



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

FEBRUARY 2017

Sevalaya Athletes win big at District Athletics



Front Row L to R : R Archana, S Amsa, V Kiruba, D Divya, R Punitha, R Sowmiya

Top Row L to R : D Avinesh, V Deepak, K Akash, V Surendar, R Haribabu, S Dhanush Raj, R Dinesh, S Sivaraj

Sevalaya students won 6 gold medals, 3 silver medals, and 8 bronze medals in the Thiruvallur Educational District Athletics competition (World beaters talent spotting scheme 2016-2017) held at the Thiruvallur SDAT stadium on 19th

January 2017. Ten students from Sevalaya were selected to the Regional (Thiruvallur, Chennai and Kancheepuram) level competitions. The prizes were distributed by the Chief Guest, A Mohan, Secretary, Thiruvallur Athletics Association. More

| Name | Class | Event | Results |
|-------------|--------|---------------------|---------|
| Archana R | VIII C | Long Jump and 200 m | Gold |
| Punitha R | VIII B | 400 m | Gold |
| Dinesh R | VIII D | 200 m | Gold |
| Sivaraj S | VIII A | High Jump | Gold |
| Haribabu R | VII C | Long Jump | Gold |
| Avinesh D | VIII C | Shot put | Silver |
| Sowmiya R | VI B | High Jump | Silver |
| Kiruba V | VI C | 100 m | Silver |
| Dhanush Raj | VIII D | Long Jump | Bronze |
| Deepak V | VII A | Long Jump and 200 m | Bronze |
| Surendar V | VII D | 400 m | Bronze |
| Amsa S | VII B | High Jump | Bronze |
| Akash K | VI C | Long Jump and 400 m | Bronze |
| Divya D | VI A | High Jump | Bronze |

State medal for Archana



At the state level competition “Khelo India 2016-2017” conducted by Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, R Archana of Sevalaya representing Thiruvallur district athletics team won the Silver medal in the 4 x 100 relay race held in SDAT grounds, Thiruvannamalai on 13th January 2017.

than 600 students from 25 schools from Thiruvallur district participated in the event.

Lionbridge Technologies Ltd., sponsors the athletes of Sevalaya.

V Kiruba is an orphan and is a resident in Sevalaya hostel. She is an avid athlete and never misses her training both in the morning and evening. She is dedicated and passionate about track events, and has all the markings of a great athlete, says her PT master M Nithyanandam.

R Dinesh, is also a resident of the hostel, after his father passed away. His mother is a daily wage earner. He has been making waves in the inter-district competitions and has a bright future, according to Nithyanandam. He takes his practice seriously, and is always ready to run!

Both these athletes have been chosen to represent at the regional level.

Joy of giving: the way of life

Dear Friends,

Mahadevan of Hot breads is known to Sevalaya for many years. He is an 'innovative donor'. During the 'Joy of Giving' Week (first week of October), he organizes an event called 'Battle of Buffet'. He spends for all arrangements like fixing the venue, getting Chennai's top five star hotels to contribute food, getting top performers to sing and dance etc. All advertisements, logistics, everything will be taken care of by Mahadevan. The NGOs will get printed tickets which they will have to sell and take 100% of the money. We have organized many fund raising programs and in many cases at the end of the program the collected amount will be less than the total expense, resulting in a loss. Also the time spent in organizing is too expensive. In NGOs, as we have very little staff, the same people will be running around to organize everything and also sell the tickets, which will cause a lot of confusion. But in case of Battle of Buffet, everything is presented to us on a golden

platter and our only job will be to sell the tickets. No organizing expense, as we get the 100% of ticket amount to the NGO, thanks to Mahadevan.

He has come up with a new initiative for supporting NGOs and also ladies affected by domestic violence – burn survivors- in one go- the 'Writers' Cafe'. Writers' cafe is located on Peters road, very close to Mount Road junction. Good continental food is served here and many books are on display. People can walk in, have food and read books. Organizations can reserve the place and have book review meetings. Most of the employees in this cafe are ladies who are severe burn victims. They should have undergone terrible times. To get them together and offer them job is like giving them new life and new hope.

In addition to this, there is a discussion room reserved for NGOs. Many NGOs don't have their own place and if they want to have a discussion, they have to look for some calm and quite area and

mostly will have to spend from out of their small budgets. But Mahadevan has offered this discussion room free of cost to NGOs. Sevalaya had the good fortune to be the first to make use of this facility to discuss our annual plan for the year 2017-18.

Mahadevan also prepares huge cakes and donates to NGOs. NGOs can sell and take the money for their projects. He has also set up bakery units in prisons and also in collaboration with NGOs. A Bakery at Sevalaya is getting ready and will start production very soon. Already two of our staff members are undergoing training under one of Mahadevan's Bakery 'Winners Bakery'.

Sevalaya will specialize in pure vegetarian bakery items and once production starts, we will be able to collect some donations via bakery products. Hope we will have your support, as we have had for other projects of Sevalaya.

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali

Mahakavi Bharathi and Swami Vivekananda fervently remembered



L to R : Sevalaya Murali, Shri Tiruppur Krishnan, Editor, Amudhasurabhi, Shri La Ganesan MP, with the State level toppers of the Mahakavi Bharathi and Swami Vivekananda open book exam

Shri La Ganesan was the Chief Guest for the combined Bharathi and Vivekananda day held at the campus on 9th January 2017. In his special address to the students, he dwelt at length about India's glorious past, duties of the children towards their parents, and to the motherland. He drew several anecdotes from our mythologies, analogies and stories to elucidate the same. He and Shri Tiruppur Krishnan, Editor, Amudhasurabhi, gave away prizes to the 25 students who won the state level competition conducted on the life and times of Swami Vivekananda and Mahakavi Bharathiyar. Shri Tiruppur Krishnan spoke about the great qualities of Mahakavi Bharathiyar who as a visionary fought for women's rights in early twentieth century.

Rajaji – the elder statesman fondly remembered

Rajaji Day was celebrated in Sevalaya campus in a grand manner, at Kasuva, on 5th January 2017. Kavikko Gnanaselvan, a Tamil Scholar, who participated as the Chief Guest said "Rajaji adorned several high positions in India, both during British Rule and after Independence. He was known for his sagacity and wisdom while performing the roles in the Government and enactment of laws, his farsightedness in the matters that concern the nation,



Sevalaya Murali; Shri Sankaran; Dr N R Ramanathan; Kavikko Gnanaselvan, a Tamil Scholar; Shri K R Krishnan; Shri R Raghunathan; Shri R T Namachivayam; Amarchand Jain

concern to the poor are all the hallmark of his great qualities. His astute prescription to the problems is to be mentioned. He introduced Sales Tax and it proved to be the main source of revenue for the state's expenditure.

The Chief Guest distributed prizes to the winners of the state level exams conducted on the life of Rajaji. He also explained to the children the greatness of Tamil language.

Cyclone Vardah gifts volunteer Dean “a new lifetime experience”



Top : Dean with Sevalaya children

Right : From Dean's Sevalaya Album

Dean Forbes landed in Chennai and reached Sevalaya's Kasuva campus the very day Cyclone Vardah arrived with gale force of 140 km and left behind a trail of destruction and devastation. For a westerner used to comforts, living without Wi-Fi, Internet, AC and fan for a couple of days was an unforgettable experience. The first night in the off-city setting wasn't easy. "It was so dark, and the mosquitoes kept me company". The next morning, Dean was shocked to see the extent of damage. "I felt bad for Sevalaya that they lost so many trees".

However, an even more lasting memory for Dean is the way Sevalaya responded to the tragedy. "The clean-up started immediately. Sevalaya is very well



organised. I was highly impressed by how quickly the staff went to work. They didn't wait for the government or any outsiders to come and help". On balance, he is happy for his difficult experience which "created an appreciation of what people go through".

Dean has been making his almost annual volunteering trips to India since 2010, visiting NGOs to do documentary photography. In charge of media relations in the Marketing Communications

department of Seattle University, USA, Dean is happy to combine service with travel. "As a volunteer, you get to see what a tourist never gets to see: small villages and people up close". Dean selected Sevalaya "because of the large variety of services seen on the Sevalaya website". And he wasn't disappointed, putting to use his photography skills to document them. He was also privileged to plant the first tree as part of Sevalaya's tree replacement drive.

Students take out smokeless Bhogi rally



Smokeless Bhogi rally being flagged off by the Chief Guest M Thanikachalam, Asst. Elementary Education officer, Thiruvallur Dist

1000 students from New College, Chennai, and four schools – Amutha High secondary school, Angel Matriculation School, Pakkam High school, Vivekananda School, Dasar Higher secondary school and Sevalaya Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher secondary school participated in a rally in Pakkam and Puliur village spreading the message of smokeless Bhogi.

The rally was marked by thematic slogans explaining the hazards to environment

and health. The villagers appreciated the initiative and the persistent efforts of Sevalaya, to shun the concept of burning things during Bhogi. The village Panchayats of both Pakkam and Puliur served refreshments to the participants. M Thanikachalam, Asst. Elementary Education Officer, Thiruvallur district, flagging off the rally, asserted "Only children could bring the desired changes, by taking the message to their parents first."

Snapdeal Sunshine brings cheers & colours to Sevalaya



Montessori children enjoying the party supplies donated by Snapdeal

Sevalaya children received as gifts celebration packs comprising of balloons, decoration material, party caps, Frisbee, pencil boxes and 2000 crayons, donated by Snapdeal, an Indian E-commerce company. The company donated these materials to NGOs during Christmas and New Year. The children enjoyed the gifts and many were seen drawing and colouring with the crayons with great zeal. Thank you Snapdeal, for brightening the lives of the children.

Lilly Prasad, Managing Director, BNY Mellon remembered Bhuvaneshwari Muralidharan, her colleague during the UTI days way back in 1989, and Sevalaya, when BNY Mellon planned a Women's Symposium on the topic - Purposeful Life-Living and following your Dreams as a part of their 10th anniversary celebrations in December 2014. Bhuvaneshwari Muralidharan was invited to be a Panel member of the discussion. It was the first meeting between BNY Mellon and Sevalaya and a fruitful partnership blossomed then. BNY Mellon officials visited Sevalaya campus and found that Sevalaya was a right fit for many of their CSR activities.

BNY Mellon chose the areas of Health, Education and Volunteering as their CSR Projects.

BNY Mellon volunteers had visited Sevalaya almost every weekend in 2016. The sheer breadth of activities performed by the volunteers is staggering. It includes Library book data entry, creative classroom activities for students in primary school and hostel students, wall painting activities, teaching accountancy



Cheerful Montessori students and volunteers peer through a handmade 'photo frame'

BNY Mellon's round the year support

BNY Mellon's round-the-year support encompasses multiple spheres. Add to it the enthusiastic week end visits by its employees.



Arts and craft activity with primary school students

Heartiest congratulations to Sevalaya for the selfless work rendered over the past 28 years. The commitment and dedication with which this organization serves the rural poor is commendable and we are proud to partner with Sevalaya in improving the quality of life in Thiruvallur District. All the very best to Murali and his team.

Dinesh Deo, CEO, BNY Mellon



"We don't have enough money to reach a private hospital, our only destination is GH. It takes lots of time to see the doctor because of big crowd in GH. Thanks to Sevalaya camp we all got treated for our general problems. We request you to visit our village often.

Subbammal, Nelvoyal village



Higher Education for Alumni

Sponsorship of higher education to 36 alumni in various colleges ranging from Engineering to Commerce and accountancy



Mobile Medical Van

Mobile medical van, operational since July 2016, serves the local rural community- on an average 40 villages a month



Nursing Assistant Course

Sponsored the Nursing assistant course at the Mahakavi Bharathiyar Community College





Creative learning activity with Montessori students

classes for Std. XI students, fruit tree plantation at school and Student homes, conducting summer camps, imparting value based education for students, among other things. Till December 31, 2016, BNY Mellon volunteers were in Sevalaya campus for 34 weekends. It certainly looks as though they made Sevalaya their second home!

Wall painting and drawing

More than 175 volunteers participated in painting the school class rooms. They painted the classrooms with equations and formulae for students in higher classes (Std VI to Std XI), and pictures of animals, alphabets and numbers for Montessori and primary school children. Since all the painting activity happened

over the weekend, the smile and the excitement in the student's faces when they came into the brightly coloured class on Monday was a joy to see!

Fruit tree plantation

Varieties of fruit trees were planted by 124 volunteers, from early April to October 2016. They took a lot of effort to dig holes, plant the saplings, and water them. They planted more than 300 saplings in and around the campus. The volunteers were clearly passionate about the environment and their commitment to conserve the ecosystem.

Clearing post Vardah debris

As Sevalaya was reeling after the onslaught of Cyclone Vardah, the first call for physical help came from BNY Mellon. 34 volunteers from the company came the same weekend to help in clearing out the fallen trees and debris. It was due to their presence that weekend that Sevalaya staff got a breather from the nonstop work after the cyclone. The place bore some semblance to the old Sevalaya, though thousands of birds left Sevalaya and sought sanctuary in other places, due to all the felled trees.



Volunteer brightening up a classroom with vivid painting



A swarm of volunteers descended on campus to clear the debris, after the fury of Cyclone Vardah

Nursing Lab equipment

Sponsoring the training equipment in the Nursing Lab



Reconstructing Basketball court

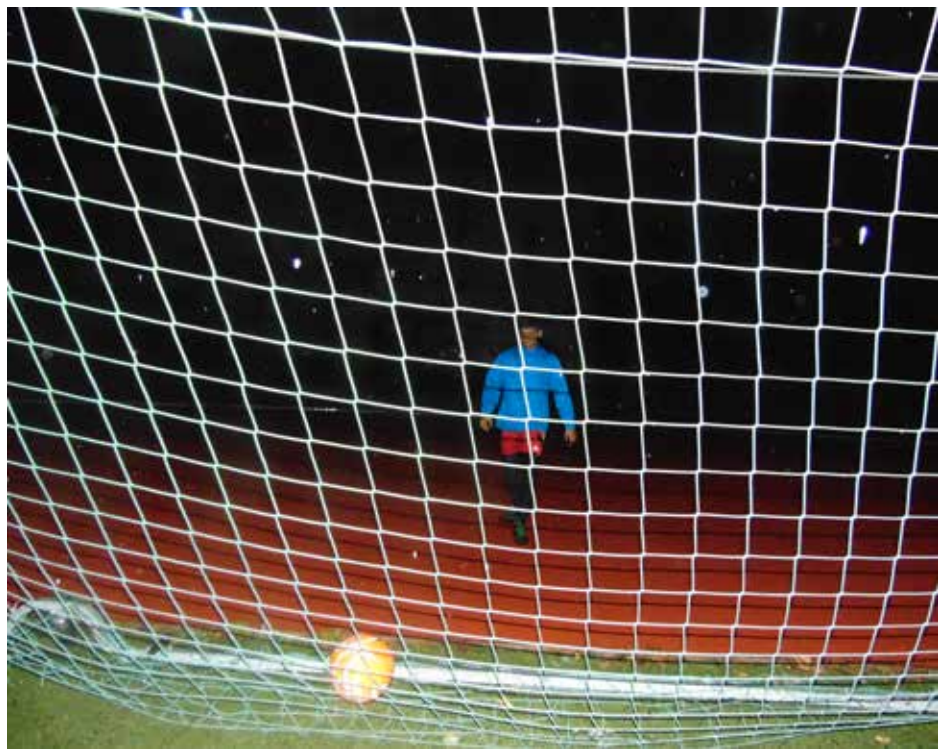
Joining hands with Shell India Pvt Ltd to reconstruct the Basketball court to International dimensions



Homes for flood victims

Sponsoring the construction of three homes to victims affected by the 2015 Chennai floods





Silambarasan Devaraj : goal-bound

Sevalaya Alumnus Silambarasan Devaraj follows his dream, to become a football coach in Latvia. His advice : "Do not stop learning, face difficulties with courage. Break down limiting boundaries"

Sevalaya alumni, 22 year-old Silambarasan Devraj is a football coach in Latvia. Employed by Futbola Parks, Riga (Capital of Latvia), he coaches children in the 4 to 12 year age group. This follows one year as a player contracted by Latvia's Riga United Football Club (RUFC) to play in that country's second division till March 2016. It has not been easy, mastering the skills and then passing them on in a foreign tongue, in unfamiliar circumstances. What stands him in good stead is his self belief, a trait he earned at Sevalaya.

Post his Std XII at Sevalaya, Silambu joined Shriram IGNOU community and completed his Diploma in Sports Education. During this period he developed friendships with sports loving students around the world and gathered lot of information about sports. He started to work at Shriram Matriculation for a monthly salary of ₹ 8000, most of which was spent for learning purposes.

Driven by his passion to earn an international qualification, guided by his international friends, Silambu joined the Latvian Academy of Sports Education in Riga, Latvia to qualify as a sports coach. Recommended by his coach, he earned a contract from Latvia's Riga United Football Club (RUFC) to play in Latvia's

second division. He played the middle position as a Defender. Silambu's routine included a total of 3 hours practice with his Club team as also with his university team, then another 3 hours individually. "My coaches were from England and Latvia. They were very professional and knowledgeable as well".

Challenges

Silambu coaches the youngsters in the Latvian language, which he has picked up. Equally, he has to adjust to the unfamiliar setting. Helping him is his club experience of measuring up to international standards of fitness, skills and temperament. "That was my first experience playing in a new environment with overseas players". Since the coaching is only in the afternoon, Silambu gets to attend free sports workshops and seminars in the country's football Academy.

Looking back on his years at Sevalaya, Silambu says: "I improved my sports skills in Sevalaya with the help of PT master Sankarapandiyan Sir. He is my mentor", says Silambu. Sankarapandiaan the PT master has this to say about Silambu. "Silambu is a very good player. I could see a deep passion and he always

wanted to be an achiever. He kept in touch with me even after completing his studies. We are very glad to see him in a good position."

He started to play football in 2014. "I started my football career with lot of difficulties and faced a lot of criticism from senior team mates about my skills. But I leapt over the criticisms as well as difficulties". He adds, "Sevalaya provided me a better education as well as an introduction to sports. I have been influenced by Murali anna's Hanuman story (Hanuman assumes Vishwaroopam, to be able to lift the huge Sanjivi mountain. Moral of the story: grow larger than the problem). I follow this advice consistently when I have problems". Understandably, his advice to Sevalaya children is: "Do not stop learning. Earn good friends. Face difficulties with courage. Break down your limiting boundaries".

Destination Sevalaya ?

Asked about his future plans, these are Silambu's parting words: "Definitely I will come back to India. I would like to work in Sevalaya."

Passionate teachers, diligent students produce excellent results

Board exams are round the corner and students everywhere are in the last leg of the race going all out to give their best. Along with the children, are ambitious parents who stand by these children ready to do anything to help their children do well in the exams. The situation at Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar HSS is no different. Half yearly exams are over, marks analyses have been done and everyone- students and staff are gearing up to do their best. But there is one small difference. Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar School caters to children belonging to the underprivileged families residing in villages.

The students are first generation learners and the parents are mostly uneducated. They come from an environment which is not very conducive for learning. Homes are small huts with many of them just have one common room where the whole family congregate. Many do not have a quiet place to sit and study. They rarely have anyone to clarify their doubts. The lack of all these is compensated by the committed teachers who play a dual role, both as a teacher and as a parent. They work tirelessly, with passion and commitment, to bring out the best in their students. These teachers spend more time with the students than with their own family. Classes start as early as 8AM and goes on until 8AM, as the



exams draw closer. Sundays and holidays are bonus time as it gives more time to give individual attention to those who need personal coaching. The good results achieved year after year is outcome of the selfless sacrifice of our dedicated staff.

Getting a centum is the dream of many and every year quite a few students achieve this distinction. Last year 6 teachers were able to help their students get centums in various subjects. Teachers bond together with one another and the students like a family, supporting each other to bring out the best in each child. Last year in the board exams, a few students missed centums in Science and Accounts by just one or two marks.

This year, the teachers and students are sparing no effort to ensure that more students reach the coveted three digit mark, and increase the tally of centums!

| Name of the teacher | Subjects taught | Std | No. of centums |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----|----------------|
| R Vijayaraghavan | Social Science | X | 6 |
| M Sathyapriya | Social Science | X | 4 |
| A Kumaresan | Social Science | X | 1 |
| D Vanmathi | Maths | X | 1 |
| S Sumathi | Maths | X | 1 |
| S Lakshmi | Com-merce | XII | 1 |

Hostel residents participate in competitions

As it usually happens during the half-yearly break, some hostellers did not have anywhere to go. To make their days exciting, impromptu competitions were held in essay writing, handwriting, Quiz, creativity and book review for 50 students. A Kavitha, Std XI won the prize for best book review. Two prizes for each competition were given to the children. The children were divided into 5 groups and the best group was selected and given the overall championship.



Hostel students participating in an impromptu quiz competition during the winter break

There is a spirit of camaraderie and bonhomie amongst all. The atmosphere in the last 3 months is charged with hectic work schedules, continuous tests, feedback and retests till the D day, when the exams start and all the children in the school pray that their brothers/sisters do well in the exam.

We are confident and hopeful that the students will come out with flying colours in the Board exams this year.

Mara Breech Foundation, USA, sponsors innovation in education and teaching methodologies, at Sevalaya.

With best compliments

"Better is to educate an underprivileged child"

-MahaKavi Bharathi

"The soul of India lives in its villages"

-Mahatma Gandhi

"God comes in the form of Roti for a hungry man"

-Swami Vivekananda

Well wisher

From Skeptic to Mystic

With the sudden demise of Vishwanath, the burden of supporting a big family, already in penury, fell on the young shoulders of Naren. Many a day he had to go without food, saving what little was there in the family for his mother and other members of the family. He was led to doubt the existence of God. If He does, does He really hear the fervent prayer of Man? Then why is there no response to my passionate appeals? Why is there so much woe in His benign kingdom?

Notwithstanding these atheistic views, the vivid memory of the divine visions he had experienced since boyhood, and especially since his contact with Shri Ramakrishna led him to think that God must exist and that there must be some ways to realize Him. Days passed and the mind continued to waver between doubt and certainty. His pecuniary needs remained just the same.

It struck to him one day that he should ask his master to pray to Kali for removing

his pecuniary needs. Shri Ramakrishna told him that he could not make such a request to Kali. He asked Naren to go to the temple, prostrate himself before the Mother and ask of her any boon he wanted, and surely it would be granted. That night Naren went to the temple, and casting his eyes on the image, he actually found that the Divine Mother was living and conscious, the perennial fountain of Divine Love and Beauty. He was caught in a surging wave of devotion and love. In an ecstasy of joy he prostrated himself again and again before the Mother and prayed, "Mother! Give me discrimination! Give me renunciation! Give me knowledge and devotion! Grant that I may have the uninterrupted vision of Thee!" A serene peace reigned in his soul.

On return from the temple, the Master asked him whether he prayed to her for the removal of worldly needs. The startled Naren sheepishly told him that he had forgotten about it all. Shri

Ramakrishna directed him to the Temple again and the same thing happened again. One more time he went to the temple and now a terrible shame overpowered Naren and he thought, "What a trifle I have come to pray to the Mother about! It is like asking a gracious king for a few vegetables! What a fool I am!" He bowed to Kali and said, "Mother! I want nothing but knowledge and devotion!"

Shri Ramakrishna smiled on hearing this and granted him a boon that his people at home would never be in want of plain food and clothing.

The above incident is a landmark in Naren's life. Hitherto he had not realized the significance of the Motherhood of God. From now on, the meaning and purpose of the worship of God through images, and the concept of God as Mother was brought home to him, thus making his spiritual life richer and fuller.

Career counselling for Sevalaya commerce students



V Sundar, CFO, Symrise Pvt Ltd., while interacting with Std. XI and Std. XII students at the campus on 21st January 2017, exhorted the students to study well and mentioned that there were many opportunities in banking, finance and management, after finishing their higher studies. He asked to students to aim high and motivated them by asking them to have goals. Events like these boost the morale of students, as the Board exams are just around the corner.

Sundar, and staff of Symrise Pvt. Ltd., distributed stationery to our Std. XI and Std. XII students.

Sahaj Marg - Heartfulness meditation at city office



Sevalaya organized three one hour sessions of guided meditation for its city office employees and volunteers between 19th-21st January 2017. After initial introductions by the Heart fullness volunteers, the staff was led to guide meditations by Shri Kamlesh Patel (Daaji) via video. The objectives of the meditation sessions are to become aware of oneself, and get rid of all negativity, by doing a series of practices, each day. Ranga Padmavijayam, Senior Manager, Sevalaya said, "The guided meditation classes are extremely helpful. I'm sure it will be beneficial in the long run."

Awareness programme on dental hygiene



Saveetha Dental college dentists examining the oral hygiene of primary school children

Dental Hygiene Awareness Programme was conducted on 9th and 10th December 2016. Twenty doctors from Saveetha Dental College and Department of Public Health Dentistry talked about common dental ailments especially stressing on tooth decay and gum diseases and measures to prevent them. More than 70 elders and 375 students were examined at this camp.

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