

EDUCATION TODAY

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values

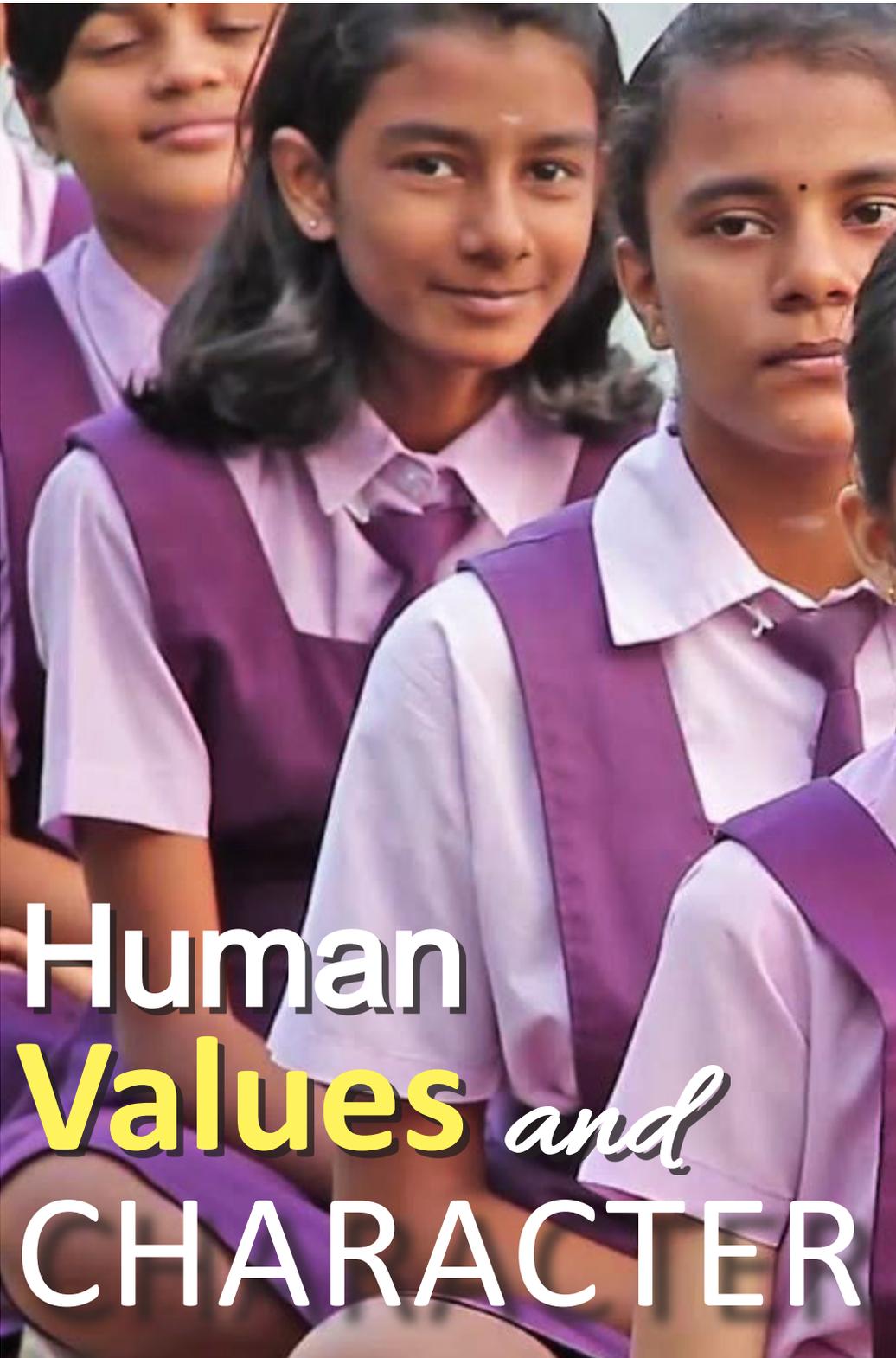
NEWSLETTER

8

October 2024

Character: A Message from the Founder

HIGHLIGHTS



Inspiring
Testimonials

Moral
Excellence
is Virtuous
Character

*A Beacon for the
Community in
Himachal Pradesh,
(India)*

A Model School
in Malaysia

A quarterly online newsletter
published by the Education
Committee of the SSSIO

ECNL n. 8, Oct-Nov-Dec 2024

"The final outcome, where personality is character and character is personality, this is integral education." – V.K. Gokak, 1981

Humankind: The most precious thing in the world.

CHARACTER

A Message from the Founder



In 1981 Sri Sathya Sai Baba began introducing the concept of Education in Human Values at a conference for international teachers. Here follows a brief excerpt from this historic speech which has been slightly adapted for this newsletter.

For people who want to manifest their real natures through their work, first they must develop one quality. That quality is moral excellence, or in other words virtuous character. If you are endowed with a virtuous character, you will never entertain any bad thought. A good character will also enable you to do more and more work with greater and better motives, lead you to engage in social work with earnestness, and to live your life not only for the sake of securing your own livelihood, but for certain ideals. This is why a life without character can be compared to a dark house, or to a kite that has no string attached to it. It is

like a counterfeit coin that won't be accepted by anyone... We say that the end of education is character, but what exactly does this mean? Have we grasped the deep sense and significance of what "a good character" stands for? The first step in the development of character is to see that bad ideas and thoughts do not enter our hearts. Character means that the words that one utters must be transformed into action.

A life without Character is like a dark house. It will be like a kite that has no string attached to it. It is like a counterfeit coin that won't be accepted by anyone.

It doesn't matter, it's not a flaw in one's character, if a fault is sometimes committed. The greater mistake is to repeat the same fault again and again. It is, of course, very unnatural for a person to go on entertaining bad thoughts in one's mind, either knowingly or unknowingly. But once one recognizes this, and understands that these thoughts should not be entertained, it is necessary to see that it doesn't happen again. We must take up this task of developing character and good thoughts in education today. But before we teach

or we persuade the students to develop character, we must also, in our own lives, develop it and practice it. We are not meeting our goals if we ourselves do not have the characters we would like our students to express. We must practice and experience, and then only can we inspire them to stand up to these ideals in their own lives. Whatever mistakes that the students should commit, if we discipline them, finding fault in

their behaviour, we need to first be sure that we are not committing those same faults ourselves. The prosperity and peace of the future depends on the measure with which the students will develop this kind of character and on our own practice of the

same. What is the most precious thing in the world? If you ask, some people may say silver, some may say gold, some may say diamonds. But it is not "silver or gold or diamonds" that are most precious. Humankind is the most precious thing in the world. It is humans who discover the veins of gold under the earth and then take them out and purify them and bring out what we call value. It is humans who take lumps of stone and cut them and make them and recognize them as diamonds and make them bright and shiny. Who is it therefore, that have given value and price to the diamond? Humans. Therefore, the most precious thing is humankind; humans alone must substantiate this value, maintain it and prove that they represent the most precious thing in the world.

*Sri Sathya Sai
1 August 1981*

"The real preparation for education is a study of one's self. The training of the teacher is something far more than a learning of ideas. It includes the training of character; it is a preparation of the spirit."

- Maria Montessori - The Absorbent Mind

A MODEL SCHOOL IN MALAYSIA

As of September 2024, the **Sathya Sai Primary School of Kuala Lumpur** (Malaysia) has successfully completed the SSSIO Accreditation process. The principal and staff of the "Sekolah Rendah Sathya Sai" have every right to be proud. Since its establishment in 2002 the school, which focusses on integrating character development and academic excellence into its educational programme, is flourishing. As a result, hundreds of students have grown in stature and their all-round excellence is transforming the lives of those around them by their own example. The value-based curricula that uphold the school's overall learning process is the effective root cause of both their good academic achievement and compassionate awareness of the needs of others. As a result, students have become qualified candidates for high schools, universities and workplaces. Diligence, ethical behaviour and a sense of community service are among the character traits that the students are imbibing thanks to the dedication of the teachers and the entire school staff, whose aim is to extend the school's harmonious environment towards the students' homes, the local neighbourhoods and the region. Strongly engaged in its mission, the Sathya Sai Primary School of Kuala Lumpur promotes a variety of distinguished programmes to inspire both staff and students. During Spring 2024 motivational talks, classes on how to implement the five Human Values into lesson plans, vitalizing mentoring from senior to junior students, anti-bullying seminars, chess tournaments and various annual celebrations and sports competitions, were impressive parts of its agenda. During the same period the school also welcomed a visit by a group of Nigerian Education officials with the aim of fostering international collaboration.



A BEACON FOR THE COMMUNITY

The **Sri Sathya Sai Educare Vidya Pratishthan** (Himachal Pradesh, India) was established in April 2010, initially to provide free schooling to 33 children in the 6th to 8th grade. Interestingly it was started by a group of inspired local youth affiliated with the Sathya Sai Organisation, in a donated village farmhouse, with no resources and only their faith that it would succeed. Since then, it has become a beacon for the community, with values-based integral education provided to 199 students from nursery to 10th grade. Of these, 131 reside in the school hostel as their family homes are in remote areas. Programmes in yoga, sports, arts, and culture and different practices that belong to the golden heritage of India find their place in the overall learning process. The students regularly win prizes at district and state levels in athletics, yoga, folk dance, and spelling competitions. In addition to offering an educational setting where knowledge and wisdom walk hand in hand, the five human values of Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love and Nonviolence, pillars of the school's curricula, are manifested and shared with the community. Provision of food and free drinking water



to hundreds of adults and children in their own and nearby villages, blood donations, tree planting, the construction of a 450 metre road to the school (which was initially only accessible via a goat track), and of playgrounds in nearby areas, are among their noteworthy activities. They also cook and serve food daily to visitors at the hospital in Dharamshala. Parents and other community members work alongside the students and staff on many of these service activities. The school's self-development process of achieving the Highest Goodness can be exemplified by the school programme: "From Cleanliness to Divinity", where local temples and landmarks are cleaned, and inner purity promoted.



Values-rich Cultures in Sathya Sai Schools

The message of the Founder, brought into focus in this issue, is that it is important for all of us who hope to help children transform to first be aware of our own positive and authentic role models by paying attention to our own character development. It reminds us that values are not just for the classroom or the school, but for every facet of life. In Sathya Sai schools, this means a culture in which human values permeate every aspect and touch the hearts of all stakeholders, from the board members to school leaders, teachers, support staff and parents. To learn more about how our Sathya Sai schools achieve this and to identify good practices that can be shared between schools, the SSSIO Education Committee is about to conduct a short online survey inviting directors and principals to share key aspects of their schools' values-rich cultures. The questions in the survey are also examples of the types of questions schools could ask in their effort to implement an ongoing systemic monitoring for their school improvement processes.

TESTIMONIALS

Teachers and school staff, parents, children and the local community who have been exposed to the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values programme have expressed their appreciation and gratitude on various occasions. They have stressed how the programme improves behaviour, interaction and school performance, among many other beneficial character traits.



"The health of all people is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security. Genuine happiness for yourself should come from your human values." - **High School Student**



"I learned how these human values are evident in good character, the life forces, the mind, and so much more." - **High School Student**



"We used the Sathya Sai curriculum in our pilot session of University Extension and Freedom Through the Arts last summer as the basis of our multi-faceted program for youth and the families. We will continue to use it as the core of our program as it becomes a year-round out-of-school initiative. We have found that the curriculum helps our youth develop the kind of personal core that empowers them to resist the lure of the toxic cultures which may surround them. My personal belief is that this training results in young people who are better able to successfully navigate their journeys toward productive and responsible adulthood. The adults who go through the SSEHV facilitator training are, for the most part, empowered to become better teachers of youth and more competent human beings." **SSEHV Community Training - Volunteer, Freedom Through the Arts in collaboration with an esteemed university in Indiana, USA**



"I like this program because it has peace and dignity. I also like this program because it talks about friendship." - **SSEHV Student, Age 10**

Front cover: Children of the Sathya Sai Primary School of Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)



The Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) is a spiritual and humanitarian organization active for over 50 years and in over 110 countries. The SSSIO Education Committee supports and promotes Sathya Sai Education worldwide including 39 Sathya Sai Schools, 28 Institutes of Sathya Sai Education, and programmes of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) and Sai Spiritual Education (SSE). For more information please contact: ec@sssio.org

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any manner without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. To request permissions, please contact ec@sssio.org