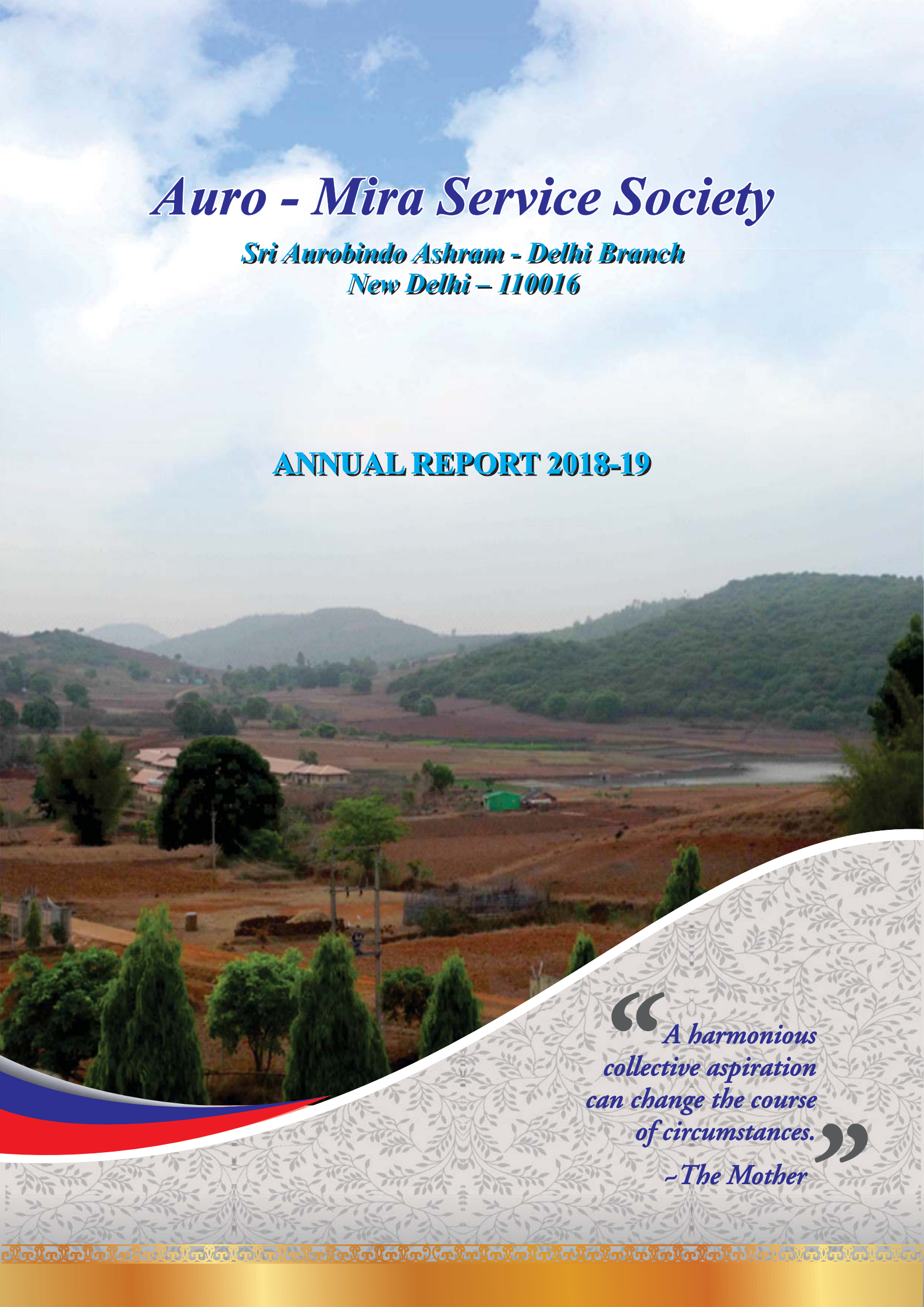


Auro - Mira Service Society


***Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch
New Delhi – 110016***

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19



***“ A harmonious
collective aspiration
can change the course
of circumstances. ”***

~The Mother



*“Open yourself to the new light that has dawned upon earth
And a luminous path will spread in front of you.”*

~The Mother

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Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir **School Report 2018-19**

The Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir is a fully residential school in Koraput district of Odisha. Most of the children attending school are from Kechla village and just a few belong to the adjoining villages. The children are primarily tribal and speak three different local dialects. The school is absolutely free of cost for the children and runs on donations received in kind or as financial assistance from supporters and well-wishers. Ever since the school started ten years back, it has been growing in its reach and capacities every year. A steady progress has ensured a vibrant nourishing environment for students and teachers alike. The school is thankful to all who have contributed in different ways to make this possible.

The student strength of the School increased by 12 in this academic year. The total strength is currently 137 students. The School is a powerhouse of cheerful children who come to the school regularly with cheerful faces all the 365 days; not even taking off on Sundays! The learning of these children is interwoven with the life chores that they do from the time they wake-up till they sleep. Their daily schedule is well planned and a disciplined approach is encouraged in everything that they take up. The physical, mental, vital, psychic and spiritual aspects of the personality are nurtured and children are guided towards greater awareness and conscious living. Celebrations of a plethora of festivals with full vigour ensures that there is never a dull moment on the campus!



Physical culture is an intrinsic part of the daily routine of all the members. High fitness levels are ensured through yoga, compulsory sports and a variety of sports events. The annual sports day is a much-awaited event in the school calendar. Sports equipment is regularly replenished and well maintained. There has been an addition of 6 new unicycles in the Hostel Sports Room.

Four students completed class 10th and moved to other schools, one dropped out just before appearing for 10th and one moved to another school in a lower class, due to family problems. Students enrolled under National Institute of Open Schooling, for class 10 and 12 examinations have shown a good academic performance. All of them have passed with first division marks.

The School Library is richer with new books that are added to the collection on a continuous basis. Students take interest in reading and the habit is actively fostered by teachers and senior students.

Guests graced different events and added to the celebrations. Visitors and volunteers helped out by teaching academic subjects or skills. The teachers from Mirambika Free Progress School and The Mother's International School, Delhi, regularly visit and teach the students in Kechla.

When the number of students grow, the infrastructure too has to keep pace with it! A new building for the girls is under construction and likely to be completed soon. A new basketball court is in the planning stage.

As the School completes ten years of its journey, it looks back with gratitude. And it also looks ahead with hope and aspiration for progress at each step, in every possible way.

Let us celebrate significant milestones... May the Mother's grace continue to guide the steps...



Celebrations and Festivals

Celebrations are an integral part of the school. Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir observes all significant days of the calendar and celebrates most of the festivals. Such celebrations are eagerly awaited by the students and at times long drawn preparations only make them all the more exciting. They provide ample opportunity to the children, to not only showcase their talents but also to educate them on the importance of various dates at the national as well as international level. Through these occasions children get to learn new skills and imbibe an ability to appreciate the rich cultural heritage of the country. They are joyful experiences that encourage them to explore newer vistas in life and aid their all-round development.

Sri Aurobindo's Arrival in Pondicherry 4th April, 2018

On 4th April, 1910 Sri Aurobindo arrived at Pondicherry. Referring to this, he subsequently wrote ... "I need some place of refuge in which I can complete my Yoga unassailed and build up other souls around me. It seems to me that Pondicherry is the place appointed by those who are Beyond" ... The special day was commemorated through collective meditation at the Ashram, by all the members of the School.

The Mother's Final Arrival in Pondicherry 24th April, 2018

The momentous occasion of the Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry was celebrated with a special meditation in the Ashram. In the evening, the Mother's flag was hoisted, the children marched-past and rendered salute to the Mother's flag. The atmosphere echoed with the collective aspiration of the teachers and students as they marched-past in perfect coordination and later lit earthen lamps in the Ashram.

Rabindra Jayanti 7th May, 2018

The members of the School paid a tribute to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore on his birth anniversary through a cultural programme. The children sang various songs composed by him. A power-point presentation put up by the children showcased the life of the Nobel laureate. Little budding flautists played Tagore's songs melodiously on their flutes. Tulsia, Chandrama, Neela, Kamli and Darshana sang Jodi Tore Dak Sune Keyu Na Aashe. All the children joyously sang Ananda Loke and Moumo Chitte. Srinath Bhaiya rendered a solo with Purano Sheyi Diner Kotha.



Mother's Day - Second Sunday of May, May 13, 2018

Mother's Day was celebrated for the first time this year. It falls on the second Sunday of the month of May every year and this year it was on May 13. It is an important moment for all as it is the day to remember the unconditional love with which a mother brings up her children. For, it is said that God made mothers because he could not be everywhere.

All the children of Gratitude group onwards were asked to express their feelings for their mothers. Some children wrote heart-rending poems and some younger ones made colourful paintings for their parents. Stories based on devotion to the Mother were narrated to the children. The children sang a few songs dedicated to the Mother. In the afternoon, the little ones made sweets for everyone, which was indeed a sweet gesture!

World Environment Day 5th June, 2018

June 5 is marked by the United Nation as the World Environment day; a day set aside since 1974 to promote "worldwide awareness and action for the protection of our environment." The School carried out a tree plantation drive on the environmental day. Over 500 trees or saplings were planted by the children and facilitators, both inside the campus as well as outside- on the sides of the road. Everyone was sensitized to the need for sustaining the environment for future generations so that they can live in harmony with nature. It was emphasized that beating air pollution is the need of the hour and trees help in doing that, besides being advantageous in many other ways. The children of the Twinkle group enacted a creative play to spread awareness on saving trees. Later in the day, the children wrote an essays on the topic of 'environment'.

Swing Festival (Raja Parba) 14th June, 2018

Raja Parba or Mithuna Sankranti is a special festival of Odisha and signifies beginning of the solar month of Mithuna, indicating the onset of rainy season. The festival marks the beginning of the agricultural year all over Odisha, with the first showers of the monsoon. This is a joyous day for the girls of Odisha, and is celebrated as the Swing festival.

The Swing festival was celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm. Sulochana didi's stories and anecdotes pertaining to the festival were dearly missed this year. The children wore beautiful clothes and gathered around the tree. After a few minutes of meditation and mantra chanting, the ceremony began with the song, Banaste Dakuchi Gaja and all the children by turns got a chance to swing. Special traditional sweets associated with the festival were made for all.



International Yoga Day 21st June, 2018

The world celebrated the 4th International Yoga Day on June 21, 2018. It was first introduced by the United Nations on June 21, 2015 after a suggestion from India with the main aim of spreading global awareness on the importance of staying fit and healthy. This holistic approach to health and well-being helps all to imbibe the value of discipline and it also has many long-term benefits if it is made an integral part of life.

The children of AMVM who stay in the hostel have yoga every morning at 6 o'clock, but on this special day, they were excited and everyone reached the field before time and Chandrama Didi led the children in performing the asanas. All the students along with the diyas did the yogic asanas for an hour. It started with an offering to the Sun god who is the source of every living thing. The session began with Surya Namaskar and proceeded to other different yogic postures. It concluded with relaxation and recitation of chants.

School Foundation Day and Tara Didi's birthday 5th July, 2018

July 5 is the most awaited day at the AMVM as it is an occasion to celebrate the School Foundation Day and Tara Didi's birthday. Like every year; this year too, the talented students presented a series of captivating cultural events inspired by Indian culture, moral education and values. Most of the groups chose plays from Upanishad Ganga. The day began with meditation at the Ashram, and Hawan and 'Savitri' Reading in the School. The cultural programme, lasted for two days and included many memorable events.

Smile group sweetly danced to the strains of Itansi Hansi; Sujata Didi's dance was set to the song Sei Ratiti Kede Madhumay. Both classical and folk dance found its way in the programme when girls of



Gratitude group performed Bharat Natyam and Sujata Didi and Mona Didi presented Sambalpuri dance. Later in the programme, Gratitude and Humility group also showcased Sambalpuri dance and a play on the symbol of Aum.

Twinkle group's action song based on Bachche Man Ke Sachche brought a smile on every face. Children recited an original creative poem by the composed by the diyas of Joy group, 'We, the children of Auro Mira Vidya Mandir'; while Ramesh bhai recited a creative birthday song for the School. New Creation group presented the play 'Yaksha's Prashna', while Aspiration group performed 'Devta'. Children of Faith group played compositions on different Raagas on the flute.



Ratha Yatra 14th July, 2018

Ratha Yatra or Chariot festival, particularly an Odia festival involves a public procession with a chariot with deities Jagannath (Vishnu avatar), Balabhadra (his brother), Subhadra (his sister) and Sudarshana Chakra (his weapon) on a ratha, a wooden deula-shaped chariot. It attracts over a million Hindu pilgrims who join the procession at Puri each year.

On this auspicious occasion, the children were shown a live telecast of the Chariot Festival of Puri. Srinath Bhaiya, sang a few Odiya bhajans on Lord Jagannath. There was collective meditation and later everyone invoked the grace of Lord Jagannath. Girls from Humility and Gratitude group performed a dance to mark the event.

Chachaji's Birthday August 13, 2018

There was collective meditation by the entire AMVM family in the Ashram meditation hall and later Havan was held to pay tribute to our revered Chachaji, Shri Surendernath Jauhar. On this special day, his grandson, Pranjal Bhaiya along with a few children enacted a few anecdotes from Chachaji's life and stories written by him. He also spoke about Chachaji's surrender to the Divine and his high thinking and simple living style.

Babaji Maharaj's Birthday 14th August, 2018

Sri Ramakrishna Das, fondly known as Babaji Maharaj, had aspired for the people of Orissa to open to the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's consciousness. With the Mother's approval, he started organisation of study circles and later Integral Education Centres, Relic Centres with experiments in collective living. On his birthday, all the children and the teachers went to the Ashram for special meditation and paid homage to the great soul.

Sri Aurobindo's Birthday and Independence Day 15th August, 2018

August 15 has a double significance for all: it is not only the Independence Day of the country, but is also the birth anniversary of one of its freedom fighters, Sri Aurobindo. This year, the School celebrated the 146th birth anniversary of this great son of India. Preparations for the celebrations began a week in advance. Cultural events with variety were planned, they were to include dance, plays, march-past, singing, etc. The Diyas industriously looked for and organised tricolour costumes to highlight the theme of the day. The strains of patriotic songs sung by children resounded through the whole Ashram. The programme was inaugurated with the hoisting of the Mother's Flag. The cultural programme included plays, one enacted by Aspiration and New Creation group on the life of Sri Aurobindo and another by Gratitude and Humility group, titled 'Jagao Mere Desh Ko'. Joy group enthusiastically recited Sri Aurobindo's poem 'Invitation'. Various dance performances regaled the audience: Gratitude group swayed to the tune of 'Tare Rum Pum Pum, Hum Rahi Hain'; Smile group danced along with 'Dilhaichhotasa'; Humility group brought in Punjabi beats of 'Rang de basanti'; 'It Happens Only in India' was the chosen number of Twinkle group and finally Bhavna, Sushila and Monalisa performed a dance based on a remix of patriotic songs. 'Dilhai Hindustani' was sung by Joy group and Aspiration group sang Vande Mataram and 'Suno Gaur se Duniawalo'. The programme ended with the National Anthem and it was indeed a fitting conclusion to this patriotic day.



Raksha Bandhan 26th August, 2018



The festival of Raksha Bandhan was celebrated to emphasize and strengthen the bond of love between brothers and sisters. The day also made the children aware of the fact that rights and duties go hand in hand. The children had started preparing for this festival a month in advance. The children of all groups made fancy and colourful rakhis for their friends and siblings. The older children took on the task of making more complicated rakhis using macramé knots. The children of Aspiration group enacted skits depicting stories based on the significance of the festival, for example, the Sugarcane story, Shishupal and Krishna, Roxena and Porus, Santoshi Maa, Yama and Yamuna, Goddess

Laxmi and Bali, and other narratives by Humayun and Rabindranath Tagore.

Janamasthami 26th August, 2018

Like all other festivals, Janamasthami was celebrated with great enthusiasm and involvement of all the groups. A cultural programme was organised and almost all the aspects of Sri Krishna's life were covered. The little ones dressed as cute little Radhas and Krishnas, the teachers in orange costumes and white tilaks on their forehead. The hall decorated colourfully gave the impression as if one was in Mathura or Vrindavan. A kirtan held for the children completed the ambience. Some of the memorable points in the cultural programme included Odissi dance by Monalisa and Bhavna on the theme 'Swagatam Krishna' and 'Asuchi Nandlala' by Neeti Sapane of Smile group. Twinkle group sang a song on lord Krishna. A number of plays were performed by different groups. Joy group presented 'Makhan Chor', Twinkle group enacted 'Vakasur' and 'Vyomasur', Gratitude group performed 'Shyamantak Gem' and Humility group captured the friendship of Sri Krishna and Sudama in a play titled 'Sudama'. Aspiration and New Creation groups presented an orchestra of flute and tabla.



Ganesh Chaturthi 26th August, 2018

Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated in the school with devotion and splendour. The festival started with silent meditation accompanied by the Mother's music. After an invocation to Lord Vinayak, the god of wisdom and knowledge, the students and teachers prayed, chanted mantras and sang bhajans.

The cultural programme started after the 'Diya Lighting' ceremony. The children kept the audience engrossed with their dance, songs and skits. Gratitude group and Twinkle group chanted mantra of





Ganesh Pancharatnam Stotram and Ganesh Mantra respectively. Gratitude group presented the play, 'Ganapati's Wedding' while Humility group enacted 'Mahotkat'. Aspiration and New Creation groups performed a flute recital and Humility group regaled the audience with percussion recital on the tabla. Joy group sang 'Aao Aao Gajanan' and Aspiration group narrated stories about Lord Ganesh. A dance by children of Twinkle group based on the song 'Deva Deva Ganapati Deva' completed the programme.



► 'Siddhi' Day 24th November, 2018

24th November is a very significant day in the Ashram calendar, as it marks the anniversary of the 'Siddhi' Day, the 'Day of Victory', the day of the descent of Sri Krishna's Consciousness into the physical, which took place in the year 1926. 24th November, 1926, is also the day when Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, came into being. It, therefore, marks the planting of the seed which has now grown into a huge banyan tree with a presence all over the world.

Like every year, this year too, the day was observed as Darshan day. Children went to the Ashram for special meditation and in the evening the Mother's flag was hoisted. Children rendered salute to the Mother's flag as they marched past in synchronized rhythm. The Ashram echoed with the strains of the national song when the children sang Vande Mataram with spirited ease. Earthen lamps were lit around the Ashram and the day's celebration concluded with distribution of prasad.

Pranjal Bhaiya's Birthday 29th November, 2018



The day began with havan. In the cultural programme, the children of Smile group performed an action song on 'Teri Hansi Mein Phoolonki Khushboo'. Joy group children sang a group action song, 'Jhoom Jhoom kauwa bhi dholak bajaye', a song taught by Bhaiya himself. Twinkle group's dance on "Chhota baccha jaanke" was a joyful offering to Bhaiya. The programme ended with a play by children of Gratitude group on 'What is thanks-giving'. The children put up an exhibition of Bhaiya's childhood photographs much to the delight of all in the School.



Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi Day 5th December, 2018

5th December is the mahaprayan day of the revered sage Sri Aurobindo, and traditionally referred to as 'Mahasamadhi Day'. It is a day when all remember his contribution and achievements in both the freedom movement and the spiritual world. A collective meditation was held in the Ashram with the Mother's music and everyone prayed for his grace and guidance.

Christmas 25th December, 2018

Christmas is celebrated in a grand manner in the School and it always unfolds a bagful of surprises for everyone. All the children wait for this special eve with a curiosity about the surprises the gifts that it is likely to bring. Both the Ashram and School were decorated with traditional Christmas decorations made by the children themselves, using colourful papers and a Christmas star was put atop the Christmas tree. There were gifts for each child and they were either tied on the tree or put beneath it. The children joyfully opened their presents and it was fun-time for everyone.

In the evening, they sang joyful carols and staged numerous short plays. Smile group sang 'We Wish you a Merry Christmas' and 'I am a Little star'; Joy group presented 'Away in a Manger'. Twinkle group enacted a play in English, titled 'Who Woke up the Sun and a Christmas Carol'. Humility group presented 'Fa la... la la... la... la la and Santa Claus'. Gratitude group entertained with 'In the Realm of Glory' while Aspiration group did so through 'It's Christmas' and 'Rock and Candle on the Ceiling' and sang 'Jingle Bells'. New Creation group built tempo through 'Nekiki Raahpetu Chal' and Faith group presented 'Gloria! In Excels is Deo...', 'In the Town of Bethlehem' and 'O come all ye Faithful'.



New Year Celebrations 1st January, 2019

The preparations for New Year celebrations started a week ahead. The children secretly planned a cultural programme and presented it on the eve of New Year. Some children enacted short skits based on humorous anecdotes about student-teacher interactions. The skits presented by the Gratitude group and Humility group were very entertaining for the audience and had them in fits of laughter. Some of the children and diya went to the Ashram for midnight meditation. The calendar of the New Year was first unveiled in the meditation hall and everyone was given the beautiful calendar of the Mother. A one-day Naam Jaap was arranged in the school meditation hall and all the children Gratitude group onwards sat for fifteen minutes in silent meditation. Some of the children later shared their beautiful experiences.

Annual Sports Day 18th-19th January, 2019

The school celebrated its Sports Day on 18th and 19th of January with great zeal and an atmosphere filled with excitement. The young ones decorated the field with colourful flags, buntings and beautiful paintings. The spectators were awestruck by the indefatigable energy of the children and their athletic prowess. The air was filled with cheers for the young sportsmen. The children enjoyed events like relay race, cycle race, football, basketball and most interesting of all- Tug of war and Musical chairs. Everyone participated wholeheartedly to make the day a huge success.



The programme started with an offering of Diya to the Mother and two minutes of silent meditation. The children with their antics on the Cycle and Hoopla welcomed the audience and that was the start of the Physical Demonstration.

The young sports persons marched to the beats of Saare Jahaan Se Achha and rendered salute to the Mother's flag. The soulful rendition of this patriotic tune by the teachers' orchestra was the highlight as the different instruments like sitar, keyboard, flute and violin were harmonised in a beautiful manner. The First-Aid team was ready in the field with energy drinks and necessary help.

On the first day, the children of Bliss, Smile, Joy and Twinkle groups participated in relay races. The newcomers who had just joined the school were helped by the more experienced little ones. It was a





great source of entertainment for the children as well as the spectators. The children of Gratitude and Humility played football.

On the second day, the children demonstrated their physical talent. The villagers and the students of Sri Aurobindo International School, Hyderabad were the spectators. Their loud applause encouraged the little participants to make the event a success and achieve greater heights. The greatest achievement was that the entire school participated on the Sports Day.

- Smile Group-Umbrella dance;
- Joy Group-Yogasana;
- Twinkle Group-Aerobics;

- Gratitude and Humility Groups' boys and a few girls-Cycling;
- Gratitude and Humility Groups' girls-Hoopla;
- Aspiration and New Creation-Pyramid;
- Jayu, Pinki and Malti-Juggling;
- Aspiration Group-Dance on the theme of saving the green Kingdom
- Aspiration Group 4 girls and 3 boys-Unicycle

The Sports Day concluded with Shanti Paath by the Auro-Mira family and a memento of the Mother's symbol was distributed to all as a token of grace and bliss.



Basant Panchami 10th February, 2019

Basant Panchami marks the onset of the spring season in India. For many, this festival is dedicated to goddess Saraswati-the goddess of knowledge, music and all arts. It also celebrates the blooming of yellow flowers on the ripening mustard crop, and it is also goddess Saraswati's favourite colour. People come out wearing yellow colour. The colour yellow has a great significance in the celebration of Basant Panchami.

The advent of Basant Panchami was celebrated in AMVM with great fervour and enthusiasm. Every one assembled to invoke the power of Goddess Saraswati. A resplendent idol of the goddess was made from papier mâché. The children and the teachers decorated the place beautifully. The programme started with silent meditation with the Mother's music. Vikram and Bhakti from the Humility group read excerpts from Maha Saraswati aspect of the Mother from the book, 'The Mother', by Sri Aurobindo. In accordance with the usual practice, the children had prepared many offerings to goddess Saraswati. Delicious, sweet, yellow khichri was served to mark the occasion.

The cultural programmes offered variety. Smile group performed the song, 'He Saraswati Maa' with actions. Joy group sang the Saraswati Vandana -Ya Kundendu while Twinkle group offered Saraswati Aarti and Gratitude and Humility groups sang, 'He Saarade Maa'. Flute recital by Gratitude and Humility group of 'Stuti Aaraadhanaa' was followed by Aspiration and New Creation groups presenting an orchestra comprising Tabla, Keyboard and Flute. New Creation group also sang a Saraswati Bhajan and then, Kamli, Darshana and Chandrama presented a flute recital. Ganesh Bhaiya played the Sitar and Faith group's song 'Saraswati Maa....' was followed by Bikanti's solo song 'Maa Saarade Vardaan Do'.



The Mother's Birthday 21st February, 2019

The AMVM family celebrated the 140th birth anniversary of the revered Mother on 21st February, 2018. After the Flag hoisting and March Past, the celebrations included numerous cultural events prepared and presented by the different groups. A creative play in Hindi by Smile group 'Mata ka Naata' was a beautiful beginning. Joy group presented Durga Stotra with creative fluid free style movements. Then, it was the turn of students of Twinkle group who performed a play in English on the values of honesty and gratitude, titled 'True Education'. Gratitude and Humility group enacted a play in English on the life story of the Mother 'Jagat Janani Sri Maa'. Aspiration group took up the theme of qualities depicted through the Mother's symbol and performed plays on Gratitude, Humility, Perseverance and Courage. A choreographic presentation in Bharat Natyam, Odissi and Kathak by some children displayed a harmonious confluence. Flute recital by Chandrama, Kamli and Darshana was a perfect conclusion to the programme.

Holi 10th March, 2019

Children eagerly await the festival of colours. The older children had dug a pit for mud bath. The little ones from Bliss, Smile, Joy, Twinkle, Gratitude and Humility groups were very excited and enjoyed a mud bath under the supervision of their respective didis. To make the festival even more special and festive for their students, the teachers had put up food stalls for the children. Children savoured the handmade lassi, panipuri, gulgulla, etc. There was watermelon and chikoo too. The best part, of course, was seeing the hot air balloons and the moonlight dinner that was arranged for everyone on the terrace. Children danced to the rhythm of local village songs before dinner.



The Mother's First arrival in Pondicherry 29th March, 2019

The Mother's first arrival in Pondicherry on 29th March, 1914 is a significant day in the Ashram calendar. While approaching Pondicherry, the Mother had a vision of a huge column of light and the intensity of the light became greater when she arrived in the city. She met Sri Aurobindo and recognised him as her guru or Krishna.

The day was celebrated with special collective meditation at the Ashram



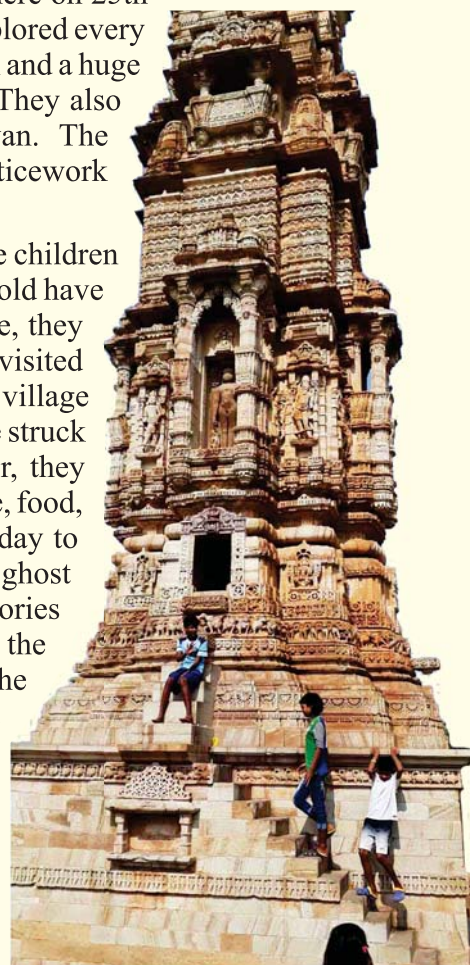
School Trip to Rajasthan, Agra and Delhi A Report

The school organised a study tour to Rajasthan for the children and Diyas of the Gratitude, Humility, Aspiration, New Creation and Faith groups. Before the trip, the children researched on the historical facts and figures of the places they were to visit. They were informed about the kings who had ruled those places, their forts and their achievements. The children of Gratitude and Humility groups also studied about the history and monuments of Delhi. They were given this knowledge before the trip so that they explore these places with more interest and absorb the atmosphere of the places. As it was a huge group so the children travelled in two batches.

Batch I

The first trip was arranged for 26 children from Gratitude and Humility groups and 3 children from Aspiration and New Creation groups who had not been to Delhi before. They started from Kechla on 23rd October and travelled by a motor launch to the Railway Station. They took a train from Koraput to Rayagada. After a one-night halt at the Integral school of Barijholra, Rayagada the group left for the blue city of Rajasthan-Jodhpur and reached there on 25th night. In Jodhpur, the children visited the Rao Jodha Park and explored every corner of the park with a guide. The varied plants fascinated them and a huge neem tree coming out of a stone raised quite a few eyebrows. They also went to the Jodhpur Fort, the shrine and the Umaidbhavan. The Mehrangarh fort had 240 different types of designs on the latticework which was a beautiful piece of art.

On 26th night they left for the golden city-Jaisalmer and there the children were especially impressed by the Gadaisar Lake and the century old havelis. Though they did not understand much about the architecture, they were quite taken in by the intricate designs of the havelis. They visited the Jaisalmer Fort and these tribal children who are from a small village of Odisha and have only seen small houses; were completely awe struck by the sheer size of the buildings that they were seeing. Later, they visited the local market so that they could get an idea of the culture, food, dress, toys, jewellery, etc. of Rajasthan. The next day was the day to explore the Thar desert and on the way the children saw the ghost village; Kuldhara. The children were amazed by the incredible stories of that place. On reaching Sam, the desert point, they played on the creamy sand but the highlight of the day was the Camel ride. The children bravely sat on the camel with their partners but when it stood up, it was a frightening experience. After the camel ride; a refreshment as well as a cultural programme was ready for the children. The Ghumar dance of Rajasthan, the jugal bandhi by Kartals and Dholak, the dance on a cycle wheel were really awesome. They got to know about the dance, music and songs of the place. The programme was really remarkable.





On 29th they went to visit the Jodhpur Museum and after so many days of travel and oily food, the children were a little under the weather. When passing through Ranakpur and Falna, they visited the colossal Jain temple and then left for Udaipur. The beautiful garden with a really interesting name; 'Sahelion Ki Bagian' had many stories attached to it. The water fountain for the princess was really interesting. The visit to the Udaipur Lake was an opportunity to see different water birds.

On 30th night, the group left for Chittorgarh and they were welcomed by Hassan and ji, Daulat ji and their whole family, the owners of a big Hyundai Showroom. The children were taken for a visit to the car showroom and saw how the broken cars were fixed there. The Hyundai team also distributed small gifts to the children. The rooms were neatly arranged and the children loved the delicious food served by the hosts. The historical Chittorgarh Fort and the Victory tower were impressive and so were the Vijay Stambh, the Kirti Stambh and Jauharkund.

On 1st November, after reaching Gulabpura, the children were taken to visit the Mayur School run by the Mayur Fabric Company (Bhilwara). The children liked the school environment very much. The visit to the famous Badi Mata temple of Gulabpura was something the children will not forget since



teachers told them that the questions that they had written to know about their future were answered in Yes or No. The visit to the Spinning mill was a novel experience and they enjoyed being taken around the Mill and getting to know the process of making yarn. All of them collected peacock feathers from the Mill compound and their stay at the factory's guest house was a luxury for them.

On reaching Ajmer late on 2nd November; the youngsters went to see the famous Brahma temple and spent some time in the pious Pushkar Lake. Located in the small town of Pushkar, amidst the Aravalli ranges, it is one of the most prominent spots of pilgrimage as well as the site of the world famous Pushkar Fair. Though the journey was a little tiring, but the enthusiasm of the children to see new places did not diminish.

In Jaipur, the pink city, they stayed in a Kanyashram School (Arya Samaj). Here they visited the Jantar Mantar, the Hawa Mahal and the Jaipur Fort. A Hawan was arranged by the Ashram members and the children participated in the mantra chanting.

They left for Agra on 5th November and saw the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. They finally reached Delhi and performed a hawan the next morning with the Diyas. The ashram members were very impressed with the way the children performed the rites and the way they recited the mantras by heart and with perfect pronunciation. In Delhi, they saw the Humayun's Tomb and the Zoo in the morning and went with Pranjal Bhaiya to visit India Gate and the Rashtrapati Bhawan in the evening. The opportunity to have Langar in Bangla Sahib Gurudwara was a new experience for them. They saw Qutub Minar and the Lotus Temple on 7th November and spent some time in the serene atmosphere of the Temple. As it was Diwali; they joined the Delhi Ashram members in the Light of Aspiration. The crackers bursting in the dark sky were fascinating and a really enjoyable sight. They had seen the crackers light up the dark sky for the first time and it fascinated them, but the harmful effects of the crackers were discussed with them. The highlight of the visit to the great Swami Narayan Temple of Akshardham was the musical fountain and boat ride, though they saw all the shows there.

The most admirable thing about the trip was the discipline maintained by all the children and the trust that they had on their Diyas. It was a great learning experience for the Diyas as well. The presence of the little ones made the journey less tiring and stimulating.



Batch II

On Children's Day- 14th of November 2018, a trip was arranged for 42 children, accompanied with 4 adults. Keeping the health and hygiene of the children in mind, we carried homemade food, snacks and fruits for the three days train journey. We had a night halt in Rayagada at Barijholia Integral School. Next morning, we caught a train for Jodhpur and then took a bus from the station to the Sri Aurobindo School, Jodhpur. It was 16th late night by the time we reached. On 17th morning we went to Rao Jodha desert Rock Park. A guide took us around the park and enlightened us with his knowledge about the park. The children enjoyed looking at the desert plants. After we had seen the desert rock park, we went to the Padamsar Lake where there were many birds. After that we went to the Mehrangarh fort. There were 240 different types of designs. The latticework was very beautifully done. The guide explained about the fort and the children got Poori and potato for lunch. We had the privilege to sit in their staff canteen to have our meal. After that we saw a temple made of marble. Many pigeons were seated above it. After seeing the temple, we went to a museum and saw Umaid Bhavan from outside. The view of the blue city from the hills was really fascinating.

We took the overnight train for Jaisalmer and reached at 6:30 AM. It was still dark because it is far west. At dawn, we went to the Gadaisar Lake. Children wolfed down the noodles at the roadside stall and were overwhelmed seeing the fossils and the curd stone on the footpath, sold by a vendor. After Gadaisar Lake we went to the Jaisalmer golden fort. There was a city inside. Children saw the typical Rajasthani costumes, jewelry, toys and food stalls. There were 4 gates for exit and entrance and it was too crowded.

In the evening, we booked five vehicles to explore the Thar Desert. The creepy roads took us to the haunted village Kuldhara. From there we went to Jain temple at Amar Sar. We were stunned by the intricate design of the temples. We then went to Sam, the place on the desert. The children were excited driving through the desert. Finally our taxis reached Sam and there we enjoyed camel riding. Playing in the golden sand dunes was really fun and frolic. We also got a chance to see the cultural programme put up by famous artists. The Ghumar dance of Rajasthan, the Jugal bandhi by Kartals and Dholak, the dance on a cycle wheel were really awesome. The next morning we went to see the old Havelis, which were the endowment of the Rajasthani architects. Children were fascinated by the street musicians all over the place. It really articulated the culture and heritage of Rajasthan, which is still alive. Next morning we went to the fort and Jain temple again.



We took a train to Jodhpur and went to visit a temple on the hills in the morning in Jodhpur. There was a lake and waterfalls. After that we spent some time with the children of the Sri Aurobindo School, Jodhpur and left for Falna by train.

After we alighted from the train, we went to see the Jain Golden temple, which was indeed very beautiful. We then took a bus for Ranakpur where we saw a massive Jain temple and many other old temples.

After Ranakpur, we went to Udaipur and visited Saheliyonkibadi. The children enjoyed the gardens, fountains and water bodies. We then went to the City Palace Museum, where we spent hours, seeing everything in great detail.

We departed by train for Chittorgarh. The train reached around midnight. Daulat bhaiya was there to receive us even at that hour. The luggage was loaded on a luggage auto and the children with Daulatbhaiya walked to the place where our stay was arranged. We got dainty food for breakfast and dinner. Daulat bhaiya with his nephew accompanied us to Chittorgarh fort, Vijay Stambh, Kirti Stambh, Jauharkund and Jain temple. The temples and towers were standing examples of the cruelty of the Muslim kings.

We then went to the Hyundai showroom and workshop, which were owned by Hassanandji and his family. All the children really enjoyed seeing the huge workshop in detail and understanding about the mechanics of vehicles and how they are repaired. They were served snacks and mementos.

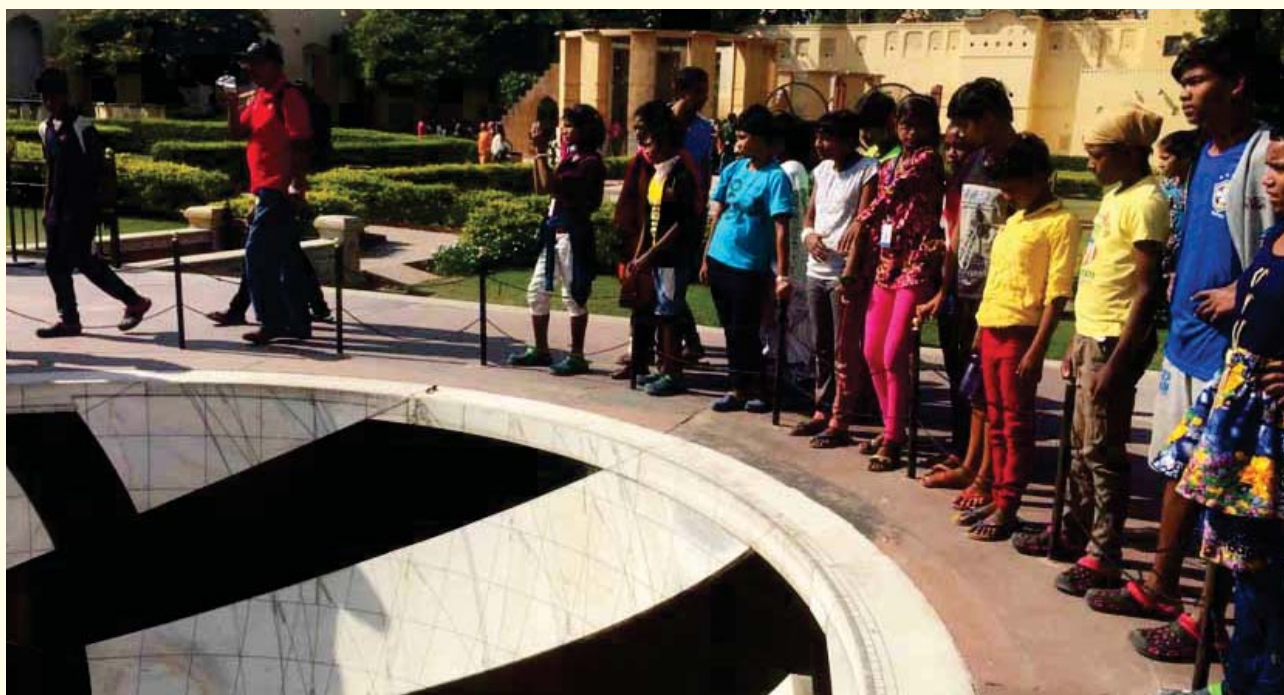
From there we visited Sanwariyaji temple, which was a long drive from Chittorgarh. It was very beautiful and there were many beautiful paintings of Krishna and everyone really enjoyed. Hassanandji, Daulat bhai and their whole family were so warm and caring. They really went out of their way to make our stay in Chittorgarh memorable.

Next, we took a train for Gulabpura to visit the Mayur textile mills. First we visited the Bhilwara School set up for the education of the workers' children. The school was really beautiful and we spent time in their art gallery, maths lab and science lab. The music teacher of the school performed on drums and tabla. Then we went to the temple of Badi Mata, a goddess who would answer all the questions in yes or No. After a delectable lunch, we went to see the Bhilwara spinning mills. Children saw the process of





yarn making. The company arranged our halt in a very expensive hotel. The children will never forget the factory or the hotel. Next morning we took a train for Ajmer. From the station, we had a bus, which took us to Ajmer Sharif Dargah. We walked to the Dargah and after darshan we went to Puskharjheel and Brahma temple. There was a fair going on and we sat on a giant wheel called Ram Jhula. It was really fun. After Pushkar, we went to Jaipur by bus. We saw Hawa Mahal, Jantar Mantar and some museums. We also went to a very old fort, which was many hours drive from Jaipur, towards Fatehpur Sikri. Children spent two nights in an Arya Samaj Kanyashram in Jaipur, where our children performed Havan guided by the Pandit Ji. We departed for Kechla on 25th of November and were home on 28th of November.



Kechla Project - A Report

New Construction

Kechla is now connected by road. This connectivity would make Kechla more easily accessible. The road, which comes right up to the school and hostel, was nearing completion by 31st March, 2019.

New construction work on the campus was slow paced this year. However, the structure of the new hostel building is complete. The walls are being plastered. Hopefully, there would be quick progress on that front and soon the building would be brought to usable level.



Tree Plantation Drive

Each year many new saplings are planted to ensure thick green cover and a regular supply of fruits for the children studying in Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir. The students and the local populace work together towards afforestation in the region. This year saplings of about 200 trees have been planted on Society land. Regular tree plantation has transformed the landscape of Kechla. The Society land and the neighbouring areas have a diverse variety of trees and plants.



Rich Produce of the Farms

The fruit orchards and the farms continued to yield rich produce this year. This in turn ensured that the children savoured nutritious variety during their meals.

Beans	Kg	191
Bitter Gourd	Kg	77
Bottle Gourd	Kg	144
Brinjal	Kg	696
Cabbage	Kg	780
Carrot	Kg	841
Cauliflower	Kg	354
Cholai leaves (Amaranth)	Kg	170
Cluster Beans (Guanra)	Kg	22
Coriander	Kg	117
Corn	Pcs	1858
Cucumber	Kg	94
Drum sticks	Kg	31
Garlic	Kg	5
German Turnip (GanthGobhi)	Kg	70
Ginger	Kg	133
Green Chillies	Kg	34
Ivy Gourd (Kundru)	Kg	16
Jackfruit	Pcs	36
Lady fingers	Kg	93
Onion	Kg	268
Potato	Kg	645

Peas	Kg	99
Plantain (Green Banana)	Pcs	1117
Pumpkin	Kg	88
Radish	Pcs	2946
Red chillies	Kg	6
Spinach	Kg	295
Sweet Potato	Kg	139
Tomato	Kg	214
Indian Gooseberry (Amla)	Kg	73
Banana	Pcs	4867
Cherry	Kg	6
Guava	Kg	450
Jamun	Kg	48
Lemon	Pcs	78
Litchi	Kg	816
Mango	Kg	3844
Papaya	Kg	129
Pomegranate	Kg	354
Rose apples	Kg	217
Sapeta	Kg	372
Star fruit	Kg	355

Other Activities

Medical Camps

A five-day dental camp was organised for the students of AMVM by the Matri Prerna Group, Auroville. Surya didi with her husband Hari bhaiya and two dentists visited Kechla. Dental check-up for all the children and other members of the school was carried out. Surya didi has been conducting annual dental check-up in Kechla for the past five years. These regular checkups have enhanced oral health of most of the children and generated awareness regarding oral hygiene.



School Camps Organised at Kechla by Auro-Mira Service Society

Community Service by Students of The Mother's International School From 4th to 11th January, 2019

A group of 29 students of class 11 volunteered as teacher-mentors at Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir. Each student was allotted a child of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir. The aim was to teach children, all first generation learners, by creating rapport with them, find different methods to gauge their interests and impart joyous learning experiences.

A wide variety of subjects was taught to the students with Math, Social Science and Science being the most common. However, their favourite, English, invariably found its way into the daily regimen. Apart from the academic classes, the volunteer teachers group also engaged them in co-curricular endeavours everyday after lunch. Children were guided in various arts & crafts, musical instruments and indoor games. Teaching little children bubbling with eager enthusiasm in a remote place in Odisha helped the volunteers gain an insightful experience for themselves and they too returned enriched and inspired. Very positive feedback was penned by MIS students about their experience: "Teaching the children was another experience altogether. It gave us the perfect opportunity to gauge into the minds of young ones who are eager to learn and express. It also gave us chance to feel and understand how our teachers must feel everyday teaching us" (S.N.); "The children were very eager to learn and their excitement made the experience a lot more fun... The children are very talented and never failed to amaze me" (S.L); "While they [the children] were able to understand most concepts well, they faced problems in applying them. A little non-mechanical teaching and confidence boost can really help them excel" (A.A.); "The treks were really adventurous and I'm overwhelmed to have had such experience" (I.S.); "This trip was probably the best school trip ever. The food was amazing. The facilities were great... And the attitude of the children just brought a smile to my face" (M.G.); "I had a wonderful time volunteering for community service at the Auro Mira Vidya Mandir" (S.S.).



Personality Development & Adventure Camp for Students of The Mother's International School From 29th December, 2018 to 3rd January, 2019

Thirty seven students of class VIII along with two teachers took part in this camp. Activities included keep-fit exercises, day/night trekking, rappelling, river-crossing, rowing, swimming in the Kolab River Reservoir and cavorting at the waterfall, learning eye care routines, pranayams for a more efficient respiratory system to deal with Delhi pollution on an individual basis, and interactive talks & discussions. Western folk-dancing, interacting with students of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir at a joint picnic and New Year Eve celebrations formed some of the other activities.

Students were truly delighted as is obvious from their feedback: “Personally when I came here at Kechla I didn't get a very good impression but gradually the activities we did and people over here.. changed my whole experience” (V.S.); “Turning to its physical beauty, imagine a huge reservoir, with mountains in the distance, in the middle of which an abrupt island is nestled, green and red (Kechla has red soil). That is Kechla... Kechla, I want to say that I learnt so much from you and I never want to leave you. I'm grateful for all you taught me” (P.K.); “Kechla taught me that resources such as water and electricity are supposed to be used very carefully” (R.V.); “This trip taught me to take care of not only of myself, but of my friends, and has taught me that 'simplicity is the best” (H.A.); “Auro Mira Service Society has brought a whole new perspective to Kechla. It educates children, and gives them a whole new platform to experience several aspects of life” (K.T.); “The Ashram rooms are very well maintained. Kudos to the gardener as well for maintaining the gorgeous orchard” (N.S.); “I thought that I will or could not celebrate a fun New Year in Kechla but I was wrong. The celebrations were just amazing and I had fun, may be in a different way” (S.K.); “One lesson that I learnt from this trip was that us, humans don't need luxury but we do need the beauty of Nature” (R.N.); “I learnt to cooperate with everyone as a team, many kinds of Western folk dances, and how to take care of our lungs and eyes” (S.S).



*Personality Development & Adventure Camp for Sri Aurobindo International School,
Hyderabad From 16th-20th January, 2019*

A group of 61 students of class VII accompanied by 5 teachers attended the camp. Activities included morning keep-fit exercises, trekking, bouldering, rappelling, learning eye-care routines, swimming in the Kolab River Reservoir, jumping into the pool formed by waterfall from a height of 6-7 metres, learning folk dances of England, USA and Israel, meditation, routines and procedures for improving the efficacy of the respiratory system in these times of unprecedented pollution, etc.



Children had a fun time and learning experience as is evident from their feedback: "I liked this place very much because of its beauty and greenery and the adventures with friends" (G.A.); "I liked trekking, swimming, and dancing. We went on night trek yesterday and saw a meteor" (P.P.); "Our eyes are now improved after the honey treatment" (N.S.A.V.); "The Sports Day of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir was superb especially cycling, hoop and umbrella dance" (S.Y.); "I liked swimming, jumping into waterfall and rappelling the most" (P.S.G.); "I have to say, this is the most adventurous and fun time I have ever had in my life" (V.); "I like the place a lot... The garden was superb" (G.M.); "The meditation classes will help us a lot in the future.

The Western folk dance classes were really fun and I wish they could continue" (H.A.); "I .. thank my school for such a wonderful chance and also Auro Mira Ashram for serving and providing us with mind [boggling] and stunning activities" (L.H.).



Visitors to the Kechla

“Atithi Devo Bhava”

Kechla welcomed many visitors, friends and well-wishers during the course of the year. Some of them come regularly every year to spend time with the children and help them with their studies or teach arts and music. While others come with an eagerness to find out more about the work being done in the place. And, then there are ones who are here to enjoy the serenity that the place abundantly offers and to encourage and cheer up the children. The children look forward to each arrival and cherish the joyful experience and learnings from each of these guests.

Nigel George and Yuhan, April 15-21, 2018

Mr. Nigel George, a former teacher-volunteer of AMVM visited Kechla for a week accompanied by Yuhan. During their stay they helped the children in their studies. Nigel taught English to the senior students while Yuhan helped the senior secondary students with their assignments. Their visit proved to be very beneficial as they helped senior students by providing academic guidance.

Prabhat Bhai - May 7, 2018

Prabhat bhai, a devotee of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and a marvelous orator, came for a day's visit to Kechla. During his short stay, he guided the teachers in the evening on the work they have undertaken and next morning he spoke to the children about overcoming mental inertia, aim of human life and a little about Supra mental power. His deep voice and cadence kept the children engrossed while he spoke.

Teachers from Chadheigudi Integral School, Sonapur, Distt. Subarnapur - May 24, 2018

Six teachers from Chadheigudi Integral School visited Kechla for a few days to learn more about the methodology adopted for teaching in AMVM. Mr Areikrishna, who is keen to adopt Integral Education in their school referred them to visit Kechla for classroom observation. These teachers were involved in the classroom activities and a special class on art and craft was arranged for them. They also had an opportunity to go for trekking. They were gifted storybooks and some teaching, learning material for their school.

Dr Ramesh Bijlani and Dr (Mrs.) Surinder Pradhan - June 2- 8, 2018

Dr Bijlani, an ashramite and a Trustee of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch, is an educationist, a medical doctor and a yoga researcher. During his stay in Kechla, he took sessions on Integral Education for the teachers of the School and also discussed the concept of five-fold education with them. He spoke about the aim of life and the importance of lasting mental peace. He put up a power-point presentation on stories written by him which conveyed the importance

of enabling mental peace and that being a good human being should be the ultimate aim, and this has more importance than getting a well-paid job. The discussion inspired and compelled all to think about a new way of looking at life. He also taught Psychology and Biology to the older students.

Dr Pradhan, a retired medical professor from Lady Hardinge College, New Delhi, spent her valuable time teaching Biology to Aspiration and New Creation groups. She also took classes on Food and Nutrition for the Humility group.

➡ **Mrs Anupama Jauhar and Mrs Rajni - June 2-15, 2018**

Mrs Anupama Jauhar and Mrs Rajni along with her daughter came to Kechla and spent their time absorbing the peaceful serenity of the place. Mrs Jauhar spent her time in meditation and reading; whereas Mrs Rajni taught the younger children of different groups. Her daughter spent time with the children participating in activities of different groups.

➡ **Mrs. Bhuvana Nandakumar - August 9-16, 2018**

Bhuvana Didi, a long-time devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the Chairperson of the Foundation for World Education, USA and her two children, Parthiv and Arjav Krishna came to Kechla from Minnesota, USA to spend some time with the children. Bhuvana Didi taught Biology to the older classes and Parthiv, who is a genius in Physics, taught the subject to New Creation group. He also taught them robotics and Mathematics. Arjav spent time with the children of Aspiration and Gratitude group. He played some melodious tunes on his flute and inspired the children to learn the instrument. Suresh Bhaiya, Bhuvana Didi's husband, joined them on August 14 and really enjoyed the programmes performed on August 15. He encouraged the children to work hard and do better.

➡ **Pandit Barun Pal - October 20-28, 2018**

Pandit Barun Pal ji, a senior disciple of Sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar, visited Kechla with his wife Lipika Didi and his two dedicated students- Radhika Samson and Ramanan. Radhika is an Odissi dancer as well as a Sitar player and Ramanan is a professional Keyboard player. They



organised a music camp for the students under the guidance of their guru Pt. Barun Pal. 60 students including the interested Diyas (Didi's and Bhaiyas) attended the camp. They were taught Sitar, Guitar, Key-board, vocal music, Flute and Tabla. The advanced flute learners were taught how to play gamak, meend and Jhala. Some compositions based on Raag Yaman were also taught to the children. Ramanan and Radhika taught the basics of Keyboard, Guitar and Sitar.

They also taught them how to tune and fix the strings of the instruments. Guruji emphasised on the importance of playing with consistent taal (rhythm/beat). He also taught the children learning Tabla, different variations in Teentaal and Jhaptaal. He said, 'Music is a performing art', and taught some compositions that the children played when they put up an orchestra. At the end of the camp, the students performed various compositions like Srishti, Ekla Chalo, Purano Sei Diner Koutha and Bhajans for the audience.

Amita Didi and Sudam Bhaiya from Puducherry - October 27, 2018

Amita Didi and Sudam Bhaiya - ashramites from Pondicherry arrived in Kechla to partake of the tranquil environs. Sudam Bhaiya has been in the ashram at Pondicherry since the time when the Mother was still there. He guided us in plantation work and gave tips on more effective ways to manage a place better.

Mr. Brij Sapru - December 4-7, 2018

The Santa Claus of Kechla, Brij Bhaiya visited in the month of December and brought lots of gifts and sweets for the children. His deep love for the children brings him all the way from USA to this remote village time and again. During his stay, he spent his time with the children and enjoyed teaching them.

Mrs. Veerinder Kaur and Mr Kewal Singh Viridi - February 15, 2019

Veerinder Didi and her husband Kewal Bhaiya spent a whole month in Kechla with the children. Didi took Biology classes for Aspiration and New Creation groups. She also took science classes for Humility group. In the evenings, Veerinder Didi taught Environmental Science to the senior students. The couple enjoyed their stay thoroughly and the students are grateful to them for their sincere dedication.

Mr. Nischal Mothkuri, Founder & Trustee, Orenda Initiatives - March 15-17, 2019

Mr Nischal Mothkuri, Founder & Trustee, Orenda Initiatives, had come to visit Kechla only for a day. He interacted with all the children and enjoyed reading out Charlie and the Chocolate Factory to Humility group. He was pleasantly surprised to find that the tribal children of the school could communicate fluently in English. Suryodhan took him around the village and explained about their festivals and culture.

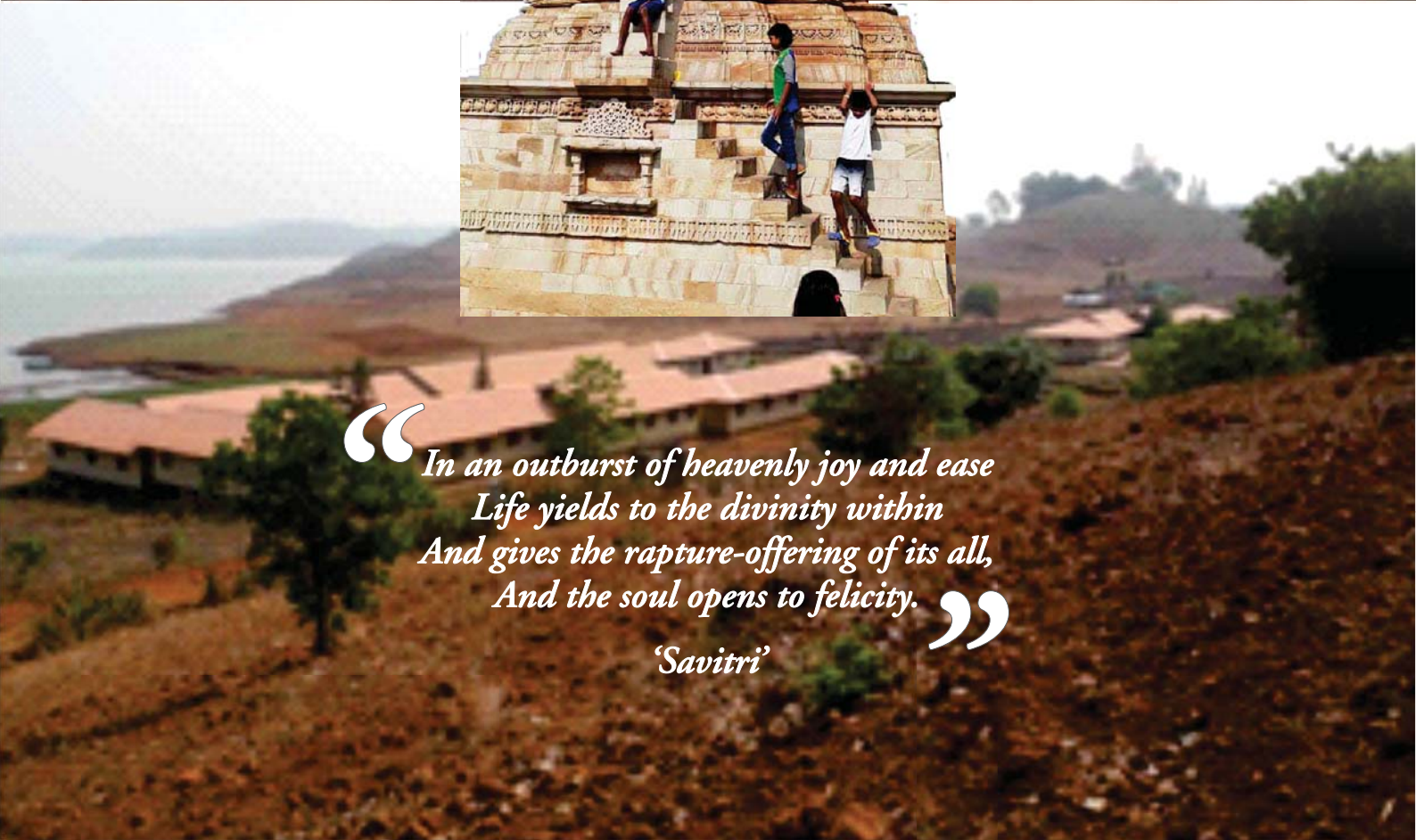
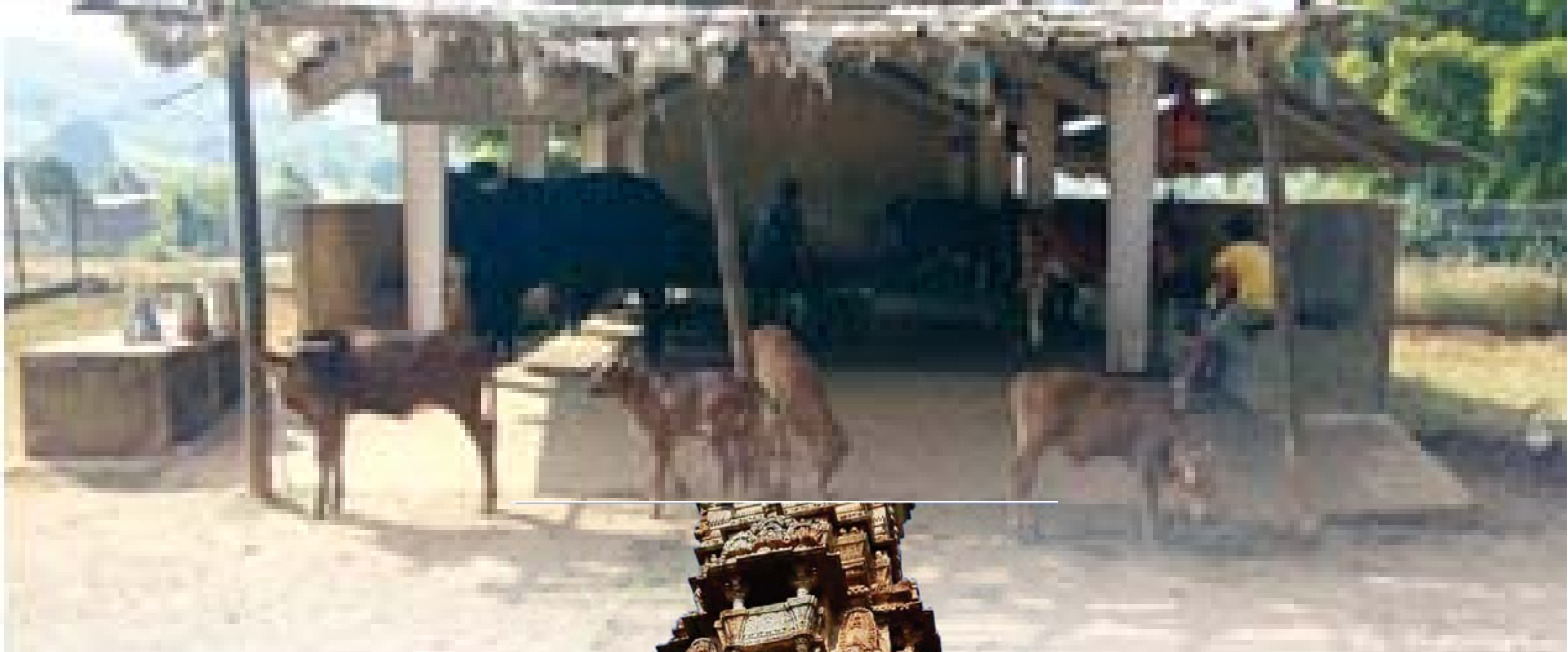
Mrs Puneeta Puri - March 20-25, 2019

Puneeta Didi, her daughter, Sanvee and three students Riya, Smriti and Deepa visited Kechla for five days. During their stay, they conducted the morning Yoga classes outdoors and the children enjoyed that a lot. They participated in some activities on Art and Storytelling with different groups. The fun games like playing with water balloons was a highpoint for the children. They explored the village and found walks around village very refreshing. Suryodhan and Kamli accompanied them. In a nutshell, it was enjoyable for them, as well as for the children.

Surya Didi and Hari Bhaiya


Surya didi with her husband Hari bhaiya and two dentists visited Kechla to conduct a five-day dental camp for the students of AMVM by the Matri Prerna Group, Auroville. Dental check-up of all the children and other members of the school was carried out. Surya Didi was happy to find that the dental health of most of the children was good. She also conducted special sessions on how to take care of the teeth and gums. Children really enjoyed Surya Didi's cooking especially vegetable biryani and potato soup!





*“ In an outburst of heavenly joy and ease
Life yields to the divinity within
And gives the rapture-offering of its all,
And the soul opens to felicity. ”*

‘Savitri’



*“There are greatnesses hidden in our unseen parts
That wait their hour to step into life's front:
We feel an aid from deep indwelling Gods;
One speaks within, Light comes to us from above.”*

'Savitri'