



## An Empirical Study of Teachings and Works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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### Abstract

*Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given new dimension to human transformation. Through his teachings, life and works, he has established world - wide movement based on infinite and self-less LOVE. His concept of humanity is that all are one. Every individual has the freedom of following one's own religion and faith. He not only preached but also practiced what he propagated. He emphatically reiterated a number of times: there is only one religion, religion of love; there is only one caste, the caste of humanity; there is only one language, the language of heart; and there is only one God, and that is omni-present. Through his organizations, he provided water, food and shelter to millions across the world without any charge. Sri Sathya Sai Education System is a unique system of helping child to be what one can become. For him, truly educated person is one who has broad mind and compassionate heart. His life is a message for his devotees. The present research work was conducted in Himachal Pradesh with the purpose of understanding the activities of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation and to study the views of devotees about the life, teachings and works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. For the conduct of this study, a sample of 324 devotees was taken. Data was collected with the help of a questionnaire which was mailed and also administered by personal interaction. It is found that the respondents have staunch faith in the divinity of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and they experienced that his teachings and works have inspired them and transformed their lives.*

**Keywords:** Religion, Transformation, Teaching, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, works.

### Introduction

The existence of religion is as old as society itself. It constitutes the transcendental objects of inquiry as body of socially cultivated discourses and practices in human society. Religion of one sort or the other appeared to be universal among human beings. Sociology of religion developed on an objective and rational evaluation of the religious phenomenon and religion become a resource of varied interpretations. There are three main approaches generally associated with religion namely, the functionalist interpretation associated with Emile Durkheim, interpretative approach associated with Max-Weber and the critical approach with Marxist interpretation of religion. Despite the variations, the sociological perspectives on religion have ultimately been guided by the functionalist dictum that religion is what religion does. Religion as Dharma in Indian civilization had been all encompassing concept. Critical enquiries into the Indian religious tradition started with earliest interpretations by the colonial census officers, which later on were given the social and sociological direction by the sociologists like Ghurye, Milton, Singer, Srinivas and others.

Religion can hardly be indentified or defined except in terms of human social relations. From functionalist perspective, society requires a certain degree of social solidarity, value-consensus and harmony and integration between its parts<sup>1</sup>. Religion promotes social solidarity by dealing with situations of emotional stress which threaten the stability of society. Religion has occupied a central place in human society and human

thought. At present, there are eleven religions which are broadly classified in three group i.e. i. Aryan-Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Sikhism, ii. Semetic- Hebruism, Christianity and Islam, iii. Mongolian – Taoism, Confucianism and Shintoism<sup>2,3</sup>.

**Sri Sathya Sai Movement:** Sri Sathya Sai Baba with his extraordinary vision, miraculous powers and leadership led the masses world over in their journey to learn to live a life full of bliss, prosperity and service to others. He ruled the hearts of his devotees through his infinite love. He practiced a unique model of serving others without expecting anything in turn. His only instrument which he used to refer in almost all of his hundreds of discourses is LOVE. His is the unique example of LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL in the whole world. Former President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam said, 'I admire Baba Sathya Sai Baba for his selfless work and contributions to the welfare of the people by providing drinking water for the rural population, free healthcare facilities for the rural poor and free higher education'.

The Sai organisation operates in 20 states of India with 6 lakh active members. The Seva dal has strength of nearly 1,40,000 are mahila. The Samithis and Bhajan Mandalis number is about 8350. There are 14695 Bal Vikas centres with over 3 lakh students and nearly 19,000 gurus<sup>4</sup>. The major factors in human resource development are value based education and quality healthcare. In addition, the infrastructural requirement like availability of potable water is an essential need of the human

resource. While the government is actively engaged in providing these resources to the citizens, Baba has been sensitive to these essential needs of the Indian population, particularly of the people living in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, for over four decades. Keeping this in mind, he has created vast infrastructure for providing value-based quality education to children from primary to university level, established super specialty hospitals in rural area - as early as 1991 when there were no corporate hospitals in such interior regions - and worked on a project to provide potable safe drinking water for people of Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh'. His all human transformation programmes are rooted in spirituality.

Sri Sathya Sai Movement is different in its approach and contents. 'Baba gave the world a new framework that brought empirical science to unifying force if spirituality, efficiency driven institutions closer to eternal/human values and comforts of modernity closer to stability of tradition. He demonstrated this through the initiatives he started and the institutions he founded. Broadly, they are in the areas of medicine, education and social service, commonly called as medicare, educare' and sociocare.

The most important part of Sai movement is Sri Sathya Seva Organization which is active in all the states of India and about 180 countries of the world. Sai Organization has three wings - the spiritual, educational and service. These wings conduct various activities with the purpose of transformation of man and society. Today, in India alone, there are more than 10 lakhs members who voluntarily serve with love and devotion, irrespective of their position or caste. They work in over 2700 villages, slums, hospitals, old age homes, jails, orphanages and in disaster prone areas. They are inspired by Baba's message that 'service to man is to service to God'. *Seva* transforms their own lives and the lives of others who are served.

According to Sri Sathya Sai Baba, all the religions in the world stress on two important factors, *Jnana* (wisdom) and *Bhakti* as essential means for God-realisation<sup>5</sup>. The Sai spiritual movement, however, is the essence of all religions and that has to be developed and propagated. The essence, the inner meaning and the goal of all the religions in the world is only one. No religion in the world teaches hatred, conflict and wickedness.

## Methodology

The present study was undertaken to understand the teachings and works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, particularly in the present day world which is going through turmoil and chaotic situations.

**Objectives of the study:** Main purpose of this study has been to understand the life, teachings and works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The main objectives of this study are as under: i. To study the life, teachings and contribution of Sri Sathya Sai

Baba in social transformation in different areas like education, health, social welfare, and spirituality. ii. To examine the aims, structure, activities and functioning of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, an organisation established by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. iii. To study the experiences and views of devotees pertaining to Sai Teachings, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and Sai Works. iv. To analyse demographic, socio-cultural and economic profile of the study area and the respondents.

The study has been conducted with sociological perspective. It has used descriptive research design and survey work for realizing the research objectives. Primary and secondary sources of collecting information have been used.

**Profile of study area:** The study has been conducted in the state of Himachal Pradesh. This state is a hilly and mountainous region and is one of the smaller states of India. Its area is 55,673 sq. kms. with a population of 68.56 lakhs persons as per Census 2011. Himachal Pradesh comprises of twelve districts, 52 sub-divisions, 75 development blocks, 109 tehsils and sub-tehsils and 3243 panchayats. Its economy mainly depends upon agriculture, horticulture, tourism and allied activities. It is one of the fast developing of states and can boast of high literacy rate, high performance on social factors and peaceful society.

Himachal Pradesh is a multi cultural as well as multilingual state like other Indian states. Low castes form only 24 % of the population. The tribal population of the state comprise of the Gaddis, Kinnars, Gujjars, Pangawals, Lahaulis and Spitiens. The Kinnars are the inhabitants of the Kinnaur region and have traditionally practiced polyandry and polygamy. The Gujjars are nomads who rear buffalo herds. Himachal also has sizable population of Tibetans.

The languages spoken by the people are Hindi, Punjabi, Mahasui, Kulluyi, Lahauli, Kinnauri, Chambyali, Sirmauri, Bilaspuri, Pahari, Dogri and Kangri. Culture of Himachal Pradesh is rich, extravagant and traditional. Due to this rugged terrain the culture and tradition of the Himachal Pradesh thus, remains unscratched by foreign invasions. Its ethnicity and originality are retained.

It has very rich culture not only exuberant in the physical attires but also in the festival celebrations and musical melodies. They are mainly spiritual and invoke gods and goddesses during festive seasons. Festivals and fairs form an integral part of the culture of Himachal Pradesh. These festivals are full of religious rites and cultural practices that the Himachalis assert in the best of their abilities ([www.carrentalservice.co](http://www.carrentalservice.co)). Himachal Pradesh is the least urbanized state in India, and so there is an 'untouched' simplicity about its inhabitants. Ninety percent of the people live in distant 'fairy tale' villages and small towns, and depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Many also rear sheep, goats, and other cattle. Education is the key instrument for

developing human capability. Himachal Pradesh has a literacy rate of about 86 per cent. Male/female literacy rate differs considerably in the state as against 90 per cent literacy rate for males and 77 per cent for females.

Hinduism is the main religion in Himachal Pradesh. Music and Dance form a very important part of the Culture of Himachal Pradesh. Another interesting aspect of the culture of Himachal Pradesh is the endless succession of fairs and festivals celebrated in the region. The main festivals are Holi, Dussehra and Diwali, but numerous local festivals are also celebrated with great pomp and grandeur. Himachal Pradesh is also widely renowned for the beautiful handicraft items produced here. The carpets, leather works, shawls, paintings, metal-wares, woodwork and paintings of the land are all evocative of the rich culture of Himachal Pradesh.

**Sample:** For carrying out survey work, District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh has been selected. The main reason of selecting this district is that it is the biggest district in the state has largest number of devotees as compared to other districts. There are 42 Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithis which have 3500 devotees/members out of whom 1682 are males and 1818 are females. A sample of 350 devotees was selected with the help of proportionate random sampling. 324 questionnaires were found complete in all respects. Primary information has been collected through questionnaire by mail and personal interviews as well.

## Results and Discussion

**Socio-cultural and economic profile of respondents:** Demographic, socio-cultural and economic profile of the respondents portray that 40.13% devotees fall under 46 to 60 years of age, followed by 27.85% and 21.91% under the age group of 61 years and above and 26 to 45 years respectively. In the present study, 50.93 percent females are there as against 49.07% males. In the selected sample, 76.85 percent belong to high castes and 23.15 percent are OBC and Scheduled Caste category. Religion is the most influential force of the society. i. In the present study, most of the respondent devotees are Hindus i.e.98.15 percent, only 1.85 percent devotees are from Sikh community. ii. Out of 95.06% respondents who are literate, 22.84% are post-graduates, 22.22% graduates and 17.90% devotees hold vocational/technical qualification. iii. Among the respondents, 71.91 percent devotees belong to rural area while 28.09 percent devotees are of urban background. More than 59.07 percent respondents have income more than Rs.3,00,000 per annum while only 9.88 percent devotees under study belong to less than Rs50,000 income group. iv. 85.19 percent respondents have joint family setup. 54.94 percent families consist of 6 to 8 members. It shows that the concept of joint families still exists in the villages of Himachal Pradesh. v. As far as the belief in religion is concerned all the devotees have faith in God or *ishtdevta*. Main reasons for developing faith in divinity are their personal

experiences, study of religious literature, interactions with religious persons and family *sanskaras*. The devotees admit that electronic media has triggered their faith in divinity. Most of the respondents admit that they pray to God for material gains and prosperity and for eradication of pains and sorrows. Only 20.99% pray for guidance for righteous living. 12.35% and 10.49% pray for welfare of humanity and redemption of man for realization of inner being. vi. As far as the major religious festivals are concerned, all the devotees celebrate all the local festivals and fairs including the birthday of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and holy Easwaramma day. The devotees feel that festivals intensify devotion, bring harmony in the society, give joy and happiness and maintain culture. It is also strongly affirmed by the respondents that social transformation can be brought by organizing educational activities for promoting human values at mass level. The message of love, harmony, selfless seva activities and oneness plays an important role in bringing social transformation.

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba and his teachings:** Sri Sathya Sai Baba, one of the most revered spiritual masters of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, established biggest social and spiritual welfare organisations and launched a number of programmes for the good of the humanity. Born on 23rd Nov.1926 in a tiny and backward village of Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, Baba revealed his extra-ordinary talent, compassion and wisdom from the tender age of fourteen years when he declared that his life was for the welfare of people. He engaged in his mission of individual and social transformation through the instrument of love. Bill Aitkan (2012) writes about Sri Sathya Sai Baba that such saintly beings even when they leave their bodies do not cease their compassionate ministrations, but remain available to those who seek their help. After forty years of his blessings I have come to regard Sathya Sai as probably the most astounding spiritual being in religious history not because of what I have read but because of what I continue to feel at his Darshan, the intoxicating mood of real self hood, that most liberating of mortal ecstasies<sup>6</sup>.

From the Table-1 portrays that 34.88 percent devotees know about Sri Sathya Sai Baba for the last five years while 37.65 percent devotees are aware about him for the last ten years. 27.47 percent devotees know about Him for more than 10 years.

Table -2 reveals that 95.06 percent respondents were highly impressed by his quality of infinite love or his compassion to all beings. His self-less service to humanity impressed 96.91 percent devotees. 91.05 percent devotees are attracted due to his miracles while 82.72 percent devotees are impressed by his teachings. 58.64 percent respondents felt Sri Sathya Sat Baba's omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence in their day to day life while 58.64 percent devotees have heart to heart communication with him.

**Table-1**  
**Awareness about Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
**N=324**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Number of years since respondents know about Sri Sathya Sai Baba		
For the last five years	113	34.88
For the last ten years	122	37.65
For more than ten years	089	27.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-2**  
**Sathya Sai Baba’s Attributes that attract devotees**  
**N=324**

Attributes in Sri Sathya Sai Baba that impressed respondents		
Infinite love/compassion to all beings	308	95.06
Heart to heart communication	188	58.02
Selfless service to humanity	314	96.91
Miracles	295	91.05
Omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of Baba	190	58.64
Teachings of Baba	268	82.72

**Table-3**  
**Respondents’ Views about Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
**N=324**

Respondents’ views about Baba		
God Incarnate	304	93.83
Man with supernatural powers	048	14.81
Social Reformer	278	85.80
Spiritual Guru	269	83.02

On the basis of their feelings and experiences, 93.83 percent devotees are of the view that Sri Sathya Sai Baba is God incarnate while 85.80 percent respondents feel that he is social reformer and 83.02 percent devotees admit that he is spiritual Guru. 14.81 percent respondents feel that he is man with supernatural powers (table-3).

Sandweiss, a practicing psychiatrist in his book, “With Love, Man is God”, writes, “I have seriously contemplated on swami’s teachings. In this process, I have defined for myself nine elements that serve as an overview of his teachings.” These elements are; with Love, Man is God, the mind is the key with the help of which we can use our discriminatory power, practice sense control, develop a relationship with Sai, the living god, see Sai everywhere, Bring Sai into the community, Accept the purification process, transcend suffering with the help of *namasmarna* and practicing self control, merge in Sai love, meaning thereby that pure love for humanity is the penance for worldly sufferings<sup>7</sup>.

Baba gave nine point code of conduct for the functioning of Sai Organisation. These are -Daily *japam*, meditation and prayer, regular study of spiritual literature with special reference to Sai literature, devotional singing with members of the family once in a week, participation in Bal-vikas programme by children, attending community *Bhajan / Nagar Sankirtan* at least once in a month organized by the Organization, Participation in community service and other programmes of the organizations, speaking softly and lovingly to everyone, not to indulge in talking ill of others especially in their absence and ceiling on desires and utilizing the savings generated for the service of mankind.

Table 4 analyses the views of respondents regarding their belief in teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. 91.98 percent respondents believe in five human values i.e. *Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema* and *Ahimsa*. 89.20 percent each believe in “love all serve all” and practical spirituality i.e. nine point code of conduct and ten principles/directives respectively. 84.88 percent devotees liked unity of faiths, 82.41 percent respondents found teaching i.e. “wastage of resources is crime” most appealing. 73.46 percent devotees were impressed by his rich culture and tradition of Bharat and 70.99 percent respondents found his concept of ‘Educare’ most appealing. 62.62 percent devotees are much influenced about his explanation to “Man’s reality: Inherent Divinity”. Last but not the least, 58.33 percent found his views significant on the role of women in the society most revealing.

**Table-4**  
**Respondents' belief in Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba**  
**N=324**

Particulars	Frequency	%age
<b>Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in which respondents believe</b>		
Unity of faiths	275	84.88
Man's Reality: Inherent Divinity	204	62.96
Five HVs- <i>Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa</i>	298	91.98
Love all and serve all	289	89.20
Educare	230	70.99
Nine Point Code of Conduct-Practical Spirituality	289	89.20
Rich Culture and Tradition of Bharat	238	73.46
Significant Role of Women in the Society	189	58.33
Wastage of Resources is Crime	267	82.41

Table-5 displays the personal views of respondents that as to which religion his teachings belong. It was found that 98.77 percent believe that these teachings belong to Hinduism, 12.35 percent related his teachings to Buddhism and 10.88 percent devotees related to Jainism. Only 6.17 percent devotees and 1.54 percent devotees each related to Christianity and Sikhism. Baba says that, "there is only one religion, the religion of love, there is only one caste, the caste of humanity and there is only one language, the language of heart". He further says that whatever religion you believe, believe it with firm faith and have respect for other's faith also.

**Table-5**  
**Respondents' opinion about the religion to which Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba belong (N= 324)**

Religion to which teachings of Baba belong		
Hinduism	320	98.77
Islam	020	06.17
Christianity	005	01.54
Sikhism	005	01.54
Jainism	035	10.80
Buddhism	40	12.35
Zoroastrianism	00	00

Table-6 exhibits the views of respondents as to which 'teaching' has deeper impact in changing their life-style. 92.59 percent respondents denote it to 'Namasmarana', 88.58 percent devotees to 'help ever, hurt never, love all, serve all', while 83.33 percent devotees found 'five human values' and 72.22 percent respondents have a greater impact of 'service to man is service to God'. 70.67 percent respondents found 'nine point code of conduct' as the essence of life and 58.33 percent respondents

believe that 'ceiling on desires' is most practical way of life and need to be followed in life.

**Table-6**  
**Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba which have deeper Impact on respondents (N=324)**

Teachings of Baba which have deeper impact on Respondents		
Help Ever Hurt Never, Love all Serve all	287	88.58
Service to Man is Service to God	234	72.22
Five Human Values	270	83.33
Nine Points Code of Conduct	229	70.67
Ceiling on Desires	189	58.33
<i>Namasmarana</i>	300	92.59

**Respondents' opinion about the Works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba:** Charismatic leader has the power to convince individuals to sacrifice their personal gain, even their lives, for the common goal and commit themselves to an omniscient god-like leader who knows the best for them and for society<sup>7</sup>. Sri Sathya Sai Baba was a leader of this type. His works can be grouped under five categories as given below: Educare, Medicare, Aquacare, Sociocare, Spirituacare. Sri Sathya Sai system of education imparts education through formal, non-formal and informal system.

Under formal system, Baba established Sai schools, Sai colleges and Sai University. There are 99 Sri Sathya Sai Schools throughout India. At international level, 41 Sathya Sai schools with about 5100 students are operating in 26 countries including Thailand, Zambia, Paraguay, Chile, Mexico, U.K, and Nepal, to name a few. Sri Sathya Sai University is accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC).The

NAAC peer team in its report remarked, "The peer team feels that this university stands out as a crest jewel among the university education system worthy of emulation by the institutions of higher learning in the country and elsewhere, so that these benefits would be reaped fast and on the widest possible scale". At non- formed level, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation runs *Bal - Vikas* Programme for small children. The idea of *Bal -Vikas* is to raise a generation of boys and girls with healthy thinking and clear consciousness. The young minds of children can be led into good ways of living with simplicity, humility and discipline. Sai parenting is another way to transform children and parents so that whole world will be better.

The hospitals run by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust provide free medical care to the sick and ailing with dedication, commitment, love and the best of skills (sssm.org.in). The mission of these institutions is to provide high quality medical care free of charge to all irrespective of caste, creed, and religion. Various medical and institutions run are; Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Medical Science, Prasanthigram has two super speciality hospitals one at Puttaparthi and another at Whitefield. Other medical hospitals are - Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Prasanthi Nilayam, Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Whitefield, Sri Sathya Sai, Mobile Hospital, Prasanthi Nilayam. In addition, Sri Sathya Sai Organisations and Sri Sathya Sai Trusts at state level have established hospitals for rendering medical care to the needy and poor. Medical camps and veterinary camps are held throughout the world providing access to medical care.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba launched a couple of water supply projects spending crores of rupees for providing water in the drought-prone districts of Andhra Pradesh such as Anantapur, East Godavari, West Godavari, Medak and Mehabubnagar. Through Chennai Water Project (named by the government of Tamil Nadu as SathyaSai Ganga), Baba ensured adequate water supply to Chennai. These are unique examples of Baba's love and compassion to the society at large.

Personification of self-less service and *Masiha* to suffering humanity. He established Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanodharana Pathakam to provide food, shelter, clothing and education to destitute children. Baba's Love and compassion reached out to the victims in the form of relief material to earthquake victims at Bhuj, Tsunami affected families in Tamil Nadu and natural disaster relief at Uttarakhand. Sri Sathya Sai Trust runs *Vridhashramas* (homes for the aged), Gram Seva projects. In Odisha, Sai Organisation provided 700 houses and 2 schools in 16 villages in 2008, and 300 houses in 8 villages in 2013. Besides, there are hundreds of seva projects executed by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations throughout the country and the world.

Whole philosophy of Baba for bringing transformation is founded in spirituality. His personal interaction and public discourses were highly inspiring and prompting people to

transform through spiritual *sadhana* which is based on practical spirituality rather than unnecessary rituals. He had spiritual recipe for each individual depending upon his/her need and level of penance. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization implements various spiritual development programmes through community devotional singing, *nagarsankirtans*, meditation camps, study circles, veda chanting, workshops and conferences, etc.

Respondents under study are found to be aware of various projects and works of Baba including Free Drinking Water Projects, Value-based Education, Sri Sathya Sai Village Integrated Programme, Bal -Vikas programme, Blood Donation Camps, Youth Development Programmes, Spiritual Development Programmes, Narayan Seva etc.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba formally declared the establishment of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization at the time of first world conference in 1968 at Mumbai. The major objective of this organization is to make devotees of any religion more sincere and dedicated in the practice of their respective religions by understanding properly the true spirit of religion through various spiritual, educational and services activities at individual, family and community level in an organized and systemic manner. In order to help the members of the organization, all the members are expected to follow nine point code of conduct and ten-fold path to divinity as laid down in the charter. Sai Organisation is spread over 126 countries of the world. The apex body of the organization is the 'Prasanthi council', headquartered in Prasanthi Nilayam, Andhra Pradesh.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization in Himachal Pradesh was started with one Bhajan Mandli in 1971 has grown into a wide network of Bhajan Mandalies, Sai Samithis and Sai Centres. In June 2013, the number of *Bhajan Mandalies* was 112. These *Bhajan Mandalies* have 4010 members. The number of Samithis has increased to 150 and the number of devotees increased to 77685.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization, Himachal Pradesh undertakes three types of activities, namely - spiritual , educational and seva activities. Spiritual activities include *Bhajans*, *Nagar-Sankirtans*, *veda chanting*, *omkaram*, *meditation camps* and study circles with the sole purpose of social transformation. During the period January to June, 2013, Sai Samithis conducted 591 *Bhajans*, 3007 *Nagar Sankirtans* and 16 conferences/ *Sadhana* camps were organized.

Himachal Pradesh Sai Organisation undertakes a variety of activities in the district of Kangra. Spiritual Activities include - Family *bhajans*, Samithi *bhajans* – every week in all the *Samithis*, Study circles, *Nagarsankirtan*, Meditation, *Sadhana* Camp, *Bhajan* Training Programmes, sale of Sai Literature, conduct of *Rudra Yagna*. Educational Activities concentrate on Bal Vikas, Youth Conferences for training in Education in Human Values, Conduct of declamation contests and debates on spiritual topics and Sai Exhibitions demonstrating the teachings

and works of Sri Sathya Sai, human values in medicare, etc. In seva, main activities undertaken are distribution of blankets to poor, free medical camps, free cataract operations, free tuition to school children and free education in Sai Educare Vidya Pratishthan .

In order to impart holistic and integral education, Baba gave three-fold educational strategy: formal education, non-formal and informal education. Under formal education, Sai organization of Himachal Pradesh has started Sri Sathya Sai School at Shimla which imparts education based on Sai teachings and human values. A group of Sai youth has started a Sai Educare Vidya Pratishthan, a school at Dharamshala in District Kangra. The School provides integral education to children of down-trodden and lower strata of the society without any fee or charge. The children are given free books, uniform, clothes to be used in homes and other articles essential for quality education.

Non- informal education is imparted through *Bal Vikas* programmes of the Organisation. Under *Bal Vikas* Programme, children with age group of 5 years to 13 years are provided education in human values once a week. In Himachal Pradesh, there are 439 Bal- Vikas centres. These centres are operational in urban areas (320 centres), rural areas (107 centres) and also in schools (12 centres). Besides, students are also helped in pursuing their formal education by conducting free tuition. During six months period i.e. from January to June 2013, the Organization gave free tuition to 307 students in three centres.

Under informal education, all the devotees get education through various activities undertaken by the Organisation. It is a distinctive programme of educating people of all age groups where children, young and old people get awareness and knowledge about practical spirituality.

Organisation conducts service activities throughout the year in accordance with its annual calendar. During January and June 2013, Sri Sathya Sai Seva organization of Himachal Pradesh organized 660 *Narayan* Seva camps in which 1,09,219 persons were served. The Organization organized 20 medical care camps in which 2515 persons were educated about health and hygiene. 25 eye- camps were organized in which 9105 patients were examined and treated. Cataract patients were provided cataract lenses free of charge. During this period, 16 blood donation camps and 14 dental camps were conducted in which 4312 animals were examined and treated. Sri Sathya Sai Village Integrated Programme is a unique activity which aims at the all-round development of the villages, 14 villages and two slums have been adopted under this programmed in which 845 people have benefitted. Sai youth has organized *Bhajans* training camps in which Veda recitation also takes place. 18 study circles and five awareness camps were organized by the Sai youth during Jan to June 2012-13.

Respondents expressed their views about the aims, structure and activities of the Organization. All the devotees admit that this organization charges no fees, and most of the devotees (above 70%) admit that all the activities of the organization elevate human-beings to realize their innate divinity, and the principle of oneness by performing selfless services activities. 97.84% devotees hold view that nine point code of conduct and 63.27% respondents believe that ten-fold path to divinity regulate Sri Sathya Sai Seva organization. As far as various activities like devotional singing, meditation, education in human value programs, *Narayan seva* and service to the old age homes and orphanages are concerned, most of the respondents participate in these activities. Devotees also participate in activities like study circles, *Bal-Vikas* activities, medical camps and village adoption programmes.

## Conclusion

According to Kent, "Indeed, following in this line of reasoning, I would suggest that this, to some degree, serves as an unproblematic and even appealing facet of the Sai message; one that is quite compatible with middle class (and professional) aspirations. Parenthetically, this largely unproblematic association between serving others and the devaluation of renouncing materialism also corresponds, albeit coincidentally, with the Sai movement's growth during a period of increasing relative prosperity for the highly educated, professional and middle classes. Finally, the movement espouses the "existence of an all- embracing source of supernatural power which is manifested in Sai Baba and proven by his miracles"<sup>9</sup>.

Thus it can be summarised that right from childhood, Sri Sathya Sai Baba has dedicated his life for the transformation of individuals, socio-economic upliftment of the society and eradication of social evils. Known as the epitome of selfless love and compassion, he undertook various projects which can be grouped under *acquacare*, *medicare*, *educare*, *sociocare* and *spirituacare*. He further says, 'the home and family is the basic social institution everywhere in the world ([www.cisse.ca](http://www.cisse.ca)). When the home improves, whole world will be better' (Bruce, <sup>10</sup>). Throughout his life time, Baba worked for the good of needy and poor. He established Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation for helping the individuals to transform themselves through the practice of nine point code of conduct which is also known as practical spirituality. Most of the devotees under study have shown their awareness about the life, teachings and works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. They are aware about the programmes which he dedicated to the welfare of masses such as free drinking water projects, free healthcare and medical care, youth development programmes, *narayan seva*, village integrated programmes, value-based education and community development programmes. In addition, devotees are aware about his educational and medical institutions established in Prasanthinilayam, Anantapur, Bangalore and Muddenhalli. This deepened their faith in his teachings and inspired them to

undertake variety of social, educational and spiritual activities in society for their own and societal transformation.

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