



Sewa team guide

2013-2014

“Selfless service alone gives the needed strength and courage to awaken the sleeping humanity in one’s heart”

- Shri Sathya Sai Baba



National Hindu Students' Forum (UK)



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Need anymore help, let us know.



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Sewa should be an essential part of your society's regular events here is a variety of innovative Sewa events that you can introduce to your members and instil within your weekly events.

Hinduism and Sewa

“Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, Sarve santu niraamayaah, Sarve bhadraani pashyantu, Maakaschit duhkha bhaag bhava”

May all be happy (sukhinah). May all be free from disabilities (niraamayaah). May all look to the good of others (pashyantu). May none suffer from sorrow (duhkha)

Hindu Dharma teaches that God resides in all beings, be it human, animal or plant. Therefore serving Man and other beings is serving God. The feelings of compassion, humanity and sympathy are many reasons to do sewa.

Sewa occupies a high position in one's spiritual development. It is a form of Karma yoga and focuses on the adherence to duty (dharma) while remaining detached from the reward. It states that one can experience salvation (Moksha) or love (bhakti) of God by performing their duties in an unselfish manner for the pleasure of the Supreme, which lies in the welfare of the world.

“Datavyamiti Yaddanam Deeyatenupa Karine Deshe Kale cha Patercha Taddanam Sattvikam Smarutam”

That gift which is made to one who can make no return, with the feeling that it is one's duty to give, and which is given at the right place and time and to a worthy person, that gift is held sattvik (pure)

- Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 17, Verse 20)

In Chapter Three of the Bhagavad Gita, when Arjuna is worrying about his immediate predicaments, Lord Krishna replies that there is no way Arjuna can avoid the obligation of selfless action. He must work not for his own sake, but for the welfare of all.

ARJUNA:

O Krishna, you have said that knowledge is greater than action; why then do you ask me to wage this terrible war? Your advice seems inconsistent. Give me one path to follow to the supreme good.

SRI KRISHNA:

Fulfill all your duties; action is better than inaction. Even to maintain your body, Arjuna, you are obliged to act. Selfish action imprisons the world. Act selflessly, without any thought of personal profit.

At the beginning, mankind and the obligation of selfless service were created together.

“Through selfless service, you will always be fruitful and find the fulfilment of your desires”: this is the promise of the Creator.



Introduction

Sewa is an essential part of Hinduism - to serve is one of the greatest duties we have. It allows us to practice, promote, preserve and protect our Hindu Dharma. The Gita itself explains the importance of sewa when it declares the paths of life: *jnana yoga*, the contemplative path of spiritual wisdom and *karma yoga*, the active path of selfless service.

CONGRATULATIONS on your election as the new sewa coordinator for your NHSF (UK) chapter! You are an ambassador of sewa and have the privileged duty of implementing karma yoga within your university.

The Sewa Team are at hand to help you in every way possible

We hope that this guide will allow you to undertake your role as smoothly and successfully as possible. However if you do have any questions/queries, please email us at sewateam@nhsf.org.uk and we will endeavour to answer these as quickly as possible!

Sewa Coordinator Role Description

- Have a clear understanding on what sewa is, what it incorporates, and how even the smallest actions can be encompassed under sewa.
- To know the importance of sewa within Hinduism and how it is associated to our Dharma.
- Inspire your members to undertake sewa throughout the year by encouraging effective and regular sewa within your university.
- Advertise activities that will help your members perform sewa regularly. For example, volunteering opportunities your university has to offer, local charity work.
- Plan and implement an effective Sewa Day, National Blood Donation Day and Sewa Week.
- Work closely with the National Sewa Team. If you have any ideas, any queries, or need any help, let us know!
- Keep your eyes peeled for information, documents, and administrative details.
- Keep National Sewa Team informed of your activities, so we can use your experience to help others.
- Ensure money raised is collected promptly and given to the Sewa Coordinators at NHSF (UK) AGM in March.

Have fun and implement sewa... **“Be The Change You Want To See In The World!!”**



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Top Sewa Tips

Things to consider:

- Introduce a 5-10 minute session of SEWA in your weekly AARTI
- Emphasise some form of Sewa at each event – whether it is having a charity collection tin present, or having an educational skit to enhance knowledge. [Sewa, no matter how big or small]
- Move emphasis away from raising money to other forms of Sewa. Sewa is not only about fundraising - it is also active volunteering, raising awareness, campaigning or personal donations (such as blood donations or tins of food).



General

- Any posters and tickets should have the charity NAME and NUMBER clearly labelled
- Team up with other societies (such as other faith societies) at your university – volunteering societies, local council, people and planet, RAG etc all have a huge base of people who can help you.
- Sewa should be done regularly and not only during Sewa Week or Sewa Day.

Money [Finance / Bucket Collections etc]

- All collection buckets and money boxes must have charity NAME and NUMBER clearly labelled
- Any collection buckets must be security sealed
- Street collections require a permit from the local council- you must also keep the permit with you when fundraising. [Note: for permits you need to apply early - 6 to 12 weeks, check with local council]
- When counting buckets, you should have two people and ALSO ONE independent person from the SU.
- All money raised at events must be counted and BANKED, within 2 weeks of collection/ event.
- ALL money raised during the year is donated to the two chosen charities [50% of ALL money raised goes to the National Charity]

Event Specific

Sewa Day [6th October 2013]

- NO fundraising is allowed on Sewa Day - it is solely about active forms of volunteering

NHSF National Blood Donation Day [6th November 2013]

- If members cannot attend an appointment on the day itself then it can be done on a day better suited to their schedule - ideally in November. It is flexible - what matters is that people donate blood and hopefully regularly.

Sewa Week [24th February to 2nd March 2014]

- Sewa Week is not only from the specified dates - and can be flexible. Ideally either a week before or after. Sewa Week can also be "Sewa Fortnight / Month" to have events spaced out

NHSF (UK) Sewa Events

NHSF (UK) SEWA TEAM AIMS OF THE YEAR

- To continually support chapters throughout the year via Sewa Chapter Liaison Officers
- To introduce Sewa into Weekly Aartis as a WEEKLY EVENT
- Encourage Sewa at ALL EVENTS, no matter how big or small
- For EVERY CHAPTER to be involved in Sewa Day and National Blood Donation Day

National Sewa Day | 6th October 2013

This National initiative is a day when thousands of good-hearted people across the world come together to perform sewa and experience the joy of giving in its truest sense. NHSF (UK) fully supports this concept, and by participating in this collective endeavour, we hope to be a part of those that spread the seeds of Sewa so that acts of kindness are performed more often.

Each project organised by universities should be based on one of the guiding principles: to help relieve hardship/poverty, to bring a little joy to others and to help the environment. Projects that involve fundraising are discouraged, as the purpose is to give your time. Sewa day provides an opportunity to do something positive that makes a meaningful difference to someone else's quality of life.

National Blood Donation Day | 6th November 2013

B positive is an exciting campaign launched by NHSF (UK) in association with the NHS Blood Donation. At present, there is a severe shortage of blood supplies in the UK. With only 2% of the South Asian community on the blood donor register. There are specific blood types more common in our community; for example- 25% of Asians are blood group type B, compared to only 9% of Caucasians. NHS Blood and Donor have explained that matching supply to demand is a constant challenge, and they rarely have more than a few days' supply of B Positive in stock!

By donating blood YOU can save lives! One donation can help save or improve the lives of up to 3 Adults or 7 babies. NHSF (UK) have identified the importance of giving blood and raising awareness, and we are determined to make a difference! By all giving blood on one day, we can all work together to help improve lives.

NHSF (UK) Sewa Week | 24th-2nd March 2014

This is a week of events dedicated to Sewa activities and raising the profile of sewa. Sometimes people get caught up in their busy lives and do not get time to stop and help. Sewa Week is a week dedicated to helping others; a chance to stop your busy workload and give back to the community. Although sewa should be done all year round, this week allows organised events and active sewa to be undertaken.

This year, we have initiated for the SEVEN SEWA THEMES to be encompassed within every chapters' Sewa Week. An event should be organised from a variety of themes, to allow a diverse range of sewa activities to partake in. This is your chance to think of CREATIVE SEWA IDEAS and implement it within your university!



Seven Sewa Themes

Sewa 4 THE ENVIRONMENT

"Service to man is Service to God, but Service to the earth is Service to all living things."

By caring for the environment not only are you looking after mankind and benefiting generations to come, but you are also taking care of all ecosystems.

For example:

- Encourage recycling at all events
- Turn off electric goods and taps when not in use
- Clothes collection and recycling
- Have a display of environmental facts at events
- Send old phones and computer equipment to Computer Aid.
- Plant a tree
- Clean University Park
- Get involved in conservation work

Sewa 4 ANIMALS

"The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated"

- Mahatma Gandhi

Hinduism teaches that God resides in every being and this includes animals. Many people would regard animals as companions for life and just as worthy of our respect as human beings.

For example:

- Get in touch with your local dog kennels and see if you can take the dogs for a walk
- Milk cows in Mandirs
- Make a bird feeder
- Help in a nearby farm to care for the animals
- Adopt an animal for £x per month
- Feed ducks in local parks or feed birds
- Buy organic milk



Seven Sewa Themes

Sewa 4 THE COMMUNITY

“Vasudhaiva Kutubakam” - The whole world is one family

Community sewa is one of the broadest forms of sewa you can do. It can encompass even the smallest acts of kindness. Volunteering in your local community or campaigning for the global community all counts as sewa for the benefit of your community.

For example:

- Decorating/painting a women's refuge
- Cleaning community park/hall
- Volunteering in a soup kitchen
- Organising a Diwali function for local Mandir
- Join a befriending service run by council or Student's Union
- Painting local community buildings
- Help clean the local Mandir

Sewa 4 THE SOUL

“Selfless service alone gives the needed strength and courage to awaken the sleeping humanity in one's heart”

- Shri Sathya Sai Baba

Although Sewa is all about selfless service, we need to look after ourselves to ensure that our mind and body remains fit and healthy which can then help us to perform sewa to the best of our abilities.

For example:

- Yoga sessions
- Sporting activities
- Chapter fasting days
- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Surya Namaskar classes
- Self Defence sessions
- Patience Exercises



Seven Sewa Themes

Sewa 4 HUMANS

“I do not want a kingdom, salvation, or heaven, what I want is to remove the trouble of the oppressed, the poor and the needy”

– Mahatma Gandhi

As a concept, sewa is embedded in Hinduism - to sacrifice your time and resources for the benefit of others without wanting anything in return is an inaugural teaching and a way of living.

For example:

- Make sandwiches for a homeless shelter
- Visiting a nearby home for the elderly
- Packing customers' shopping at the local supermarket
- Volunteering at a children's hospice/foster home
- Toy collection for less fortunate children
- Visiting and speaking to patients at the local hospital



Sewa 4 FUNDRAISING

Financial sewa is a form of personal sacrifice, by giving money or spending your time to help raise money can prove invaluable. Like it or not, money is a key factor in making things happen. By raising money for charity you are directly giving those charities the support they need to continue the good work that they do.

For example:

- Movie Night
- Bake sale
- Hindu Quiz Night
- Sponsored run/wax/haircut/silence/skydive
- Mini Mela
- Committee Auction
- Beauty Treatment night
- FIFA tournaments
- Bhajan singing during Diwali (carol singing at Christmas)
- Chilli eating competition

Sewa 4 AWARENESS

“If one sows goodness, one will reap goodness”

In some cases, to educate others is to work selflessly. To raise awareness to others regarding issues that may benefit the community or environment is another integral form of sewa.

For example:

- Holding discussion sessions on topics such as poverty, climate change
- Distribute leaflets for local charities
- Giving blood
- Raise awareness and drive campaigns on blood, organ and bone marrow donation
- Recycling days and its' importance
- Taking part in Mental Health Week
- Participating in charity projects
- Promoting No Smoking Day