

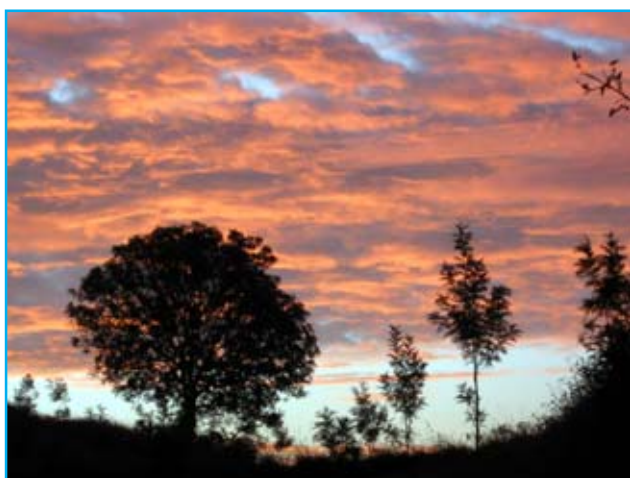
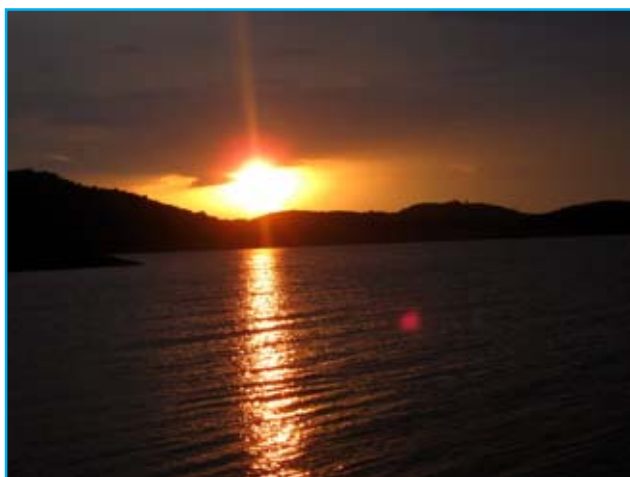


Auro-Mira Service Society

Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110016

Report of activities in Kechla, Dt. Koraput, Odisha, during 2011-12

AURO-MIRA SERVICE SOCIETY started its new journey in Kechla in 2004. It was a journey with a purpose of improving the social and economic status of the tribal population.



The silence, the coolness, the calmness reveal the spirit of Kechla. The innocent laughter of children and the chirping of birds fill the air. The swaying of flowers, the rays of the sun descends and awakens every heart.

Amidst the peace and tranquillity, the AURO-MIRA SERVICE SOCIETY reached new horizons of growth in Kechla.

Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir

Your children are not your children, they are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself

You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts

They come through you but not from you, and though they are with you yet they belong not to you

You may house their bodies but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams

You may strive to be like them but seek not to make them like you!

– *Khalil Gibran*



Nestled amongst hillocks with the Kolab reservoir just round the corner, the Auro Mira Vidya Mandir is home to nearly **79** children. Spacious, with tranquility in abundance, the pristine surroundings lend a special hue to the school.

Another year has gone by and the school has taken yet another leap of faith. The surge ahead like always has been challenging, adventurous as well as joyful. The trees, plants and flowers planted last year have all bloomed,



adding colour and greenery to the campus. So has the number of students staying in the school campus. In 2011 the number of students in the school increased from 22 to **79**, with children as young as six years now part of the school.

This is the 4th year of the school and while the journey has come with its own set of challenges, the progress too has been made in leaps and bounds.

Inauguration of New School Building

February 26th

In the two day program, after hoisting of the Mother's flag, the children demonstrated their physical agility and skills on the 26th of



February and began the day with a mass drill in which all school children participated. The children also displayed their agility and determination by participating in various sporting activities like dumbbells, umbrella exercise, gymnastics and pyramid building. The guests were taken around the campus of the school and the Auro-Mira Service Society land on a sight-seeing tour. In the evening lights of aspiration were lit, bhajan chanting was done in the meditation hall. After dinner, school children put



up a program of tribal dances.

February 27th

Building brick by brick
'A labour of love, joy and sweat together'

The new school building was inaugurated on 27th February, 2012 by Mr. Brij Sapru and Dr. (Mrs.) Krishna Sapru, who funded the entire cost of the construction of the school building. The school was built in the memory of their daughter Ms. Anuradha Sapru Kohl who left for her heavenly abode in **2010**. Family members Raj, Babu,





School building inaugurated

KORAPUT: Scholars and researchers on education from across the country joined children in celebrating the inauguration of the school building of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir at Kechla near Koraput on Monday. An exhibition of the creative work by children was organised.

ENGAGEMENTS

The Hindu February 28, 2012

Urmila, Deepak, Pronita, Alka, and Sadhana also traveled from the United States to participate in the function. Tara didi from Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch was also present.

Tara didi as chairperson of Auro-Mira Service Society welcomed the guests to the inaugural function. She initiated the program by chanting a few lines from the '*Durga Stotra*'. It was followed by a meditation session with mother's music playing in the background.

The children also put up an exhibition of their art & craft objects, stories/poems created by them, as well as an exhibition of flowers. Dedicating the flower exhibition to The Mother, the children spoke about the spiritual connect of man and nature **and how The Mother loved flowers.**

In the afternoon many





trees were planted on the campus by the invited guests.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A jungle Gym and new Swings were installed in the school in 2011 for the children to have fun.



During the course of last year the school also managed to procure some sports equipment. Our newly acquired eight new bicycles are the prized possessions of our children and many of them can be seen zipping around in the open spaces around the school. In order to provide the children with additional sporting opportunities, some students from MIS (Mother's International School) through a collective effort managed to buy sports shoes for the children. This was a noble gesture and was done with the intention that various sporting activities could be accomplished by the children with much more comfort and ease.

with a new shed for stacking firewood.

Last year a new and a larger kitchen space was also constructed,

LIBRARY

Books galore

'Under a stack of books, I discovered the joy of seeking and learning'



The library has always been a favorite with our children. Whether it's reading or writing, drawing or story-telling; the library is one of the most cherished spaces in the school. The library is lined up with large racks, with each rack neatly stacked with books. Through the year we collected several old and new story books for the children.



MUSIC & MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Hitting the right note

'Mile sur mera tumhara to sur bane hamara'

Two groups of students from MIS who visited the school last year, gave our young children an exposure to different kinds of music. From a table to a plastic bottle, a wooden stool, everything was used to produce some musical notes, even utensils weren't spared! The children had no complaints; they enjoyed the beats and the rhythm and danced to the music.



Health is wealth
'Cleanliness is next to godliness'

The school has always treated good health and hygiene of the students with utmost importance. The children are trained and monitored regularly to ensure that they practice hygiene in their everyday life so that they stay healthy and remain fit.



Dental care by professionals
 from Auroville

their dental problems. Apart from scaling and cleaning of the teeth, filling up the cavities, the dentist group extended their graciousness by providing a free tooth brush and tooth paste to each child in the school.

GUESTS

Atithidevobhava

'I welcome thee to my abode, as we connect heart and soul'

Manasmayee and Puspashree who also came from Mirambika provided the children with a new insight into music, using a flute. The children were taught to play 'sa, re, ga, ma' with a flute and they loved it. The children showed great interest, willingness and enthusiasm to take forward whatever little they had learnt, by continuing to play the flute every afternoon right after their lunch break.

Tara didi also provided the children with a few, small musical instruments when she visited the school. The children continue to use it during their singing/ meditation time every day.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Every week the teachers at the school made sure that the children have a bath with turmeric powder, boiled *neem* and *karanj* leaves - a locally grown herb with medicinal values which is very effective for any skin-related problem. Special treatment for our children for skin and other minor problems also took place.

The children are encouraged to follow a healthy routine of taking a bath, washing their clothes and putting their blankets out in the sun every day.

Under the continuous guidance and help from Dr. Baveja, Dr. (Mrs.) Parul Mohan, Dr. (Mrs.) Surinder Pradhan, Dr. Srinivas, regular check up's were conducted for the children throughout the year.

The year also saw visit to the school by a group of dentists from Auroville who checked the children in the school for



Health checkup by Dr. Parul Mohan

The Auro Mira Vidya Mandir played host to a large number of friends and dignitaries all of whom connected wonderfully with the children of the school.



The year started with the visit of Dr. Parul Mohan and Shri Gaurav Mohan who came in May. Parul didi did a complete health check-up for all the children, prescribed as well as send medicines for them.



Pratibhadi, an artist herself, worked on art and craft with children of all groups. The children enjoyed the play of colour and creativity, while Pratibha di taught and exposed them to various art forms- both traditional and modern. All children loved rangoli-making, painting with crayons, water colours, oil pastels and fabric paint. Her lessons in origami or paper craft were a hit with the children. In the sessions with the mango group (age 6-7 years), Pratibhadi introduced the English letters through innovative drawings. The school had a young

visitor too, Pratibhadi's son nine year old Ishaan, who helped the children with their reading and also taught them a few dance steps which all the children really enjoyed.

Yogesh sir from MIS (The Mother's International School) worked very patiently both with the teachers as well as the students in an attempt to improve their reading and writing skills in the Hindi language. He worked patiently with all the groups, and used some language games to improve their pronunciation in Hindi. His post-dinner tales from the Mahabharat had many takers from the children as well as the teachers.



Just like the last few years Sulochana didi paid a visit this year too, along with her team. She worked with the teachers on how to initiate language-learning with the children. She played some language games with



the children along with her team members. Her visit also saw the creation of some original songs and games that evolved as a result of several group discussions that were conducted. Some teachers from Gopinathpur and Pottangi area in district Koraput also participated in these group discussions. She also worked on the report-writing skills of the teachers along with Satlej didi.

Apart from Sulochana didi, Vaibhav, Beenapani, Jyotirmayi, Baren Bhaiya, Prashant, Rina Di, Saswati, Niharika, Mani, Radhakant, Rabindra, all of whom came from Mirambika, New Delhi, to spend some time with the children in the school.



Vaibhav worked exclusively with the 'New Creation' group. He helped them with their pronunciation and voice modulation. Beenapani enjoyed working with the



'flower' group. She helped settle down the 'flower' group that has



Dr. Abhilash Nayak, Regional Director, IGNOU, with AMVM children

the youngest children in the school. Jyotirmayi di worked with the 'new creation' and 'concentration' groups and taught them some interesting dance movements. Jyoti Priya who worked with the mango group, helped children in their singing, dancing and enjoyed telling them stories. She also guided the group teacher on how to choose a story for the children. Baren bhaiya, Prashant and Rina didi also worked with the 'new creation' group. Baren bhaiya led the entire group of teachers and students on how to work on an integrated project. During his stay in Kechla, he conducted a session on leaves which the children enjoyed thoroughly. Saswati and Niharika worked with the 'mango' group. They helped the teacher in bringing about a transition from structured drawing to a free flowing style. Hasyamayai spent a couple of days and helped in organizing the school library.



Dr. Satya Prakash Das from the Indian Statistics Institute also visited Kechla and spent four days at the school. The students really enjoyed history-telling sessions.

Vivek Gupta, Sonali Gupta, Bhuvana Nandkumar, Parthiv, Gargi, Arjav and Hersh also came to the school. Vivek bhaiya taught some devotional songs of Ram and Hanuman which the children really

enjoyed. He also taught them a new song 'jis mala mein Ram nahin'.

A young friend from USA, Parthiv put in a huge effort and acquired old as well as new crayons, pencils, puzzles, toys and games from his friends in the USA and distributed these amongst the children in the school. He has worked towards collecting material even after going back from Kechla. He has taken the role of a goodwill ambassador for Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir and will work towards improving the school.

The school also had a visitor from the United States. Annie spent a month in Kechla and conducted story-telling sessions with the children every day after dinner. With her accent however, some children found it a little difficult to understand, while the others understood her with complete ease.

We also had Madhusudan Singhania from Calcutta who came on a brief two-day visit to the school. During his stay the 'mango' group put up a drama and some action songs which enthralled him.

MIS Summer Camp

In the month of December, a group of about 70 children from MIS came to the Auro Mira Vidya Mandir as a part of their summer camp. While enjoying being in the lap of nature, they explored the hills around and did





some trekking as well. Dancing and singing formed an integral part of the group's visit to the school at Kechla. The children of the school also took the visiting students for a visit to their village.

Shimita didi who was accompanying the MIS students took out

time to be with our children and taught them clay modeling and how to draw a portrait.



Hirabhaiya also accompanying the MIS children taught mass drill, gymnastics and 'sari dance' from Rajasthan to the children at the school. The children enjoyed the exercises and participated in all the activities with a lot of enthusiasm.

Jayanto da from the Ashram was instrumental in helping the children overcome their physical fear by demonstrating and then encouraging the children to participate in river-crossing and rappelling. He also did some exercises and fun games with the children.

January, 2012 saw another group from MIS at the school. A group of 60 children from class XI came here for their community-work camp. The children whose education is sponsored by the Aurobindo Ashram, New Delhi and studying in other integral and residential schools in Indrawati, Raigada, Kotpad and Bmaliguda in and around Koraput also participated in the camp. Children from MIS worked with all the children in a ratio of 1:2 for seven days. They worked with all the groups of the school and taught them language,



math, clay modeling, dance, music and plays. The trip culminated with an exhibition and a play on the final day. Jayanti di who was also accompanying the group from MIS, took a few classes with the teachers at the school on child psychology. She also worked with some children from the school. These sessions were conducted using worksheets. Towards the end of the session, the children were made to complete some worksheets based on their individual perception and imagination.

Nisha didi, also from MIS conducted an athletic meet for the whole school along with her students. Children enjoyed high jump, long jump, relay race, cross country and some fun games. Children actively participated in all the games and sports.

Dr. Subas Pani, former Chief Secretary from Orissa, also paid the school a short visit. The District Collector Mr. Sachin R Jadhav along with the BDO of Koraput, Soojata Mishra also came to the school. The children choose 'India' as a topic and conceptualized and performed a play on the same. The visitors were really impressed with the spontaneity and the creativity showed by the children.



A group of 50 children from Shri Aurobindo International School, Hyderabad also came to the school last year. They interacted with the children, who were very inquisitive about their language, food and culture, etc.

The students had the privilege of interacting with Mr. Ramesh Ch. Mishra. He read out stories to the children and also shared his knowledge about space and planets with them.

Towards the end of the year, Mr. Satya Prakash Upadhyay came and stayed at the school from November, 2011 to March, 2012. Though his visit was primarily intended for the construction of the school building, but he also helped the children edit the stories and the songs written by the children themselves.

CELEBRATIONS

Masti ki savari

'Transcend the skies and soar up to joys unbound'

Celebrations are a never-ending affair at the school. Events, big and small will get the children to share their joys, while our corridors resonate with their crackling laughter. Several occasions demand celebrations and the first big celebration that the school had been to celebrate **Basant Panchami**.

Sh. Anil Jauharji, Tara didi and Riju Bhaiya along with nearly twenty people from the **S.N.Sunderson** were here at the school to celebrate Basant Panchami. The celebrations were initiated by the children taking the entire group to the Ashram Orchard, where they helped them identify different trees and plants. The celebrations continued through the day, right up to the meditation time during which the children joyfully sang many *Bhajans* and *Shlokas*. Everyone really enjoyed the play put up by the children. Different groups performed different plays and the youngest group put up an action songs. The day ended with Riju Bhaiya sharing some of his childhood anecdotes which the children really enjoyed the most.



June 14th, 2011 Swing Festival

Like every year, last year too, we celebrated the swing festival or '*rajo*' a traditional festival of Odisha with much gusto. Children spent some time playing on the swings, while the concentration group made cakes for everyone in the school.

August 13th, 2011 Raksha-Bandhan

Raksha-Bandhan, the festival of a bond between brother and sister was celebrated by the children amidst much fan-fare. The children made rakhis and ladoos and tied the sacred thread to each other. Special stories emphasizing the importance of Raksha-Bandhan were narrated to the children after which they put up a drama based on these stories. Some of the other creative pursuits of our children that marked the day were:

A drama was put up by the 'new creation' group based on Indra and Sachi.

A play was done by the 'concentration' group based on the story Rani Karmavati and Humayun.

A song & dance performance done by the 'mango' group, created by the group-didi was performed.

August 15th, 2011 was marked by two special occasions – The children celebrated the **birthday of Sri Aurobindo** with love and devotion. Since the day also marks the **Independence Day** of our nation, children also celebrated the joy of freedom.

The day started with a meditation session and the hoisting of Mother's flag . After a pensive start to the day, the fun and the merriment started. The 'new creation' group presented a fancy dress program, while all the other groups presented group songs making revelry the theme of the day.

An atmosphere of joy was palpable in the school as everyone celebrated **Janmashtami** - the birth of the prankster God Krishna amidst joy, fun and laughter on 21st August, 2011. Being able to relate and connect to the childhood tales of Krishna, the children of the 'new creation' group performed a dance-drama on the deep friendship between Krishna and Sudama.



Taking on another story from Krishna's childhood, the children of the 'concentration' group wrote an original song praising Krishna and presented a play on '*Kaliadalan*' . The 'mango' group performed an action song '*Chupke-chupke-kanha-aaya*' celebrating the joyousness of Krishna's childhood.



Quite similar to their name the 'faith' group reaffirmed their faith by dancing to the tune of '*Shyam-dhale-jamuna-kinare*'. The youngest children in the school from the 'flower' group offered flowers of devotion by singing and dancing to '*chotte-chotte-gaiyan*'



Following the Janmashtami celebrations is the **Nandotsav** which provides an opportunity to the children to be their creative best. The occasion was marked by colour, play, fun and

frolic and the children really enjoyed decorating the swings with colourful sarees. They loved dressing up two dolls as Krishna and Balram. Distribution of sweets quite literally sweetened the occasion. The celebration culminated with songs and dance.





Children have always loved the round-bellied, elephant-headed Lord Ganesh and celebrated **Ganesh Chaturthi on September 1st, 2011**. So while the children spent the day making their own Ganesh idols and decorating it, the teachers too chipped in by making ‘modaks’ to complete the celebrations.

The interplay of life and light was best presented during the festival of light – Diwali, which was celebrated in the school on the 26th of November, 2011. The children lit up the night by lighting diyas in the Ashram as well as the school.

The diyas that were lighted in



the school premises had been made by the children themselves. After the diyas were lit, they choose to drive away the darkness by spending some time in the meditation hall, seeking the blessings of the divine.

Who does not want a gift from Santa Claus, and no **Christmas** celebration is complete without his presence on Christmas Eve. In the school Christmas was celebrated by singing Christmas carols and songs. However, the joy and excitement of the children knew no bounds when Santa Claus himself came to the school with gifts in tow.

EVENTS

An occasion for all

‘Mark me out lest you forget’

We celebrated the third anniversary of the school on July 5th 2011. It was also Tara didi’s birthday. The day was special and the children had pooled in all their creativity to prepare for this day. Each group had something special and beautiful to present, and the students performed plays, narrated stories, sang songs and even danced.

The plays had been conceptualized by the children themselves. The ‘new creation’ group made up a story which they christened ‘helping friend’. They wrote the dialogues and the songs for the play themselves. They also performed some acts. Chanting: *asato-ma-*

sat-gama-ya and shantih mantra brought the day to an end with blessings of the Divine Mother.



The concentration group made up a story and named it ‘*how did the flower get colour*’. The story was based completely on their imagination and the children even wrote their own songs for their story.

Students of the mango group most of whom are six years of age, developed a story. The group-didi then helped them to turn their story into a play. They also wrote some beautiful songs with a little help from didi.

Children from the youngest group performed some act on some new as well as old rhymes. The group- didi wrote the new rhymes and helped the children act them out.

The teachers too danced to the chanting of ‘shantakaram-bhujagasharanam....’

13th Aug

This was very special day as we celebrated ChachaJi’s birthday as well as Raksha Bandhan. Anecdotes from ChachaJi’s life were narrated to the children. This was followed by screening a movie- ek-Mashal-Ek-

Mishal, which is based on Chachaji's life.

14th Aug

It was Baba Ji Maharaj's birthday. To commemorate this the children went for a special meditation session where kaka told the children about Baba ji maharaj and his work.

Oct 2, 2011

Gandhi Jayanti- was celebrated in the school with the 'new creation' group narrating stories from Gandhi ji's life in the meditation hall.



1st January, 2012

The New Year was welcomed by the students of the school by burning incense sticks in the ashram and spending some time meditating, and connecting to the divine. The New Year thus began in the school on a spiritual note!



21st Feb, 2012

The entire school community came together

to mark the Mother's birthday on the 21st of February, 2012. The children sang songs and a special meditation session was conducted for the students and the staff of the school.

Construction

- a. New School Building was inaugurated on 27th February, 2012 with 21 rooms as reported above.
- b. Boundary fence for Boys Hostel was constructed



c. Cow shed and a Dairy was built to cater to milk and milk product needs of the children. It is still under construction,

d. An 'AtithiGragha' comprising of 4 double rooms, 3 single rooms, Meditation Room and a kitchen is under construction.

Plantation

An area covering 28 acres was further developed with planting of some trees and replacement of the trees that had died out. These included:



a. Flowers: 30-40 varieties of seasonal and non-seasonal flowers

b. Fruit Trees planted:

- i. 5 varieties (300 trees) of Leechi
- ii. 15 varieties of Mango
- iii. 6-7 varieties of seedless Lemon
- iv. Other fruit trees planted were Dragon Fruit, Chikoo, Papaya, Custard Apple, Peach, Malta, Orange, Sweet Lime, Pomegranate, Guava
- v. Varieties of Elaichi, coffee, black pepper, Dalchini, Haldi and Ginger were planted.

c. Trees of Silver Oak, Teak and Shisham were also planted

Guests

Auro-Mira Service Society played host to a large number of students, friends and dignitaries; some of them were:

- a. Mr. Brij Sapru & Mrs. Krishna Sapru
- b. Mr. Satya Prakash from the Indian Statistics Institute

- c. Ms. Annie from the United States
- d. Mr. Madhusudan Singhanian from Kolkata
- e. Dr. Subas Pani, former Chief Secretary of Orissa
- f. The District Collector Mr. Sachin R Jadhav along with Ms. Soojata Mishra, BDO of Koraput.

Camps

Fifty nine students of class IX and three teachers of The Mother's International School took part in a Personality Development & Adventure Camp at Kechla from December 25 to December 30, 2011. Activities included trekking, bouldering, rappelling, swimming, rowing, eye exercises, folk dancing, interaction with tribal children & adults, meditation, talks & lively discussions on nutrition, physical activities and environment. A couple of representative comments from the campers follow:

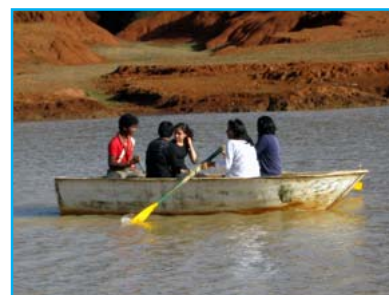


I have been going on school trips since class four however I have never experienced such an amazing trip like Kechla... I learnt that you don't need many things to enjoy life, you just need a good outlook towards life... Kechla was the BEST trip ever and everyone must visit it at least once!

- Jayati Mehta (F 14)

Kechla was a very exciting and fun trip. We did a lot of activities including rappelling, bouldering, swimming in the reservoir, jumping down the waterfall, and ... We also performed eye exercises,

learned dancing ... and went for huge treks.



- Arjun Sengupta (M 14)

Under the CBSE requirement of Community Service for class XI students, a group of 56 students with teachers Ms Milan Sarin & Nisha Mehra travelled to Auro-Mira Service Society's development project for the Tribals in the remote Orissa village of Kechla. Most of their time (January 1 - 8) was spent in teaching children of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir school plus 50 students from schools of Nabarangpur district. It turned out to be a two way process: most M.I.S. students reported that they not only taught but themselves learned a lot from the children and that it was perhaps the most satisfying trip in their experience as the following comments exemplify:

Kechla, an isolated, tiny place. Far away from traffic, noise, materialistic desires and human greed. A place which we, class 11th students of The Mother's International School ... had come to teach, to impart education... I hope that my presence and knowledge was able to change the students because *they surely changed us* [Italics added].

- Chhaya Dabas (F 16)



Even apart from the community service, the trip was made amazing by the treks I took with my friends during free time, the visits to the reservoir, and most notably, the visit to the waterfall. I wouldn't trade the whole Kechla experience for anything.

- Vaishnavee Sharma (F 16)

A group comprising of 41 Class VII students and 4 teachers from Sri Aurobindo International School, Hyderabad took part in a Personality Development & Adventure Camp from January 21-25 at Auro-Mira Service Society's project location in Kechla (Orissa). Activities included meditation; discussions on nutrition, exercise, environment; nature-walk, trekking, swimming, bouldering; rappelling; western folk-dances; eye care routines; interaction with local tribal children. Representative comments from the campers follow:



This was not my first excursion but this was the best. This trip had included all activities like swimming, bouldering, rappelling, dance and trekking and even meditation... Nature walk was knowledgeable and our guide was Neela. She was very sweet.

- G. Tejasvi Reddy (F 12)

We had no time to take rest, this was the thing which made me forget the laziness behind me. We did many different activities... We went for night trekking.

I wished my home would be just adjacent to the Ashram. I don't want to leave this place. Surely I am going to come to this place next time.

- Aadarsh Dayal Singh (M 11)

The local life is very different here, the dresses are different. I saw different villages... Jumping into the waterfall from a height of 15 to 20 feet was very dangerous but exciting... I also learnt eye exercises and they also poured honey in our eyes. I will also tell my juniors to come here. This camp rocked. I will remember all the good things talked in the meditation hall and teach it to my juniors.

- P. Pooja (F 12)

General Health Medical Camps:

- Group of dentists from Auroville checked the children in the school for their dental problems.
- Dr.Parul Mohan did complete health check-up for all the children.

New Initiatives



Drip Irrigation Project:

Drip Irrigation Project has been done in collaboration with Ms Sarah Lee from DRIPTECH USA and the completion of the projected total of 55 systems was achieved during this fiscal year.

Lending of Irrigation Pumps

AMSS Project in Kechla had acquired five portable pumps for irrigation. Funds for these were provided by Ushagram Suisse. These pumps are loaned without charge to villagers for growing vegetables in dry seasons. The only requirement for the users is that every week the borrower has to bring back the pump to show that it is being properly used and kept in good condition. AMSS bears the expense on repair and maintenance of these pumps. For repair, the pumps have to be carried to Koraput. Both transportation and repair costs can add up to a substantial amount. This recurrent scheme has resulted in an increased prosperity for the farmers.

Showers for the Villagers

We have built 2 bathing areas / showers for women who were bathing in the open with their clothes on. This initiative has led to prevention of various skin diseases. We are grateful to Usha Gram Association Trust, Switzerland, for funding this project.

Milk Dairy

The villagers use unclean utensils and water which contaminates the milk. We are building our own Dairy and Cow Shed so that we can provide quality milk and milk products for the daily requirement of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir children.

INSPIRATIONS

Thank you Pranjal, Sudham, Jogi, Sukant and others for hosting me here and helping make drip irrigation a possibility for farmers in surrounding communities to improve their livelihoods. I enjoyed the clean air, starry sky at night, and sunsets over the hills.

– Sarah Lee, Pune/Ontario (Canada)

A beautiful and tranquil place. Everyone is doing a fantastic job helping improve the lives of the locals. The children are a wonder to behold. I enjoyed my short stay here and wish the very best for this worthy project.

– Steve Kingston, Kelso (Washington, USA)

An out of world experience for us and a good learning tour for our kid. Interacting with local kids was something which strengthen our belief that many more of such ventures would be required for uplifting the downtrodden in this region. We wish all the best to the Ashram team and the organizers and hope to continue our association with the institution in the future as well... ENCHANTING KECHLA!

– Dr. Parul Mohan, Gaurav Mohan & Avi Mohan, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi

The Mother's Grace is truly at work here. We can see it in the children, the flowers, mountains, every little thing. We carry back with us the zest and love for life that we see in all of you with gratitude always, Pranam & lots of love..

– Aadya & Satlaj, New Delhi

While the natural beauty and peace in the environment is exceptionally calming, the most brilliant part of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir is its love for its children. The children here are being groomed extremely well on an all rounded basis. It is amazing to see them do mental math, speak ... in English with utmost ease; lovely to see them leading visitors like us, on "guided tours" around the place, and play brilliant little hosts.

– Kiran & Anurag Mittal, Rakesh & Ruchira Chaudhary, Gurgaon, Haryana

This trip to Kechla has been enchanting and mystical in a way. It is amazing to see so much beauty in Nature and in the nature of people serving the Mother over here in all humility, calmness, caring and love. The children are brilliant and to be with them was a most enriching experience. The way they are being guided is inspiring to them & to us.

– Sadhna Agarwal, Delhi

What an amazing place! It's such a beautiful and warm community. The kids here are so inspiring. Thank you for your hospitality.

– Tomo Hamakawa, Yokohama, Japan



Finally ... A dream which was conceptual 7 years ago has taken a very concrete shape. Only a person like Pranjal can do it. Relentless effort & sincere perseverance. A place truly Divine & tranquil ... A place where you can actually hear your inner voice... A place far away from nowhere but where you can find your own Self... the school is coming up very well. Where else can you see village children of age 5-6 years speak in English & eager to learn more & more. A true role model for all future efforts towards building a nation where people will be fully literate.

– Madhusudan Singhanian, Kolkata

After only being able to stay a few days I am sorry not to experience more of this special place with special people. I enjoyed every minute of my short stay. The peacefulness, the kindness, the cheerfulness of children eager to learn, the dedication of the teachers, and the beauty of the surroundings. Thank you so much for this experience!

– Ronnie Griens, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The children are joyful, enthusiastic, brilliant and bright. There is no better testimony to the justness of the work being done here. Total respects to Pranjal and the whole team!

– Jaques Albohair, Geneva, Switzerland

To see this place and the work done here out of nothing is really giving me hope at several levels. I'll keep in my heart that there are people here having so much results in making the future generation more conscient of themselves. Thanks.

– Jann Loosli, Geneva, Switzerland

My 3rd visit to Kechla, last was in Jan 2010 and the place is changing rapidly and beautifully. My love to the kids, teachers & Kechla team. I've had a great time with you all.

– Circe Lugubuhl, Switzerland

I was lucky to visit Kechla and see the budding school and Ashram. Sincerity and love combined with dedication and hardwork is transforming the place and its young people. The location is beautiful and the children are full of joy, curiosity and enthusiasm. May the school and its inmates flower & prosper in everything they do.

– Dr. Subas Pani (former Chief Secretary, Orissa), Delhi

“... Mr Pranjal Jauhar built here an ashram as well as a school also for tribal children. It is really remarkable and admirable, that Pranjal Jauhar putting so much efforts in growing up tribal children in all means i.e. value education, well nourishment and health. In spite of so many kinds of problems, i.e. transportation whatever he did, is remarkable”.

– A.P Pathak, SN Sunderson & Co, Katni (M.P)

“I am absolutely dumb founded by what I have seen. After seeing pictures and hearing details from my Didi and Bhai Sahib (Saprus) I now know what Pranjal and his team has accomplished is something that no one has done so far anywhere. The children are delightful we will both be back. Thank you!”

– Urmila Pateriya, Devendra Pateriya, USA

“.... I look forward to come back again for filming soon. Indeed to capture the spirit of service, growth and devotion.”

– Shankhajeet De, New Delhi



“I am flabbergasted seeing such an Institution in one of the cut-off area of my block. The institution has brought about a sea-change in the lives of children of this area educational, spiritual, physical and what not. I wonder why not our schools and our children emulate such type of life style. It's a whole-hearted, spontaneous participation of the children in school and they have learnt more than the basics of education. I would expect cooperation from this school and its founders for setting up at least 2 such schools, as Model Schools in my block. Above all, this Institution in a class APART.”

– Soojata Mishra, Block Development office
Koraput



“.... We, the people, need this light badly. It is a guiding light not only in the field of education, but the entire project presents a wholistic vision for profound foundation of life that would be with a purpose. The project is more significant when we realize that it is coming up in a resource –handicapped and isolated area dominated by uninitiated, illiterate and leaderless poor tribals. The district administration will be very happy to get this institute associated with various government initiatives in this area.”

– Sachin Jauhar, Collector, Koraput

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We are thankful to Sri. Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch for sponsoring the education and hostel expense of 40 students.

We also thank the entire team of Auro-Mira Service Society and Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir with whose help, guidance and valuable ideas, this project has been successful.