



SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING

(Deemed to be University)

Summer Course in Indian Culture & Spirituality 2023 at Anantapur Campus: A Brief Report

Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality is an annual event that was started by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Founder Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, in 1972. The SSSIHL Anantapur campus conducted the Summer Course 2023 from 13-15 July 2023. The grand event witnessed zealous participation from students, faculty, and all the staff of the campus in various capacities and roles.

Day 1:

The glorious inaugural ceremony took place amidst an ethereal procession of the Institute Band 'Sai Melodies', Nadaswaram, Bhajans, and Vedam carrying the holy Kalasham to be placed at Bhagawan's Lotus feet, formally leading the dignitaries to the auditorium for the proceedings.

After the invocatory Vedam and lighting of the ceremonious lamp by the dignitaries, Prof. M. Praphulla, Director, Anantapur campus, welcomed the gathering with her insightful message on the significance of the event. She was followed by Prof. N. Srividya, Dy. Director, Anantapur campus who rose to set the context with a flashback into the Summer Course of yesteryears. She recollected the extensive care taken by Bhagawan to ensure the event was successful, fruitful, and enjoyable to the participants. The audience was then mentally transported to the Sai Kulwant Hall through a video on Sai Darshan.

The Inaugural address was rendered by Sri K. Chakravarthy, Chancellor, SSSIHL, who emphasized the richness, variety, and greatness of Bharatiya culture. He delved into the intricate manifestations of the same and the need to evoke respect for it among the young generations. After these serious deliberations by the Chancellor, the audience was moved by the cheerful talk of Sri Sai Surendranath, Faculty, SSSHSS, Prashanthi Nilayam. The speaker in his inimitable style brought out the spiritual significance of simple rituals followed in Hindu customs, thereby inspiring the young students to follow them diligently.

The research scholars of the campus then took over next with their engaging programme "Love Supreme: A Magic Wand to Unveil Human Values." They discussed the five cardinal values propounded by Bhagawan, their significance and interrelatedness, through tableau, videos, songs, and conversations. The post-lunch sessions included a Bhajan Quiz, Study circle, and Parayanam talk by Dr. C Padmavathamma, Retd. Faculty, SSSIHL. The proceedings of Day 1 concluded with Bhajans and Mangala Aarthi.

Day 2:

To include a practical demonstration of the spiritual values learned by the students, DAY 2 began with a Yoga session organised by the PD of the campus. The regular session began at 9:25 a.m. with Vedam, followed by a talk by Dr. Rani P.L, Associate Professor of English. Defining spirituality as an exploration of the inner scape, she recollected precious moments from her experiences in the past. Her talk focused on aligning ourselves to God's dictum constantly. As Bhagawan's Divine Discourse is an integral part of the Summer Course, the participants were treated to an inspiring flow of loving words of wisdom on humility, patriotism, obedience, and purity of heart to become exemplary Sai students.



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The guest speaker for the second day was Prof Sai Swaroopa Iyer, Puranic-fiction writer & Faculty, at Chanakya University. Her talk titled “Pursuit of Excellence with a Focus on Purusharthas” turned out to be an interesting practical guide to the students. A complex idea like the Purusharthas was explained in simple terms using common-place yet relevant examples. She supplemented its theoretical models with practical insights to attain human excellence. She was followed by Dr. Kiron Bala Arora, Hon. Associate Professor of Hindi & Former Warden, Sri Sathya Sai Hostel for Women, Anantapur who elucidated many valuable lessons from the Rama Story taking Bhagawan’s *Ramakatha Rasavahini* as her basis. She highlighted the factual details related to the existence of Rama many eons ago with the help of pictures and scientific findings by researchers. She pointed at the superfluousness of contemporary takes on Ramayana as a myth and established it as history. The talk was exclusively modelled for young students who often are influenced by western ideas and beliefs.

The afternoon session had a stellar cultural performance titled “Etaddhi Ramayanam” by the senior students of the campus. It was an extraordinary fusion of music, dance, and action with intense spiritual underpinnings on Ramayana. This was followed by a Study circle and a Parayanam talk by Ms. Kiron Gupta who stirred the audience with a humourous narration of her experiences with Bhagawan and her stay in the hostel. The day’s proceedings ended with Bhajans and Mangala Aarthi. The Parayanam speakers were honoured with a token of gratitude by the authorities on both days.

Day 3:

The students eagerly assembled in the auditorium for the final day of the Summer Course that began with Vedam, followed by a short talk by Dr. U. Suma, Associate Professor and Dean of Management & Commerce, SSSIHL. Drawing the difference between secular and spiritual education, she reiterated that the latter was superior to the former and hence, is stressed by SSSIHL. She added that educational institutions started by Bhagwan stand testimony to this fact which is proved by the former students who perform exceedingly well in all spheres of their lives.

This was followed by Bhagawan’s Divine Discourse wherein he urged the students to remain humble, obedient and to follow Indian culture which is suffused with spiritual significance. A talk by Dr. Narasimhan, Director, SSS General Hospital & Mobile Hospital on “Spirituality in Practice – Seva” enlisted several real-life instances and experiences of seva opportunities. The speaker dwelt on various aspects and requirements of becoming a sevak to the Lord thereby inspiring the students to develop the attitude to serve the Lord in His Mission. Thereafter, an interesting yet challenging Quiz on Bharath and Bharatiya Culture had participants zealously answering, discussing, and pushing themselves to victory. This was followed by a talk by Dr K Aravinda Rao, IPS, Retd. DGP, AP on “Bhagavad Gita – Spirituality in Action.” Driving home the importance of Vedanta to be taught to the young generation, he dwelt upon the difference between religion and Vedanta, para and apara vidya, Brahma one of the Trimurtis, and Brahman who is the infinitely existing consciousness. He concluded by urging the women students to study the Gita and imbibe its values.

The Valedictory address was delivered by the Registrar, SSSIHL, Prof. B. Sai Giridhar. He addressed the students with warmth on the care to be taken during their stay on the campus. He insisted on being open-minded, loving, and compassionate towards everyone and practicing discrimination in thought, word and deed. The Registrar then gave away prizes to the winners of both quizzes held during the Course. The Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality 2023 was brought to a formal closure with Mangala Aarthi.



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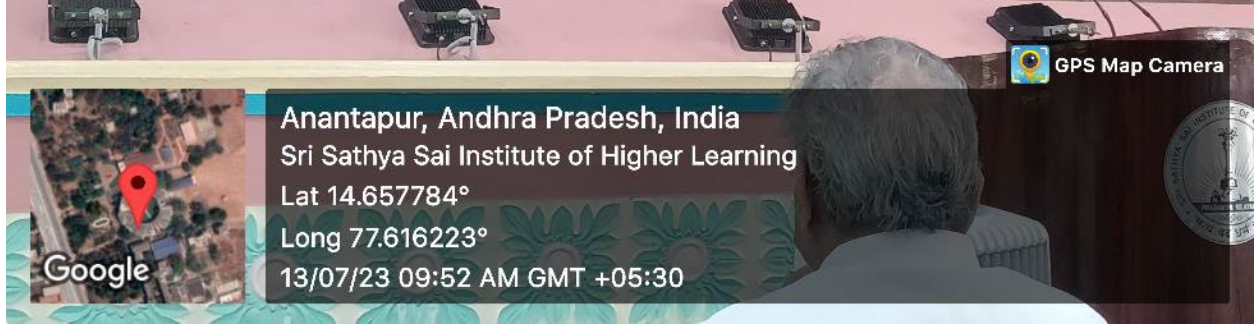
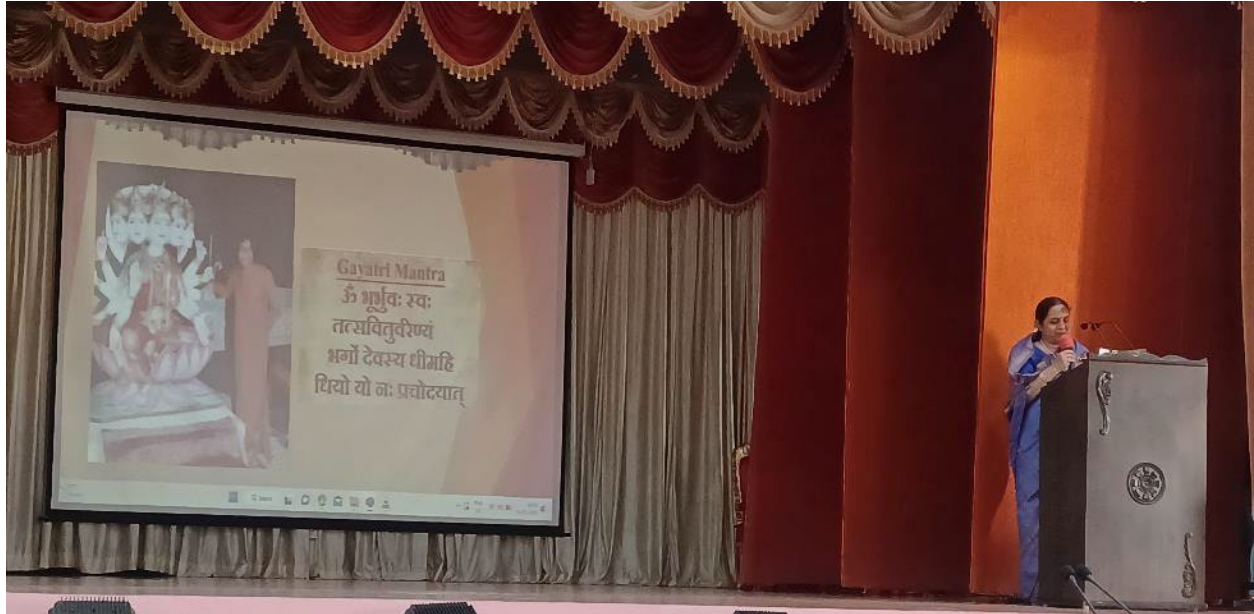
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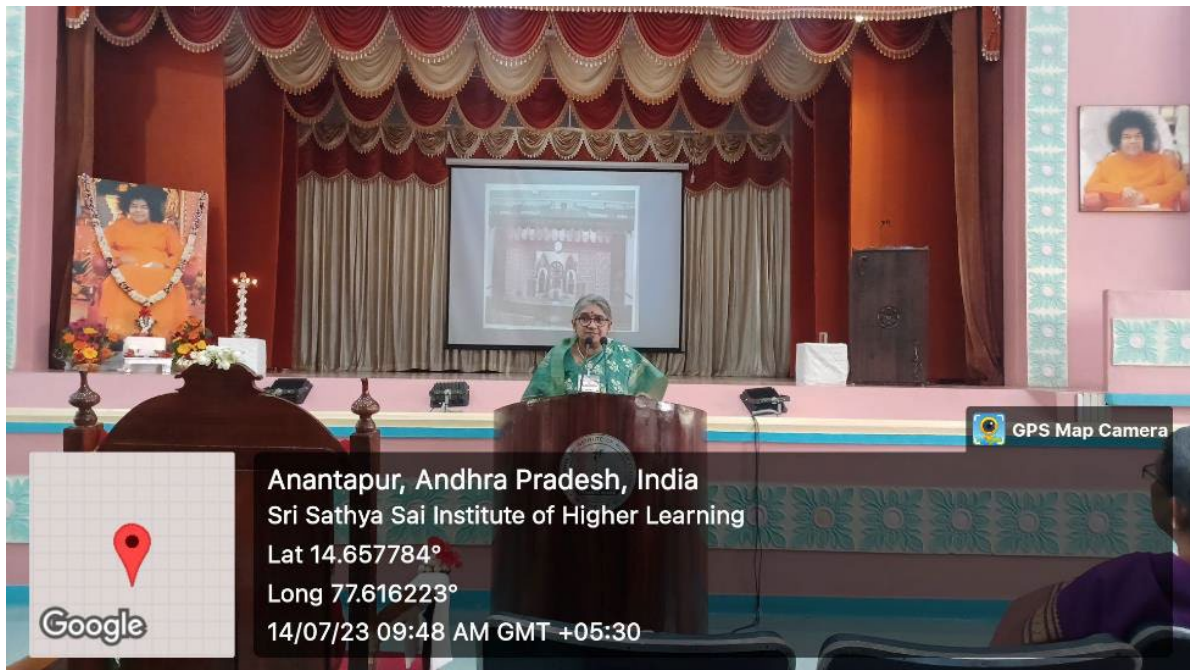
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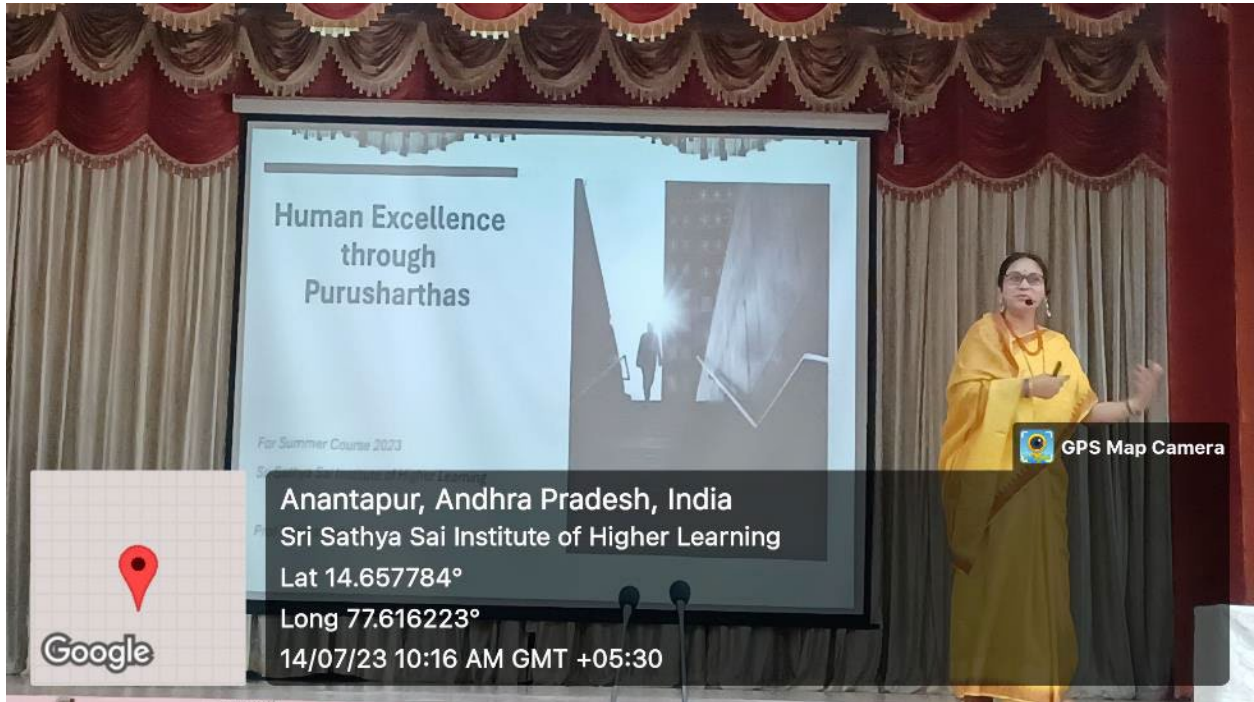
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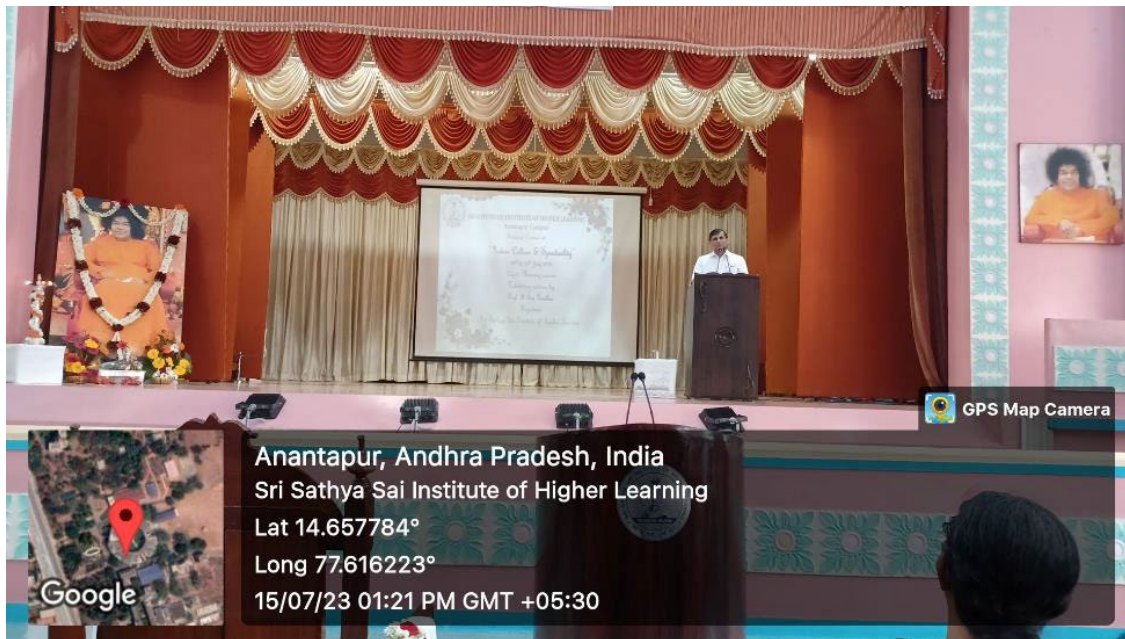
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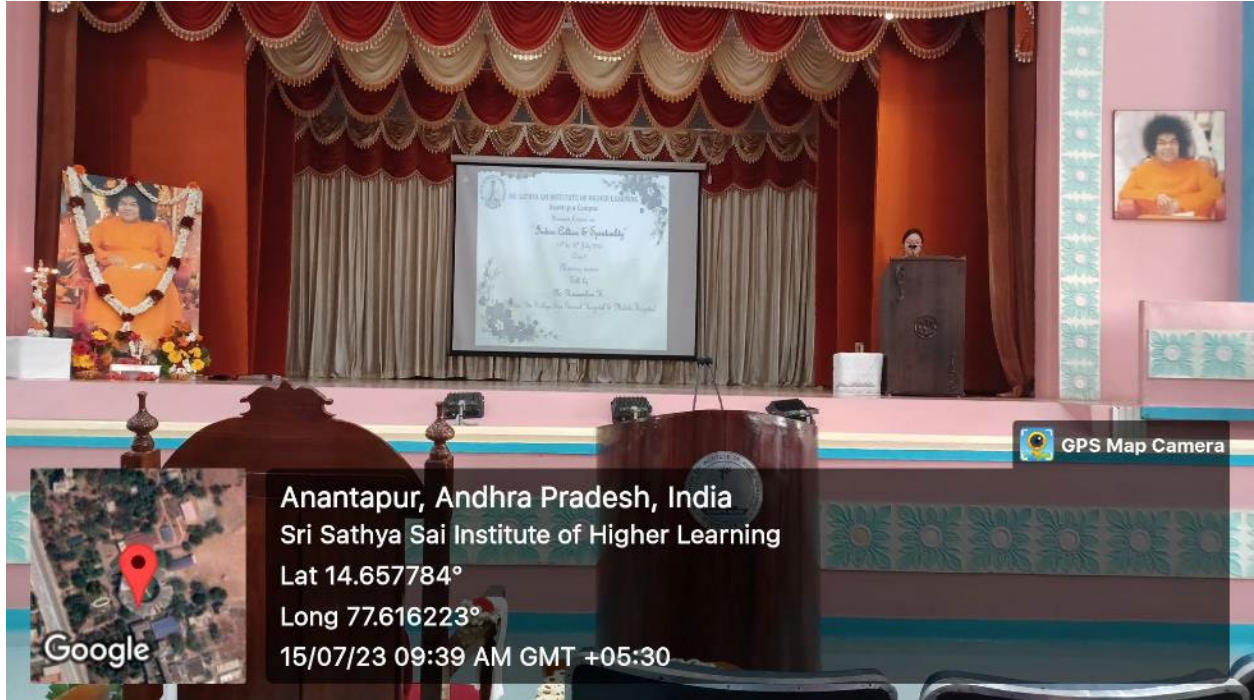
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