



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

JANUARY 2016

Wiping away the flood of tears.. Relief reached to 15,000 flood affected

Sevalaya swung into action in providing relief for the villages ravaged by the unprecedented floods that affected northern districts of Tamilnadu.

For targeted relief, a team of 40, including volunteer from SCOPE international, did a survey in Chennai, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts and collected data of the flood affected. Similar data on Cuddalore was obtained from local NGOs.

Many philanthropists including corporates generously contributed funds and materials for this project. Asian Paints quickly responded with a contribution of over ₹ 10 lacs, CapGemini with ₹ 11.5 lacs and CAMS ₹ 2 lacs,

facilitating immediate relief to about 3300 families in all 4 districts.

Truck loads of materials and volunteers from Coimbatore, Bengaluru and Madurai poured in.

25 Kgs of rice, clothes (for men , women and children), blankets, milk powder, biscuits, bread, bottled water, mosquito coils, candles, sanitary napkins, groceries, Tarpalins, stoves, and common medicines were distributed to nearly 3,300 families.

Donors, volunteers

Volunteers also added muscle power to Sevalaya’s rescue operations. Prof. Santhosh with his 5 students from IIT,

District	No. of Villages	No. of Families	Beneficiaries
Chennai	1	104	416
Kanchipuram	8	695	2,780
Thiruvallur	23	2500	10,000
Cuddalore	4	600	2,400
Total	32	3299	15,596

Suresh Lakshmiopathy, a long standing donor of Sevalaya, friends from Tamil Nadu Sarvodaya Mandal, Madurai, Manoj and friends from Avadi - all of them volunteered their services and joined our staff in organizing and distributing the
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We were impressed by the meticulous survey conducted by the staff, identification of beneficiaries and the orderly way the materials were distributed with no hitches. A very focused work, reaching out to people who really needed support. Prof Santhosh, IIT Madras



Pazhaverkadu



Medical camp at Thannerkulam



Puliyur



Putlur



Explaining how to use milk powder



Meiyur



Kovalam



Materials getting organized Campus



Thirupachur

What struck me most was the meticulous survey done by the staff before we go to give the materials. The staff had even reached out to very remote areas, where I think politicians would never step in, no, not even to get votes. M Manoj Kumar, Volunteer from Avadi

Joy of giving: *the way of life*

Dear Friends,

Wish you all a merry Christmas and happy new year.

2015 was a very bad year for Chennai, Thiruvallur, Kanchipuram and Cuddalore districts in Tamil Nadu. For many, their life has taken the worst turn in this year. Many have lost their houses, their life time savings, and their entire belongings. Added to public misery, rare and old books (many out of print now) on Gandhi which were kept in Gandhi Study centre and many collections on Bharathi at Seeni. Viswanathan's house have all been washed away by floods. These are irreparable losses.

But this brought everyone together and the common man and woman responded with courage and entire world contributed time and money to help the affected people. I was driving through 2 feet water (this was two days after the rains stopped) on Tambaram – Mudichur road to reach the huts on the banks of Manimangalam lake and I saw a group of youth in lungi and no upper cloth, standing in the middle of water and guiding the vehicles "Don't go that way – the road is broken". But

for their warning, I would have driven the car into deep waters, and would have got into trouble. After visiting 250 huts and distributing relief materials, I returned the same way. I was astonished to see the same youth still there – after nearly 5 hours – and dutifully guiding all the vehicles. On other days, I would have mistaken them for beggars. They looked like uneducated unemployed poor youth. Who asked them to stand in two feet water for hours together and direct the vehicles? Are they paid by Government? Do they represent any political party? Do they represent any service organization? Who is their leader? Did they take a break for lunch / Coffee / Tea? Will any newspaper or TV channels give them coverage? Are they going to get any awards for the work they did? They have saved many lives, including mine – but for them our cars would have been washed away! We don't even know their names.

In many villages we went to help the families, there were village leaders like Suresh in Manimangalam, Narayanan in Kovalam who helped us to identify the most affected families and regulated the crowd so that all the people can get what is needed for them. They also told us the names of other villages and

contact persons there so that we can do the distribution in a meaningful way. When we asked them about their families and asked them how we can help them, they said "Thanks a lot for coming to our villages and helping our people. You have already done a lot for our people. We will accept relief material for our families only if something is left over. There are many poorer than us. First let them get what they want".

People from Coimbatore, Bangalore, Madurai, UK, USA and middle east kept calling and asking us what they can do and sent truck loads of material and deposited cash into Sevalaya's accounts. Many corporates like Asian paints, CapGemini, L&T came forward to support Sevalaya's efforts.

Sevalaya is planning to rebuild homes, schools and hospitals in the affected areas. Looks like we will be working on these projects for few more years to come.

Rain has converted everyone into a volunteer and a donor. Let this spirit continue.

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali

Raindropss Change Maker Award



Honouring Sevalaya for the services rendered for the welfare of the needy, the poor and the destitute, Raindropss, a youth-based social organization located in Chennai, presented the Change Maker Award to Sevalaya at a grand function at Rani Seethai Hall on 12th December 2015. Also honoured were 11 other eminent personalities from various walks of life. Sevalaya Muralidharan received



the Award at the hands of Carnatic music legend Dr M Balamuralikrishna in the presence of Dr M S Swaminathan, Agricultural Scientist and father of the Green revolution in India.

An unique Calendar 2016, published by Raindropss, in which all the 12 awardees are featured was also released on the occasion.

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relief materials. Sevalaya alumni also participated in the relief operations.

While these are difficult times even for normal people, the plight of 30 families of visually challenged persons at Kannigapuram village brought tears to the eyes of the volunteers who distributed relief materials in that area.

Kuppammal of Chengalpattu, whose belongings were all washed away was emotional when sarees were distributed to her as she did not have any change of clothes till our team reached there.

Long term rehabilitation

The story is the same everywhere in these villages. The floods washed away not just their huts but their life time savings too. It will take years for them to rebuild their lives. Sevalaya is planning to undertake long term rehabilitation measures to put these lives back on the rails, with the support of philanthropic public as also corporates.

Experience sharing by donors and volunteers

S Vijay, P T R Sriram, S Babu and S Aravind

are Chennaiites working in Bangalore. They were in Chennai when the floods hit. They decided to contribute essential materials to the affected people. They felt that they could not do it on their own, not in a position to make an assessment about the areas that were very much affected and very badly in need of help. It was then Sevalaya came to their mind. They already knew about Sevalaya working for the welfare of the community in Thiruvallur district and decided that the organization, with its manpower will be in a better position to assess the situation and identify the affected areas. "And such was the credibility of Sevalaya, that we were assured that the materials we contribute will reach the really deserving people" says Vijay. They donated a truck load of items like bread, water bottles, Biscuit packets, Milk powder, Blankets and dhothies.

M Manoj Kumar and his friends from Avadi were at Sevalaya every morning for two weeks, assisting the staff to load the trucks and went with them to distribute relief materials in the villages.

When the floods devastated the villages, Manoj felt that he had to do something. "I cannot contribute much financially. So I decided to go out and help the people. I wanted to be associated with a non political organization and it was then I saw the Facebook posts of Sevalaya Murali about the relief work and contacted him. The next morning I went to Sevalaya with my friends.

What struck me most was the meticulous survey did by the staff

"It was a very positive environment...", says **Prof Santhosh** of Humanities Department of IIT Madras "It was a very well planned operation. We were impressed by the meticulous survey

before we go to give the materials. The staff had even reached out to very remote areas, where I think politicians would never step in, no, not even to get votes. Sevalaya ensured that the relief materials reached those who were in dire need. The commitment of the staff members was amazing. They took pride in doing what they did. When I specifically asked a staff about his work at Sevalaya, he replied "At Sevalaya, we do all the work not because we are told to do, but because we feel that it is our responsibility." Sevalaya has created such a sense of belonging and commitment among its staff. Every day I share my experience with my friends. I feel very positively charged now and I have a great sense of fulfillment..." says Manoj.

conducted by the staff, identification of beneficiaries and the orderly way the materials were distributed with no hitches. A very focused work, reaching out to the really needy"

An Engineer-turned-volunteer

When Suresh Lakshmiopathy returned from the US in 2013 after working there for 15 years, he was clear what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. Landing in the US with an M Tech. in Production Engineering from Annamalai University, Suresh had worked with many Fortune 500 companies, the last of which being Deloitte, in supply chain re engineering and procurement. "Having experienced all the trappings of life, and being caught in the corporate life cycle, I was determined to do something more meaningful. It was time to give back to society, by associating with people already doing good things, as I did not want to reinvent the wheel" explains Suresh.

After prospecting the NGO sector for a few months Suresh identified the organic movement (food, clothing, environmental), to counter the damage wreaked by genetically Modified (GM) seeds. Along with a dozen likeminded friends, Suresh became an investor and a volunteer in Tula, an NGO that promotes and deals exclusively with organic cotton garments, that is ecologically light and sustainable. Besides helping sustain traditional livelihood occupations, the choice was based on the realization that cotton has disproportionately the highest

pesticide consumption, among all the crops grown by man (about 55%). The group also noted the contributory role of GM crops in farmer suicides. Apart from Tula, he is also involved in popularizing organic produce and green habits (Volunteering with Organic Farmers



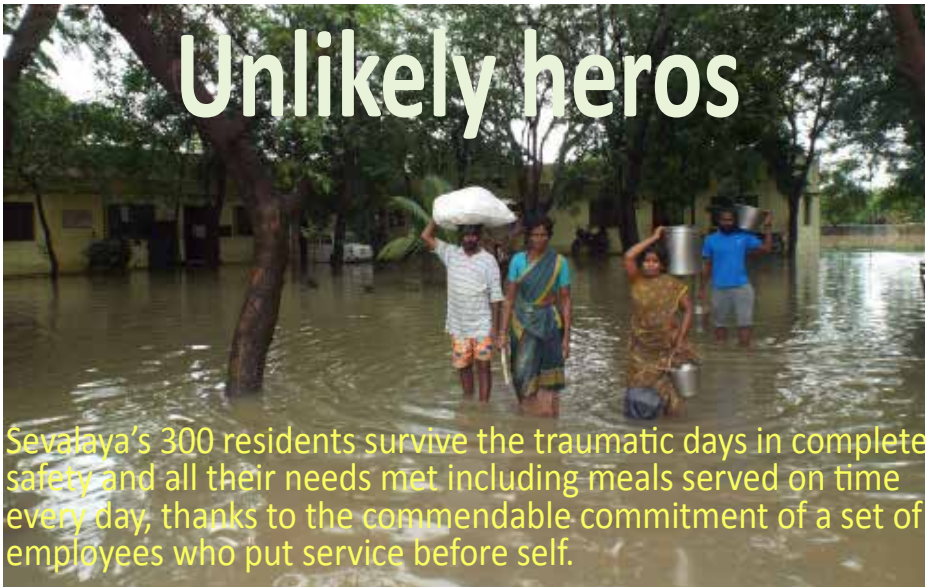
Market OFM), and taking the produce from the farmer to the consumer, resulting in better prices for the farmer and reasonable costs for the consumers.

Suresh was introduced to Sevalaya by a friend in 2005. In 2007, he raised around \$5000 by organizing a small fund raiser in the US. Since then every time he visited India he would visit Sevalaya and sponsor lunches to celebrate the birthdays of the members of his family. He has also been persuading friends to support. "This is a good place, so transparent and professionally run", says Suresh.

Suresh's visits to the Kasuva campus this year have been special. He was a volunteer at a Sevalaya relief camp at Mannivakkam near Tambaram, for around 100 families around a lake. Suresh was involved in the entire day's operations, starting with loading materials at the Campus. Sevalaya had done their homework through honest local people, to identify the needy. Materials went to the really deserving. "I liked the orderly, polite and patient ways of the Sevalaya employees (D Prathap, A Kumaresan, R Kannan and P Muruganandam). People also cooperated. This goes to show that even in times of crises, a bit of planning can go a long way". In contrast, Suresh was pained to see redundancies in relief operations and the waste generated by use of plastic bottles and packaging: "We saw seven truck loads of cooked food materials in that area within 5 hours".

On the next step, says Suresh: "Sevalaya is planning for long term rehabilitation of the affected people. I am in the midst of raising funds in the US and here in India. I hope Sevalaya uses sustainable materials in building houses, ties up with other NGO on community education to reduce plastic waste so we don't end up clogging our waterways again".

Unlikely heros



Sevalaya's 300 residents survive the traumatic days in complete safety and all their needs met including meals served on time every day, thanks to the commendable commitment of a set of employees who put service before self.

By the time November turned to December, much of Sevalaya's Kasuva campus had turned into a vast sheet of water up to 4 feet deep in some places. Water came without warning and cut off the dwelling units: boys hostel and girls hostel, that houses 200 children, Integrated Campus that houses 65 elders, Medical Center which had 10 elders, the Dining Hall and the Gaushala, which now has 50 heads of cattle. That all the residents survived the traumatic days in complete safety and all their needs were met, including meals served on time every day, is a moving testimony to the

"Water was at knee level in the kitchen and I could not do my regular job of cutting vegetables since I couldn't get out of my room. But the kitchen functioned without any break and all of them were served breakfast, lunch and dinner on time she recalls. There were no power supply and water supply for one and half days. But everything was served inside the room including hot water for all".

T Logambal

commendable commitment of a set of employees who put service before self.

Serving food for 200 resident children, 75 elders and over 20 employees, Sevalaya kitchen is the central motor of the campus. The day the floods hit the campus, S Srinivasan, the head cook had a crisis at home: his daughter's family had taken refuge at his independent home when floods inundated his colony. Thanks to a boat arranged by the local councillor, Srinivasan's now extended family managed to shift to his brother's house. Having missed the first day, Srinivasan has been hitching rides to travel the 12 kms to Sevalaya.

The challenge of managing the first day without the leader fell on seven kitchen employees. First to face the brunt were S Bhuvanewari and J Lakshmi, both hostel residents. They realized something was amiss when they saw plastic buckets and mugs floating from the bath rooms. As water rose, the girls were forced to spend the night sitting on cots. By morning, A A Kingston, Campus Head, PT Master A

Sankarapandian and Primary School Head master M T Anand arrived and the girls were shifted to the Community College with a higher floor height. This daunting task was managed by older girls and wardens carrying the smaller children, wading through water, waist high at some spots. Later they went back to the hostel to retrieve essential personal items.

Drinking water a challenge

Even as the shifting was going on, cooking had to start. So Bhuvanewari and Lakshmi moved into the kitchen and decided they will make Upma. "That day and every day thereafter, we served all food on time and without anyone complaining", says Bhuvanewari, whose 6-year old daughter Sanjana is also a

"I felt frightened when water surrounded our Home. I did not sleep that night and was holding a torch and keeping watch. The care takers had placed a row of bricks outside the room to prevent water from entering. That gave me some peace of mind " says **B Mahalakshmi**, Old age home resident. Her most frightening moment: when the water level rose suddenly when the elders came out from the dining hall.

resident. Provisions were running low for two reasons. Firstly, it was end of the month. In addition, with rains ruling for some time, donations and supplies were less than usual. The toughest challenge was finding water for drinking and cooking. With power shut down, water stored at the hostels and gaushala had to be fetched in pots, which was managed with help from the wardens and the bigger children. The water was boiled and given for drinking. "The roads were inundated, so we could not get drinking water from outside. So the resident kitchen staff had to bring water from



Left: The kitchen staff. Above: Helping an elderly resident.



Above, frantic action, draining water from Gaushala. Right, the Gaushala team

the rain water harvesting tank from boys hostel and the girls hostel in spite of the rains outside”, clarifies S Vignesh, one of the boys hostel wardens.

Soon the 5 non-resident staff arrived. Each had a story to tell, of the havoc at home, of leaving their families including children on traumatic days, and travelling to Sevalaya at great personal discomfort and some risk. But, when asked why they chose to come to work, their answer is the same: “For the sake of the children and the *thathas* and *pattis* (grandpas and grandmas). How would they survive without us?” M Nathiya, one of the

“I had asthmatic attack in the night. Even in the floods the nurse came and attended to me. I cannot imagine what would have happened otherwise. So many people rich could not get anything and some even starved. But here we got everything and 100 % we felt secure.”

A K Perumal, a resident senior citizen

major contributors in the kitchen for the past three years, said that she and her husband were clear that she would come to work. She managed the 8 kms distance by cycle. K Datchayani, also with Sevalaya for three years, travelled 8 kms by cycle, at many places wading through water and pushing the cycle. “My husband and my daughter told me not to go, but my son studying in Sevalaya told me, “mother, you must go.” I felt I had to come for the residents’ sake.” M Bhuvanewari made it from her house 4 km away by cycle, taking some risk with a narrow path and ditches on either side. With her mother-in-law taking care of her two children and her husband fully aware of her work in Sevalaya, she had no hesitation. Her

In hierarchical terms, the kitchen and gaushala staff are at the bottom of the pyramid, and least educated, but through their large-hearted actions they showed how compassion persuades people to go beyond the call of duty and makes heroes out of ordinary people.



colleague Kollapuri had it relatively easy, walking from home 2 kms away. Water reached her door step but did not enter the house.

The kitchen team’s day routinely starts early at 4 am on days Idlies and dosas are served. Coffee is served at 6:30 am and breakfast at 8:30 am. With the Dining Hall approach flooded, food had to be served at the dwelling places. Filling food in vessels and buckets and wading through water was not easy, but it had to be done. The maximum flooding was near the Integrated Centre where food was served with PT Master V Nithyanandam, a six footer, volunteering. As nonresident Bhuvana says, “When the *thathas* and *pattis* said from their heart, “*Thank you for coming, for our sake*”, it made all the struggle worth it”. “We consider ourselves a family. All of us think like that”, says Nathiya.

16 year old S Yogesh, a resident of Sevalaya for the past 10 years, says: “I have seen water coming inside the campus when I was small but this time it was heavy. But still we did not face any problem. Our caretakers managed things well and we were served hot food by our kitchen *akkas*. We thank them for that”.

Sujatha Mohan, a senior citizen who was almost in tears when she started to thank the staff who served them hot tea in the pouring rains. “There was no delay and

“This rain did not affect me at all. The only difference was that we did not go to dining hall but everything came to our room. Our care takers asked us not to come out of the room and everything was taken care of.”

G Velu of std IV

the food was served on time”.

Cows safe

It is P Krishnan’s habit to wake up at 3:00 am. On the night of December 2nd,

“ I have never seen water like this. Though excited, I was also worried whether water would enter our room. I prayed to God. Walking in water caused sores on our feet. One day a small snake entered my room. In spite of water everywhere we were very happy that we did not miss anything”.

M Gopi of std XI

Krishnan, one of the 4 resident staff attached to the gaushala found water entering the premises. By morning, water was two feet deep. Krishnan and the gaushala staff first shifted the calves to higher platforms. Half meter high temporary walls were built on either sides of the gaushala and the water was pumped out, to give the cattle a dry floor. Head of Gaushala, A Jacob is all praise for his team, which includes a nonresident: K Latha, who managed to come on all days by share autos for ₹ 10 for the 2 km ride to Sevalaya. Jacob overcame his own personal challenge at home, to attend to work through the flooded days. Water entered his house in the morning of December 3rd. He shifted his mother to a neighbour’s house and took his wife, son and daughter to his sister-in-law’s house some 5 kms away. Then he went back to his house to check the damage. The villagers had by then cut a channel for water to drain off. After drying his house floor and walls, Jacob made it to Sevalaya by a round-about alternative route, after a 25 km ride.

Bharathiyar birth anniversary celebrations

“Discipline and Education pave wave for the success.” was the message shared by M S Syed Rawoof, District Probation Officer, Thiruvallur, during the Bharathiyar birth anniversary celebrations on 13th December 2015.

Prizes were distributed by the Chief Guest to the State level toppers of the open book exam on Bharathiyar conducted by Sevalaya in November, for the schools and prisons in Tamil Nadu. There was a good response from schools and 20 students from Vellore, Thiruppur, Chennai, Thiruvallur, Villupuram, and Cuddalore were among the toppers.

Over the years the children in Sevalaya’s Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School have inculcated values through the sayings of the great leaders Gandhiji,



Vivekananda and Bharathiyar. To spread the message among all students and youth, State Level open book examinations on the lives and works of

the 3 great leaders are conducted by Sevalaya, for all the schools, colleges and prisons in Tamil Nadu, every year .

Rajaji day celebration at Sevalaya



“The two terms Rajaji served as Chief Minister- 18 months in the first term during pre Independence era and 2 years during 1952 to 1954, were marked by the introduction of farsighted legislations – Prohibition during the first term which highlighted his concern for the **Boys’ hostel gets a new look**

welfare of the people, and introduction of Sales Tax in the second term, which till date is a major source of income for the States” said R Venkatesh, Executive Editor of popular Tamil weekly, Kalki who was the Chief Guest at Rajaji’s 137th birth anniversary celebrations on **Haworth’s career awareness session**

12th December 2015, at Sevalaya. The Chief Guest spoke about how Rajaji was a multifaceted personality – a shrewd politician, statesman, writer, lawyer and a great thinker. He mentioned in his speech about the stories Rajaji wrote for children in Kalki magazine and said that Rajaji’s masterpiece – Ramayana (*Chakravarthi Thirumagan*) and Mahabharata (*Vyasara Virundhu*) in simple, lucid Tamil, are both an ideal starting point for those who wish to study the two great epics.

Admirers of Rajaji, R Raghunathan, Prof. N R Ramanathan and their friends participated in the celebrations and narrated interesting anecdotes from the life of Rajaji, which highlighted the great leader’s honesty, discipline, courage, concern for the people, steadfastness in his principles, farsightedness and sense of humour.



Rotarian Vinay Kumar Apte of Rotary club of Madras, Vadapalani sponsored the new flooring and windows in our Swami Vivekananda Boy’s Hostel. Now, the hostel sports a new look and there is no water logging at the entrance.



As a part of their CSR Day Programme, Haworth India Pvt. Ltd, organised a career counselling for 400 students, on 28th Nov 2015. The session was conducted by B S Karthikeyan, Managing Director, Falcon Educational Consultant P Ltd.

Pfizer ‘Rice bucket challenge’



Tom Ludke, Vice-President, Operations, Pfizer Ltd, visited Sevalaya, for participation in CSR day. He inaugurated ‘Rice bucket challenge’ and donated 500 kg rice to Sevalaya’s kitchen.

Manikandan's Turning Point

A course in AC Refrigeration at Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Community College has proved a turning point for P T Manikandan.

Hailing from Vellathukotai village in Thiruvallur district, Manikandan lost his father P Thiruvengadam four years back. He lives with his mother T Kumari, who is an agricultural labourer and his sister Lakshmi. On completing his std X in 2009, he did ITI course in welding. After that he worked in various organizations including Nokia and Hindustan Lever as temporary



worker. Then he heard about the Sevalaya community college through his sister who did her beautician course at the Community College and is now working from home. Manikandan realized that his interest was in A/C and Refrigeration

and hence he decided to join that course in June 2014. He was very much excited to do the course, since he got very good exposure to this field. He was sent for training in Enmac System in Guindy where he was trained well in A/C and Refrigeration. After completion of this course he is now placed in RR Service Centre in Pattabiram, just 40 kms from his home. He earns ₹ 8000 which he says is very much sufficient for his family.

Looking back on his time at the Community College, his happy memories include four aspects that benefited him: Yoga, Prayer with good thoughts, Physical education and lunch. Manikandan feels proud to have studied under his lecturer R Gopinath whose principle, "Safety first and Work next" has been a great lesson and guiding principle for Manikandan in his work place.

Diwali Dhamaka at London



Harrow Desis, an organisation of Indian expats in London , celebrated their seventh anniversary and Diwali celebrations in aid of Sevalaya on 31st October 2015 at Harrow High School, London. The event was designed meticulously and catered to the different age groups of people who were present. The event commenced with a traditional instrumental invocation followed by Bharathanatyam recital. The young girls and boys of Harrow Desis captivated the audience with a free style dance, a song and a play based on cricket. The



gorgeous Mums adorned themselves in attractive vegetables and walked on the ramp to stress the good effects of adding vegetables in one's diet. The event drew to a close with foot tapping Hindi melodies by the talented singers of Harrow Desis and the audience grooved to the scintillating music. The founder Sujatha Renganathan thanked the sponsors for their support and cited the various activities of Sevalaya with which Harrow Desis are proud to be associated with. It was truly a memorable and fun filled evening.

Bharathi Pasarai competition



Over 300 students from 30 schools participated in the oratorical, essay, song and drawing competition conducted by Thiruvottiyur Bharathi Pasarai on 28th November 2015, in commemoration of Bharathiyar birth anniversary.

Of the two students from Sevalaya who participated in these events, R Vijayaraghavan of Std IX won the first prize in the oratorical competition.

The organizers also presented English dictionaries and participation certificates to all the participants.

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Everybody according to his faith

Gandhiji was at Bombay. His son Manilal had a severe attack of typhoid combined with pneumonia and delirium at nights. The doctor prescribed some medicines, but warned that the medicines by themselves will not be of much help, and eggs and chicken broth may be of benefit. Gandhiji told the doctor that being a vegetarian he could not agree to give either of these things. He requested the doctor to suggest an alternative course. The doctor was firm and told that the son's life was in danger. To Gandhiji's mind it was in such trying circumstances that a man's faith was truly tested. He had to be prepared to take the risk the doctor suggested. He decided to try hydropathic treatment in which he had faith. Even though the child could not decide matters on his own and Gandhiji, as the parent had to make the decision, he thought it proper to inform

him and seek his opinion. "Do try your hydropathic treatment. I will not have eggs or chicken broth" was the child's reply. Gandhiji gave Manilal hip baths, never keeping him in the tub for more than three minutes, and kept him on orange juice mixed with water for three days. But the temperature persisted. It went up to 104 degrees. At nights he became delirious.

Gandhiji was haunted by alternating thoughts of self doubt and unshakeable faith in the Lord. Torn between these conflicting thoughts, he gave a wet pack to Manilal keeping only his head out, and then covered him with two blankets. To the head he applied a wet towel. The whole body was burning like hot iron, but there was no perspiration.

Gandhiji was sorely tired. Leaving the child to the care of the mother, he went

out for a walk on Chaupati to refresh himself. It was about ten o'clock in the night. With Ramanama on his lips, he prayed, " My honour is in Thy keeping, oh Lord, in this hour of trial "

On returning to house, Gandhiji saw Manilal asking him to take him out as he was feeling like burning .His forehead was covered with beads of perspiration. The temperature was going down. Soon the perspiration streamed down his forehead. Gandhiji undid the pack and dried his body. Father and son fell asleep in the same bed.

Gandhiji concludes: "Who can say whether his recovery was due to God's grace, or to hydropathy, or to careful dietary and nursing? Let everyone decide according to his own faith. For my part I was sure that God saved my honour, and this belief remains unaltered to this day."

Road safety programme

Sevalaya children were among the participants from 12 schools at the Road Safety programme conducted by Shell Business Corporation at T N Rajarathinam Pillai Muthamizh Peravai Hall, Adyar on 28th November 2015. Many competitions such as Essay Writing, Slogan Writing and Skits based on the theme of Road safety were conducted. Sevalaya students won prizes at all the events.



Dakshinachitra visit



25 students of Std VIII participated in the Kanavu Pattarai workshop – a 4 day residential camp at at Dakshinachitra from 12th to 15th October 2015. The camp was organized by Nalanda Way Foundation, a non-profit that works with children from the poorest districts. The focus of the camp was instilling self esteem and a sense of belonging in children, by providing opportunities to engage in various forms of arts through guided exploration, several interactive, inspiring and fun sessions. The children learnt the art of making face masks, wrote songs on Sevalaya and set music for the same and created a banner. They also participated in a debate on the problems faced by the students in the society. All these were new experiences for them and they were very thrilled and excited.

Reader's Right

I went through December issue and as usual (!!) it had a lot of amazing news. Murali had spoken about P S High School, I recall my own school in Kumbakonam which Appu Sastriar started with his own money and called it The Native High School in the defiant spirit of Swadesi. I paid ₹ 5 as the fees in my sixth standard. I do not think even if someone pays ₹ 1 Lakh today, he would get the type of teaching I received. No wonder the school produced the likes of Dr M S Swaminathan, the agricultural

wizard who introduced green revolution in our country.

I was very happy that Sevalaya could save Krishnan from the fury of the floods. This is exactly in line with what Murali used to tell when people were making Disaster Recovery (also called Business Continuity) plans in TCS. "When the whole town is affected, would you bother about your client and his transaction or the lives of your own brethren?". It is a striking fact that probably only people who had undergone suffering would understand what it means. For others, it is of academic interest.

Great issue!! Enjoyed!!

C P Chandrasekaran, Pune

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Send your comments to: City Office : Sevalaya, Old no 10, New no 24, Kesava Perumal West Street, Mylapore, Chennai-600 004, Tamil Nadu, India.

Phone: 7299064457, 9444333529, (044) 24950204

E.mail : sevalayaprhead@sevalaya.org, sevalayakasuva@sevalaya.org www.sevalaya.org

Editor

T S Venkataramani

Correspondents

Kingston A A, Radha Srinivasan, Vijaya R, Anupriya Suresh, Manoharan S, Rekha Perumal, Sowrirajan R

Design

Thomas T Abraham