CHAPTER-15

SRI SATHYA SAI APPROACH TO VALUE EDUCATION

"Living with God is true Education,
Living for God is true Devotion,
Living in God is true Spirituality."

---- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA : THE CONTEMPORARY CRUSADER FOR EHV

Sri Sathya Sai Baba (born on 23 November, 1926) is a highly venerated spiritual personality in the modern times. He is believed to be a unique Avatar (divine incarnation), a unique Godman, the greatest of the contemporary Gurus of mankind, by his millions of Indian and foreign devotees. His worldwide reputation and influence on the contemporary generations of human beings is due to his declared divine mission to reform, spiritualize and elevate the entire mankind through his vigorous propagation of the belief in the existence of one God, genuine efforts to spread EHV (Education in Human Values) and providing the much-needed selfless social services to the mankind in the form of education, medical help, rural development, provision of pure drinking water to the two water-thirsty districts of his home state Andhra Pradesh, and his relentless efforts to bring hope and cheer to the modern men shaken by all sorts of fears, foibles and frustrations.

He is known all over the world for his astounding miracles which defy all laws of science. These miracles also serve Sri Sathya’s Baba’s overall object to bring about a moral and spiritual transformation in the modern world.
Sri Sathyam Sai Baba’s contribution to the cause of education during the last 25 years is now being duly realised and appreciated globally. He has given to the world a wholesome and refreshing concept of ‘Integral Education’, in which there is a rational and functional synthesis of spirituality, morality, quintessence of centuries old Indian culture, and modern disciplines of Physical Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities.

He has launched a number of educational programmes in pursuance of his declared Avataric mission to enlighten and elevate the mankind—Bal Vikas and Study Circle as purely voluntary and devotionally inspired and conducted non-formal education institutions for his devotees all over the globe, and a string of schools and a full-fledged university level institution - Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Deemed University) as institutions of formal education to produce enlightened, truly secular, moral social service oriented, and functional agents of socio-cultural change in the world.

In his formal education institutions, emphasis is mainly laid on ‘Human Values’. There are 18 schools throughout India2 and one school in Zambia (Africa)4 run according to the educational philosophy of Sri Sathyam Sai Baba, out of them three schools namely - Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School Prasanthi Nilayam (English medium Residential School for boys and girls combined till class VI, and for girls only from class VIII to XII, affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi), Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam (English medium Residential school for boys from class VIII to XII, affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi), and Srimati Eswaramma High School, Prasanthi Nilayam (Telugu medium Day school for boys and girls from Class VI to X, affiliated to the S.S.C. Board, Andhra Pradesh) are run by Sri Sathyam Sai Central Trust, located at Baba’s place of residence Prasanthi Nilayam, just near his birth place Puttaparthi in the Ananatapur District of Andhra Pradesh.
We selected the first one of these three Sri Sathya Sai Trust's Schools to study empirically how the spiritual ideas and educational philosophy of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, which constitute his distinct and much publicized 'Sai Approach to Value Education', are in actuality being put into practice. Our research was focused on two aspects - one, a theoretical study of the spiritual and educational philosophy of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the author and guiding spirit of what may be termed as 'Sri Sathya Sai Approach to Value Education'; and, two, an empirical study of the school practising this approach.

II

DATA COLLECTION

To us knowing the theoretical constructs of 'Sri Sathya Sai Approach to Value Education' did not prove to be a very difficult task as innumerable discoursesı and Benediction addresses at the university convocations by Sri Sathya Sai Baba are already available in print as also are several highly informative articles, papers and books authored by devotees, intellectuals and eminent educationists and social scientists. An exhaustive and up-to-date research review of the all significant writings and research contributions of all scholars on Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been brought out by S. P. Ruhela in his recently published book 'In Search of Sai Divine: A Research Review' (1996).}

For collecting empirical data about the Value Education experiment as required according to the sociological research approach adopted by us we first sent a copy of our 'Research Tool' (Questionnaire), asking for 'General Information about the School', 'Special Features of The School', and 'Value Education Programme in The School', per registered post to the Principal of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam in early 1995 and its copy to Sri Sathya Sai Baba with a prayerful request to kindly direct the concerned Principal to co-operate in our research venture. However, no
response was received by us. In November 1995 we decided to travel to Prasanthi Nilayam (Andhra Pradesh) for the empirical study. We met Dr. Punam Sambhi, the Principal of the school, who is Doctorate in Education having worked in the emerging area of Value Education* and is a long-time and dedicated Sai devotee and teacher in Baba's school, and an ex-student of our research guide Prof. S. P. Ruhela (in the Himachal Pradesh University, School of Education during 1978-79). She kindly allowed us to observe the school and classrooms on a holiday (the school was then closed for several days due to the 70th Birthday Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Baba). She spared a little time to discuss with us the research concerns of our study and gave her own experiences and views on the Sri Sathya Sai Approach to Value Education. However, she politely and firmly excused herself for not filling in our research Questionnaire, saying she was too busy to do so. Our further request to her by post and our research guide's personnel request to her in February, 1996 also did not enable us to seeking more information about the school as per our Research Questionnaire from her school. We felt that outside independent researchers are not really welcome in the educational institutions of the Sai organization also, as is the prevailing tendency in most of the schools run by spiritual, religious and cult organizations and many other prestigious so called 'Public Schools' run by private entrepreneurs and bodies is our country.

However, we made all possible efforts during our ten days stay at Prasanthi Nilayam to collect factual information about this school and the kind of 'Sri Sathya Sai Approach to Value Education' as being actually implemented therein from some teachers, parents and students as well devotees in Prasanthi Nilayam and Puttaparthy, in an informal manner, without revealing our research objective and its research tool and our identity as independent researcher. It could be possible for the researcher to mix up with and talk
to some knowledgeable people and collect many reliable pieces of information on the subject of her study. All this field information is the base on which the case study of this school practicing 'Sri Sathya Sai Approach to Value Education' has been prepared by us.

III

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS OF SRI SATHYA SAI APPROACH TO VALUE EDUCATION

Ever since Sri Sathya Sai Baba declared his identity as a divine incarnation come to affect spiritual and moral uplift of the world and to usher in the 'Golden Age' for the humanity, on 20th October, 1940 at the age of 14, he has, through his favourite themes of continuous flow of discourses and writings on spirituality, morality, Sanathanan Dharma, Indian culture and education, been giving out to the world his valuable ideas how the transformation of mankind ought to be brought about through his teachings and more so through the instrumentality of his unique Sai System of Education.

Prof. V. K. Gokak, the first Vice-Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam, had brought out an edited volume 'A Value Orientation to Our System of Education' (1973) comprising the papers of the Guest speakers, discourses of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the proceedings of the First Summer course on 'Indian Culture and Spirituality' organised by him under the leadership of Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Brindavan, Kadugodi, Bangalore, in May-June 1972, and then a number of articles and a comprehensive papers on 'The Sathya Sai Theory of Education' (1979). Prof. S. R. Rohidkar, Shanta, A. Diwakar and K. B. Prabhu Prashad edited 'Education in Human Values for Teachers'. (In Two Parts) in 1982. A number of scholars like R.G. Kulkarni (1975), Anima Mukherjee and Dr. Hemlata (1975), Dr. S. Bhagavantam (1972), S.V. Balu (1980), Prof.

Ruhela edited works - 'Human Values and Education'16, 'Sai Baba on Human Values and Education'17 (1986), 'Sai Baba Movement'18 (1986), and his comprehensive research paper 'The Educational theory of Sri Sathya Sai Baba'19 originally published in University News (1992), and his recent books 'Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the Future of Mankind'20 (1992) and 'In Search of Sai Divine (Research Review)21 (1996) have clarified and highlighted Baba's educational contributions systematically and brilliantly. In the A. Adivi Reddy's book 'Uniqueness of Swami and His Teaching'22 (1995) presents in a clearcut and comprehensive manner the highlights of the Avataric works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.


A thorough perusal of all this vast literature on the educational contributions of Sri Sathya Sai Baba as the Guru of Mankind in the contemporary world, has enabled us to know the key ideas of Sri Sathya Sai Baba as an educationist, which form the theoretical constructs of Sri Sathya Sai Approach to Value Education.
Ruhela has rightly identified the following philosophical and sociological foundations of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's educational philosophy:

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS:

1. Belief in the existence of one God who is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.
2. Equality and unity of all people of the world on the basis of the principle of the oneness of Atma.
4. Universal values of Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), Shanti (peace) Prem (love) and Ahimsa (non-violence).
5. Spiritual elevation as the supreme goal of human life.
6. Fusion of modern knowledge of science and technology with the spiritual knowledge and moral and cultural traditions of India which is the spiritual Guru of the world.
7. Secularization, Liberalization and Humanization.
8. Unity of all religions and faiths; there is only one religion - the Religion of Love.

SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS:

1. Principle of divinity inherent in every person and creature.
2. Principle of love as the basis of all human relationships.
3. Principle of sharing.
5. Principle of peaceful co-existence.
7. Principle of selfless service for the common good.

8. Principle of obliging people, at least by speaking obligingly.


11. Principle of happiness which implies that happiness can be obtained only by cultivating a state of mind which is unaffected by fortune-good or bad.

We have discovered that Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s greatest emphasis is on the five universal values of Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), Shanti (Peace), Prema (Love) and Ahimsa (Non-violence). He champions the cause of a healthy and enriched concept of Secularism which respects all religions and cultures on equal footing. His basic concern is to make men God-minded, conscientious, moral, just, and dedicated servants of society who are inspired by high values.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s concept of education is revealed in a crystal clear manner by some of his following thought provoking quotations:

1. “Education must confer humility; it must transform moral, mental and spiritual fields and purify thought, word and deed.”

2. “Spirituality does not mean living in isolation or living without any connection with anybody. To love mankind by understanding that it is an expression of Supreme Soul is spirituality.”

3. “Education is not mere knowledge. It should enable one to manifest his inherent divinity. It should promote the practice of Truth and Right Conduct.”
4. "Morality and integrity are based on spiritual consciousness. Education should be used for promoting the nation’s welfare. Knowledge gained through education should be used selflessly for promoting the welfare of humanity."42

5. "The students today have a two-fold duty, one is to face the challenges of modern civilization, the other is to protect and preserve the ancient spiritual and cultural heritage of the country. Students should shine as ideal citizens of the nation."43

6. "You cry when you are born, and you cry when you die. In between you go on crying for useless things. Do you cry when you see decline of Dharma (Righteousness)?"44

7. "Integral education is needed. It means the cultivation of secular as well as spiritual values".45

8. "The end of wisdom is freedom, The end of culture is perfection, The end of knowledge is Love, The end of education is character."46

9. "The sign of a person who has some years of schooling is good manners; he must have humility and know that the field of knowledge is so vast that he has been unable even to touch its fringe; he must be aware of his kinship with all the mankind and he must show a keenness to do service to others, at all times, gladly and without desire for publicity. He knows that God is the moving force in everyone. He is behind all good impulses and useful attitudes. Mankind is like all separate beads strung together in one thread God."47

10 "Bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind. This is the process of attaining immortality."48

11 "Education does not end with mastery of the meanings of words It
THE HUMAN WORKSHOP

FIVE DOMAINS/LEVELS

Domain of Personality
- Physical
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Psychic
- Spiritual

Blossoms as
- Righteous Conduct
- Truth
- Peace
- Love
- Non-Violence

We have to strive for Human Excellence at all levels through Human Values

WAY OF LIFE

CEILING ON DESIRES

DO NOT WASTE

Food  Money  Energy  Time

SRI SATHYA SAI APPROACH TO VALUE EDUCATION
Teaching of Right Conduct as a Value Component

Ethical Skills
1. Nonstealing
2. Telling truth
3. Non quarreling
4. Talking less
5. Avoiding wastage of time, money & labour
6. Forming simple habits
7. Doing hard work willingly & gladly

Self Help Skills
1. To be careful about health
2. To dress up without help
3. To do one's own work
4. To practise correct sitting postures
5. To form correct breathing habit
6. To observe silence for some time

Social Skills
1. To listen to others
2. To speak calmly & clearly
3. To maintain discipline
4. To be punctual & regular
5. To help arrange seats
6. To keep books in order
7. To avoid wastage in every way
8. To be friendly to others
9. To be respectful to parents & elders

Teaching Devices
- Role Play
- Mono Acting
- Dramatisation
- Story Telling
- Service Activities
- Attitude Tests

Teaching Outcomes
1. A balanced dutiful disciplined personality
2. An effective leader in society
3. An efficient follower in society
TEACHING OF PEACE AS A VALUE COMPONENT

PEACE IN BODY-MIND-SOUL

1. TO DEVELOP SIMPLE HEALTHY LIVING
2. TO UPROOT EVIL TENDENCIES (GREED, ANGER, EGO, ETC.)
3. TO DEVELOP TRUTHFULNESS, POLITENESS & FRIENDLINESS
4. TO PRESERVE SELF RESPECT & SELF CONFIDENCE
5. TO SHARE & SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS
6. TO RESPECT OTHER'S RIGHTS
7. TO PRACTISE JUSTICE & TOLERANCE
8. TO KEEP EQUALEDNESS WHILE FACING PROBLEMS
9. TO BE TRUE IN THOUGHT WORD & DEED
10. TO SEE GOOD, DO GOOD & BE GOOD

TEACHING DEVICES

GROUP ACTIVITIES
SOCIAL SERVICE

ORGANISING CULTURAL PROGRAMMES
EXCURSIONS, EXHIBITIONS & TALENT DISPLAYS

SILENT SITTING
CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

TEACHING OUTCOMES

LEADERSHIP
SELF CONFIDENCE
SOCIALISATION
RECOGNITION FROM PARENTS
ACCEPTANCE FROM FRIENDS

EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES TO BE FACILITATED BY SRI SATHYA SAI BAI VIKAS TRUST
TEACHING OF LOVE AS A VALUE COMPONENT

FAITH & FELLOWSHIP AS SPIRITUAL OUTCOME OF LOVE

TEACHING DEVICES

- Story Telling on the Lives of Great Lovers of Humanity & God
- Dramatisation on the Lives of Great Men, Saints, Prophets & Godmen
- Visits to Places of Worship & Ethical Importance
- Slide Shows on People & Places of Interest
- Organising Cultural Shows & Films on Indian Heritage

TEACHING OUTCOMES

- Appreciation of Truth, Goodness & Beauty
- Feeling Oneness of Man with Nature
- Love of God & His Creation
- Attitude of Service to Humanity

Education in Human Values Course Sponsored by Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Trust
TEACHING OF NON-VIOLENCE AS A VALUE COMPONENT

SUPREME LOVE

CONTENTS

- Non Injury at Body & Mental Level
- Seeing Oneself in Others
- Extension & Expression of Love to All Humanity
- Loving God through All His Creation
- Universal Love All Pervasive
- A Way to Perfection Moral & Spiritual

TEACHING DEVICES

- Loving Flowers, Birds & Animals
- Helping Plants to Grow
- Practising Tolerance in Daily Activity
- Reading Stories & Poems on Man & God
- Drawing Pictures on God's Creation

TEACHING OUTCOMES

- Feeling of Oneness with Nature & Man
- Appreciation of God's Creation
- Expression Through Poetry, Songs, Dramas, Painting, Collecting, Objects of Natural Interests & Preparing Scrap Books etc.
- Being Non-Violent in Attitude & Action
means opening the doors of the mind; it means cleansing the inner tools of the consciousness, the mind, the ego, the senses and the reason."  

12. "I insist on discipline, on reverence, obedience to parents, on regulating food and play, on rigorous allocation of time and study, singing spiritual songs and meditation. I also recommend some items of service like nursing the sick... They (Children) must learn clean healthy habits. Children must also learn to follow and practice good manners at home and practice good norms of behaviour outside."  

13. "Let the different faiths exist; let them flourish, and let the glory of God be sung in all languages and in a variety of tunes. That should be the ideal. Respect the differences between the faiths, and recognize them as valid as long as they do not extinguish the flame of unity. If each person lives the ideals propounded by the founders of their religion, unaffected by greed or hate, then the world will be a happy and peaceful habitation for man."

These values and ideas of Sri Sathya Sai Baba may well be treated as the most representative and pertinent points of focus or the distinctive constituents of the theoretical approach of Sri Sathya Sai Baba to Value Education.

All schools and other educational institutions bearing his name and claiming to be inspired by this unique contemporary Godman and Guru of Mankind, are expected to dedicatedly work for the fulfilment of these high ideals and objectives upheld by Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
We observed this school and collected empirical data informally at Prasanthi Nilayam (Andhra Pradesh) in the second fortnight of November, 1995.

Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary, Prasanthi Nilayam, is a Senior Secondary School for Girls, run by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. It was established in 1980. It has classes from I to XII. The classes from I to V are held in the forenoon, while the classes from VI to XII are held in the afternoon. The total number of students in the school in November 1995, when we visited the school, was 950 and the total number of teachers was 50. There is co-education up to class V, but from Class VI onwards there are only girls. All the teachers including the Principal are females. They are all reported to be duly qualified and trained. Most of them come from Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh; some of them have come from the Northern States. The Principal, Dr. Punam Sambhi, comes from Himachal Pradesh. All the teachers are said to be devotees of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and they have deep faith in the divine stature and teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. They are paid proper salaries as per the prevalent grades in the state. Some teachers out of their devotion to Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the spirit of sacrifice, it was learnt, do not take full salaries; they accept some minimum amount for their maintenance only. However, complete or authentic information on this point could not be obtained by us.

All the teachers, including the Principal and all the students have to live in the School Hostel. Even the students whose parents live in the Prasanthi Nilayam Ashram of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, just at a distance of 400 yds
DAILY TIME TABLE OF HOSTEL ACTIVITIES
IN SRI SATHYA SAI SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
or so, have to stay in the school hostel; they cannot go to their parents as it is a Residential School. The teachers as well as the students are not at all permitted to move out of school-cum-hostel premises, except for the purpose of seeking *darshan* of Sri Sathya Sai Baba on Thursday, Sunday and special festival days. There they invariably sit on the Ladies' side.

It was gathered that most of the students and teachers are Hindus; there are some Jains, Sikhs, Christians also among them, there is perhaps no Muslim teacher among them. There is absolutely no discrimination on the grounds of religion, social class, state, profession, caste, language etc. All of them are from India.

Students are admitted only in Classes I and XI through written Entrance Tests and subsequent interview of the candidates successful in the Written Test along with their parent. On the day of the Written Entrance Tests which is held in the month of May, all the candidates have to stay and take their meals in the school. Admissions are finalised in June every year. Students are admitted strictly according to merit as determined on the basis of Entrance Tests and Interview. No outside interference, recommendation or influence, even that of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, is said to be working in admissions. Strict fairness is observed in this regard.

Parents from all parts of the country, most of whom are Sai devotees, are very eager to get their daughters and sons admitted to this most prestigious school, as they deem it to be their great fortune if their wards can be successful in seeking admission in this "God's School". Sri Sathya Sai Baba is held as God by them. More so, education in this school is absolutely free and this is a great incentive. Academic fees like Tuition fee, Library fee, Computer fee, Games fee etc. are not charged from any student irrespective of his or her parents' social class background. The students are required to pay modest hostel charges and bring their own beddings, clothings und
personal effects. They are not allowed to keep any costly things, ornaments, cash, medicines and food articles with them. Only pure vegetarian food, properly cooked by the hostel cooks, is served to all the students and teachers. Milk is given free of cost to all students. Sri Sathya Sai Gokul are provided milk. Fruits and sweets are often distributed to the students. Sri Sathya Sai Baba also gives such eatables as his prashad to them on every Thursday and Sunday when they come to his Ashram for his darshan. Sometimes he distributes colourful sports dresses, stationary items and other personal effects to all the students as his gifts of love.

Accordingly to the School Prospectus, the following school uniform is provided by the school upto Class VI:

**GIRLS Class I to VI:**

1. Dark navy blue tunic (Terricot) : 2 Nos.
2. Sky blue shirts (Terricot) : 2 Nos.
3. Green games skirts (Terricot) : 2 Nos.
5. Necktie

**Class VII onwards : White Uniform**

**BOYS : Class I to VI:**

1. Dark navy blue shirts (Terricot) : 2 Nos.
2. Sky blue shirts (Terricot) : 2 Nos.
3. Red games (Terricot) : 2 Nos.
5. Red Necktie

**Class VII onwards : White shirt and pants for boys, saree for girls.**

Female teachers do not have any prescribed dress. The teacher-pupil ratio in the school is 1:19. English is the medium of instruction from class I to class XII. Every student is required to speak in English all the time. However, bhajans are sung mostly in Hindi, some of them may be in English.
The entrance of the school is impressive. The school is spacious and two storeyed. The two hostels — one for the Junior section in which boys and girls live in separate rooms, and the other one in which only girls of the Secondary and Senior Secondary classes live are quite spacious, decorated and well-maintained with due attention paid to cleanliness, aesthetic sense and sobriety. There is a big and well-maintained playground. There is a school library. The school has a television to show some important programmes and video films on Sri Sathya Sai Baba and Human Values. The school has a good gymnasium. There is a Computer in the school to acquaint the students with its utility in modern times.

Education in Human Values Programme

The whole school programme and hostel living are organised in such a manner that they provide rich and functional opportunities for the inculcation of proper human values in students. All students and teachers are required to be present in the Prayer Assembly in each shift with which the school programme starts daily. *Saraswati Vandana* (Prayer to Goddesses of Learning) Gayatri and other mantras and prayer are recited at this time.

Everyday the first period is assigned to Value Education. In classes upto V, the teachers choose ‘Thought for the Day’ for their respective classes. It is written on blackboard or prominently displayed and students are motivated to see it and ponder over its meaning.

We had the opportunity to observe the classrooms. All the classrooms were found to be decorated with beautiful and innovative charts, pictures and quotations prepared by teachers and students. Most of the charts highlighted Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings on morality, spirituality, social service and ideals of the Sai System of Education. The classrooms presented an attractive and functional educational environment for value inculcation to the growing
students of the impressionable ages of childhood and adolescence. We found harmony of thought, visual presentation and aesthetics in all the classrooms. All the charts were prepared by the teachers and students; none of them was purchased from market. The charts and other items of display on the walls of the classrooms were according to the age group and psychological capacities and aptitudes of the children of the concerned class.

A notable feature of the school observed by us was that the students were involved and trained in preparing these various attractive and useful charts and other display materials by the teachers who, it was gathered, were very much committed to value education as focussed by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It was soothing to discover that the message sought to be communicated by these display materials is what exactly Sri Sathya Sai Baba stands for: 'There is only One God, there is only one caste - the caste of humanity, there is only language - the language of love, there is only one goal worth pursuing 'Manav Seve Madhav Seva' (Service to mankind is service to God). Sri Sathya Sai emblem of the co-existence and unity of all the major religions of the world and his portraits as the unique contemporary incarnation of God - “God of Truth and Love walking on two legs” - adorn all places in the school, hostel and other adjoining buildings, with a liberal sprinkling of the fascinating styles and colours of divinity and morality revealed by the various Godmen, Prophets, Saints and great Gurus of the different religions, cultures and nations of the world.

It was credible on the part of teachers that despite a lot of pressure on them due to their various duties relating to the Ashram work of the celebrations of so many festivals and Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Birthday which is a unique global event as more than 14 lakh devotees from India and over 140 countries had come to Puttaparthi in November, 1995, these dedicated teachers had still time, energy and the zeal to prepare beautiful charts and
display materials for their respective classrooms. This is a unique feature of Sri Sathya Sai approach to Value Education as practiced in this school.

Discipline, silence, integrity and politeness are distinctive features of this school. The level of professional culture, devotion to the Founder's divine stature, accountability and concern for the welfare of children and the success of the educational model adopted in the school were, as gathered by us from different reference individuals in our field investigations, unusually high on the part of the school teachers.

The member of the staff and students are usually not allowed to meet outsiders - not even their close relatives, friends and visitors. Even we having our genuine research mission had to face a lot of difficulties in getting into the school and meeting the Principal and seeing the school from inside. The school like a nunnery keeps away from outside contacts and influences by adopting 'Closed Door' type of school-community relationship. The girls are not taken out to slums, villages or outside institutions to do community service.

Almost all co-curricular activities are confined within the forewalls of the school and its hostel like most of the traditional girls schools in our country. Value education is a separate subject in this school, and also it is taught as an integral part of each school subject and school activity. It forms the sheet anchor of the total curriculum and the co-curricular inputs in the school. All teachers are required to involve themselves in the programme of value inculcation and present themselves as examples of ideal human beings and caring and loving kind of teachers.

The student body of the school is divided into four houses -- Sathya House, Dharma House, Shanti House and Prema House. Under the guidance and supervision of the teacher incharges of these Houses, the students organize
various kinds of co-curricular activities like dance, music, devotional singing, drama, exhibition, quiz competitions, debates, storytelling etc. on Intra-house and Inter-house basis, all within the school premises only.

This provides all the students well-organised and constantly available rich learning webs for value inculcation. There is no die-hard traditionalism, superstition, sectarianism, cultural myopia, fundamentalism, fear and repression and anomie (normlessness) in Sri Sathya Sai approach to Value Education as well in the school climate, school environment and actual curricular transaction in the school, Harmony, joy, aesthetics, morality, spirituality and learning - all these go together to form the right kind of strategy for inculcation of values in the students. The teachers and students are guided by ‘Integrative’ or ‘Conjunctive’ types of social interaction like accommodation, adjustment, co-operation, integration, assimilation. Thus it presents an ideal educational setting for value inculcation. Unlike many Public Schools and other elite schools, the students here do not develop highbrow, elitistic, superficial, irrational, disbalanced, arrogant and uncreative attitudes and moorings. They are developed and trained to live together, play together, study together and work together as loving, caring, co-operative, and creative personalities.

Each student is regularly and carefully observed and assessed in regard to the progress made in the spheres of academic and value inculcation. Since only academically bright students are admitted on the basis of rigorous admission tests, there is a constant concern shown by Baba and teachers for the students, excellence in education, socialility and personality make-up, and there is unity between thought, word and action stressed all the times, the teachers present themselves as ideal socializers and teachers, and students also grow up as ideal socializers and learners through a functional and ideal type of socialization. The overall emphasis is on simplicity, purity, unity, Bharatiya (Indian) culture, excellence and creativity, synthesis and the ideal of the full flowering of
human personality in the most secular and tolerant spirit. The students develop into balanced, reliable and moral personalities unlike many of their counterparts in many other schools and elite schools in India who are growing in sensate culture, indiscipline, money worship, and disregard for Indian culture. Students in this school are given grades instead of marks in assessing their progress in value inculcation. An astounding majority of them have been securing First Division in their Senior Secondary Examination conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education.

The teachers derive most of their inspiration, ideas, content, encouragement or motivation as agents of morality or 'EHV' Education in Human Values' from Sri Sathya Sai Baba's discourses, observations and comments. He frequently comes to the school on surprise visits. He has regular contact with the students and teachers while they visit him in his ashram for his holy darshan on Thursday and Sunday. There are no educational bureaucracy, baneful institution of fault-finding and repressive inspectors or supervisors, no pressures from political, economic or other quarters, no unwarranted interference from educational authorities or Board. Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the founder and ideal, the sole progenitor, the overall provider and norisher, and the sole supervising and assessing authority, and loving and caring sort of spiritual personality in whose missionary agenda education is on a very high priority. The school is successfully adopting the enlightened theoretical approach of Sri Sathya Sai Baba for Education in Human Values.

Although religious, cultural and aesthetic activities dominate the actual operation of this unique contemporary model of value education, yet the Principal and the teachers are not oblivious of the contemporary society's concerns for ecological balance, prevention of pollution of all kinds and the need to keep away from fashions, dirty mass media and the onslaughts of violence, corruption and moral degradation today. Through curricular as well as co-curricular inputs, especially through General Knowledge sessions, lectures,
mutual discussions, moral stories and discussion on current social ills and problems, the students are trained to develop as well-informed personalities. Thus this Convent or Nunnery Kind of residential Public School in fact is not totally alienated from society. The demands of the contemporary modernising and progressive age of science, technology and spiritual re-awakening are met out here and through a well thought and planned theoretical and academic blue print for the education of Indian girls in the best traditions of synthesis between tradition and modernity, the sacred and the secular, the East and the West, the devotion and reasoning. Thus the school is serving as an effective anvil on which Sri Sathya Sai approach to value education is being perfected for global adoption.

We asked Dr. Punam Sambhi, the Principal of the School, to give us her personal views as to how value education can be effectively imparted to children. She replied "Regarding Value Education, my personal view is that it really lies in the hands of parents and teachers; they should be conscientious and try to be exemplary persons before the growing children. Then only value education can be imparted comprehensively and effectively and desired results obtained".

ASSESSMENT

In our assessment, Sri Sathya Sai approach to Value Education in theory as well as in actual practice as observed by us in this school is a fine example of the right kind of functional approach which is badly needed in all countries today. This approach though puritan, is bound to find global acceptance in the years to come due to its truly moral, secular, bold, innovative, spiritual and enlightened practical nature.
REFERENCES & NOTES


51. Empirical investigations were conducted in the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prashanti Nilayam and in Baba's Ashram in the second fortnight of November, 1995.