

Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir, Kechla, Dt. Koraput, Orissa Mango Group report 2010-11 First half

Before we start the report for April'10, onwards, we would like to give a small glimpse of the period before this.

The Mango group children started attending school from 3rd September 2009. We had 14 children who attended school on the first day. The total number of children on roll is 24. The average attendance is however between 15 and 17. The children walk a distance up to 2 1/2 km to come to school and for these small children to do so in rain and sun without an adult is a daunting task. We will soon be having these children in the hostel and this problem will be resolved.



The children are born in 2004 and 2005. Most of them are small in stature for their age.

All the children are first generation learners and there was no school in the area till Auro-

Mira Vidya Mandir started. Most of the parents are indifferent to whether their child goes to school



or not. The teachers have to take that extra initiative to ensure that children come to school. The period from September'09 to March'10 was devoted to get the children settled in the school and used to the concept of schooling. We did rhymes and singing with them. The children knew 30 songs in Hindi and English by march end. Free hand drawing and painting was a regular feature. Clay modelling, pasting, cutting and other skill work were also done. Playing in the sand pit, tree climbing, fun games and relay races, ball games is a daily feature.



Two topics were taken up in March – colours and fruits & vegetables. The topic on colours included going for nature walks to identify colours, songs on colours were taught, drawing and painting in different specific colours, mix-

ing colours and making a new colour. Children also did marbling on paper, rangoli, made colours from leaves and flowers, by rubbing red bricks, etc.

Fruits and vegetables topic – The children were shown many vegetables and fruits. The children did pasting on drawings of fruits and vegetables, made their own drawings, used clay to make models, identified trees and saw which vegetables grow underground and which above ground. Difference between fruits and vegetables, why wait for them to get ripe. Many children made songs on fruits and vegetables. Children also made stories with fruits and vegetables.

April 2010 onwards -

The children usually come to school around 7:30 am. A little late on wet and cold days and a bit earlier on bright days. The day starts with breakfast. The food is different from what they usually eat at home. They have developed a taste for it and actually enjoy it.



After breakfast the children brush their teeth. The ones who have not had a bath in the morning do so at this time. At any given time, many children are suffering ailments and after meals medicines are administered whenever required. Some children also wash their clothes, if they are dirty.

The children do exercises after this. This could be through singing or through stories and sometimes the children make each other do exercises. Shuttle relays are also conducted at this time. The children play in the sand pit and make things. Aiming with ball is also done at this time.

Chanting is the first thing the children do after going to the group. The children know eight chants including – Asato Maa, Vakratunda, Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina, Sahana Bhavatu, Tvumeva Mata, Aanandamayi, Purnamada, Tatsa Vitur Varam.

After chanting, the children sing songs. The children know more than 50 songs. Most in Hindi but also 12 in English, 4 in Sanskrit and 2 in Oriya. The children sing with a lot of enthusiasm.

Story telling is an interactive session where the teacher tells a story, but the children are always asking questions or answering ones posed by the teacher. The stories can be told with pictures, books, puppets or sometimes just with actions. The children often want the stories to be read to



them nowadays and often select the story book. When the story is being told, many children try and enact the actions and sounds that come in the story. Sometimes the children create their own story. One child would make the story and others would listen.

Initial mathematics – The children are exposed to counting, shapes, concepts like bigger-smaller, higher-lower, taller-shorter, etc. The children have also started addition.

Skill work

Drawings are made with crayons, pencil,



chalk. The children draw with a free hand are not encouraged to copy. They have shown remarkable improvement in this and all children are very interested to draw. Cutting and pasting is another skill that is regularly undertaken by the children. The children make collage after cutting



paper. The children do pasting with leaves, sand, seeds and many other materials.

The children paint on a regular basis. Painting with brush, making designs with thumb impression, impression of designs, Papier-mâché is also done by the children.



Stitching of cloth and repairing their own clothes are done by most children.



Stitching on a design given to them. Garland making with flowers and beads is done by children.

Paper folding - 3-D models are made with paper of flowers, birds, elephant, dog, cat, bag, boats, aeroplanes tree, doll, etc.

Clay work – Children have made beads, houses, fruits, vehicles, sweets, etc.

Rangoli and designing on the floor with beads, leaves, colours, bottle crowns, twigs, flowers, etc is done by the children.

After this the children go for lunch and then



watch TV for an hour. The children are shown selected films for children in English and Hindi for improving language skills.

The children take a nap for about an hour after this.

Indoor games, toys and puzzles are done. Children create their imaginary stories with the blocks and toys while playing. Many children enjoy Lego blocks. Children also enjoy playing memory games.

Games –The children go and play games from 4 to 4:45 pm. The children play minor games including – net and fish, bog and the bone, fire in the mountain, catch the ball, fruit and salad, change your place, tag, cat and rat, etc. The children sometimes play with the ball by passing it in different ways.

Juice and snacks are served after sports and then the



children go home.

Celebrations and festivals – We celebrated the foundation day of the school on 5th July. The children started the day by going to the meditation hall. In the afternoon, put up a dance performance and watched what had been put up by other children. Sri Aurobindo's birthday and Independence Day was celebrated by making flags and a dance show. The children made Rakhis for Rakshabandhan.



Birthdays – On every child's birthday, we give the child a pair of clothes which the child wears and then takes home. The child goes to the meditation hall and lights a candle and incense. After that everyone sings for the child in the group and the child distributes sweets which have been prepared in the school. The other children make cards wishing the Birthday child.

Visiting faculty – The children gained immensely from all those who came from outside and spent valuable time with the children.

Anna Maria from Holland was here in March-April. Though she was primarily helping with the older children, she came a few times and taught the children two songs –
What a beautiful morning and I see the moon.



Sulochana di was here in May with a group of Mirambika teachers and under her guidance Sashwati, Niharika, Deepti and Rabindra worked here for about two weeks. She guided us and interacted with the children. She even did make up of children for a performance. She had an interactive session with mothers of our children.

Sashwati and Niharika worked with older children, but came a few times to the Mango group. Sashwati taught a few songs and a few new games. Niharika made the children do a drama.

Deeptimayee taught many songs and took the Home topic with the children.

She made the children play many games and told many stories to children. She made the children also create stories.

Rabindra also came to the group once and played the dholak and made the children sing.

Manasamayee from Matri Karuna Vidyalaya was here in June and worked in Mango group. She taught the children two songs and told the children many stories. She went for walks with children.

