

Report of Auro-Mira Service Society

For 2022-23



Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.

Albert Einstein

Another opportunity to reflect and rectify. The last six months was again a learning experience for us. Initially it seemed difficult to bridge the gap after the pandemic, but the sincere efforts of our young aspirants made it possible to achieve our goal. As we aspire to achieve holistic development of the students, we always strive to create an environment that is conducive to create a learning attitude. Students are helped to assimilate a sense of responsibility, team spirit and to become an independent and self-motivated learner.

We have always been trying to create an environment in the school which helps our young minds to bloom to their dimensions and striving to provide a platform where they can develop their individual thinking and grow into a worthy person.



The primary responsibility of the society has now shifted to the school. The focus is moving away from village development and empowerment of the tribals and women. Only a few small projects had been taken up by us in this year.

Village Transportation- Even though we have a road which





connects our village to the outside world, it is only used by the few people who have motorcycles, used for goods vehicles, used by Government officers and used by

tourists and visitors. Also, the road distance to our block and district headquarter- Koraput- is 80 Km. The villagers still are mostly dependent on the boats and motor launches to cross the reservoir. It is imperative that the motor launches and boats which are used for public transport are kept in good order. This year we repaired 2 motor launch of Kechla and a few boats.

Increasingly, the villagers are growing more crops and planting more trees. Saving these from animals is quite a task. A few



villagers have purchased chain link fence from outside. This was prohibitively expensive, especially due to the bulk which increases the transport cost. We gifted a chain link fence making machine to the villagers. This would not only give them cheaper and

better quality of chain link fence, but also provide work to a number of villagers, especially women. It should also increase the plantation and crops not only in our village but also in the surrounding villages.



Tree Plantations- The tree plantations in our village have been progressively increasing. The villagers plant a few thousand trees this year and we help them financially in this.



Half Yearly Report of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir

For the period April to September'22



Carrying our lessons from the past and our hopes for the future, Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir is hurtling through its path to unveil its stories for the last six months.



It was only at the beginning of 2022 that the children who were staying at home started coming to school after a lockdown of nearly two years.



For the younger children it was quite a struggle to get back to school and relearn all that they had now forgotten. It was especially difficult in those cases where some children of the group were staying in the hostel, hence attending school and others having missed out on their classes.

Five children of Aspiration group moved out of the school. Three of them after having completed class 10th and two after class 12th. Lakshya Jani joined The Mother's International School in Delhi in class 11 in the science stream. Maina Krisani joined Matru Bhawan in Cuttack in class 11 in the science stream. Chirag Gouda took admission in the government college in Koraput in the science stream. All these students left mid-session of this year, only at the time they had to join their new school.

Padma Jani decided not to study further, at least for now, after completing her class 12. Niraj Muduli joined the vocational training course in Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch, after completing his class 12.

There were 184 students in the school in the last academic year. This number has marginally increased to 190, after subtracting the 5 students who have moved on.

There are 13 students in Faith group and they are at various levels of their graduation. There are 16 students in Aspiration group and they are doing class 12 from NIOS. 5 of them have opted for science and the rest for humanities. There are 16 students who would be appearing for their class 10th exam in the year 2023.

A few months back, we had taken 5 girls of 9 to 10 years age, in our fold. These girls had never been to school. They have worked very hard and progressed well. We were hesitant about taking them and were sceptical about their learning but are now so glad that we have been proved wrong.



The children went for swimming after a gap of two years. So many children learnt swimming this year that everyone is surprised. To have

over 40 children being able to swim in deep water has been a great achievement for the children.





Our school is very small. All the children learn vocal and instrumental music. They learn sports including- football, basketball, volleyball, minor games, athletics,

cycling, swimming, skating, gymnastics, unicycle, etc. They learn all types of arts and crafts- sketching, painting, origami, carpentry, clay modelling, etc.



There are so many festivals that are celebrated in the school. Some of them are a part of this report. What is not mentioned in the celebrations is that all the beautiful decorations are done by the children. The children go for trips, picnics, boating, walks on the hills.





The children take care of the school and hostel by themselves. All the children staying in the hostel wash their clothes by themselves and are very responsible. When the children are new in the hostel, it is quite a task to teach them to be independent, but very soon, it is a joy looking at them taking initiative and responsibility.



The school has no holidays. Not even on Sunday or for any festival. We work 365 days in the year. On every Tuesday the children go home at 3 pm and are back for breakfast the



next day. The holidays are the part of the school activities when we go for the trips, picnics, festivals, celebrations, functions, sports day and many such activities.



The children who come from home are provided 3 meals per day. The ones who stay in the hostel partake 4 meals every day. The meals are wholesome- with lentils,

vegetables, milk, curds, sweets and the meals have a lot of variety.

The children get a lot of exposure by watching various selected and educative documentaries and movies.



It should not sound as if there are no academics in school. Everyone works very hard at their academics. Children start speaking fluent English and Hindi from a

very young age. There is a very well stocked library of over 20,000 books and most of the children have a very good reading habit.

Till class 5th, the children learn by project-based methods and hands on learning. From class 6th onwards, we have a hybrid model where we have both- learning from books and by doing experiments.

We do not have classes and the children are in groups. They are never promoted. Only once in their school life would the name of their group change from a simple

name like Joy group to a more difficult name like Perseverance group. The children move at their own pace. In one group, if there are 20 children doing maths, in all likelihood they would all be doing different chapters at different levels. One child may be doing class 5, another class 6 and still another class 7. Two children doing the same chapter is a rarity.

Celebrations

4th April- Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry

The day began with meditation with the Mother's music in the ashram at 6 o'clock in the morning. Some aspirants attended the special meditation which was followed by



collective meditation by the children. It also included some bhajans sung by the children.

24th April- Darshan Day- The Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry

On this day the Mother arrived in Pondicherry and she never went out. This special day was





remembered with a special meditation in the ashram and the children saluted the Mother's flag with a parade.

7th May- Rabindra Jayanti

On this occasion, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was remembered with a special assembly which included music, dance and song performances by the students and teachers. The students of Gratitude and Humility groups gave speeches on Rabindranath Tagore. The Joy and Grace groups' children sang Rabindra Sangeet- *Alo Aamaar*. On the song *Phoole Phoole Dhole Dhole*, the Peace group children performed a dance. Bhavna and Chandrama of Faith group played Raag Brindavani on the flute accompanied by Jagat on the Tabla.





Anuradha di and Srinath
bhaiya sang *aguner parosh*
moni purano se diner katha.
The progress group children

recited Rabindranath
Tagore's poem 'Where the
mind is without fear'. The
poem 'Sunday' was recited
by the Grace group children.



June 14th - Swing Festival (*Rojo*)



On 14th of June, *Rojo* (swing festival) was celebrated in the school for the children to inculcate the values of Odia culture and tradition. A big milk cake was prepared for the children with our homemade cheese. Everyone



enjoyed the sweet at breakfast time. The girls anointed their bodies with turmeric paste and got ready in their best clothes and the older girls wore sarees. A swing was made for them which was tied to the branches of *karanj* tree. They swung

with beautiful *rojo* songs. In the afternoon they played kabaddi.

Rath Yatra (Car festival)- 1st July



Rath yatra is the most auspicious and holy festival of Odisha and is also celebrated all over India. Every year, this festival is celebrated in Puri and all other places in Odisha. To enhance the culture of Sri Jagannath and to nurture it within, we celebrated Rath yatra in our school for 9 days from 1st July to 10th July. A Rath was made in wood and decorated with colourful clothes and flowers. We all sat in the school meditation hall. Ramesh bhai (Papa ji) and Puspanjali didi (Mummy ji) did all types of rituals in front of the Deity Lord Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra. Mani didi told some

stories of Sri Jagannath like Bhakta Salabeg and Bandhu Mahanty. Srinath bhaiya sang some Bhajans of Sri Jagannath. After Prasad and Aarati, the three deities were taken to the Rath. Children were engaged to play drums and chanting Haribol and



Jai Jagannath ki Jay. The place was vibrating with the name of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra. Slowly the rath (car) was pulled towards the boys'

hostel. Girls and others were dancing in front of the car. All of us were engaged in some kind of action like- playing, dancing, taking the name of deities etc. A different vibration was created for a few hours. Finally at 12.30 p.m., the car reached the boys' hostel. Deities were taken to the meditation hall. Everything had been arranged there from before. After reaching, more rituals were performed and Arati conducted and Prasad distributed to all.

Everyday mummy ji and papa ji used to do all kinds of rituals in the morning, noon and evening. All of us enjoyed





the Prasad at all the three times. Every evening all of us would sit in front of the deity and sing some bhajans and listen to stories of

Lord Jagannath. On the 9th day, after doing all types of rituals, at 12 noon we again took the deities to the rath and returned to the school meditation hall in the same manner as the first day, which was called Bahuda Jatra. This time we were joined by some of the village people who shared our happiness. We concluded the programme with some silence and a grand Prasad distribution ceremony. Children enjoyed the bounteous sweets and fruits.

July 5th - School's and Tara di's birthday





The school completed 14 years and Tara didi's 86th birth anniversary. To mark this auspicious day, the students of AMVM participated in many events and showcased their talents. The preparation began many days before. The efforts of both the children and the teachers built up to this beautiful day. The children were dressed in colourful dresses which filled the environment with a vibrant atmosphere. The programme by the younger children, who had joined the school recently brought a smile to everyone's face. The day started with a meditation in the ashram followed by a special hawan by the children in the school.



The following items were presented: -

Progress Group students presented- Ishwar (play) and Vidyarthi ka Jeevan (play) and a dance on the theme of Mahabharat and an Odia song *ei aama pathashala* (This is my school).



Perseverance Group students presented- Ganga Avataran (play), dance on Shri Ram Chandra Kripalu Bhajuman song, and an Odia song *ei ama vidya mandira* (This is my temple of knowledge).

Humility and Gratitude Group students presented 'Ouch', a play and an Odia song- *ei aama vidya peetha* (This is my place of learning).

The children of Victory Group presented- two plays- 'Goldilocks and three bears' and 'two hens', dances on the songs *chanda chamke cham cham* (the moon is shining) and I like to move.



Grace Group presented The tree and the woodcutter- a play and danced on the song *sanwaar loon* (decorate you),

Bliss Group presented a dance- *aaj ki* (today's) party, which added vibrancy to the event.





Smile Group children presented- Phalon ka Durbar (Court of fruits) which was a play, but actually a fancy dress on fruits.



Peace Group children presented a play *Chin chin chidiya* (chirping birds).

Children of various groups got together and presented a yoga dance, which created a serene effect on the audience.



Besides the above, there were various presentations of singing, instrumental music, and dances, in smaller groups and solo. These dances were full of energy and the eyes of the spectators were glued to them.

Raksha Bandhan- 11th August



Raksha Bandhan is a festival that all the children look forward to. This year it was celebrated on 11th August. Children from different groups made colourful rakhis using silk threads and glitters. The children of Perseverance and Progress groups braided different designs of rakhi using colourful threads. Both the teachers and students made many complicated patterns using threads which was a joyous moment for them to learn together. Before the function, the children were ready with their rakhis which they had made for each other and a special assembly was held to celebrate the day. Children of Aspiration group put up plays, retold the

stories behind the celebration and sang songs. It was followed by tying rakhis. Everyone enjoyed the homemade laddus.

In the evening, special *pithas* (an Odia sweet dish) were made for the cows. Everyone gathered in the cowshed to worship the cows with flowers and tilak. everyone showed their gratitude by chanting the mantras for their wellbeing. Special rakhis were made for them which were tied to their horns.

Chacha Ji's Birthday- 13th August



The 119th birth anniversary of Shri Surendranath Jauhar “Faquir” (1903-1986) or our beloved Chachaji was celebrated in the school. A

special meditation was held in the morning. The aspirants gathered there to pay their homage to the great soul. As he was a member of Arya Samaj, a hawan was arranged in the school. Poonam Didi shared the ideals that Chacha ji stood for. A

few interesting stories related to his life which had been told by himself were retold to the children. Prasad was distributed at the end.



Babaji Maharaj's birthday-14th August

On this auspicious day we paid our reverence to the great man who brought a big change in the history of Education in the state Odisha. He was the one who inspired to put Integral education into practise. He believed that *naam jap* (invocation of name) can solve many problems in life. That day a special *naam jap* programme was arranged for the children in the school meditation hall. Everyone repeatedly chanted the Mother's name for a while which created a tranquil environment around.

Independence Day- Sri Aurobindo's birthday- 15th August



Weeks and weeks of rigorous practise, choreography by our older students of Faith group for the small kids, choosing costume was a cheerful endeavour for us as

it was our Master's 150th Birth Anniversary and India's 75th year of freedom from the British. Teachers and students eagerly waited for the final



performance. Some important visitors were present to witness the final programme.

This time a number of activities were planned for the children. All children from Perseverance group onwards participated in Quiz, Speech, Essay writing, poem writing and painting competitions. Pandit Shantanu Bhattacharya along with his wife Smt. Durba Bhattacharya and their daughter Kumari Mitra graced the occasion.



The programme began with two-minutes of silence with The Mother's a New Year's music and was followed by a few devotional songs: - Om Sri Aurobindo Mama





Sharanam and Namaste Sri Aurobindo accompanied on the Harmony by Shantanu Da. Then the creative movement and recitation of Hymn to Durga (by Sri Aurobindo) by the Smile group children left the audience spell bound and had a calming effect on the atmosphere. They also performed a play on Bhagat Singh in Hindi and a dance *Bharat Humko Jaan Se Pyara Hai*

which was choreographed by Denis (Barwa) Bhaiya. The recitation of the poem 'God' by Sri Aurobindo and the song Sri Aurobindo Name Aanando by the Victory group



children fascinated the audience. The Youngest ones from Peace Group performed an action song 'I Salute My Flag' which was really catchy. The children of Grace Group presented a song- 'Avatar' and recited the poem 'Surrender' by Sri Aurobindo. Their patriotic dance set to Bollywood music '*Chakhde India*' with stunning costumes was well choreographed. The children of Bliss group recited the

poem 'Tree' by Sri Aurobindo and did some formations with marching on the song 'Nanha Munha Rahi Hun'. A beautiful dance on the theme of Krishna was



choreographed by the Progress Group children. Their movements were awe inspiring. Pallavi, Divya and Radhika put up a dance 'India Walé'. They themselves



choreographed this dance on the song. They bagged sacks of applause for their beautiful performance. The children from different groups also presented different patriotic songs in



Odia. The children of Perseverance, Gratitude and Humility Groups enacted a play on Sri Aurobindo's life. Their dialogues were energetic

and spirited. The programme came to an end with a few devotional songs by our renowned singers- Pandit Shantanu Bhattacharya, Smt. Durba Bhattacharya and Km. Mitra.

Ganesh Chaturthi- 30th August.

Like every year, this year also we celebrated Vinayak Chaturthi in the school. A few days before this festival the preparation started. Some children took initiative to make the statue. They collected clay from the riverbank and made a mould using hay and jute thread. Finally, the



statue was ready and they painted it with their favourite colours and decorated Lord Ganesh and the stage on which the statue had been placed.



Children of different groups prepared a few programmes to put up on that day. Some groups enacted small skits. Dance and songs were performed by different groups. The event left a set of unforgettable memories in the audience.

The following were the items presented: -

Sri Vakratunda chant by Peace Group

Jai Ganesh- a song by Bliss Group

Ganesh ka Punarjanam (rebirth), a play by Smile Group

Hey Gajavadana a dance by Bhagwati, Chetna and Tulika of Aspiration and Gratitude groups.



Ganesh's wisdom, a play by Victory group

Deva Shree Ganesha, a dance presented by Bhagwati, Chetna, Shampa, Shamika and Jagriti of

Aspiration, Humility and Gratitude groups.

Shrapit chandrama (cursed moon), a play by Smile group

Sukh karta dukh harta- song sung by Pramila and Amita of Gratitude group





Nache dhina- a dance presented by Victory group

Majha bappa- a dance presented by the girls of Gratitude and

Humility groups.

Bappa Banjo, a dance presented by Bhagwati and Swati of Aspiration group

Gajanana, a dance presented by the girls of Gratitude, Humility and Faith groups.

Boys from Gratitude and Humility narrated many stories related to Vinayak.



Vishwakarma puja- 17th September

This year the Vishwakarma puja festival was celebrated on the 17th of September. It was celebrated with great fervour and joy. A day before this, the children decorated the hall to worship the eternal



architect, Lord Vishwakarma. They cleaned the gardening instruments and various tools and machineries and arranged them in the hall. The morning echoed with devotional songs and chants. Stories of the Lord were told by the students and the teachers. The stories included the rebuilding of Lanka, how he carved Lord Jagannath in an incarnation of an old carpenter, how he created the earth and the story of building a castle for Goddess Laxmi when she was abandoned by Lord Jagannath and for the poor brahmin Sudama- the friend of Lord Krishna.

Everyone enjoyed the stories and the prasad of bundi (sweet) and the flatted rice powder added with sugar and different fruits.

Trip to South India



In the month of August, a group of 43 children and 9 teachers and escorts embarked on an educational trip to South India. The age group of the children



varied from 9 years to 13 years, i.e. Perseverance group to Gratitude group. All were so excited for the trip since most of them are travelling for the first time. Out of them, 6 children from Gratitude group had been a part of the school trip to Rajasthan and Andaman Islands. This was the first school trip after Covid-19 Pandemic. We visited Kanyakumari, Madurai, Rameswaram and Puducherry in

17 days. We stayed for 2 days and 2 nights in Kanyakumari, 1 day and 1 night in Madurai, 2 days and 1 night in Rameswaram and





6 days and 5 nights in Puducherry. The rest of the time was spent in the train. On 17th of August, we started our journey to

Kanyakumari with one night and half a day's halt at Simhachalam in Visakhapatnam. There we did darshan of Simhachaleswaram on the top of a hill and caught a train for Kanyakumari after lunch. First 3 days passed without any problem though temperature was ranging from 28 degree to 30 degree. We all enjoyed Swami Vivekananda rock memorial, travelling by ferry to the rock,



sightseeing, sunrise and sunset, Kanyakumari temple, Gandhi memorial, Aquarium and eco-friendly garden in Kanyakumari. We also visited Vivekananda Museum and Ramayana darshan in Vivekananda Kendra. In Madurai we visited Meenakshi temple, kings' palace and Gandhi Museum. At Rameswaram we visited Rameswaram temple, Dhanushkoti, Vibhishana temple, A.P.J. Abdul



Kalam's house and his Samadhi, Panch mukhi Hanuman and floating stone. On 25th early morning we reached Puducherry. We visited different places like boating at Paradise beach, Lake estate, Ashram flower garden, Marina

beach, Auroville, Matrimandir, Savitri bhawan, Bharat Nivas, Botanical Garden. In the Ashram, we visited departments like handmade paper, bakery,



laundry, kitchen, weaving, sports ground, playground, Sri Smriti, etc. In Bureau central office we watched a video on the life of Sri Aurobindo. Every morning at

6.30 we used to go to the Samadhi and meditate near the Samadhi for 10 to 15 minutes. On two evenings, we joined the playground meditation and on one evening Samadhi meditation. The children felt the peace around the Samadhi and also in the playground





meditation. Out of all the meals the children had in the whole trip, the children liked the Ashram food the most. One evening we went to the Ashram Theatre to watch a play enacted by the Ashram school kids and the ashramites. The play was based on Rabindranath Tagore's novel "The Home and the World". Children had a live experience of a theatre. They loved it. Finally, on 31st of August, on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi, after having darshan in the Ganesh temple, we boarded the train for our return journey to Kechla. On 2nd September we reached safely.

Visitors to Kechla



Ms. Neha Aghi with her Mother (Krishna di) spent a month in Kechla. During their staying they helped the children in their academics. Neha di taught various activities to the

Progress and the Perseverance Group children. She also taught mathematics to Sumitra, Madhumay and Bhagwan. Krishna Di Taught Hindi to different groups.

Mr. Denis Barwa from Ghaziabad volunteered to teach dance movements in Kechla. For this purpose, he was in Kechla from 22nd July to 17th August. The dance and movement sessions commenced with children of varied age groups. For children between the age group of 10 years to 17 years, the sessions were thrice a week. In order to make the



activities like – Ninja game and Introduction with an action. In order to get them comfortable with rhythmic movements and create spatial awareness, he did the Boat Activity wherein the

children were made to move within the space imagining it to be a boat and in order for the boat to float they had to walk around and balance the space throughout. They also had to walk at different speeds and do different actions as and when the action was called out. This acted as a good warm up as well. Then he did the Rhythmic Isolation Movement. Here the children had to find different ways to move individual body parts on the music being played. This enabled them to become more comfortable with their bodies and enquire creative movement patterns. This helped them to ease into dance choreographies that were taught to the children later during the week



For the children between the age group of 5 years and 8 years, he started the Introduction with an Action in order to make them feel comfortable and less inhibited. This was followed by action songs like Hello-Hello, Walking-Walking and Head Shoulder Knees & Toes. This was followed by mild dance warm up on the song Waka Waka. Then he made the children play the Dance & Freeze game. Ending the sessions with cool down and relaxation. In the first week the younger children were not made to learn any structured choreographies, so as to make them comfortable with movements and gradually ease them into dance choreographies.

On the first Saturday a special session was conducted for the senior group of children on Improvisation and Creative Movement. Here the children were taught various tools of movement improvisation. They were also taught Inscribe technique for creating unique movement patterns. Here they had to draw the letters of their individual names within the given space, using different body parts on the music being played. This allowed them to express themselves individually using the tools of improvisation and to enquire into creative and rhythmic movement patterns.

On another Saturday a few groups were showcased dance performances of various dance forms like ballet and contemporary. It was meant to help them develop a better understanding of various dance forms and become more informed as an audience.

For the upcoming program on 15th August celebrating Independence Day and 150th Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo, all the groups were taught theme-based dance choreographies.

The children participated in all the dance sessions with a lot of enthusiasm. Their efforts to comprehend dance and movement-based information was truly commendable. The dance performances showcased by each group on 15th August were truly praiseworthy.

But most of the credit goes to Denis Barwa for working so hard with the children and making them so enthusiastic about dance that the children would be looking forward to their dance sessions every day and would be dejected on the days that their turn was not there.

Film Making group- Sh. Neeraj Sharma and Smt. Vinita Sharma visited Kechla with a whole group of cameramen, lights, drone and other equipment for making a short film on Kechla. They were accompanied by their two daughters- Anvi and ____ who are studying in Mirambika. Sulochana Didi and Ms Puneeta Puri didi with her daughter- Sanvi accompanied the film makers. They visited Kechla from May 28th to 6th June. Anvi taught a few songs- '*Sa se Sargam gate hain*', '*Shakti sahita Ganapati*', a bhajan and an English song 'smooth like butter' to the children of progress and Perseverance groups. She also taught them how to make butterfly in origami.

Ms Poonam Gupta came to Kechla at the end of June. She spent about two months with the children. During her staying she helped the children of Perseverance Group with their Hindi.



Meeta (Bisen) didi spent 15 days in the month of July (from 12th to 28th). During her stay, she helped the 12th class students with

their Chemistry. She also taught Chemistry and Biology to the children of Gratitude and Humility Group (Class 9th and 10th).

Nigel George and Maya came to Kechla on 12th August and spent about a week. Nigel helped the older children with their English and Maya taught English to Bhavna, Lalu and Gauri and Sociology to Neela.



Sh. Sudipta Das from Guwahati, Assam visited Kechla. During his three weeks of stay, he helped the brishti and Swati in their Geography. He also helped the Gratitude and Humility group children

with their Geography.



Pandit Shantanu Bhattacharya visited Kechla with his wife- Smt. Durba Bhattacharya and daughter- Km. Mitra from 13th to

20th of August. They taught the children devotional songs based on ragas. They also guided the senior students with their vocal



and instrumental music. It was a matter of pride for the school to have such a great and accomplished artiste visit us.

On the 2nd of September, the District Collector Mr. Abdaal Akhtar, IAS visited the school for a few hours. This was an unexpected visit and a very pleasant surprise. The children



of Gratitude and Humility groups were his guide and took him around. These children got an opportunity to interact with him freely without any hesitation. He visited different groups and interacted with the students. The children of all the groups sang for him and presented items, when he visited their group. He highly appreciated the children and liked the school setup a lot.



Report of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir

For the period October to March 22-23

Celebrations

Celebrations infuse life with passion and purpose. They summon the human spirit.

- Terrence E. Deal

To foster the rich cultural heritage of our nation, our school celebrates all the festivals and observes the significant days with due fervour. They inculcate the feelings of patriotism and make the children aware of our vast and immense cultural heritage and legacy.

Diwali- 24th October

Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.

-J. K. Rowling



Diwali, the festival of lights, was celebrated in a grand way. The school and hostel campus were cleaned by the children. They did a thorough cleaning of their rooms and some

older children made hand-made sweets (rasgulla) for everyone. Most of them made candles and diyas to decorate the courtyards.



On the occasion everyone gathered in the meditation hall for a short prayer. Prakash bhaiya read to the children on Mahakali from the book *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo. The children from

Perseverance Group put up a small skit on the story of Ramayana and Narakashur. Mani Di enlightened the children



with the stories related to Diwali and the series of festivals before the occasion. The hall echoed with Sri Ram Bhajans and mantras. There were games and



different corners were arranged for the children. The girls from the Gratitude and Humility Group made Earrings whereas the boys put up Novelty game Corners for the younger ones. Some children from Perseverance and Progress Groups took initiative in learning the making of science toys

using the waste materials and others participated in Rangoli. Some children also



participated in painting and the children of Smile group learnt a few items in origami. Basketball, volleyball, base kickball and touch-ball matches were arranged for the children.

In the evening everyone gathered in the Ashram Courtyard to light the diyas. After that, they beautified the school and hostel campus with their handmade diyas and candles.



Pranjal Bhaiya's Birthday- 29th Nov

He is the man who bathed in the light

He guides us from dark to light

He, who grew on the mother's lap

On his Birthday we sing, pray, aspire and clap.



Pranjal Bhaiya's birthday was celebrated with gaiety and enthusiasm on the auspicious occasion of 29th November. Everyone assembled in the Ashram Meditation Hall to pray



for our beloved Bhaiya. It was followed by a Hawan by our children. Students prepared songs, dances and skits to perform on that day. The children of **Smile Group** put up a dance on the mantra **Gurur Brahma** and also enacted the play **Wizard of Oz**. Our tiny ones from **Bliss Group** sang one of Pranjali Bhaiya's favourite songs **Suraj Zara** and also performed a small play on the story **Chicken Licken**.





Three fools and Chicken for Dinner were two short plays performed by the children of Victory Group. The children of

Perseverance and Progress Groups, Gratitude and Humility Groups danced Bhangra and Jazz respectively. They also put up small creative skits and songs in Odia. Bina di and Jagat Bhaiya mesmerised the audience with their Sitar and the Tabla.





Sri Aurobindo's Mahaprayan- 5th December

Remembering the legend



On 5th December 1950 Sri Aurobindo left his body. To honour the day everyone gathered in the Ashram Meditation Hall for a special prayer. The children sang a few devotional songs (Sri Aurobindo's Bhajan) and a hawan was arranged in the school.

Christmas-25th December

A Season of spirit to give and forgive

Christmas, the celebration of love and care, was celebrated with the message of love and care. It was celebrated with our vibrant choir groups. The tree was decorated by the Aspiration group children. It looked gorgeous with balloons, bells, stars, balls and many



decorative items. We started the programme in the evening on the Christmas Day itself.

All the groups sang carols related to the events of the birth of Christ and Saint

Nicholas. All children in their bright red costumes were a delight to watch. The entire programme was superb and fabulous. The singing and dancing group enthralled the audience with their rhythm and coordination. The parents were also present on time to enjoy the programme. Palani Bhैया who came here from Auroville was



dressed like Santa and he came dancing to the beat of the song Jingle Bells and distributed candies to everyone's delight. On this occasion the children of **Peace Group** presented a dance- **Christmas time**. The **Victory Group** children sang **Raat Christmas Ki** and danced on the carol - **We Wish You A Merry Christmas**. The children of **Smile Group** put up a dance on **Thandi Hawa Chali Hai** and sang **Every Tiny Star and Silent Night**.



The **Perseverance Group** children sang **Jingle Bells Rock, Christmas Tree and Door Ek Tara**. The **Progress Group** children sang **O Come All Ye Faithful** and **Nyari Raat**. **Little Drummer Boy, We Three Kings, Gloria and Door Aakash Mein Ek Tara** were sung in tune by the **Gratitude and Humility Group**

children. The girls of these groups also played a few carols on their flute. A few girls

danced to the carol **Jingle Bells Rock**, **Christmas Time Is Here**, **All We Need** and **Last Christmas**. The **Faith and Aspiration Group** children sang the carol **Charni Mein**. At the end of the programme there was a group dance. The big girls danced to their tribal music in rhythm. Everyone enjoyed the programme thoroughly.



December 31st

Looking for another chance, standing on the old scaffolding

A special midnight meditation was held in the Ashram on 31st December. The willing members participated in the programme. The New year calendar was opened and everyone wished each other for the coming year.



New Year

One more opportunity to renew and rejuvenate



On the occasion of New Year, we assembled together in the Ashram Meditation Hall for a prayer and welcomed the New Year after bidding farewell to the year gone by. A 12-hour naam jap programme was arranged in the school meditation hall. All the children participated enthusiastically from 6 am to 6 pm. We thanked The Mother for a lovely year behind and aspired for a better year ahead.

Republic Day

Rejoicing the rich heritage of our country



The day was celebrated in our school with great zeal. Meeta Didi unfurled the national flag. The school building echoed with the national anthem. To commemorate the day, the importance of the day and the sacrifice of our heroes were

discussed. Everyone missed watching the Republic Day celebration ceremony on the television as they had to proceed for the Basant Panchami programme.



Basant Panchami- 26th Jan

Celebrating the Goddess of learning, music and art

The advent of the Spring Season was celebrated with the occasion of Basant Panchami. Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge and wisdom was worshipped on that day. One



of the four aspects of The Mother, Maha Saraswati was invoked on this special day. The character of Maha Saraswati, her likings and

dislikings were discussed after reading a paragraph from the book- The Mother by Sri Aurobindo. Everyone assembled to pray and to be blessed. The programme started with silence with The Mother's music and the children of different groups put up the



programmes they prepared in a very short time. The children of Bliss Group sang Saraswati Vandana beautifully and mesmerised the audience. The children of Peace Group exhibited their talent on the classical dance on the song Veena Vadini. The bhajan Hey Sarade Maa was sung beautifully by the children of Victory Group and the Smile

group children sang Teri Veena Ki Ban Jaun Taar in tune and danced on the song Maa Saraswati Sarade in rhythm. The Girls of Progress group sang Hans Vahini and the children of Gratitude and Humility put up an orchestra. The children played raag Bilawal on the flute accompanied by the boys on their tabla in Teen Taal.





*Persistence and hard work can
create miracles*

*Sports rejuvenate the human spirit.
It inspires the young ones not only
with the new skills and tricks, but*





it also provides them with new values and ethics. Keeping that as the aim we celebrate our Annual Sports Day every year. This year too we celebrated the same on 4th February with great enthusiasm and solidarity.



The one-month rigorous practise of the children ended with the field cleaning, making paintings, drawings and writings of their experiences about their corners and the grand performance. All of them unitedly worked on the field decoration, made green rooms, put up tent for the guests and set mikes and music system. It was unbelievable how our young ones were trained in a few years so perfectly. They

prepared different corners and trained the tiny ones for their physical demonstration.

This time the children took Courage as the theme of the event and displayed it in the field in their decorations. Children took Lion as its mascot and they made two beautiful lions in papier mâché which stood on the field courageously. They also made the same as the mementoes for everyone.



Our dearest Tara Didi (Padmashri), Lt General Dr Daljit Singh; DG, Armed forces and Medical Services, ASI Sh. Raman Lamba of Delhi Police and many parents were present to witness the grand event.

The event had its grand opening by Tara Di lighting lamp which was followed by a small meditation with The Mother's music. The grand ceremony unfastened with a spirited and well-synchronised March Past by our hero warriors accompanied by the feisty song



Kadam Kadam Badhayēja
by our young mentors.
They saluted The Mother's
flag and their national
song echoed in the hills
and left the spectators

speechless. The children of
peace group dressed up
like animals and put up an
action song **Janwar ki**
Duniya which was created
and tuned by their group



teachers. Their final performance was unexpectedly good, which mesmerised the



audience. The morning stage events ended with a **Yogasan** by all the children which was designed by our elder students only with a very little support from the teachers.



Different corners like **relay race** , **obstacle race**, **slow cycle race**, **running race** were arranged for the children. Everyone participated in their respected corners enthusiastically. Presence of Tara di made the children more energetic as she herself was watching the events in the scorching sun. The children also played a basketball match, which is one of their favourite games. After a short meditation everyone dispersed for lunch and a nap.



The children with their colourful costumes, holding their heads up presented themselves in the field for their final performance. Bhavna and Jagat with their booming voice resumed the programme. Our highly distinguished guests were welcomed to eyewitness our little one's demonstrations.

The children of **Unicycle** corner welcomed the visitors with a small **welcome song** which



was followed by a dance by the **Perseverance** and **Faith group** children on the musical chant **Bhoomi Mangalam**. The children of **Bliss group** performed an aerobic

dance with dumbbells.

The children of **Perseverance Group** fascinated the audience with their skills on their **stilts**. The little soldiers



from the **Victory Group** performed an **army drill** being alert all the time. The children of





Perseverance group also prepared a corner on **Hula hoop**. Mind blowing performance on **roller skates** was performed by the children of Perseverance and Progress group children. The children of Smile Group and



Gratitude and Humility Group thrilled the audience with their gymnastics skills. A group of children from Perseverance Group onwards showed their

courage, harmony and balancing skills by constellating different Pyramid postures which left the audience dumbstruck. The children from Progress



Group, Gratitude Group and Humility Group showcased their skills on the unicycle. The programme was surreal and made it a

memorable day for our guests and the spectators.

The ceremony closed with an **enlightening** speech by Dr Daljit Singh. Everyone gathered on the court to thank the Mother



Earth and invoked peace with **Shanti Path**. Tara di distributed mementos and sweets to



everyone. It was a memorable day for everyone who made the programme so special.



The Mothers Birthday- 21st February



We bow to Thee...

Like every year, this year too, The Mother's Birthday was celebrated with extensive programmes but in a serene environment. The following was the schedule for the day: -

Meditation in the school

The evening Programme was as follows: -

Ghode jaise chaal- dance by Peace Group (Age 3+)





Sabse achhi sabji kaun hai-
play in Hindi by Bliss group
(Age 5+)

Shooting, quiz, The Mother's
dictionary and sweet- skits

by Victory Group (Age
7+)





Make your children battle ready
Mother – The virtue a play by
The Mother by Perseverance
Group (Age 9 & 10+)

Ascent to Truth- play by
Gratitude group (Age 13+)

Flag down and Lights of Aspiration in the ashram at 6:30 pm.



Anuradha Sapru Kohl birthday-27th Feb

Our sincere homage to the departed one

Everyone assembled near the plaque of Mrs Anuradha Shapru Kohl to pay tribute on her birthday. Children did a few chants and prayed for the departed soul on this auspicious occasion.

Holi- 8th March

Spreading the message of Love and compassion



We celebrate the festival of colours with lots of enthusiasm. The children prepared hand-made colour powder using beetroot, spinach, turmeric and from the juice of different flowers and leaves. Many mouth-



watering food corners were arranged by the teachers for the students. The programme started with a short collective meditation in the prayer hall. Children sang different songs on Lord Krishna ji and songs related to colours.





The Mother's first arrival in Pondicherry- 29th March

To Thee whom we consecrate.....

Everyone gathered in the ashram Meditation Hall to commemorate the day with a special meditation. Children sang a few devotional songs. In the evening assembly Srinath Bhaiya spoke about the importance of the day.

Visitors

Welcome, Make yourself at home

We welcomed our visitors heartily. We are grateful for their dedication and contribution. They support our children by giving their precious time to guide them in their academic field.

Prakash Bhaiya, Anuradha Di and Anurag Bhaiya



Dr. Prakash Verma has been taking online classes in Physics for the senior students of Kechla for a long time. During his stay, he taught Physics to the class 10th and 12th students. Anuradha didi helped the Smile Group children with their English reading. She also taught some basics of Odissi

dance to a few children. Anurag Bhaiya helped the progress Group and Gratitude Group children with their Hindi.



Sandeep Saha- 20th December to 27th December

Sandeep Bhaiya has been taking online classes for quite some time. He helped the older children who are doing English Honours with their English. He also helped Basant in some of his commerce subjects.



Nirankar Bhaiya- 25th December to 16th January

Nirankar bhaiya taught Western Folk Dance to the senior students. He also coordinated the educational trip of the students of The Mother's International School and of Sri Aurobindo School, Hyderabad.

Shailja Bansal didi, her son and daughter-26th December to 30th December



Shailja didi has been teaching Biology to the class 12 students by online mode. She visited Kechla with her son and daughter to enjoy the scenic beauty and to experience the serenity



with her children. During their stay, she helped the children with their Biology.

Sonali Gupta- 3rd to 16th January



Sonali didi visited Kechla and spent time by taking classes for the younger children.

Rupal Di and Vijaya Di- 3rd to 9th January

Rupal didi, a doctor from Ahmedabad and Vijaya di, a retired teacher from Bangalore spent time in Kechla. They took classes of the older children.

Gopa Saha and her husband- 22nd January to 26th January

They are long time devotees. They enjoyed the scenic beauty of the area.

Surya Di, Palani Bhaiya, Hari bhaiya- 22nd to 28th December

They had come on their annual visit from Auroville. They did the Dental check-up of everyone. They also cooked special sambar for the children.



Meeta (Bisen) di -16th Jan to 14th Feb

Meeta didi has been coming to Kechla for a very long time. She has also been taking online classes of the children. She taught the class 10th and 12th children chemistry and biology.



Veerinder didi

Veerinder didi came with her husband. She has been coming every year, but after Covid, this was her first visit. She taught Biology to all students from classes 6th to 10th.









Educational Trips of outside schools to Kechla

Trips of students of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir

This year too we organised excursions and field trips for the students to gain first-hand knowledge. As there are no holidays in the school, it becomes an opportunity for the children to entertain and explore.

Smile Group- trip to Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar

A group comprising 25 students from the Smile Group and 7 adults, which included our Principal (Sangita didi), one teacher (Bina didi), one senior escort (Ramesh bhai) and four of our student-volunteers (Basant, Neela, Sushila and Basanti) began their journey away from their calm and serene home to the city Bhubaneswar, which has a special attraction for the tourists for its old temples and historical places. Though the children were very small to



understand the importance of these historical places, we organised this trip as it was their first outing away from their village. This was just to prepare them for the future programmes and to make them more independent.

2nd October

The group started its journey with a half an hour journey by boat on the Kolab reservoir and went to Champaguda. Everyone packed from here in autos and went to the Railway station. As it was the first time for the children, no medicines for travel sickness were given to them,



just to determine as to which child has a problem. Out of 25 children only 5 children at the beginning had a little problem. Later they too were fine. Children enjoyed the packed dinner they carried from the hostel. The train was late by two and a half hours. Pappu Bhaiya was waiting for us at the Bhubaneswar Railway Station. On reaching the Khandagiri school, we were hosted by Aparti bhai and were welcomed to the dining hall for

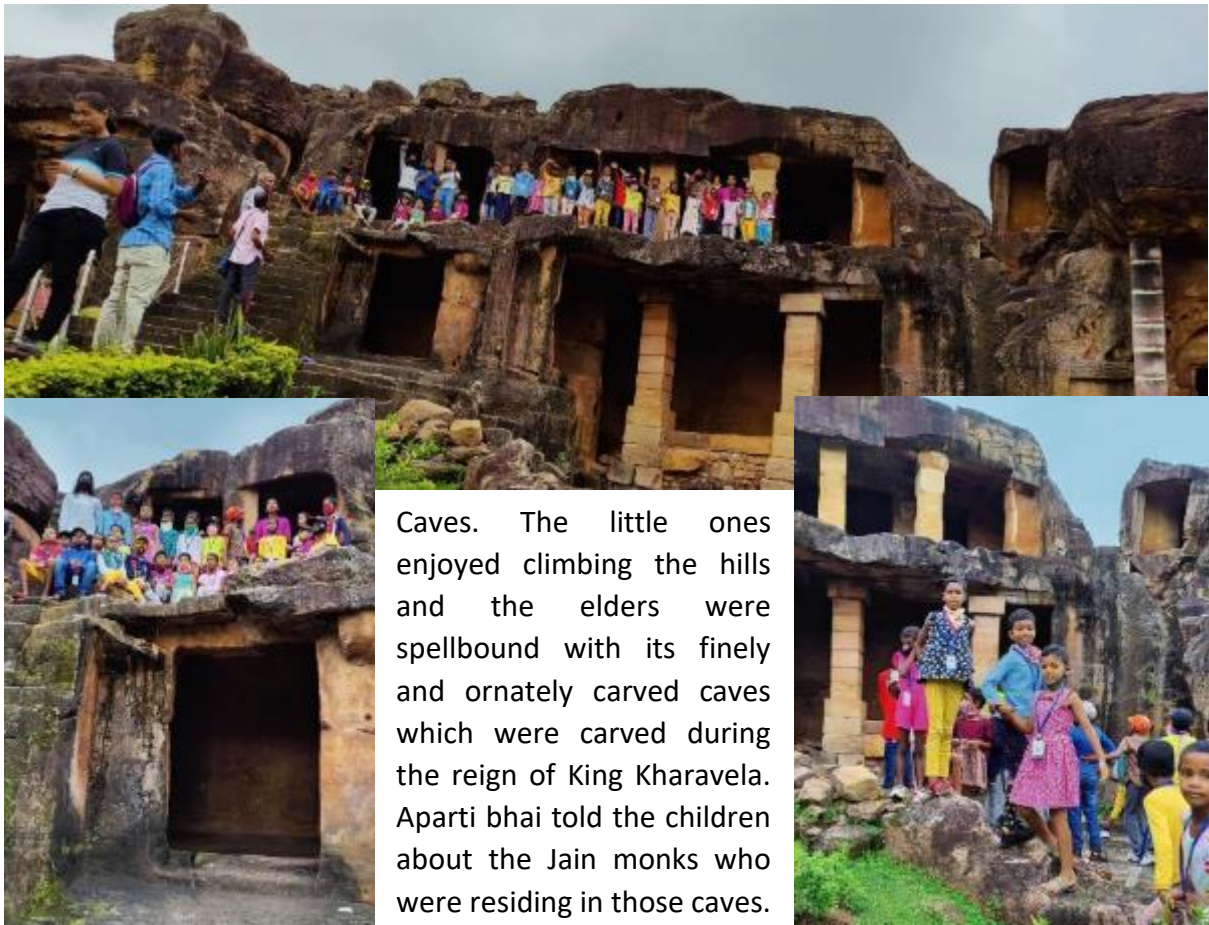


breakfast. The children and teachers cleaned the rooms thoroughly and took a bath.

Then Pappu Bhaiya took us by his bus to a stoppage from where everyone had to walk for at least two kilometres to reach Lingaraj Temple, which is the largest temple in Bhubaneswar. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Everyone enjoyed the images of different Gods and Goddesses on the temple walls. Everyone relished the lemon juice we bought from a street stall.



After resting for a while Aparti Bhai accompanied us to visit the Khandagiri caves. Children walked for around three kilometres to enjoy the view of Udayagiri and Khandagiri. As Udayagiri was closed by 5 o'clock in the evening, they could see its view from the Khandagiri



He showed the children some important caves like Kumari Parvat or Hathi Gumpha, Ganesh Gumpha, Jaya Vijaya Gumpha, Queen's palace cave or Rani Gumpha, etc. Children enjoyed the view of Bhubaneswar from its summit.



The monkeys were a special attraction for our little ones. These monkeys were well behaved. They were waiting for the visitors to give them goodies instead of snatching it. The monkeys were very friendly with the people. Sometimes the pampered ones would sit on people's shoulder for getting extra. They came back to their camps and in the evening Pappu bhai took everyone to show the beautiful Durga Pandals in the bus. Children visited a few nearby pandals and returned.



with their water bottles and snacks. They went by bus to the Nandankanan zoo and

That night all children were curious and excited as they would be visiting the Nandankanan zoo the next morning. They were ready on time



they were energetic like never before to meet their animal friends. Krupasindhu Bhaiya accompanied us to the Nandankanan. He took us around the zoo and the children met different animals like monkeys, baboons, white tigers, Royal Bengal tigers, deer, lions, hippos, elephants, wolves and foxes, crocodiles, giraffe, different snakes and birds. As it was raining heavily, it turned out to be the best adventure of the trip.



On the return they visited the museum of Pathani Samanta Planetarium. In the evening children joined the inmates of Khandagiri school in the evening meditation. They recited the Durga Stotra by Sri Aurobindo and sang a few bhajans and then went to have their dinner.



As heavy rain was forecasted for the 5th they spent the whole day in Khandagiri Integral School. In the afternoon, children walked to Gandhi Peace centre with Aparti Bhai.



They saw different pictures of Mahatma Gandhi and heard his recorded voice which was overwhelming. After spending some time in the serene environment, they returned to the camp.

After a delicious breakfast they started for Shanti Stupa or peace pagoda which is only a few kilometres from Bhubaneshwar. Children were told the story of the great King Ashoka who laid the foundation stone. Afterward they went to Konark Temple which is dedicated to the Sun God. The children liked the huge wheels and horses. They were told the story of Dharmapada



who completed the construction of the temple. On their return they enjoyed the coconut water and ice-cream. Then they started for Puri. As the rain was lashing, the children could not enjoy the seashore and they were taken to visit the temple. The temple was

crowded and the younger ones managed with difficulty in the crowd. Only a few could see the idol of the Lord. Children had their lunch in the temple and then we reached Kalupada Ghat. At night we halted in Sri Aurobindo Integral School, Kalupada Ghat. The rabbits were a great attraction on the campus. Everyone enjoyed the dinner and went to sleep in the big hall.



The next morning after breakfast, children visited the Chilika lake. As it was windy, there were some restrictions for the boat riding. The children enjoyed the lake standing

on the bridge. They could see fishes in the water, and they were concerned about the pollution in the water. After spending an hour there, they visited Narayani Temple which is dedicated to Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva. Children chanted a few mantras in the temple and were mesmerised by the scenic view of the temple. They went back to the camp and after

their lunch, everyone enjoyed a nap. Then they visited the ashram garden, the cowshed and the shrine. Sanjay Bhaiya showed the children the Mother's room there. In the dining hall they relished the special egg curry and left for the station. The



station master was informed before and the train stopped at the junction for a little longer for the tiny ones to climb. Everyone departed from the loving hosts. But there was a great joy in their heart as they would be back to their homeland, a land of serenity and tranquillity.



TRIP TO SOUTH INDIA



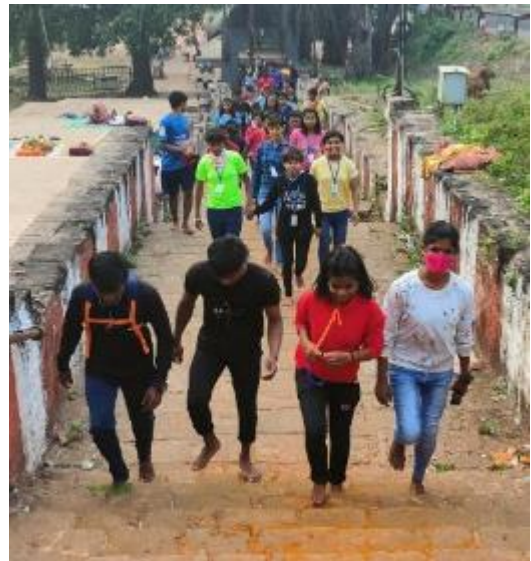
The children of Gratitude, Humility, Aspiration, and some students from the Faith group with three didis embarked on the journey to South India on the 2nd of November. This was a trip after a gap of over two and a half long years. Everyone was glad to get away from the monotony of school and the village and wanted to explore a new world. Two days before the day of departure, we (the children with the help of teachers) and these were ready on time for the trip. The luggage was loaded on a tractor and the children were taken by cars and autos for Paliba station, which is 15 km away from Kechla. It was a short train journey, and the tickets were in the reserved compartment. The bogie was overcrowded, and the children had to struggle to get to their own seat. Finally, our train reached Vishakhapatnam and the children sat up in autos and



reached Simhachalam Temple area, where accommodation was arranged for us. Everyone had their dinner and spent the night on the floor in the big hall. With the music of Shehnai everyone



opened their eyes. They got ready quickly and had a small snack. Everyone climbed the over thousand steps to reach Simhachalam temple, to offer their obeisance and prayers. Lunch had been arranged for us at the



temple. Children spent time roaming around the temple's premises and explored the surrounding area as well. After having an early lunch, everyone ran down the stairs. It was amazing that the children



came down before the bus could, which had started at the same time. Afterward everyone brought their luggage and went to the Vishakhapatnam station for the next journey to Kanyakumari by the Gurudev Express.

Everyone boarded the train, but a new experience was that the train was chock-a-block with people and luggage. All our seats were captured by the people whose tickets were either not confirmed or not there. With a lot of difficulty, we could get possession of our seats. After two days of avoiding the usurpers, we reached the Nagercoil junction. At the station we boarded a bus that took us to the Triveni Lodge where we spent our next two days.



The lodge was in the central area from where most of the places were a walking distance. The hotel manager provided us with two separate halls for boys and girls.

Breakfast was arranged in a nearby roadside stall (Mani Mess) and everyone relished the





South Indian Dosa with special coconut chutney and sambar. Then we went to Vivekanand Rock Memorial by boat. A guide told us about Swami Vivekanand. Many children were inspired by Swamiji as he was also a great swimmer. Some wanted to plunge into the sea right away. Afterwards we visited the Marine Aquarium, Kumari temple, Gandhi



Memorial and the Triveni Sangam; the meeting point of the three water bodies. We all had typical South Indian food at lunch time at the tourist office, Kanyakumari. After a while from there itself we went straight to visit the Kamaraj Hall (dedicated to the former Chief Minister) and the Museum. Then we went to enjoy the scenic and serene beauty of Kanyakumari from the Watch Tower.

The children spent some time in watching the crabs on the stone and the turtles dashing around in the roaring ocean. From there we walked towards the sunset point which is a few kilometres from the Watch Tower. As the sky was cloudy, the sunset was hazy, but the walk was more than pleasant and took us through the clean pitch-dark road and the long walk was worth the effort.

The next day began with a clear sky, and we went to watch the sunrise. The crowd was so big that there was not even place to sow a single mustard seed. We headed to a



clearance which was difficult for others to climb. We somehow managed to stand there and waited for the large golden spherical object to manifest. The ocean was calm as if in deep meditation. From



the viewpoint we were enthralled by the lights that ornated the rock and the Kumari Temple. With the appearance of the natural light, the artificial ones were switched off. We spent some time and returned to our rooms.

After our breakfast we packed ourselves in a local bus and went to the Vivekanand Memorial and the Ramayana Hall which were close to each other. After getting the tickets, the first thing that stunned us was the painting of Swami Vivekanand which was made in such a way that everyone felt as if Swamiji was standing and looking at them. Everyone got inspired after reading about Swamiji, his views on India and about his direct contact with Maa Kali. Then we moved to the double storeyed building of



the Ramayana Hall. The exhibition of Ramayana and Mahabharat was displayed with hand paintings. Children were dumbfounded after seeing the beautiful pictures. They wanted to spend some more time, but we had less time as we had to go for lunch by walking in the scorching sun.

After our lunch we spent some time near the sea, playing with its water and running with its waves. As weather is never reliable, it suddenly rained cats and dogs. Anyhow everyone took it as a grace and returned to



the hotel. In the evening again we walked to Eco-Park which was well organised. Then we packed our luggage for Madurai, cleaned the rooms and bathrooms thoroughly. Then we had our delicious dinner with tasty fish curry and started for our next destination.



On the early morning of 7th our train reached Madurai. A bus was arranged to pick us up by the Arvind Eye hospital. The bus took us to their guest rooms where we spent the whole day. The akkas (sisters) there served us hot tea and breakfast. Everyone devoured the food and got ready for the famous Meenakshi Temple. As we were the late birds today, we had to spend around 3 hours for the Darshan of Mata Meenakshi. Everyone was mesmerised with the Dravidian style temple architecture and the idols on the temple walls. After spending three hours in the que everyone got energised with the magical tiny temple prasad (laddu). Then we



walked on the Vaigai river bridge to go back to our place. After lunch we went to the famous Thirumalai Nayakkar Mahal. As there was sound and light programme and we had not made the tickets for it, the caretaker warned us to get out of the palace. There the children enjoyed the very old stone carved statues in a glance, and



we were out in 20 minutes. The bus again picked us from there. As it was a Monday the other museums were closed and everyone enjoyed their fun loaded sharing in the room. After a good night's sleep, we started for our next destination Rameswaram, one of the 4 pilgrimages of India.

We liked this train journey very much as the compartments were separate for ladies and gents. It was not over-crowded. We spent time in singing and munching snacks. But the most thrilling was the train moving over the sea bridge. Everyone was curious to get that experience. Many of us took videos and photographs. Our train crossed the bridge and reached Rameswaram. We all walked with our luggage for about one and a half kilometres.



Finally, we reached the Kamayani Hall, which was right in front of Laxman Tirth, a famous tourist place. The caretakers were very generous and had arranged lunch for us at a decent price. They took good care and had made comfortable arrangements for us. After our lunch we went to Dhanush Kodi a place from where Shri Ram destroyed the bridge he had built with the monkey army. Children spent some





time there but their longing to play with the water could not be fulfilled as there was a red alert for the cyclone. After spending some time, we went to the Ghost town which was destroyed after a Tsunami. Everyone liked walking on the smooth sand and they embraced the broken church walls which stand still in the memory of the lost lives. The stones on the walls were built out of the coral stones and the children enjoyed the patterns and designs on them. Our bus took us to the only Vibhishan Temple in India, which is a holy place.

But we were unlucky as the temple was closed due to the eclipse. We offered our homage at the temple's threshold and returned back to our camp. The next day in the morning we all cleaned ourselves and went to the famous Rameswaram Temple.



The Dravidian style temple architecture fascinated everyone. The temple is devoted to lord Shiva, the master of Lord Ram. Everyone saw the Jyotirlingam that Mother Sita had built with sand and the Vishwalinga which Lord Hanuman carried from Mount Kailash and they were installed by Lord Rama. A guide who accompanied us told the stories behind the place. The thousand pillar corridor was a special attraction for everyone. On our way to the temple shrine we met many people who



had washed their sins and were coming out clean. We too longed for this, but the time was short, and we had to discover more. As we were free, and no one was with us to guide us, we explored a little more. We visited almost all the tirtham like Rama tirtham, Laxman tirtham, Sita Tirtham (which has changed to a stinky pond), Jatayu tirtham, Vibhishan tirtham, etc. The main attraction was the Panchamukhi Hanuman Temple, a sacred place where the children took first-hand experience of the floating stone. The temple priest explained about the greatness of Nala and Nila who had some miraculous touch to make the stones float on water. We got packed lunch

from the hotel and enjoyed in the Kamayani dining hall. As we were told to vacate the place before 6 PM, we cleaned the rooms and started for the station. After spending two hours at the station, we caught another train for our main destination.



After travelling in the hustle and bustle, everyone wanted to avoid the city hubbub and the commotion around. Early in the morning at 4 o'clock our train reached Villupuram station. The sleepy heads climbed off the train with their luggage and put them in the reserved bus. It took around an hour and a quarter for us to reach Delhi Guest House which we were to make our home for 5 days. As per the instructions of Chitra di who takes care of the place, we entered the building and followed the rules. As all the previous places had no provision for washing clothes, the children found this the best place to clean their clothes. After a refreshing shower we all went to the Ashram dining hall for our breakfast. Everyone relished the ashram made brown bread and the porridge. Then we went to the shrine to offer our homage to Lord Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The calm and serene atmosphere put everyone into a deep meditation. The French style buildings and walking through similar looking roads

and gullies seemed surreal. The first day it was so strange that we could not follow the way to our abode. The children were dumbfounded when they saw the old ladies cycling on the streets.



The very first day in Pondicherry we explored the different units of the ashram. We went to the playground where Rajkumar Da took us around and showed us the gym and also told us about the strict discipline necessary for our body. He also explained the importance of physical exercises and

activities. It was followed by a visit to Sri Smriti which is a place of spiritual sanctity. Everyone was ecstatic after seeing the things The Mother and Sri Aurobindo had used. Then we visited SABDA and Auroshikha, a unit of the Ashram which sells perfume-based things. Some children bought small things for their near and dear ones. Then we had our Sattwik lunch in the Ashram Dining Hall. Then we went to the hand-made paper department. Though the things were not new for our children, but we learnt how to display the things. Of course, the beach was their favourite part of the day. Children watched the waves hitting the black rocks, the white moonlight gleaming on the salty white water and spent some time near the shore. Everyone went for the special meditation in the Playground.



That night brought with it a sudden rain with thunder and lightning and by the morning it was pouring. Our trip to boathouse was cancelled and we started for Chennai with packed lunch in the bus. After visiting the zoo on the way, we halted to say hello to our crocodile friends in the crocodile banks. We saw many happy crocodiles lying on the ground and waiting for more rain. Afterwards the bus took us to Mahabalipuram.



Our bus passed through a road which had stone carved statues on both sides. Everyone's eyes were glued to their beauty. The unique temple architecture is dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu. We also visited the shore temple on the shore of Bay of Bengal. The cyclone affected sea with its waves was one of the prime attractions. We were late coming back from our endless journey.

The next visit was to Auroville, the dream city of The Mother. On our entry to the place, first we visited the Information centre where they showed a movie



to us about the aim and vision of Auroville. Then we proceeded towards Matrimandir. We reached the destination with lots of hopes and expectations in our heart. When we learnt that the entry is prohibited because of rain, we just

enjoyed the golden spherical structure from outside, with a heavy heart. We also visited the botanical garden and one bhaiya enlightened us with his vast knowledge of trees and plants. Then we had our lunch in the solar kitchen. Everyone enjoyed the food there. Afterwards we visited the Savitri Bhavan. Everyone liked spending time seeing the paintings by Huta and returned to Pondicherry with bags full of muffins and buns that had been provided by Surya didi.



The next day we visited the Ashram Garden with Shankar Bhaiya who also accompanied us to the boathouse, the paradise beach and the Marine beach. Children loved these beaches as they opened a gate for them to explore their very own world. They became the eternal children on the wide beach of white sand. They made beautiful sandcastles and sand structures. The evening was spent in the local market. The children went to a sweetshop without thinking of the price.



They had not imagined that the rasgullas, milk cakes, handmade sweets which they get in their hostel for free, would be costing a minimum of 25 Rupees, and the size here was much smaller. Everyone, like the jackal in the story of sour grapes, came out of the shop.



On 14th November, early in the morning, after darshan of the samadhi, we went to the Bureau Central. There we saw the exhibition on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. We watched a movie on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. We also saw the Cottage Industry where ashram products were being sold. We bought the ashram incense and a few other things. Parul Didi, Matri Bhai, Surya didi, Laxman Bhaiya and Hari Bhaiya came to meet us. With special permission from Parul didi we went to Sri Aurobindo's room at the Guest House in the Playground where the Master had spent a few years.



Children also visited the Ganesh temple and some other places in Pondicheey. No one wanted to miss the seashore. Every day, like the waves we were returning to the sea. We left the tranquil Ashram with a heavy heart. It had rejuvenated us. It gave us room to reflect on ourselves and to be one with it.



Report for Water Rescue Skill Training Course

National Institute of Water Sports, Goa

National Institute of Water Sports is the apex body for all forms of water sports in India. It was set up in 1990 under the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. The effort to enhance the skills for our students had been going on for many months, as this would not just enhance their skills but also support the nearby villages which have water bodies around the district.

Finally, it became a reality with the help of funding from Parle Biscuits Private Limited and concession given by NIWS. The two courses that we enrolled for were: -

1. Lifesaving Techniques course
2. Kayaking Techniques course

The beneficiaries of this skill training were Eighteen students from Kechla, Odisha who attended the two courses. The students are: -

1. Bikanti Mali F
2. Tulsa Jani F
3. Chandrama Jani F
4. Kamli Krisani F
5. Kokila Jani F
6. Darshana Gouda F
7. Lalu Krisani M
8. Gauri Muduli F
9. Jagat Nag M
10. Bhavna Gouda f F
11. Hari Krisani M
12. Basant Gouda M
13. Neela Gouda F
14. Sushila Kamar F
15. Swati Jani F
16. Basanti Krisani F
17. Sumitra Gouda F
18. JayuMuduli F



They were accompanied by Pranjali Jauhar.

The group of students left Kechla and boarded the train from Vishakhapatnam on 14th February. They reached Vasco Da Gama station at around 6 pm on 15th February as the



train was late. From there they went to the NIWS campus and were given their rooms, which would be home to them till 28th February.

Lifesaving Techniques course

The first course was of Lifesaving Techniques, for five days.

The students had selected this as they live on the bank of the Upper Kolab reservoir, which is a large reservoir in Koraput district. Deaths by drowning is something they live around. Hardly anyone in the village can swim. All these students are however decent swimmers. They wanted to improve their swimming skills and also upgrade them to Life-Saving level.

16th February- This was the first day of the course. We had theory classes from 9 am to 6 pm. Their instructor was Shri Ranjeet Singh, a retired Naval Officer, who in the Navy was working as a trainer and doing the same work. Not only did he have an in-depth knowledge, but his method of imparting it was also excellent. He covered so many aspects of Lifesaving which were related to Lifesaving like What is Lifesaving, Need to do lifesaving course, Aim of Lifesaving, Basics of Lifesaving, Priority of safety, Qualities of Lifeguard, Knowledge of zone, What is drowning, Types of drowning victims and symptoms.



This took us the whole day as it was detailed and the classes were interactive, with lots of real-life situations being explained and also many videos shown.

In the evening we went to White Church in Panjim.



17th February- All students had an early breakfast and reached the beach at 8:30 am. They were made to do warm up under guidance, which was very detailed and lasted for about 40 minutes. After that they entered the sea and had to swim for 100 metres, where timings were also being recorded. They were supposed to complete 100 metres in 3 minutes. The students were not used to the sea and the



salt water was not pleasant for them at all. Only some of them could complete the distance within 3 minutes. Ranjeet Singh sir then started doing the exercise of getting the students used to the salt water, followed by improving their swimming strokes and styles. He gave this utmost importance and justified it by explaining that one cannot do any lifesaving unless the technique of swimming is perfected and one has strength, stamina, speed and the strokes have power behind them. This went on till 2 pm.

We had a short break to take a bath, wash our clothes, have lunch and then rushed to our classroom to attend the theory session which started at 3:30 pm and continued till 7 pm. The theory covered more topics and with enhanced depth. The afternoon session now had many new topics. These included Rescue procedure like- Rescue with swim with various types of jumps and entry into water; Approaching, Rescue and Lifesaving stroke; Various types of Rescuing with rescue tube; Non-contact using rescue tube from front and rear; Contact tow like chin tow and chest tow; Various Methods of landing a rescued person.

These were now more technical and many of the terms were more difficult to understand as the students had not done the practical of the same.



Even though all the classes were long sessions with just one break of 10 minutes in between, all students were completely engrossed.

We then had dinner and went for a walk to Dona Paula Beach.

18th February- The schedule was just the same as the previous day. The students reached the water at 8 am. Most of the students were improving rapidly in their swimming speed and strokes. The days was tougher than the previous, with the pressure increasing from our instructor. We came out of the water at 1 pm. This was again a gruelling session in the water.

In the afternoon we went to see the Goa Carnival. We had been given special invitation passes for the Stage 2 seats. It was a great experience and a lot of fun for all the students. Some of them even went down and joined the Carnival by dancing with the troupes.



We had a late dinner.

19th February- Everyone was there on time at 8 am at the beach. After warming up, they entered the water. A few hours more of swimming practise took place. After this the rescue procedure started. This was a tough procedure and looked easier in the classroom than it did in the water. Some students who had proper technique and the strength to back it up with, did well. Others struggled, but still tried their best. The instructors were very strict and made it clear that they would be very particular about the skills and techniques before they would be able to provide a certificate to anyone. Everyone started working very hard and putting in their best. This session went on till 1:45 pm. Then we went for a back and lunch.

The theory class started at 3:30 pm. Everyone was early as they wanted to study and revise what they had learnt on the previous days and also discuss the same amongst themselves. The theory class now moved on to more technical topics like Spinal management and rescue of a person with spinal injury; Communications with flag and whistle; Emergency action plan; Rescue equipment and accessories; Duties of Lifeguard; Lifeguard instructions; Lifeguard rotation; Risky guests and customers and risky situation.



We then took a short break and after that moved on to First Aid. This included many topics of first aid; What is death; Vital organs of human body. We were then taught Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). After doing a detailed study of CPR, we were shown the same on a model. After the class got over at 7 pm, all students took turns for practising CPR on the dummy. Some did this before dinner, some after dinner and the rest early morning the next day before breakfast.

20th February- This was supposed to be the last day of the Lifesaving course. However, our instructor, Sh. Ranjeet Singh Sir rightly decided to extend the course for an extra day as he felt



that this was required. From 8 am we started practising the rescue procedures. We did understand that even though these were just mock rescues, there was a gravity attached as the same could be a real-life situation where there would be no scope for making a mistake. Repeated rescues, interspersed with teaching of swimming, breathing and rescue techniques and handling the rescued person took place till 2 pm. We then went for lunch.

At 3:30 pm, the theory class started. We were taught about recovery position; Heart attack and Stroke and the first aid/CPR to be given in these cases. We then learnt about various forms of bleeding and what should be done in case of any



bleeding. Various forms of wounds and their first aid was then taught. Fractures and displacement of shoulder and its first aid was taught. Practicals were shown on the screen and physically. These were all in very great detail and were very technical.



21st February- Everyone was very nervous. This was the day when tests would be given. We started with a battery of tests in swimming and lifesaving. These were gruelling and till the end of the course the students did not know as to who would qualify and who would not make the cut. They were informed that the certificates would come to them in due course. They did Front Huggies, Rear Huggies and various other forms of rescue. There were points for each component including starting, communicating, approaching, actual rescuing, checking of vital organs

like heartbeat and breathing and then bring the person to recovery position. We wound up our day at 1:15 pm. This was followed by time for a bath and lunch.

Everyone reached the class well ahead of time as they wanted to revise the extensive theory that they had studied. At 3:30 started



the practical examination of CPR and First aid in one classroom, which was conducted by Meghraj Sir and the written test and detailed viva conducted by Ranjeet sir in the next classroom. A third classroom was available for

revision and discussion by the students who were waiting for their turns. All rooms had a very sombre atmosphere. The day finished at 8 pm. After dinner everyone went for a long walk.

22nd February- This was our free day. We had hired a bus and went for trip to North Goa. We visited the following places: -

1. Aguwada Fort
2. Aguwada Jail and Museum where we also saw a lovely arts exhibition



3. Calagute beach where we did lots of water sports like Jet ski, Parasailing, Banana ride and bumper ride. It was all extremely enjoyable.
4. Baga beach where several students swam, and others enjoyed the place as tourists.
5. Anjunam beach where some swam, and others enjoyed the beach.



This was a much-required break after the hectic schedule of the last six days. We returned for dinner to the hostel.

Kayaking course

The next course was of Kayaking Techniques.

23rd February- This was the starting day of Kayaking course. We started with theory class for about an hour from 9 am. In this class we learnt the basics of Kayaking, theory of different water sports, Motorised and non-motorised boats, Types of Kayaks- sit in & Sit on. (We learnt practical- the kayaking on Sit on top kayak), Safety and dangers in water and of marine life and places where kayaking can be done.



At 10:15 am we went to the beach carrying Kayaks, lifejackets, a few sail boards and sails. The next four hours went in learning all forms of basic kayaking. Some students got an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the sailboard. We broke for lunch at 1:30 pm. As we had half an hour extra, we went for a walk to Siddhi Vinayak Temple immediately after lunch.

The theory class started as usual at 3:30 pm. It now



contained a detailed study not only of Kayaking, but also included more first aid like handling of fracture, choking, burns, seizures or fits, nose bleeding, snake bites, fainting, transportation of victims. These were in very great details. The class got over at 7 pm. We went for a walk and then had dinner.



24th February- The kayaking classes got tougher. We had to have more balance and control. We had to do self-rescue. For this we had to topple our kayak and fall into the water. Then in deep water, all alone, we had to turn in up again and climb into the kayak. For some, it was a mighty task. A few managed easily, some after a lot of struggle and others could not do it even after multiple efforts. Some students were able to learn the basics of wind surfing, though after plunging into the water time and again.



We then went for a bath and lunch, which was followed by our theory class at 3:30 pm.



25th February- Now the difficulty level increased. The students had to tow kayaks, rescue other persons in various different ways and do very difficult tasks. But by now the level of the students had also increased and they were able to do the given tasks in a better manner. Some of the students became more confident in windsurfing. They could steer the surfboard in a better way, without falling in the water. They could go far and return, without getting stuck.





At 3:30 pm we had our last theory class. We had learnt about right of way,. The theory class was followed by a practical class where we learnt the following knots.



1. Thumb knot
2. Figure of eight
3. Follow through Figure of eight knot
4. Fisherman's knot
5. Clove hitch
6. Bowline knot
7. Sheet Bend knot
8. Reef knot
9. Figure of eight knot with single loop

The class got over at 8 pm. Everyone was given a line to practise the knots. After dinner and early the next morning was for practising the knots. Not only had we to get it perfectly, but also get it quickly.



26th February- The last day of our course. The day started with swimming test. The timings were taken again. Of course, we would only know the result when we would get our final certificates. This was followed by Kayaking test. This included going up in a straight line between two points,



reverse kayaking between two points, figure of 'S' kayaking, figure of '8' kayaking, toppling the kayak and then flipping it back in deep water all by oneself and then climbing into it (self-rescue) and rescuing others. After this we were again tested for rescuing and had to do front huggie and rear huggie. We went back to our rooms at 1:45 pm, took a bath, had lunch and then went to the class where a

Valedictory Function took place. A senior IAS officer- Sh. Ajit Roy was the Chief Guest and Prof. S. Babu, Director of NIWS was present. Both of them spoke to us in detail and also asked many questions from the students.



We took a bus for Panjim and went on a cruise. It was a very different experience and exposure for us.



27th February- We went for a trip to South Goa. We visited the following places: -

1. Old Goa Church
2. Mangueshi Temple
3. Sahakari Spice Farm at Ponda
4. Big Foot Museum at Loutolim
5. Science Centre at Miramar





The food was somewhat below par, especially as we were doing an incredible amount of



physical activities. However, this was supplemented by purchasing fish on various occasions and eggs on two occasions. We had Ice Creams a number of times and also had chocolates, juices and milk shake. This took care of whatever was lacking in the food.



We really enjoyed the trip. The courses were excellent and the faculty could not have been better. Even if some students do not qualify and are not certified, it really does not matter. We have learnt a lot and will remember this knowledge for the rest of our lives. We will hone our skills, whenever we are in the water. Even though we are not certified to teach anyone lifesaving techniques, we can at least become official- and legal lifesavers and also teach everyone around us better swimming.



THE MOTHER'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Kechla Trip Report -2022-23

Class-8

From 28th December 2022 to 4th January 2023, 47 students of class 8 along with 3 teachers and 1 parent volunteer went on a Kechla trip. The students got first-hand experience of village life. For most of the



students, it was a novel experience as their hometown is Delhi. The students in the Kechla school were very friendly and helpful to us.



The students enhanced their learning as some of the theoretical concepts learned in the





classes could be seen in real life during the trip like red soil, non-conventional power sources-windmill and solar energy, Durga as a coal center, etc.

Folk dance and rowing were the activities that students enjoyed the most. Many other exciting activities were planned for us, although we could only complete some of them, as a few students were down with viral fever. Pranjal sir was there throughout the trip to guide us. The students received papaya as a return gift.



By:

Shalini Sharma

Surbhi Yadav

Nitin





Report- Trip to Kechla (Batch 1- Class 11)

Duration: 31st December 2022 to 7th January 2023

Accompanying Teachers: Ms Aanchal Singhal, Ms Meghna Pohani, Ms Simranjeet Kaur

Forty-five students of Class 11 could be seen brimming with excitement at platform no. 3 of Nizamuddin Railway Station waiting to embark on their journey towards the remote village of Kechla in Odisha. The group reached the Raipur Railway Station in the morning of 1st January 2023, ushering in the new year in Durg-Hamsafar train, with Chocolate cake sent by the Ashram. Then, they boarded the sleeper bus to reach Koraput at around 10 p.m. This was followed by the much-awaited ferry ride which took them to their destination Kechla. Post dinner, everyone retired for the day to wake up fresh the next morning.



The next four days were packed with activities. Students were divided into three groups for morning *Shramdaan* for kitchen work, gardening, and dorm cleaning. The groups carried out these tasks on rotation. Post breakfast, students would go to Auro Mira Vidya Mandir for the community service programme, followed by a visit to the Reservoir.



Post lunch, students went back to AMVM for afternoon co-scholastic activities, such as: art, astronomy, creative craft, chess, crotchet, dance, debating, drama, guitar, photography, public speaking, and so on.



After tiffin, different activities were planned out for each day. A night trek on day 1, boating/ rappelling, trek to the viewpoint, trek to the waterfall, kept the students enthusiastically engaged on subsequent days.



Before dinner, students of MIS and AMVM would assemble for *Satsang* led by Pranjal Sir.

It was a beautiful exchange programme. The interactive sessions with Sir were looked forward to by the students. On 4th January, the AMVM students presented a cultural programme showcasing the activities learnt during afternoon sessions with MIS students.



On the 5th of every month, *hawan* is conducted by the students of AMVM. MIS students were fortunate to be a part of this ceremony on the last day of their stay at Kechla. Later in the evening, post dinner, students practised the local, tribal dance. The students bid farewell to their learners, exchanged contact numbers/ mail IDs with a promise to remain in touch. The community service programme was carried out with full sincerity and commitment. It was a learning experience for all. Every student went back home with a bag full of cherished memories.

The group reached the Raipur Railway Station in the morning of 6th January and boarded the train for Delhi. The train got delayed by around 10 hours, and the students reached Nizamudin Railway Station by 6 pm on 7th January 2023. All's well that ends well. It sure was a trip to remember for a lifetime for all.



Sri Aurobindo International Integral School (Telangana)

Report – 7th – 11th January 2023

Adventure Camp at Kechla for Telangana Schools. A group of 59 students and 6 accompanying staff of Sri Aurobindo International School and New Creation School from Telangana attended a Personality Development & Adventure Camp at Kechla (Dt. Koraput), Odisha, from January



7–11, 2023. Activities included shramdaan, trekking, bouldering, rappelling, swimming in the Kolab River Reservoir, jumping into the pool formed by waterfall from a height of 3-4 metres, learning International and tribal folk



dances, meditation and chanting. Children had a fun time and learning experience as is evident from their feedback: “I really enjoyed the camp here at Kechla and I have enjoyed the food, sports, swimming, nature, waterfalls and dance. I have tried first time boating and loved that” (K.P.R.); “The hills, mountains, waterfalls, river are the best view

full of greenery" (S); "The western folk dance was very much fun and the night-trek was beautiful under the sky and bunch of stars" (M.V.); "I hope that the dance teachers teach the 'New



York' dance to others because it was fun" (U.D.); "I learnt swimming within 3 days. I am more active here than my school" (M.S.R.); "We thought we were so fit but when we played with the tribal [students] we felt we all were nothing in front of them" (S.A.); "The folk dance was fun to learn and yesterday sport day program was really good" (N.S.V.); "And the most interesting part was the night-trek. We really did not see the road and the torches were off but the experience was great" (M.D.); "To put in simple words, I think the purpose of my trip is done- lots of

learning... Really impressed the kind of education the children are getting over here" (S); "Finally Kechla was good with comfortable rooms, top-notch supporting people, delicious food, priceless scenery and amazing treks" (S.B.S.); "This



camp was the most amazing camp of my life... I thank you Pranjal Bhaiya... for organizing such a wonderful trip" (S.A.B.); "Finally I would like to thank my school for such an amazing experience" (S).

THE MOTHER'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Kechla Trip Report -2022-23

Class-11-11th -15th March



At 10:25 AM on 11th march, 2023, 47 excited students and 3 teachers were ready on the train platform, prepared for an eventful week ahead. The Durg Humsafar Express from New Delhi was set to leave at 11:25 AM. The train left Delhi around the scheduled time and after a 20-hour journey delayed by 4 more hours, we reached Raipur. We had some lunch and then boarded the bus to Koraput, which reached at 1 in the morning on 13th March. Since there was only 1 ferry, the first round was for the 26 girls. They reached Kechla, the final destination around 2:30 in the

morning and immediately went off to sleep after this tiring journey. The second round of the ferry with the 21 boys reached their dorms at 5:30. The girls woke up at 7:30, had a refreshing breakfast and went to the school where they would be teaching. We got to know our students and converse with them, find out about their interests and started off with our course. The boys woke up at 11 and went to the reservoir for a swim.

After some lunch, we all went to the school for our extracurricular activities. In this, we taught the Kechla kids various skills according to our own talents, like dance, art, chess, martial arts etc. In the evening, after tea, we gathered in the meditation hall for some soulful singing and got our



the school to teach our students from 8:30 to 11:30. Followed by the teaching session, the students who wanted to visit the reservoir went for a swim and came back in time for a delicious lunch. Followed by lunch was rock climbing for those who wanted to go for it. We all had some delicious snacks with some tea

designations for shramdan. The shramdan would consist of dormitory cleaning, gardening and helping out in the kitchen, each on a different day. Having finished with meditation and dinner, we went to bed. Early morning on the 14th, we all woke up at 6 and got ready for shramdan, starting at 6:30. After this, we had breakfast and headed to





and coffee and headed to our dorms to prepare for the night trek. The night trek was an experience to remember, where we climbed up a mountain in the pitch black, accompanied by the kids of Kechla, who then sang songs on the peak. Exhausted from all the activities of the day, we went to bed after a late dinner. The next morning again we had our shramdan at 6:30 followed by breakfast. After our teaching session, we went to the reservoir for a swim. Lunch for that day was the famous “gobi Manchurian” of Kechla, which we all love and filled our stomachs as well as our souls with. The extracurriculars that day were full of enthusiasm to put on a great show the next day. That evening we



had rappelling and boating activities, followed by snacks, and after some rest, meditation and a filling dinner. 16th morning we woke up, having enjoyed ourselves to the full but dreading our last day in this amazing place. Shramdan and breakfast were followed by an emotional and enriching teaching session. A joyful session in the reservoir was followed by our last lunch of the trip. The evening activities too were full of enjoyment and hugs, with

everyone unwilling to say goodbye. Cards and gifts were exchanged, and photos were taken that will forever be cherished by everyone. The football match between the MIS and Kechla kids then took place in pouring rain, where we put on a great fight, but eventually the Kechla kids won with a score of 4-1. After some snacks, we packed for our journey back to Delhi. Before dinner, all the children put on a display of all the skills they had learnt in their extracurricular activities over the last 4 days. Having had dinner, we all said our final goodbyes and headed back to Delhi in the 36-hour journey. This trip was fun as well as educational, not only for the kids of Kechla but also for us. Their calm demeanor, purity, and the joy and happiness that



they spread made us all reflect on our own behavior. The simple life in such a village, while hard to adjust to at first, was eye-opening. The love that all the people there showed us, cared for us and

helped us is something we will all be truly grateful for. They showed us how we can derive pure joy from the smallest things in life. One of our most memorable experiences, Kechla will always remain in our hearts, and the bonds that we formed there will last forever.

Prakriti
Report – 24th – 28th March 2023

“By our Stumbling the World is Perfected”

-Sri Aurobindo



Stumbling is essential, to look near, to look at the simple foundations we are racing upon and be conscious of our steps along the way. What we generally perceive stumbling as a roadblock is most often a detour to the infinite possibilities to rediscover ourselves.



When our learners embarked on an arduous journey to rural Orissa it was a path lesser known,



rather travelled. What we experienced was the power of simplicity and sincerity exemplified in every moment we lived in Auro Vidya Mandir, Kechla. The space welcomed us with enormous freedom & love. Children at the ashram were brimming with confidence & compassion.

Their guidance, care & discussion was the most critical part of knowing more about the space.



We could have never imagined a trek at night after dinner and that too without any light, that trust emboldened in our immediate nature, our own selves & people surrounding us. The adventure of sailing into unknown depths just strengthens that trust. When we were a part of the classrooms, it was a liberating experience where one can choose their pace of learning and peers,



facilitators collectively facilitate that learning journey. Finally, the community cooking attempt was fulfilling & the real joy of creating & sharing food all together was a key takeaway from our short yet beautiful time at Kechla.

What we observed and attempted to understand there is just the spark of re-discovering our own selves and our surroundings.

