

Good response to Gandhi Darshan programmes - July 18,2001.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 18. A systematic implementation of the Gandhi Darshan programme in 456 upper primary and high schools in Thiruvananthapuram district as part of the State-wide non-formal education programme aimed at character building among school children has begun this year. The purpose of this programme is to mould and change the attitude and personality of young children through exposure to the life and works of the Mahatma Gandhi.

The Gandhi Darshan programme has been active since 1984 in the districts of Ernakulam, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kottayam. The programme, however, attained a definite course only last year when the University of Kerala came forward to coordinate and partially fund the programme.

This year, there is enthusiasm among teachers as the earlier concept of the programme being a Congress-oriented one has since been dispelled, the coordinator of the Centre for Gandhian Studies, Dr. Jacob Pulickan, said.

The course ware includes an abridged version of Gandhi's ``My Experiments with Truth'' for the high school students and a book that outlines the transformation of the `man to the Mahatma' for the upper primary level. The teachers are also taught to development skills in making soaps which could be used to generate a marginal income for organising the Gandhi Darshan school-level classes and activities.

The text books supplied provide the basic reading material, from there on discussions and interaction among students will follow. Additional inputs such as Gandhian ideals, history of the freedom struggle and anecdotes from the Mahatma's life will be given by the teachers. Classes will be conducted every week.

Apart from classes a Gandhi Darshan Kalotsav will be held in 12 educational sub-districts of Thiruvananthapuram. A mobile book and picture exhibition is also planned. Students will have the opportunity to show their skill and competence in the quiz

competitions and the evaluation test which will be conducted during the last term of the school year.

Gandhi Darshan will inculcate the values of truth, non-violence and create a service-minded attitude in the young, Dr. Jacob Pulickan, said. Voluntary participation of students and exclusion of Gandhi Darshan from the formal school syllabus will give the programme an added advantage, he said.