

## Report of Auro-Mira Service Society – 2005 – 06

### Koraput (Kechla) project

The year 2005–2006 marks the second year since our commencement of this venture. This year too can be summed up as a year of continuation and further settling in and consolidation of the various activities launched earlier. Our understanding of the area, the people and their problems got further enhanced, resulting in our being better accepted in the fold.

The following (new) projects were taken up :

#### Model farm: -

The 22 acres of land with us is being turned into a model farm where we have planted all types of trees and undertaken cultivation of crops in the small patches (between the trees). We are also in the process of working out the economics of this experiment. Then the villagers can study our results and decide what suits them and what is good for their fields. We have also started supplying quality seeds, seedlings and plants to the tribals who show interest in cultivating these trees and plants. We do not want to give them the impression of being their benefactors and explain away our benevolence by telling them that if they have their own plants/trees then they will not steal from us.

#### Sri Aurobindo National Integration Camp: (SANIC)

Under the aegis of Sri Aurobindo Education Society a National Integration camp was held in village Kechala from January 22 to 28, 2006 and we, members of **Young Adventurers for a New Consciousness** of Auro Mira Service Society at Kechala, acted as hosts. There were 163 participants drawn from as many as 10 different states. Kechla, is a conglomerate of several tribal hamlets inhabited by approximately 1400 members and is located on the shores of the Upper Kolab reservoir. Its distance from the din, dust, noise and pollution associated with urbanization and modernization, its natural beauty, sylvan surroundings and features like a big reservoir of water all contribute to making it an ideal location for such regular camp activities as are listed below :

The morning started with 'keep – fit' exercises based on *Yogasanas*. This was followed by *shramdan*, bath and a swim in the reservoir. Then followed a wide variety of activities such as Group discussions on topical issues, singing of patriotic songs in groups in different Indian languages, hikes, treks boat-rides etc. For those with other interests there were activities such as cultural programmes, interaction with local people and in the evening chanting and meditation.

For those interested in sight seeing and visiting places of historical and cultural interest, trips were organized to the famous Jagannath temple, local shrines of Gupteshwar, Macchkund and Jeypore, the ancient capital of the region..

Eye Camp: -

In collaboration with Chaudhri Trust (Orissa), Auro Mira Service Society also held a Free Eye Camp in village Kechala of Koraput district. It comprised an initial Screening Camp, a Surgical camp and a Postoperative follow up Camp.

**The Screening Camp** was conducted by **Auro Mira Service Society** from November 25–26, 2005. As many as 450–500 patients were screened in the OPD and Consultation and Medicines were provided to them.

**The Surgical Camp** was conducted by **Chaudhri Trust (Orissa)** from December 22 to 27, 2005. As many as 62 patients, poor and old and hailing from tribal areas, underwent surgery for Cataract and IOL at the Community Centre, Nandapur.

1. Each patient was provided free transportation to and from the health centre.
2. Three meals per day for six days of post operative care.
3. Blood sugar testing.
4. After surgery, enough medicines to last for six weeks.
5. One blanket.

**The Post Operative Follow–up Camp** too was held by **Chaudhri Trust (Orissa)** ? on Jan. 16, 2006 and free consultation, distribution of medicines and spectacles to approximately 100 patients was carried out.

The team of participating doctors, volunteers and Ophthalmic Assistants comprised the following :

**Doctors :**

1. Dr. Rajiv Ghai MS,
2. Dr. Debnath MBBS,
3. Dr. T. Baveja MBBS.

**Volunteers :**

1. Duryodhan
2. Sudam
3. Banwali
4. Parasu

### **Ophthalmic Assistants :**

1. Suresh
2. Balwant
3. Saurabh
4. Narayan
5. Amit

### **Rural Road: -**

Furthermore, we are happy to inform that a rural road was funded by us. This road is now being used by the villagers going to the reservoir and to their fields. It is also used by the villagers/tribals for taking the cows out for grazing. The entire amount was literally spent on the tribals who worked on it. Its construction generated considerable employment something very much needed in this area.

### **Education: -**

In the field of education an effort was being made to educate the children in the village itself. However, it has not shown very good results as on some minor pretext or the other the parents would not send the children to school. The parents were often drunk and did not have a positive influence on the children.

In view of the above, a decision was taken to send a few children to hostels. This year two children were sent to Indravati school. They were sponsored by Sri Aurobindo Education Society. The children did exceedingly well. In view of this very favourable report, one can hope that more children will be educated by the parents.

(Excerpt from Sri Baren's article on Kechala)

### **Reaching the Heart of the East.**

A vibrant river has the potential to cut out a fertile, green valley through granite rocks. Such is the vitality of spirited youth and such is the dedication and force of Pranjali Jauhar, Chachaji's grandson. The lone endeavour that he started in the remote areas of Orissa from the local population saw the light of day when Sri Aurobindo Education Society and Auro Mira Service Society started playing an active role. The project was formally started in 2004 in the village of Kechla of the Koraput district in Orissa by the name of **Young Adventurers for a New Consciousness**. The main aim of the project was to develop this tribal area by providing education, vocational training, environmental awareness and forestation.