to his athletics background. His grounding in athletics made handball his passion. He considers his P.T. Master A. Sankarapandian his



R. Saravanan



M. Narayanan

great motivator ever since he entered the sports field. After he completes his XII, Narayanan plans to join B.Com in a college which gives more importance to sports and then work hard to develop into a good handball player.

Sharing his experience, he said "For me representing Sevalaya is a great honor. The school has given me everything and this is the right time for me to show my gratitude to the school".

Thank you, Teachers!



Teachers Day was celebrated on 5th September 2014. Reflecting the belief that Sevalaya's differentiating strength was its staff, all the staff were honoured on that day.

Speaking in the occasion, the Chief Guest, Shyamala Ashok, Executive Director, United Way of Chennai, appreciated the services of Sevalaya, the school in particular, in bringing about a positive change in the lives of the rural, poor, underprivileged children.

The students presented a cultural programme which was much enjoyed by the Chief Guest and the staff.

Vinayagar Chathurthi



Vinayagar Chathurthi was celebrated on 28th August 2014. Dr. J. Prabhakaran, MBBS, DPH, DIH, Deputy Director of Health Services, Thiruvallur, was the Chief Guest. He participated in the Pooja and prasathams were distributed to the children.

Earlier the Doctors from Primary Health Centre, Puliur presented a slide show to create an awareness on Dengue fever- its cause and preventive methods.

Asian Paints CSR team

Two members from the Asian Paints CSR team, Capt. Naveen Kumar and his team, visited campus on 28th August 2014. The team had discussions and conducted inspection in the campus with the vendors of the Solar and Water projects, as part of their CSR activity.

A competition for students - and staff!



A drawing competition was conducted for the students from LKG to XII and the entire staff of the school on 6th September 2014, by the volunteers of SCOPE International. 650 volunteers co-ordinated the event which challenged participants to express various themes through art and imagination.

Over 1900 children of the school and 75 staff participated with utmost interest and 70 students were selected for prizes.

The staff were divided to groups of five and given a theme. Three top groups were selected and prizes given.

Godanam and Gopooja



Gayathri Vaidyanathan, donated a cow and performed Godhanam and Gopooja along with family on the 25th August 2014, in memory of her husband. She

also sponsored the annual maintenance of the cow, a new entrant to the Sevalaya family.

Founder conferred Big Chennaiite award



The city of Chennai celebrated its 375th birthday a few weeks ago, and as part of the celebrations, Big FM, honoured select Chennaiites who are achievers in diverse fields with the Big Chennaiite Award. The awardees were selected on

the basis of voting by the listeners of BIG FM. Chennai's noted historian S Muthaiah presented the Big Chennaiite Award for Social Initiative to Sevalaya's founder and Managing Trustee V Muralidharan.

An honour at DVD release function



V. Muralidharan, Sevalaya's Founder trustee received the first copy of the DVD containing Swami Omkaranananda's lectures on Thirukkural, in Chennai on 14th September 2014.

Mumbai exhibition



Dhanashree Page, India CSR coordinator for Capgemini India Private Ltd. visited the stall of Sevalaya at NGO India 2014 exhibition, organised by UBM India Pvt Ltd at Nehru Centre, Worli, Mumbai.

Kolu at Sevalaya



Navarathri started in Sevalaya on 24th September 2014. The 'Kolu' was kept and children were dressed as Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. Pooja was performed regularly and prasathams were distributed.

"Giving gives me peace"

A Doctorate in Chemistry with 18 years of teaching experience and currently working in KPO, **Dr P. Meera** is a regular volunteer at Sevalaya's Kasuva campus.

How did you get to know about Sevalaya?

I visited sevalaya with a friend of mine a year back. I was inspired by this place and working so decided to volunteer and contribute for the same.

So what is your perspective about sevalaya workings?

Sevalaya is doing exceptionally appreciable work for the society and increasing the feeling of sharing and love. The day I first visited this place I got touched within by the amazing work. It just got settled in my mind about the sharing and serving others. At that particular moment I decided to share and serve others in whichever way I can. I really appreciate the vision of Murali which has deeply inspired me to serve all.

How do you volunteer in Sevalaya?

I think the best way we can serve is by doing something that we really enjoy doing which in my case is education. I love teaching so I decided I will give what I can do the best. I am volunteering here for more than one year and would like to add more. Other than this I spend time with the old-age people here in sevalaya which somehow makes me close to my



mother. She died a few months back, the time before I came to Sevalaya.

How do you manage between your work and volunteering work?

It is not easy to manage between work and volunteerism but the passion now drives me to overcome the challenge. The love and relation that has been now build between me and this place gives me enough potential to manage.

Have you been into social activities before Sevalaya?

Yes, this feeling of sharing was always there inside me. So I was always connected to such activities along my routines. I was teaching the blind people before this work.

What are your future plans?

I want to give my entire life for such work. I want to be a full time social worker. I love living for others this gives me peace.

Mahatma, the Scientist

Gandhiji gave the alternative title, "My Experiments with Truth" to his autobiography. It is very appropriate as it is a narration of his numerous experiments with Truth. His life consisted of nothing but these experiments. He believed what was possible for him was possible for all. As he himself said, his experiments were not conducted in the closet, but in the open. His belief was that if he would narrate them in a dispassionate and humble spirit, many others would be benefitted in their onward march. He has this to say about his experiments:

"I claim for them nothing more than does a scientist who, though conducts his experiments with the utmost accuracy, forethought and minuteness, never claims any finality about his conclusions, but keeps an open mind about them.... I have gone through deep introspection, searched my-

self through and through, and examined every psychological situation. Yet I am far from claiming any finality or infallibility about my conclusions. One claim I do indeed make is this. For me, they appear to be absolutely correct and seem for the time being to be final."

His attempt was not to enunciate academic principles, but to give an account of the various practical applications of these principles. To him, the truth as perceived by him at a specific situation, -the truth of the moment, -was his "beacon, sheath and buckler." This path had saved him from coming to grief in any situation, and he had gone forward according to this light. The narration was due to his deep desire to share his experiments and conviction with others so that those who were keen could benefit. Whatever was possible for him was possible for anybody. The only

requisite was humility-being "humbler than the dust."

He, however cautions that the experiments narrated should be seen as illustrations, and in the light of it everyone may carry on his own experiments according to his inclination and capacity.

He affirms that as a true scientist experimenting with the principle of Truth, he has documented the experiments with absolute fairness not excluding any ugly things that must be on record.

In the coming issues we will be narrating episodes in the life of the Mahatma, giving certain of his life situations, an insight in to his perception, how he faced them and the conclusions derived by him.

This may help some of us to at least inch our way towards "Mahatma-dom"

Readers Right

Letters to the Editor

Thank you for the regular supply of the 'SEVALAYA' monthly newsletter, I wish to

after sunset. When these children are promoted to higher classes the situation worsens as they have to come earlier or stay back for special classes.

A few months back Sevalaya's newsletter carried an appeal requesting funding for cycles, to make commuting easier and safer for Sevalaya's children who cover long distances daily. Many children had been repeatedly asking their class teachers for some help. Sevalaya has great faith in its donors who have always stood by the organization and so it was decided to appeal to them. The results were seen soon enough.

32 children of Sevalaya's school were given cycles by kindhearted donors on



comes from Sembudu village which is nearly 10 kms from the school and the village does not have proper bus facility.

time. Thanks for the school which has given me everything."

The June 2014 issue of the newsletter had highlighted the daily problem of commuting faced by Sevalaya school children living a fair distance away. It triggered immediate responses, with promise of cycles for the children, from many quarters.

Already, for 37 children, commuting has become less strenuous. They are also finding more time for studies and leisure.

congratulate the Editorial Board of the Newsletter for the pictorial presentation of the cycles, particularly in chronological order: "The Appeal, The Response and The Result", is simply superb. Very impressive. Hats off to them.

The services rendered by 'Ratnabhai' is astounding, and the great lady is a 'role model. My Pranams to her.

G. Balasubramanian, Tiruvotriyur

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