

Mahakavi Bharathiyar's 137th Birth Anniversary



Prize winners with Chief Guest Bhagwan Singh, Sevalaya Murali and foreign volunteers

Mahakavi Bharathiyar's 137th birth anniversary was celebrated at Kasuva on 10th December 2019. Bhagwan Singh, Executive Director, Deccan Chronicle was the Chief Guest on this occasion.

The students presented a colourful cultural programme based on incidents from Bharathiyar's life.

6 volunteers from Germany, Scotland and Denmark participated in the cultural and presented a lively dance.

The Chief Guest gave away prizes to the winners of the Bharathiyar competitions conducted in 15 schools of Thiruvallur

district. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest said that he could see the future of India in the students of Sevalaya. He gave a clarion call that they should rise up in the service of the motherland.



Sevalaya's Sunguvarchatram Mahakavi Bharathiyar Community College, celebrated "Bharathi 137" in a grand manner. The Chief Guest M Kanchana, Block Educational Officer, Sriperumbudur Block, lauded the efforts of Sevalaya and requested them to consider extending their help to schools in and around Sunguvarchatram also. She quoted extensively several verses from Bharathi's works.

S Rakesh, Associate Vice President, Operations, Sevalaya recalled Bharathiyar's role in India's freedom struggle. He said that Bharathi's poems and other works have been a perennial source of inspiration for generations.

Earlier competitions were conducted in several schools in the nearby areas and winners were given prizes on the occasion.



Prize winners with Chief Guests at Bharathiyar day at Ravanasumaudram

Mahakavi Bharathiyar's 137th Birth Anniversary was celebrated Sevalaya's Ravanasumaudram centre, at the Government High School,

Pottalpur, Tirunelveli District on 11th December 2019. M Murali, Admin Associate of Bajaj Finserv Corporation, Tirunelveli, M Sudalai, District

Educational Officer, Cheranmadevi district and R Thirumoorthis, Headmaster of Govt. High School, Pottalpur, Tirunelveli, participated as Chief Guests on the occasion.

The District Educational Officer, M Sudalai, appreciated the services of Sevalaya and gifted pens to the students who recited Bharathiyar poems at the function.

Earlier, various competitions had been conducted for the students of 20 schools in the neighbourhood of Kadayam in which 300 students participated. Bharathiyar's books were presented as prizes to 40 winners of the competitions.

Joy of giving: *the way of life*

Dear Friends,

Wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Prosperous Pongal.

One more year has been completed and Sevalaya has, as usual completed many more projects and touched many more lives.

We had developed a five year growth plan for the period 2016-2020 which will come to an end by this 31st March. We had a review of all the actions based on this plan and we can say we will complete nearly 55 to 60% of what we thought we should do.

One major point in the previous five year plan was to start ten community colleges all over Tamil nadu. When that plan was in discussion, Sevalaya was only a Thiruvallur – Kasuva village based organization and there was only one centre outside of Kasuva in Vadanallur village in Kanchipuram district.

But as the years progressed, we got land and building donations from

K Muthuramakrishnan in Thanjavur, R S Nallaperumal in Ravanamudram, Tirunelveli, D V Sridharan in Madhuranthakam. PPG Asian paints sponsored community colleges in Mambakkam, Sunguvarchatram and Pudhucherry, Ambattur clothing in Ambattur estate and L&T Infotech in Ambattur. As the sponsorships and support started coming one after the other, we were able to achieve our goal of ten community colleges.

We wanted to introduce Montessori upto 8th standard but we could do it only in primary classes. It was a challenge to do Montessori in Tamil. As it is very expensive, getting donors to support this initiative was a bit difficult. With all the challenges, we are not giving up, but taking this action item into the next five year plan, 2020-2025. It is a matter of great pride that we were able to introduce Montessori in Tamil and we are able to do it in primary classes. Sure, with the same zeal, we will be able to extend it to higher classes as well.

Automation of our internal processes was another goal. We have developed and implemented "Go Digital," a software application for our internal use. Though we have to develop many more modules, all locations of Sevalaya are now connected via this web based application and staff are using it to send accounts data and staff data from wherever they are and it is automatically picked up by our accounting system. Project accounting, salary accounting and attendance system are working very well.

If the direction is set and sincere efforts are deployed, support comes from all corners to help us move towards our targets. Yes, we still have a long way to go. On many goals, we have just made a beginning. We are sure you will be with us in the next five years too and we hope to achieve much more in that period.

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali

Rajaji Day celebrations



S Kanchana, Head of value education (BGV) presenting memento to Dr C L Ramakrishnan IPS (Retd)

Rajaji Day was celebrated in Sevalaya on 13th December 2019. The programme started with a wonderful cultural given by the children of the school, grandmas of the old age home and volunteers. The Chief Guest, Dr C L Ramakrishnan IPS (Retd) gave a motivating speech to the students.

The Chief Guest spoke to the students about how Rajaji organised Salt Satyagraha at Vedaranyam leading 100 volunteers on a Salt March from Trichy to Vedaranyam and was the first satyagrahi to be arrested. He also advised

the students to follow the principles of Rajaji in their life. Ramakrishnan also explained about Rajaji's Education Policy to the students. Prizes were given to the winners of the Rajaji exam.



Welcome!



V Manojveer has joined Sevalaya as the executive Assistant to Sevalaya Muralidharan, the Founder and Managing Trustee of Sevalaya.

He is a Commerce graduate with MBA in Finance. He comes with 11 years of experience in diverse fields like Secretarial services, HR, Administration and Finance.

"I am happy to be associated with an organisation that serves the underprivileged section of the society" says Manoj.

Bharathi ula - Taking Bharathi to schools

Bharathi Ula programme was celebrated at Sevalaya on 6th December 2019. This event is held every year by Uratha Chinthanai writers forum to spread Bharathiyar's ideas to the next generation.

A beautiful cultural programme centred on Bharathi's life was presented by the children of Sevalaya. Students gave speeches on different topics related to Bharathiyar's thoughts and sang Bharathiyar's songs.

The prizes were given by Madan Bob, Cine actor, Uratha Chinthanai team, Rasi Rasi Azhagappan, film director, poet G Subramanian and Amudha Balakrishnan, Founder, Amudhar group of schools. Speaking on the occasion. Madan Bob said that he could see the



L to R: Bhuvaneswari Muralidharan, Sevalaya Murali, G Subramanian, Amudha Balakrishnan, Rasi Azhagappan, Madan Bob, S V Rajasekar, N Annapurna Standing: K Malarmathi, S Kanchana, R Ganesh Krishnan with prize winners

future leaders of the country in the children of Sevalaya. He said that he was impressed by their confidence and oratory skills. The other guests spoke

about Bharathiyar's thoughts and told the students to lead a life of honesty and integrity serving others whenever possible.

Science centre inaugurated



L Krishnan, Managing Director, Taegutec India Pvt Ltd Inaugurating the Science centre

Sevalaya's Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Science Centre was inaugurated by L Krishnan, Managing Director, Taegutec India Pvt Ltd on 27th November 2019 in the presence of Topaz, RM, Agatsya Foundation and B Senthil, District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) Thiruvallur.

Taegutec has sponsored the scientific equipment for this centre. The Chief Guest in his address expressed his hope that students would use the equipment to gain good knowledge in science and many more Kalams would come from this institution. B Senthil said that the location of this centre here would be a great boon to students of all the nearby government schools too.

Every class from Std V to Std IX will be

visiting the centre twice a month to do various experiments on their own, related to the month's syllabus, thereby getting a clear understanding of the concepts being taught in class. Students from nearby Government schools will be also given this training in the near future.



BNY Mellon ERT programme

Anoop S Mathew, HSE Executive and Praveen Ponnusamy, Senior HSE Executive from BNY, gave an Emergency Response Training to nearly 65 students of Std IX on 9th November 2019. Students were taught how to send signals manually or through machines, reach a safe area in case of need, ways to put out fires and save people whose clothes have caught fire.

Various types of extinguishers were demonstrated. Children were also taught how to deal with fractures.



I understood that it is the smoke which causes more harm in fire accident and how we should escape from this smoke. They also showed pictures of the different devices kept in companies to avoid such accidents and I now know about them. The information about tying a sling to avoid further injury to a fractured part before taking the person to a doctor and participating in the demos was very interesting.

Sharmi, IX D

Gokulam : Creche for staff's kids



Dr C L Ramakrishnan IPS (Retd) and Sevalaya Murali with Kids at Gokulam

Gokulam, a creche for the little ones of Sevalaya's staff, was inaugurated by Dr C L Ramakrishnan IPS (Retd) in the campus of Sevalaya.

This is a new initiative by Sevalaya for providing a needed facility for women staff members. Like all other activities of Sevalaya this facility will be provided free of cost.



Physiotherapy at Sevalaya



Sevalaya has a full time physiotherapy unit at the Medical Centre at Kasuva. Approximately 35-40 people per day, from near by villages, come here regularly for physiotherapy sessions.

The services include pain management, nerve palsies, paralysis, weight reduction programs, developmental delays and post traumatic stiffness. The physiotherapist also visits the old age home regularly and gives bed side exercise therapy to the residents.

Recently a group of therapists from Indian Association of Physiotherapy,

Thiruvallur conducted a camp at Kasuva centre and did bone densitometry and peripheral nerve test for the people who attended the camp.

Physiotherapy camps are conducted in the near by villages twice a week. Around 40-50 people benefit from a week's camp. Physiotherapy awareness is conducted once a month to dispel myths about physiotherapy. People have started responding well to these camps. The medical camps are sponsored by BNY Mellon.

Montessori activity



Monthly competitions are held for the Montessori classes based on the theme of the month. In October, the children had a fancy dress competition with each section having a different theme like heavenly bodies, fruits, vegetables, our helpers and shapes. November saw the kids getting together for a rhymes competition.

All the rhymes were about vegetables. The tiny tots, dressed in colourful dresses related to their rhymes, with different vegetables in their hands happily sang the rhymes with appropriate actions.

Chefs' day



Sevalaya students at the Indus Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts

48 students of Sevalaya got a chance to visit the Indus Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts on 24th October 2019. The excited students were received warmly by the staff. They were shown how hands should be cleaned hygienically.

They were then taken to the kitchen area where they learnt the steps in the making of a vegetable salad. The students then helped them in the process and finally got a chance to taste the salad.



Volunteering at organic farming



16 student of Don Bosco College of Agriculture came to Sevalaya on 29th November 2019 for a 10 days stay to observe and learn how NGO is run and understand the activities of NGOs.

They worked in Sevalaya's organic farm doing deweeding and planted 430 tree saplings in Koyambakkam and Ayalur.

They conducted a career counselling session for the Higher Secondary

Agricultural students and practical classes for them.



First aid training



Training in First Aid by S Vijayakumar, Founder, English Express Academy, Thiruninravur

S Vijayakumar, Founder, English Express Academy, Thiruninravur, conducted a first aid training session for students of Std XI on 30th November 2019.

The precautions to be taken to save human lives, the golden hour and the importance of emergency response were explained clearly.

He asked the students to take an oath that they would be careful while driving vehicles and not cause accidents by their rash driving.

Omega School visit



Students from Omega International school at Sevalaya campus, Kasuva

4 staff members and 112 students of Std VII of Lalaji Memorial Omega International School visited Sevalaya's Kasuva campus on 26th November 2019. One of the teachers taught Sevalaya's Std VII students a small technique to reduce stress levels.

Students of both schools exchanged gifts and interacted with one another. The visitors also spent time with the residents of the old age home. The visitors gave snacks to the students and elders.

At The Akshaya Trust function



Distributing aids to the physically challenged at Akshya Trust function

Sevalaya Murali was the Chief Guest at the 185th meeting of Akshaya Trust, serving the differently abled, on 15th December 2019.

Sevalaya Murali distributed the Wheel chairs, hearing aids and calipers provided by the Trust to the beneficiaries.



Kind at heart, Ready to help.

A native of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, Vinaykumar Bhalachandra Apte grew up in Chennai. A graduate in Chemistry and a diploma holder in rubber technology, he started his own firm ARK Rubber products in 1972 after working for 12 years as Works manager with Industrial Rubber products.

The company has been doing very well and is now being taken care of by his



son. The factory produces a high quality product for defence vehicles. Son of a freedom fighter he has been donating for social causes for decades.

He is a trustee of Maharashtra Mandal which was formed in 1927 to bring together all Maharashtrians.

A noble, humane person, he sponsored the construction of a lift along with required structural changes when he found many people facing difficulty in climbing the stairs at Maharashtra Niwas

A member of Rotary club of Vadapalani since the past fourteen years, he visited Sevalaya 4 years back and interacted with the children and elders.

Impressed by Sevalaya's free services for under privileged children and Senior citizens, he sponsored the flooring of the boy's hostel at Kasuva.

He has also sponsored the construction of a pathway/ platform in front of the dining hall at Kasuva centre.

On the road to a Public Speaker from a Teacher

Kanchana S joined Sevalaya three years ago as Tamil Teacher and is now heading the Value Education Programme of Sevalaya, taking Bharathi, Gandhi, Vivekananda (BGV) to all the students across Tamilnadu.

Hailing from a middle class family in Chengelpet, Kanchana was a bright student. She wanted to pursue Engineering, but her father, who worked in a private company, could not afford it. Hence she did bachelor's degree in Computer Science and a Masters in Computer Applications.

She started her career as a Computer Science teacher in a private school. She did B.Ed and her love for Tamil spurred her on to do Masters in Tamil Literature, while she was working in the school. "I started reading Vallalar's Thiruarutpa when I was 17 years old. Whenever I



floundered, *Thiruarutpa* was my biggest support." says Kanchana.

After the birth of her son, she started her own play school and tuition centre *Arul Oli Kalvi Nilayam* at Chengalpet. Her focus was mainly on innovative teaching methodologies to make learning fun for

the children.

Kanchana was determined to take care of her parents, who had made many sacrifices to provide good education to her and her sister. Her family shifted from Chengelpet and moved to Aranvoyal Village in Thiruvallur, where she constructed a house. This shift led to the closing down of her centre at Chengelpet.

It was then she heard about Sevalaya. "I joined as a Tamil Teacher and was promoted as Assistant Headmistress in Primary School in a short period. Book reviews by staff are a regular feature in the school. Murali Sir was present at one such meeting, where I reviewed a book and that was the turning point in my life. He identified my flair for public speaking and provided me opportunities to speak in various forums. "

With a view to focus more on Sevalaya's unique value education programme, Kanchana was entrusted with the responsibility of heading BGV programme and spreading the message among students, staff, resident elders, and students of the community colleges at various centres of Sevalaya .

"My aim in life is to go beyond working for my family and serve the needy. I am thankful to Sevalaya for identifying my talent and providing me a wonderful opportunity to do what I enjoy doing and leading a purposeful life. " Says Kanchana with a smile.

Shaping the future - Libraries at Sevalaya



The written word is the strongest power in the universe. Words can heal, encourage, construct or destroy. Sevalaya is a testimony of this power. A few lines from Bharathiyar's poem had the power to inspire a young boy to start Sevalaya which serves thousands of underprivileged for over 30 years now.

An important part of Sevalaya's activities today are its libraries. A library with a collection of books of different genres can be found at every centre of Sevalaya. Swami Vivekananda library at Kasuva centre with nearly 29,000 books is the biggest library catering to the needs of students and staff of Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher secondary school and all centres of Sevalaya.

There is a smaller library in the same campus with attractive pictorial books for the tiny ones of the Primary section and a separate library for staff.

The main library has an exhaustive collection of books of Mahakavi Bharathiyar 100 volumes of Complete works of Mahatma Gandhi and Complete works of Swami Vivekananda. There are several biographies, books related to spiritual pursuits, encyclopedias, books on academic subjects, Tamil and English novels. Daily newspapers, periodicals and magazines are also a part of the library. Many of the books in the library have been donated by well-wishers.

The main library sends books to all centres and monthly book reviews are done by staff regularly. The teaching staff of the school at Kasuva do weekly book reviews. Hostel children are encouraged

to do book reviews at their weekly 'Nila Mutram' programmes. Some of the residents of the Old Age Homes at Kasuva and Thanjavur also use the library. Some books are kept in the homes for the elders who cannot walk till the library. Some residents in the home read out interesting snippets for the benefits of others who cannot read.

The children of Sevalaya's school have

Yogesh: an avid reader; aspiring journalist



I love reading books; Books open up an entirely new world of adventure, fantasy, inspiring life stories, emotional dramas, intriguing mysteries, thrillers. My favourite place in the school is the library, having a vast collection of over 29,000 books on varied topics. My sister reads a lot of books especially detective stories. I was inspired by her to read books, and reading became my hobby. This has helped me. I have been a resident of Sevalaya home, for six months now. Even if there are no friends around to spend time with, I am never bored as I always pick up a book and start reading. I have never felt

a library period every week where they are encouraged to read books. Monthly Book reviews are also held in these periods. Yearly competitions are held to motivate children to read more books. Students of the community colleges in Kasuva, Ambattur, Sungavarchatram, Ravanasanudram, Pudhucherry are also encouraged to read books.

Book reading is also encouraged in villages by taking books to the doorsteps of villagers. Alumni of the school take books to their villages and distribute them to interested people. Books are collected back after a fortnight and returned to the library. 2 villages are covered every month. A set of 25 books are given to the neighbouring Government schools so that children studying there get a chance to read books. Books are replaced every term.

A library has been constructed at a cost of 11 lakhs at Nathamedu village in Thiruvallur district as a part of the village development activities with the support of Hyundai Wia. It is administered by the Village Library Committee and the Readers' Circle ensures that the library is used effectively.

loneliness, as books are my best friends.

I read books, when I travel. I read all genres of books but my favourites are books on history, detective stories and Tamil novels and short stories. My favourite author is Jayakanthan. I also read magazines and dailies in the school library. I do book review during "Nila Mutram" programme at the hostel.

Books have taught me many things. Biographies of leaders inspire me. It is through books I got a better understanding of the struggles women go through. I realised the need for a change in the mindset of men, the need to respect women.

My aim is to become a Journalist. In order to study Journalism, I keep myself updated in current affairs by reading newspapers regularly and making notes. With the vast resources available at Sevalaya's library, I am sure to achieve my dream.

A review of the grievances : The Transvaal and other colonies

A dispute thus arose between the British and Boer Governments, and the matter was referred to arbitration. The arbitrator's award was unsatisfactory. The Law was amended in 1886 in accordance with the arbitrator's award. The registration fee was reduced from twenty- five to three pounds. The clause, which completely debarred Indians from holding landed property, was removed, and it was provided instead, that the Indians could own fixed property in such locations, specified by the Transvaal Government.

The Government did not honestly carry out the terms of the amended clause, and withheld from Indians the right to purchase freehold land even in the locations. In all towns inhabited by Indians, these locations were selected in dirty places situated far away from the towns where there was no water supply, no lighting arrangement and no sanitary convenience.

Thus the Indians became the

"untouchables" of the Transvaal. Again the Transvaal Government interpreted Law 3 of 1885 to mean that the Indians could trade only exclusively in the locations. Since the arbitrator decided that the interpretation of the law rested with the ordinary Tribunals of the Transvaal, the Indian traders were in a very awkward condition.

They managed the situation by

- (i) carrying on negotiations
- (ii) having recourse to law courts and
- (iii) exerting what little influence they possessed. Such was the miserable and precarious position of Indians in the Transvaal at the outbreak of the Boer War.

The situation in Free State was worse. Hardly a dozen Indians had opened shops there when the Europeans started a powerful agitation.

The Volksraad passed a stringent law and expelled all Indian traders from

the Free State, awarding them nominal compensation.

That law provided that no Indian could on any account hold fixed property or carry on any business or farming business or enjoy franchise rights in the Free State. With special permission an Indian could settle as a labourer or as a hotel waiter. Even this precious permission was at the discretion of the government. The result was that a respectable Indian could not live in the Free State even for a couple of days without great difficulty.

At the time of the Boer War there were no Indians in the Free State except a few waiters. In the Cape Colony, too, there was some newspaper agitation against Indians, they were subjected to humiliating treatment. For example, Indian children could not attend public schools, etc, and Indian travelers could not get accommodation in hotels. But there were no restrictions as to trade and the purchase of land for a long time.

Chennaiyil Thiruvaiyaru Tree plantation



127 children and 23 elders of Sevalaya Homes attended Bharathanatyam programme at Kamarajar Arangam, Chennai on 23rd December 2019. The programme was a part of Chennaiyil Thiruvaiyaru, an annual Music and Dance festival organised by Lakshman Sruthi, a Chennai based musical consortium. The children and elders watched the dance performances of Bhuvaneswari K Kaushik, Pooja Srinivasa Raja, Sheela Unnikrishnan and Sruthilekha.



10 volunteers from Avighna systems (Tionale) came to Kasuva campus on 3rd November 2019. They planted 235 saplings and conducted a village survey at Sivanvoyal and Koyambakkam village.

62 people took part in this survey in which the villagers answered questions related to their needs which they hoped Sevalaya would address in the coming years. This is the first time 235 saplings have been planted in a single day.

Donor's 50th Birthday



Sevalaya Murali was one of the special invitees to the 50th birthday celebrations of Dr P Meghanathan, Managing Director, Tapams Advanced Management and Industries Pvt Ltd.

He participated in the celebrations and offered his felicitations to Dr Meghanathan, a well wisher and a patron of Sevalaya.

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