

Report of Auro-Mira Service Society for the Year 2023-24

Registered office: -
Auro-Mira Service Society,
Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch,
New Delhi- 110016

The path is long, but self-surrender makes it short; the way is difficult, but perfect trust makes it easy.

- The Mother



Embracing the chance for further introspection and improvement, our goal remains steadfast in fostering the comprehensive growth of our students. We consistently endeavour to cultivate an atmosphere that nurtures a mindset inclined towards learning. Through our efforts, students are encouraged to embrace responsibility, foster teamwork, and cultivate the autonomy and motivation necessary for independent learning.

Our commitment to crafting a conducive educational environment is unwavering. Within our school community, we dedicate ourselves to facilitating the flourishing of young minds, offering them a platform to expand their individual perspectives and evolve into individuals of merit.

The school has become the focal point of our society, akin to a mother prioritizing her children above all else.

Most of the activities undertaken during the 2023-24 academic year have been detailed in our two half-yearly school reports, which are enclosed below. However, there are additional activities not covered in the reports:

- A motor launch of Kechla village and one of Semla village underwent complete overhauls this year due to their precarious condition.
- We reached out to the Health Department of Koraput to conduct tests for genetic disorders among the children. A team of doctors and technicians graciously undertook this task, testing nearly all the children (with only a handful absent) and a significant number of villagers who responded to our announcement of the diagnostic camp. Tests were conducted for HIV-AIDS, Hepatitis B & C, Sickle Cell Anaemia, and other illnesses. Although we are not privy to the specific findings due to confidentiality, we were informed that the prevalence of sickle cell anaemia is a cause for concern, along with a few cases of AIDS in the village.





However, all other diseases tested for returned negative results. The Health Department assured us that they would continue to monitor and address these cases accordingly.



- Construction commenced on a new building to accommodate teachers this year. Located opposite the girls' hostel, across the road, the building comprises four Studio Apartments, one single room, and stilts for storage of bicycles, vehicles, power tillers, and other gardening and construction equipment.



Half Yearly Report of

Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir

April '23 – September '23



'The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.' - Eleanor Roosevelt



A wondrous journey, a voyage forward to reflect the joyous moment with the children. Looking back at our journey since 2008 we are happy at the thought of the memorable milestones we have reached. All our efforts revolve around the



all-round development of each student's potential in the field of physical, mental, vital, psychic and spiritual.

In the last six months we have achieved various milestones and



are still moving ahead to face the challenges in the coming session. We continuously strive to provide the seeds for the all-round development of the children. The facilitators tirelessly put their efforts to provide a proper learning environment to achieve the aim. It's also a novel experience for both the students and the teachers.

Co-Curricular Activities

I learned that we can do anything, but we can't do everything... at least not at the same time. So think of your priorities not in terms of what activities you do, but when you do them. Timing is everything.

Dan Millman



To break the monotony of the schedule we have designed some co-curricular activities related to maths, debate, Contemporary and classical dance, music- both instrumental and vocal, language- both in Hindi and in English, painting, puzzles, art and craft, story-telling etc for the children. Every Tuesday they participate in these corners. Each of them gets a chance to participate in all the corners by rotation.



“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.” —Albert Einstein

Programmes and Celebrations



The preparation for the programmes starts well in advance. All children get an opportunity to showcase their talents. The vibes of different festivals rejuvenate the environment with positive energy. The

colourful clothes for different occasions add

colours to the young lives. Various festivals and ceremonies unite us to work harmoniously. Together we stand to help each other.

4th April- Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry



Sri Aurobindo landed on the land of rishi Agastya, Pondicherry on the 4th April by the divine aadesh. To commemorate this auspicious day a special meditation was organised in the ashram. Everyone gathered at 8:30 in the morning and children offered a few devotional songs.



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



The day of The Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry was celebrated.



To mark the event a special meditation was held in the ashram which was followed by the hoisting of the

Mother's flag. Children saluted the flag with a march and assembled in the meditation hall for a short meditation.

14th June- Raja

Raja was celebrated with lots of fervour and enthusiasm. The presence of Sulochana di added more colour to this festival. On this special occasion children were gathered to remember again the past glory of Odisha. Sulochana di depicted the stories behind the festival. Children of Faith Group sang a few Raja songs that they had created earlier. After





the songs and a short prayer all the children wore their colourful clothes and decorated their face with colourful bindi. On the trees, swings were tied and all the children got a chance to be on the swings and waited for their turn. Everyone helped each other by pushing the swings. With their laughter the swing touched the sky. Much merry making was done and special *Pithas* (local sweetmeats) were prepared by the little hands of Gratitude and Humility Group children to mark the event. The children of Gratitude group put up an orchestra. Their flute and the

Tablas tuned to a few raja songs. Children recited their creative poems in the assembly and everyone enjoyed the day.

20th June-Ratha Yatra

There was enthusiasm and excitement in the air for a week before the festival, as the children were looking forward to this festival. The idol of the three Lords were made by Papaji (Ramesh bhai) and the older students. The car for their travel





was assembled by the children of Progress Group along with the seniors. Some children practised their band by themselves to perform on the day. On the final day the juggernaut (car) was decorated with colourful clothes and flower garlands,



ready to run on the road. The three Lords were worshipped with many devotional songs by our teachers and the children. The children of Smile group presented a Sambalpuri dance. Some rituals were followed before the taking of the idols to the car. The car was worshipped with coconut and incense. Pranjal



Bhaiya took the role of the Gajapati who swept the road and the car before rolling on the road.





The festival started with the sound of conch and Hari bol. The villagers were also

ready with their bands and their devotion to pay their homage to the Lords. The car was pulled by ropes from the school to the hostel, with everyone jostling to have an opportunity to do this. Everyone danced and sang to the glory of Lord Jagannath and his brother Balabhadra ji and sister Subhadra. The villagers and the children danced to the live music. Finally, the car reached the hostel and there the Lords were welcomed with band and devotional songs. They were worshipped for eight days with a different special prasad every day. In the evenings, children and the teachers offered their





devotional songs and chanted the Mahamantra Hare Rama Hare Krishna. Sulochana didi narrated stories of Lord Jagannath and his different incarnations. On the day of their return, everyone gathered in the hall and paid their homage with many devotional songs. The Lords returned to their abode.

5th July- Annual Day- Tara di's and school's birthday



The children did extensive decorations on the stage and in the hall for this most looked forward to event. Prior to this, the whole school underwent spring cleaning.

Many of the children participated in cooking savouries and sweetmeats, which was undertaken the day D-Day.

Everyone went to the ashram in the morning for meditation. This was followed by Hawan in the girls' hostel.

The programme was as follows: -

Peace group performed a play in Hindi.



Bliss group sang an action song on my body.

Unity group enacted a play in English, the Cat's party. They also performed a dance on the song Crazy frog.

Victory put on two plays in English- the Gingerbread Man and Three little pigs and a play in Hindi "Kechla ka jungle."

Smile group presented a Kathak dance and performed Two colour coat- a play in English.



Perseverance group enacted Andheri Nagri, Chaupat Raja- a play in Hindi.

Progress group performed a Konkani Dance. They enacted a play in English- three trees.

Gratitude group presented a dance- Avyi Giri Nandini.



Jagat guided and led the orchestra with the gratitude group.

In the evening we had Savitri reading where all the children who can read participated in reading of portion of Sri Aurobindo's great epic.



6th July-Tree Plantation



Tree plantation drive was carried out in the campus of the girls' hostel, the barren hills and on the roadsides.

Everyone participated enthusiastically. Saplings were collected from the ashram nursery and the forests. The main aim was to make our microcosm greener.

Children in groups went to different places with shovels and planted approximately 3000 plants.



August is the month of festivities and celebrations. The feelings of joy and bliss filled the environment. The children exhibited their talents through different activities like speech, poem recitation, art, storytelling, quiz, singing and dancing and theatre. It is the month to celebrate the Great Heroes of yesteryears.



13th August- Chachaji's birthday



Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar 'Faquir' (1903-1986), who is our beloved chachaji- a freedom fighter, a storyteller and the founder of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch) was born on 13th August in Punjab, which is now a part of Pakistan. To honour the day, a collective meditation was held by the children in the Ashram's Meditation Hall. As

Chachaji was a prominent member of Arya Samaj, a special hawan was performed by the children in the girls' hostel. In their literature classes, stories of Chachaji were read to the children. A few of his stories were narrated by the children of Aspiration Group and skits on some of the stories were enacted by the children of Progress Group.



14th August- Babaji Maharaj's birthday

Sri Ramkrushna Das, a staunch devotee of the Mother was a visionary

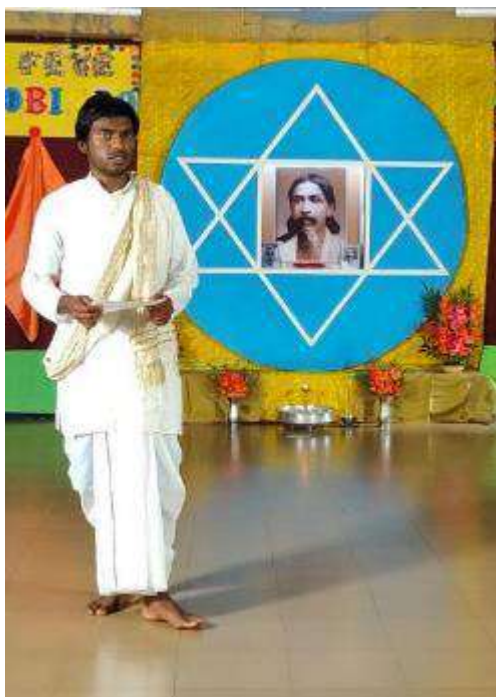


who led an austere life and guided the devotees of the state of Odisha and worked for the implementation of Integral Education in the schools. He also made people aware of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo's vision by awakening their consciousness through study circles in different regions. His selfless service left an incredible mark on the land of Odisha. On this special occasion, a special assembly was held. Srinath Bhaiya enlightened the children with his soulful anecdotes. As he emphasised on the Naam Jap, everyone repeated the Mother's name for half an hour. The assembly ended with a silent meditation and everyone left the hall wrapped in a blanket of calm serenity.





15th August- Independence Day and Sri Aurobindo's Birthday



Sri Aurobindo a multifaceted personality- a yogi, philosopher, freedom fighter, a spiritual guide and above all an incarnation. His 75th birthday is also the Independence Day of our country.

To commemorate this auspicious occasion, some intra school competitions like speech, quiz, singing, dancing,

poem recitation and art were organised. Each child chose any three corners according to her or his choice. On the final day, prizes were given for the best performances.





On the 15th morning, the inmates gathered in the ashram for special meditation before 6 o'clock in the morning to

observe the auspicious day. It was followed by the hoisting of the Mother's flag. Our little ones, ready in their marching clothes and some children as part of the band arrived in the ashram to salute the flag. The Mother's flag-bearing the dream of undivided India was unfurled by Pt. Shantanu Bhattacharya, the famous classical singer. Children offered their veneration in the ashram meditation hall. Children offered some programmes as an offering for the day.



The children of Peace group presented an action song I Salute My flag, which was followed by a dance on the song *Sri Aurobindo Name Anando* by the children of Bliss Group.



The children of Unity Group displayed their talents in the play- The Mice Wedding. The little ones of Victory Group recited the poem- Who by Sri Aurobindo with action and their tiny feet danced in rhythm with the song *Desh Rangila Rangila*. "Krishna" a sonnet by Sri Aurobindo was recited by the children of Courage Group.



They also put up a dance on the song Chakhde India and melodiously sang the song Lahran Dun.

All the senior children from Smile Group onwards participated in the



play on India's Freedom Struggle, a play which depicted the complete freedom movement in brief. Many of them gained

knowledge from the play and also got an insight of the pre-independent era. The play also included songs and dances which everyone had learnt during the evening meditation time. Everyone dressed up according to their role and the children made props with the help of teachers to use in the play. Shantanu Da taught two songs in a span of two days- *humne Tumko Dil se Lagaya* and *Bhagaban Aurobindonah*, which were presented by his students.



Sandeshe Aate Hain, a remix song was danced on by the Perseverance Group children. They used many gymnastics skills in the dance which was an astounding performance. Shampa,

Shamika, Rukmani and Parul danced on the song *Ai Watan, Watan mere*. The programme ended with a silent meditation.

30th August was celebrated as Raksha Bandhan.



Children of all the groups made rakhi using silk threads and colourful beads. The older children from Perseverance group onwards learnt new macrame designs to weave their bands. Sweetmeats were prepared before the programme. Tulika, Brishti, Shampa, Shamika and Malti put up a puppet show on Rani Karmavati and Raja Humayun. They also mesmerized the audience with their soulful song *Rakhi ki Laaj*. Jagat, a senior student narrated stories related to the history and culture of rakhi. The children of Perseverance group wrote poems in Hindi for their brothers and sisters and they recited them. They also presented the song *Rakhi Ka Bandhan*. The children of Courage group sang the song *Rakhi ki Dor* in tune. The whole school participated in

tying rakhis to each other and fostering the spirit of brotherhood. In the afternoon everyone gathered in the cowshed to pay their homage to the cows who have been fostering us with their pure and sweet milk, which is no less than nectar.



7th September- Janmashtami was celebrated with much fanfare and as an offering to Lord Krishna. The celebrations began with soulful bhajans and continued with singing and dancing, with a gradual increase in tempo. On this auspicious occasion, the children of Victory group recited the poem Krishna by Sri



Aurobindo and presented a dance on the song Govind Gokul Aayo. The children of Unity group mesmerized by dancing in rhythm on the song Vrindavan Mein Kanha Aaya.



Rohini, Manya, Perna danced on the song Raat Suhani which they learnt by themselves. Amita, who loves to dance, presented a classical dance with Gauri on the song *Radha Raman Hari*. The children of



Perseverance group presented a song Tum Prem Ho. The children of Smile group presented a dance on *Shri Krishna Govinda hare Murari* and a play



Krishna and Sudama in English in two groups. The children of Peace and Bliss group put up a dance on the song Pyaara Kanhaiya and



Adhram Madhuram respectively. The little ones danced in rhythm.



Their colourful lehngas for both the girls and boys hypnotized the audience. The Courage group children recited the poem Yah Kadam ka Ped Agar Maa by Subhadra Kumari Chauhan. Amita and Parul put up a Bihu dance and Suparna didi, a classical dancer fascinated everyone with her beautiful dance. The event ended with home-made

prasaad which made the programme even sweeter.

Visitors

Shri Sandeep Saha visited Kechla. He helped Basant, who is doing B. Com (Hons.) in Indian economics and taught the theory part of physical education to Shampa and Shamika. He also took classes for



other groups. Shri Saha takes online classes regularly and his periodically coming to Kechla helps with them as well.



Sulochana di- guided Victory Group in their projects and took social science classes of Perseverance Group. Although she worked on the topic Unity and Diversity. She made the topic interesting for the children by taking examples from their day-to-day activities into context. As usual, she mesmerized the children with her stories and also guided the teachers to set up a conducive environment for the children.



Bageshree (Acharya) di visited Kechla for the first time. She is

an educationist and artist. Her hidden and untapped talents were most unexpected and a joy for all the children she worked with.

Laxmipriya Roul (Laxmi di) from Jodhpur had visited for over a month during her summer break. She is an artist and did wonderful work with

the children. She also did wall paintings and uplifted the looks of the school.

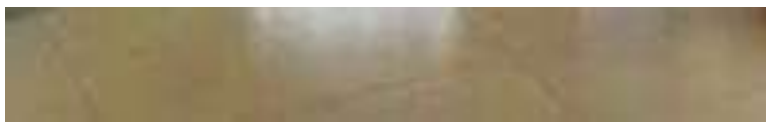
Surajita Panda from Mirambika visited the school. She spent all her time in organising the school office and guiding the senior students and teachers about the art and science of office management.

Divya Shrivastava, a teacher of Hindi and music volunteered for a week in Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir during her summer break. During her stay, she took some classes of vocal music. She also taught the younger children some rhymes and songs.



Nigel George, Archita Murthy and Vijay Shanti Murthy visited the school during the summer. They spent over ten days and contributed by guiding the students who are doing B.A (Hons.) in English and the ones in class 12th.





(Pandit) Shantanu (Bhattacharya), his wife- Durba didi and daughter Mitra, all accomplished artistes visited Kechla for their annual 'pilgrimage'. From sunrise to late at night, they were actively singing, teaching, giving lecture demonstrations; in short making the whole place melodious.



Trip

Trip to North India

A trip for Smile Group children was organised starting from 16th September and returning on 5th October. 27 children of the smile group, five senior students, three teachers



and Suman bhaiya comprised the group. The places to be covered were Delhi, Rishikesh, Nainital, Ramgarh and Agra. The following is a brief report of the trip:-

16th September- Everyone woke up early and started from Kechla at 4:30 am. We started by autorickshaws, and a few went by motorcycles. The auto went up to the railway bridge and from there they went walking or by motorcycle to the



Koraput Railway Station. They boarded a train for Rayagada railway station, where they changed trains and boarded Samta express for Delhi. The train was rather late when it reached Nizamuddin railway station.

18th September- The group walked to **Qutab Minar** after lunch. They spent a couple of hours there, discussing the history and architecture of the complex. They walked back and returned by 4:30 pm.



After their evening snacks, they played football. After dinner, they had ice cream and went to the old Delhi railway station by a chartered bus and boarded a train for Haridwar.

19th September- They reached Haridwar at 6 am. They went to **Sivanand Ashram** where they had breakfast. After breakfast they toured Sivanand Ashram. Then they went to **Dayanand ashram**, where Kurban chacha warmly welcomed them and showed them around. Swami Chidanand ji addressed the children and spoke to them about True Life. Swami ji also discussed with the children about the aim of their lives.



After this, the children put up a small performance where they sang, danced, did storytelling.

Then Kurban chacha taught them a song- old man Romeo.

20th September The children again saw various aspects of the ashram. They then went to Ram Jhula and Laxman Jhula and to various ashrams and temples on the other side of the Ganges.



21st September- The children went to Vashisha Gufa. Swami ji explained about the cave and its significance.

In the evening, the children boarded the train for Kathgodam.



22nd September- The children went by bus from Kathgodam to Nainital. They walked up from Bara Patthar to Van Niwas, Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch).

During their stay in Nainital, the children did trekking to meditation rock, tiffin top and other places. They did activities like- rappelling, bouldering and river crossing. They had sessions of meditation, discussion and attended lectures.



25th September- Most of the children trekked 16 km to Kainchi dham. Some of them went by road straight to Ramgarh. After darshan at Kainchi dham, the children went by road to Ramgarh. Four of the senior students



trekked from Kainchi dham to Madhuban ashram in Talla Ramgarh, which is a distance of 18 km.





26th September- All the children did various treks during their stay in Ramgarh. They also trekked to Mountain Paradise. Every day they



would trek 15 km on an average. In the evenings, the children learnt weaving baskets with bamboo, making flowers with wool and also learnt a different form of drawing.

29th September- The children went to Kathgodam by bus and boarded the train for Delhi.

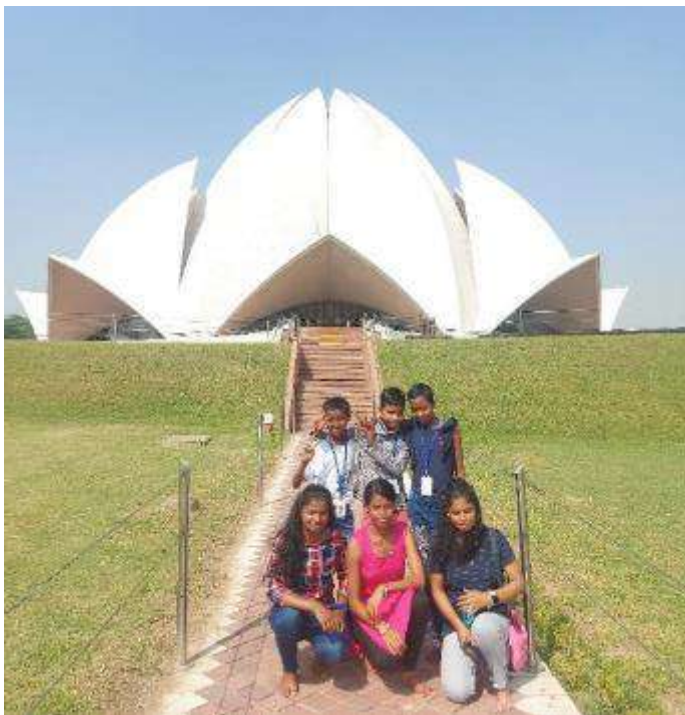
30th September- After breakfast, the children visited the Lotus Temple. They



commuted by Metro. This was their first experience by Metro. They attended meditation in Baha'i temple.

1st October- The children visited Humayun's Tomb, Science Museum, Purana Quila. They also visited Waste-to-Wonder park where they saw replicas of Leaning Tower of Pisa, Taj Mahal, Statue of Liberty, Colosseum, amongst other attractions.

2nd October- The group did shramdan in the morning as it was Gandhi ji's birthday.





In the evening they went to Akshardham Temple where they saw all the shows and attractions, including the boat ride which showed the entire biography of swami Neelkanth. They also saw the Indian history in the field of science. They also saw the beautiful show of fountains, light and water with soulful music.

3rd October- The group boarded the train for Agra. Arpit Singh sir received them. He gave them a sumptuous breakfast and then took them to see Taj Mahal and Red Fort. After a wonderful

lunch, they rested in Delhi Public School, Agra. They had an early dinner at 6:30 pm and boarded the train at night, for their return journey.



Physical Activities

All the students at the school are avid sportsmen / sportswomen. The very young who are up to 6 years of age have an hour of games in the morning. They do some exercises and play minor games during this period.



The students staying in the hostel have yogasana from 6 am to 6:30 am every day.



All the students have sports in the evening for over an hour where they start with exercises and running, followed by playing games. They play football, basketball, volleyball and many minor games.



During the summer months they go for swimming, instead of games. The older students of Faith and Aspiration groups are good swimmers.

The students of Humility, Gratitude and Progress groups improved their swimming skills. The students of Perseverance group learnt swimming this year.

The students take turns with the three Kayaks we have and on some days also go for rowing.



Half Yearly Report of

Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir

October'23 – March'24

Everyone has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it & use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.

– Sri Aurobindo



A great opportunity for reflection, introspection, self-observation, and self-contemplation arises every six months with the issuance of the school report. In our continuous pursuit of personal transformation, this report serves as a testament to the progress made by each individual over the preceding six months. Our primary focus remains on nurturing the holistic development of every student, a core principle ingrained in our school ethos since its inception. This report acts as a springboard, propelling us forward as we assess our current standing, set goals, and strive for greater accomplishments in the upcoming year.



Since the school's inception, significant transformations have occurred. Previously, our efforts involved visiting households to encourage parents to enrol their children in school. Now, we witness a shift as parents actively seek admission for their children. With the recent addition of a new girls' hostel building, our capacity to accommodate students has expanded, enabling us to welcome more girls from nearby villages. This has resulted in a surge of enthusiasm among students, both local and from neighbouring hamlets, eager to pursue their education within

our school's nurturing environment. Notably, the number of girls enrolled in our institution surpasses that of boys, indicating a positive trend towards gender equality in education.

This year, we joyously welcomed more than 25 eager children into the Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir family, while bidding farewell to just over a dozen students who completed their 10th or 12th grade and moved on to new endeavours.

As our student body continues to grow, we are fortunate to have a dedicated team of self-motivated volunteers who generously offer their assistance in the school, particularly in aiding the younger students. Upon completing their 10th grade, students have the option to either venture out or remain as volunteers within the school while pursuing their higher studies. Those who choose to stay are enrolled in the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for their 11th and 12th grades, and upon graduation, they continue their studies through the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).



This year, three students are preparing to sit for the 12th board exams in April, while seven students enrolled in IGNOU will appear for their exams in June. These students exhibit remarkable diligence, despite the challenges of working with younger students. Their patience and adeptness in handling these responsibilities are commendable.

Our school is blessed with a team of six enthusiastic and dedicated teachers whose coordination and cooperation ensure the smooth functioning and continual growth of the institution. As avid learners themselves, they serve as exemplary role models for future generations. It is noteworthy that most of these volunteers are young women who are provided with ample opportunities to thrive and excel in activities traditionally dominated by males. Despite initial resistance from villagers regarding girls learning swimming and venturing beyond traditional gender roles, these young women have not only mastered water sports but have also earned certifications in water rescue. Furthermore, the school provides

opportunities for them to learn motorcycle and car driving, with many displaying confidence in handling both two-wheelers and four-wheelers.

Reflecting on the progress made over the past 15 years, both within the village and among its children, we recognize the strides we have taken. However, there remains much more to accomplish in the years ahead. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and sacrifices made by all those who have poured their hearts and souls into our school.



A few students have passed their 10th and 12th grades through NIOS, affording them the choice to either continue with the NIOS board or transition to mainstream education. Those eager to pursue further studies outside the school are provided with assistance in filling out college application forms. During holidays, many of these students opt to remain in the hostel, finding it to be a conducive environment for their studies.



As the school operates continuously for 365 days without interruption, meticulous planning is undertaken to break the monotony of each year, month, and day.

The day commences with a prayer session, followed by a half-hour Yogasan session, during which children practice various yoga postures along with Surya Namaskar. Subsequently, all students engage in Shramdan, a rigorous hour-long session of voluntary work.

The Kitchen group, however, forgoes the Yogasan session as they are engaged in vegetable cutting for both breakfast and lunch preparations. During festivals, students take on additional responsibilities such as cleaning utensils and the kitchen area. Younger students often assist

in cleaning grains and shelling peas, fostering a sense of appreciation for work from an early age.

An emphasis on instilling a love for work is evident as designated groups are responsible for



daily tasks such as cleaning toilets, bathrooms, and dustbins for leftover food. Once a week, these groups diligently remove cobwebs and thoroughly clean toilet walls, ensuring hygiene standards are maintained. Additionally, open drains are cleaned daily, with all tasks undertaken willingly and happily by the students.

Another group of children takes charge of cleaning the boys' hostel area, performing tasks such as clearing cobwebs, wiping common rooms, cleaning the kitchen area, sweeping the surroundings, and collecting plastics for proper disposal, all executed without hesitation.



Similarly, a dedicated group of girls assumes responsibility for cleaning the Girls' hostel, meticulously tending to toilets, lobbies, and water filters. Despite the considerable size of the building, the maintenance is efficiently managed by the

students themselves, showcasing their commitment to communal upkeep and responsibility.

One group of students tends to the school garden with dedication, engaging in activities such as digging, weeding, watering plants, and collecting manure from the cowshed. Some transport the manure to the garden, while others harvest vegetables for use in the school kitchen. Our produce is entirely organic, as we refrain from using chemicals,



although occasional challenges arise due to insects and white ants. Certain students display keen interest in operating the power tiller to remove weeds, cultivate and aerate the soil, and transport manure to the school and hostel areas.

Another group focuses on maintaining cleanliness throughout the school premises. They diligently sweep all areas and tidy their designated spaces. Additionally, two girls from the village are entrusted with cleaning common areas such as the library, math lab, science lab, puzzles room, and art room, ensuring a welcoming environment for all. A select few children



are tasked with caring for the meditation halls in both the school and hostel. They meticulously clean the rooms and adorn them with freshly collected flowers from the garden. Remarkably, some of our youngest students, aged only 6 or 7 years, have mastered the art of blowing the conch, a practice that infuses the early morning atmosphere with revitalizing vibrations, setting a positive tone for the day ahead.

On Sundays, students take responsibility for cleaning their own rooms meticulously under the guidance of teachers. Each item of clothing provided by the school is numbered, facilitating organization and accountability. Students launder their clothes, blankets, and bedsheets, ensuring a clean and orderly living space. Some younger children may choose to have their clothes cleaned at home.

To break the monotony of routine, Tuesdays are designated for various engaging activities for the children. They are organized into groups to undertake a

diverse range of tasks. Some students take on responsibilities such as cleaning the terrace, maintaining water tanks, inspecting solar panels, repairing bicycles, experimenting with new dishes in the kitchen, organizing books in the library, and arranging equipment in the various labs. Additionally, they are tasked with cleaning vehicles and tidying the sports room.



Occasionally, they embark on community service endeavours such as collecting plastics from the village or participating in forest clean-up efforts.

Following breakfast, the school day commences promptly at 8:30 AM. The youngest students break for lunch at 11:30 AM and then return home, while others have lunch at 12:30 PM and proceed directly to their afternoon classes. The afternoon curriculum typically includes activities related to art and craft, dance, music, gardening, and other enriching pursuits.



After a brief snack break, students eagerly participate in sports activities. Groups are organized based on the children's skill levels, ensuring that everyone can actively engage and benefit from the session.

Over the course of the hour-long sports period, students are exposed to a variety of games and sports, such as basketball, football, volleyball, and other recreational activities. Following warm-up exercises, they enthusiastically participate in these games, regardless of the season. During the summer months, it is mandatory for children above the age of 9 to undergo swimming lessons, given our proximity to a water body. Additionally, older children are



instructed in rowing techniques. Prior to entering the water, all students are closely supervised, with our dedicated rescue team remaining alert and vigilant at all times. Mastering swimming takes consistent practice, but during the summer, all children eagerly anticipate the opportunity to dive into the lake, relishing the experience to the fullest.

In our efforts to instil a sense of cultural heritage, we celebrate a myriad of festivals within the school community. These celebrations serve to deepen our students' appreciation and respect for the rich cultural tapestry of India. Over the past six months, we have commemorated several significant occasions with joy and reverence.





Celebrations

Dussehra- 24th October

On October 24th, a special assembly was convened to commemorate Dussehra. The assembly commenced with melodious music, followed by the recitation of sacred chants. Students also delivered soul-stirring devotional songs, enriching the atmosphere with reverence and devotion. Pranjali Bhaiya elucidated upon the significance of Maheshwari, the divine Mother, drawing insights from "The Mother" by Sri Aurobindo. The assembly provided a platform for reflection and spiritual upliftment.

Diwali- 12th Nov

Diwali, known as the festival of lights, symbolizes victory – victory of light over darkness, truth over falsehood, and knowledge over ignorance. To commemorate this auspicious occasion, the children from various groups crafted clay lamps, or diyas, using wicks and paraffin. Festivities unfolded within the hostel premises, where the children adorned the area with a stunning flower rangoli and illuminated it with the radiant glow of the lamps. The entire campus gleamed with an enchanting aura of light.



At school, the significance of Diwali was discussed through various stories, enlightening the children about the profound meanings behind the celebration. They joyfully sang devotional songs and engaged in spirited dance performances. A tranquil interlude in the meditation hall allowed for introspection, accompanied by readings about Mahakali from Sri Aurobindo's revered work, "The Mother."

In a heart-warming gesture, we ventured to the Ashram to partake in the tradition of lighting lamps, enhancing the spirit of unity and harmony. The festivities culminated with a lavish dinner, featuring an array of delectable dishes including rice, kheer, chili mushroom, and sweets.



Siddhi Day- 24th November

The school organized a special meditation session, commencing with a serene atmosphere conducive to inner reflection and tranquillity. Following this, a solemn flag hoisting ceremony took place.

With disciplined precision, students marched in unison, showcasing their respect and reverence for the occasion. The rhythmic cadence of their steps echoed a sense of unity and purpose.



As dusk approached, the campus was illuminated with the gentle flicker of diyas, signifying the triumph of light over darkness and the dispelling of ignorance. The act of lighting diyas served as a poignant reminder of our commitment to uphold truth and righteousness in our lives.

Pranjal Bhaiya's birthday

The children organized a heartfelt celebration, beginning with a sacred hawan ceremony held within the school premises.



After that the programme commenced with a brief meditation accompanied by the soulful strains of the Mother's Music. The children from the Faith Group, led the proceedings with melodious renditions of cherished songs such as "Aa Chalke Tujhe" and "Kisiki Muskurahato Pe."

Additionally, the Gratitude Group, along with Amita and Rukmani, captivated the audience with graceful Nepali dance performances learnt during their educational trip to Sikkim. The Peace Group showcased their creativity with an engaging action song centred around fruits, while the Bliss Group delighted everyone with their theatrical skills in the Hindi play "Chuhiya Layi Matar Ka Dana."



The Unity Group presented an endearing rendition of "The Ugly Duckling" in English, while the Victory Group enthralled the audience with the Hindi play "Pariyon Ka Khel." The Receptivity

Group offered thought-provoking performances of "Washing Machine" and "The Emperor's New Clothes" in English.

In addition, the Courage Group showcased their talent with an impactful English play titled "The Stone Soup," while the Perseverance Group sang the inspiring English song "Wind Beneath My Wings."



A few children, accompanied by Papaji, recited an Odia song. The celebration culminated with the heartfelt rendition of "Suraj Re Jalte Rehna".



Sri Aurobindo's Mahaprayan day- 5th December

A special meditation session commenced at the Ashram at 6 AM, dedicated to the elders of our community. Following this, all the children assembled in the meditation hall at 8:30 AM for a collective meditation session. Enveloped in the serene ambiance, the children immersed



themselves in meditation, guided by the tranquil melodies of Mother's Music, as they offered their heartfelt reverence and gratitude.

Mahasamadhi day- 9th December

The significance of this date holds profound meaning for us, as it marks the occasion when our revered Lord was moved to the shrine, four days after he departed from his earthly form, and astonishingly, his body showed no signs of decomposition. To honour this sacred event, we gathered in the meditation hall where we offered our heartfelt veneration through chants and devotional songs, reverently acknowledging the miraculous nature of this moment.

Christmas-25th December

Christmas is a cherished time for all of us, symbolizing the anticipation of a new year ahead,



much like a tree awaits the sprouting of new leaves after the fall. The preparations for our Christmas celebration begin days in advance, with each group rehearsing their carols and short dramas for the special day. The festive spirit permeates the school, with boards adorned with Santa, Christmas trees, stars, and colourful hangings,

creating an atmosphere of joy and excitement among the students who eagerly await the festivities.

On the 25th of December, we joyously celebrated Christmas. The children meticulously decorated the Christmas trees in the school with glitters, lights, ornaments, stars, and more. Adorned in their finest attire, the children eagerly awaited the evening's program, where their parents also joined to witness the beautiful performances put forth by their beloved children. To the delight of the children, Santas also made an appearance, with Suparna Didi and Sangita Didi donning the roles this year.

The evening's program commenced with a moment of quiet concentration accompanied by the Mother's music, followed by a captivating light and shadow play presented by the Gratitude Group. The



Peace Group serenaded the audience with the carol "I AM A LITTLE STAR," while the Bliss Group enchanted with "MOON MOON." The Unity Group uplifted spirits with the rendition of "TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS," and the Victory Group enacted the poignant "BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST" in English.

The Courage Group filled the hall with melody with their rendition of "MARY'S BOY CHILD JESUS CHRIST," and the Receptivity Group spread joy with "JOY TO THE WORLD" and "RAAT



CHRISTMAS KI." The Perseverance Group captivated hearts with their soulful carols "THE FIRST NOEL" and "JHUMO NACHO KHUSHI SE AAJ." Progress Group showcased their diverse talents with both dance and song, with performances on "RAJUGA," "HALLELUJHA," "SILVER BELL," and "GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN."

Amidst these jubilant celebrations, the spirit of Christmas radiated through every performance, uniting us in the joy and warmth of the festive season.

Year's last night- 31st December

The eve of the new year was embraced with fervour and enthusiasm as children eagerly prepared various programs, most of which they chose themselves. Whether it was dancing on stage or sharing jokes, each performance was a reflection of their creativity and individuality. Gathered in the school hall before dinner, the program unfolded over two hours, with each participant expressing gratitude for the past year and harbouring hopeful aspirations for the year ahead.



At midnight, a special meditation session was arranged in the Ashram meditation hall, symbolizing a serene transition into the new year. As the new calendar was unveiled, sweet treats and calendars were joyously

distributed among all present, marking the beginning of a fresh chapter filled with promise and anticipation.

New Year Celebration- 1st January

A Special Meditation commenced in the Ashram at the break of dawn, at 6 AM, setting a tranquil tone for the day ahead. Additionally, a Naam Jap program was organized, wherein children and teachers took turns repeating the Divine Mother's name continuously for 12 hours. With heartfelt



prayers for the grace of The Mother and hopeful wishes for the forthcoming year, the atmosphere was imbued with a sense of spiritual connection and anticipation.

Sports day- 3rd February'24

The much-awaited Sports Day of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir was held on 3rd February 2024. As soon as the message of Tara Di's arrival was received, the days filled with great enthusiasm. Children practised for their events more enthusiastically and rigorously.



The mentors of the different events motivated the children to do their level best. The children practised every day during their games time.

The preparation for the Sports Day started a few days before. A group of children made the memento using wastepaper. This year, they made horses as it



symbolizes swiftness and freedom. They also helped Papa Ji to make things for the altar decoration. Children also made drawings of their own events and displayed them on the board.

The day before the programme, all the children with their guides worked together on the sports field. Children cut the grass, cleaned the basketball court, and dug the ground to put up the colourful flags. They also stitched the bedsheets for the tents and set up the

scaffolding. A group decorated the entrance gate with welcome messages and colourful flowers and sarees. Some children also made rangoli. On the 2nd, in the evening, we welcomed our honourable guests. The atmosphere was rejuvenated by our eminent guests.



The Chief Guest was the District Collector- Sh. Keerti Vasan, who was accompanied by IAS officer Sh. Soumya Ranjan Pradhan and the BDO of Koraput- OAS officer Sh. Debasish Gouda. Tara didi, our Chairperson, Swami Brahmadev ji from Aurovalley Ashram, Raiwala, Smt. Neha Sharma from Jhansi, Dr. Jayanthi Ramachandran- Principal of Mirambika, Smt. Chanchal Bhugra from Delhi, Sh. Abhijit Chatterjee with his wife Luna ji from Kolkata, Sh. N. Srinivas Rao from Hyderabad but originally belongs to the royal family of Vizianagaram, Sh. Mandala Kanakaji from Delhi and many others from all over Odisha, especially



Koraput district. The large contingent of villagers were also present to take part in the festivities.

On the 3rd, children were excited to showcase their talents. Everyone got ready with their new marching clothes, which were donated by Mr. Lamba ji. The programme started with a short meditation with the Mother's music. Tara Di



and Swami Brahmadev ji lit the lamp and inaugurated the program. A choir group sang the song "Taqat Vatan Ki Humse Hai" with drumbeats, and the children marched forward to salute the Divine Mother. It was followed by a Zumba dance by our Peace

group children. The children of Bliss group performed a flower drill with rhythm. The colourful flowers in their hands decorated the sprawling ground. The children of Unity group displayed agility and coordination with their hoopla. The last programme in the morning session was Yogasan, which was performed by all the children from the Receptivity group onwards. Though there is no definition for perfection, everyone strived to give their best.

The guests went to visit the village where each one welcomed them with warm hearts. As the harvesting festival (Pitha Parab) had just finished, the villagers wanted to refresh them with their handmade pitha. After the lunch break and a short rest, all the children with their special colourful costumes got ready for the afternoon physical demonstrations.

The program started with a welcome dance on the song "Aap Muskuraiye," performed by some of the girls from Perseverance, Progress, Gratitude groups, and a few older girls. It was a fusion of Bharat Natyam and Kathak, which enchanted the guests. The children of Victory group performed human pyramids. Their coordination and teamwork were praiseworthy. A



bamboo dance was performed by the children of Courage group, displaying their proper coordination.



The children from the Receptivity, Perseverance, Progress, and Gratitude groups were given options for events like skating, lazium, unicycle, gymnastics, and army drill. Children chose the events according to their own interests. Though a few events were new and tough for the children to learn different skills. On the final day, they fascinated

the visitors with their talents. It was a spectacular view for everyone present on the field. The field echoed with applause. Swamiji enlightened us with his enchanting speech.



A few funny skits filled the atmosphere with joy and laughter. The events mesmerized our spectators and will be an unforgettable moment for everyone.

The program ended with a Shanti Paath. Our hearts filled with gratitude. Tara Di, Neha Di, Swamiji, Jayanthi Di distributed the mementos and sweets to all the members of Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir. It was a day of fulfilment and cherished moments.





Basant Panchami-14th Feb

Basant Panchami, dedicated to Goddess Saraswati and symbolizing the onset of the Spring season, is celebrated as a day of aspiration. Recognizing her as the deity of knowledge, music, arts, and crafts, we gather to honour and seek blessings from the Divine Mother. A special assembly was convened to mark this auspicious occasion, with students and teachers adorning yellow attire to herald the arrival of Spring.



The event commenced with a reading from the teachings of Maha Saraswati, one of the Mother's four aspects, delivered by Prakash Bhaiya. A thoughtful discussion ensued, focusing on the virtues embodied by Maha Saraswati and how we can integrate them into our daily lives. The Saraswati Vandana 'Ya Kundendu' was beautifully rendered by the children of receptivity, invoking the divine presence of Goddess Saraswati.



The Unity Group offered a soulful rendition of 'Maa Saraswati Sharade,' while the children of Victory Group sang 'Sharade Bhawani' with heartfelt devotion. Additionally, the Courage Group presented the melodious song 'Hai Sharade Maa,' captivating the audience with their musical tribute.

Demonstrating their reverence, the children of Progress and Perseverance groups expressed their devotion through devotional songs such as 'Hai Hams Vahini' and 'Hai Sharade

Maa.' The little ones of Peace Group added a delightful touch with their rendition of 'Namo Sharade,' accompanied by endearing actions.

The program culminated on a serene note with the Gratitude Group's rendition of the beautiful bhajan 'Var De,' filling the atmosphere with divine grace and tranquillity.

The Mother's birthday celebration

The celebration of the Mother's birthday began with a serene morning meditation in the Ashram, setting a contemplative tone for the day's festivities. Following this, a ceremonial flag hoisting took place, with Prakash Bhaiya proudly raising the Mother's flag high. In a show of reverence and devotion, the children proceeded to march forward, offering their heartfelt salutations to the Divine Mother's flag. This symbolic gesture was a testament to their deep connection and reverence for the Divine presence guiding their lives.



On the 21st of February, coinciding with the Mother's birthday, a vibrant flowers' exhibition



adorned the girls' hostel. Over 100 flowering plants, sourced from all our campuses such as the Ashram-garden, school garden, and hostel garden, were showcased. Alongside the flowers, displays featuring pictures of different blooms, their common names, and the significance attributed to them by the Mother were exhibited.

The primary objective of the exhibition was to instil enthusiasm and reverence for flowers and plants amongst the students, while also imparting the messages conveyed by different flowers, encouraging the cultivation of those qualities within us. Images of various flowers were captured and adorned with their names and significance. Additionally, several plants had been nurtured in polybags for over a month and a half. Two groups, Unity and Receptivity, undertook projects cantered around flowers, conducting research and study. Finally, four girls

from the Gratitude group assisted in the meticulous arrangement of the pictures and plants within the girls' hostel.

On the 21st of February, all the children congregated in front of the girls' hostel, where the exhibition was unveiled. Ramesh Bhai inaugurated the exhibition by lighting a diya in front of the Divine Mother, after which the children gathered quietly. Basic knowledge about flowers and how to care for plants was imparted to the children. The Unity group creatively presented the qualities symbolized by the Mother and the significance of flowers associated with her symbol.

The exhibition remained open until the 1st of March, attracting children from various groups who came to observe and learn about the flowers along with their group members. This initiative provided joyful moments and valuable lessons derived from the study of flowers.



The atmosphere in the program hall was charged with enthusiasm and fervour as everyone gathered for the special occasion. Bikanti Didi and Tulsa Didi's meticulous decoration added a touch of elegance to the setting, while Papaji's painting of The Mother graced the altar, radiating divine presence. Bedecked in colourful attire, the children exuded a vibrant energy that set the stage aglow.

The program commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, accompanied by a brief meditation to the soothing strains of the Mother's Music. The Perseverance Group delighted the audience with a graceful dance performance titled "Dream Boat." Following this, the Victory Group showcased their talent with two captivating plays: "The Stones and Flowers" and "The Secret of Buds," performed in English.

The Unity Group's rendition of the melodious song "Maa Mein Nadi" resonated with heartfelt emotion, while the Gratitude Group delved into readings about the Mother and presented a small program highlighting her Four Aspects. The Progress group children enthralled the audience with anecdotes from the Mother's life, while the Joy Group made their stage debut with a tender rendition of the song "O Sweet Mother," touching hearts with their innocence.



Despite occasional absences during rehearsals, the Peace Group confidently presented the play "Mata Ka Rishta," portraying the unique bond between vegetables and Mataji. The Courage Group stirred emotions with their rendition of the devotional song "Mein Kya Gaun Maa," expressing reverence for the Mother. Meanwhile, the Bliss Group delivered a thought-provoking play titled "The Spirit of the Banyan Tree," where the tree conveyed its concerns about human activities to the Mother.



The Receptivity Group offered a thought-provoking play titled "In Search of Riches," centred around the pursuit of virtues. Bikanti captivated the audience with her soulful rendition of the song "Nandan Van Basane Dhraape," stirring hearts with its emotive melody.

In our commitment to integrating art into daily learning, we often showcase student drawings in exhibitions, which draw widespread appreciation. Recently, an exhibition featuring children's stories captivated visitors with its creativity and imagination.



As the program drew to a close, the flag was ceremoniously lowered, symbolizing the conclusion of the event, yet the lights of aspiration continued to illuminate the corridors of the Ashram, guiding us forward on our spiritual journey.



Golden Day

In the spiritual realm, the year 2024 is deemed the Golden Year. On the 29th of February, 1956, a momentous event transpired in the playground of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry: the descent of the Supramental Light by the Divine Mother. To commemorate this significant occasion and impart its message to the



children, a brief gathering was convened in the school common room on the eve of the 29th of February.

Prior to the meeting, the common room was adorned with the radiant images of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, draped in golden attire, alongside a miniature model of the Matri Mandir, encircled by plants and flowers, creating a serene ambiance.

At 6 p.m., all the children residing in the hostel, along with 11 guests from Matrikiran School, Gurugram assembled there. The Mother's music enveloped the room as everyone sat in silent contemplation for a few moments, evoking the spirit of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

Mani Didi eloquently elucidated the significance of the Golden Day through a captivating slideshow prepared beforehand. The children attentively listened, gaining insight into the events of 1956. Subsequently, three videos depicting the Mother's Darshan on previous Golden Days, namely 1964 and 1968, were screened, further enriching the experience.

Holi- 25th March



The vibrant festival of colours, Holi, was celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm at our school. Children from various groups came together to prepare the colourful powder using natural ingredients such as flowers, leaves, turmeric, and beetroot.

The festivities kicked off with a serene meditation session, followed by the chanting of mantras and songs dedicated to Lord Krishna, adding a spiritual essence to the celebration. The mythological significance of Holi was discussed, shedding light on its cultural and historical importance.

Teachers organized a food corner where a variety of delicious dishes were served, prepared with love and care in our school kitchen. As the festivities unfolded, children gleefully smeared each other with the

organic colour powder, creating a kaleidoscope of hues that filled the air with joy and laughter.

To conclude the celebration, children bathed with a paste made of turmeric powder, embracing the traditional rituals associated with Holi. The festival not only brought immense fun and excitement but also fostered a sense of unity and camaraderie among students and teachers alike.

The Mother's first Arrival in Pondichery-29th March

On the 29th of March, a solemn gathering took place in the meditation hall to honour the day when the Divine Mother first graced the soil of India with her divine presence. The session commenced with a serene half-hour meditation, accompanied by the ethereal strains of the Mother's music, filling the Ashram with a sense of tranquillity and reverence.

Visitors

Chaitanya Sharma, a student from Sri Aurobindo Education Centre in Pondicherry, generously



shared his expertise during his stay in Kechla, teaching the children the art of photography and the intricacies of working with Photoshop. His dedicated guidance and the enthusiasm of the team resulted in valuable learning experiences and enjoyable moments together.

Parag Mehta ji, visiting from the USA, graced us with his presence for a brief period. Despite the limited time, he

engaged with children from various groups, explored the nearby villages, and immersed himself in the breath-taking natural beauty of our surroundings.



Mr. Leslie Stevens from WWT generously dedicated two days to visit Kechla, offering valuable suggestions for enhancing the community and preserving the environment.



Prakash Bhaiya, who has been serving in this capacity for several months, demonstrates a deep commitment to the students' future. His primary focus revolves around imparting knowledge in Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry to students across different groups, investing a significant amount of his time in their academic development.



THE MOTHER'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

School Trip, Class 11, Kechla (Dist. Koraput)

Dec 31, 2023, to Jan 13, 2024

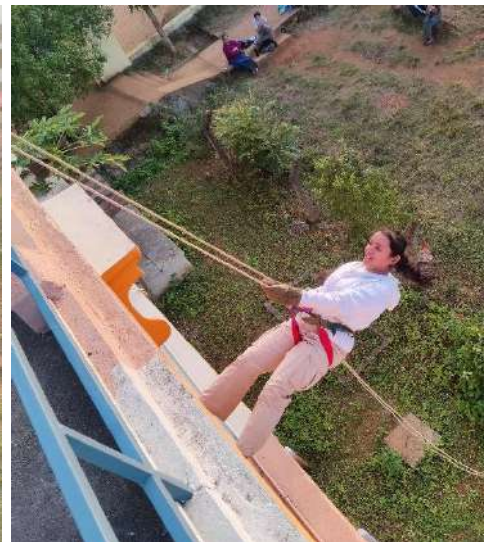


Students of Class 11 of The Mother's International School, New Delhi, with their teachers visited Kechla, for a community service programme. They came in two batches of almost 40 students each, from December, 31 to January 7 and January 8-13. Their daily activities included 'shramdaan' from 6:30AM to 8AM that entailed service towards activities in the ashram such as cutting/peeling vegetables/gardening/cleaning and so on. Every morning from 9 AM to 11:30 AM the MIS students would teach the children at AMVM. They taught concepts of Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Political Science, Biology,



English, etc. and also conducted tests at the end of those sessions, emphasizing on oral and

written exercises to improve understanding and analytical abilities. In the afternoons, the visiting students would engross themselves in taking extra-curricular activities such as dance, art and craft, drama, crochet, quiz, chess, etc.



A short programme was put up by students of AMVM displaying and presenting what they had learnt through the week. Other activities enjoyed by MIS students included night trekking, bonfire, rappelling, kayaking, swimming in the Kolab Reservoir and playing at the waterfall.





Report of MatriKiran High School, Gurugram

From 27th February to 3rd March' 2024



27th Feb: The group reached on 27th of February at around 03:30 pm. After the evening snacks, they met the students of AMVM. Each student of MatriKiran was teamed up with 2-3 students of AMVM. They interacted with each other. The students of AMVM showed their School to MK students. At 06:15 pm everyone participated in satsang and sang bhajans. From 07:00 pm to 08:00 pm the students of MK helped their team members in practicing the concepts of mathematics.



28th Feb: The morning began with 'Shramdan' where the students of MK helped in the preparation of breakfast. After breakfast they were taken for a village tour. The students of AMVM showed their houses and lifestyles. The students of MK organised an Origami session and explained how to make a tulip and a swan. After lunch, a theatre session was organised. In the evening, the students of MK enjoyed rowing.



The lifeguards of AMVM Lalu, Jagat Hari and Chandrama motivated and guided the students.



29th Feb: The day started with a trek to the View Point. The students of MK organised sessions of Mathematics (Area and Volume) and Science (Chromatography and Transportation of fluids) for the students of AMVM. They also enjoyed swimming in the Kolab reservoir. In the evening there were theatre and painting sessions. After snacks, everyone attended the Golden Day celebrations at the School.



1st March: The day started with 'Shramdan' by watering the plants at the School. In the morning, the students of MK organised Mathematics (Calculating speed), Science (Transfer of heat), Quilling, Theatre and painting sessions for the students of AMVM. In the evening, the students of AMVM taught tribal dance to the students of MK. Everyone enjoyed dancing on the beats of tribal music. After snacks, the students of

MK had a friendly basketball match with the AMVM students. The match was full of energy and excitement. After dinner, we went for a night trek and bonfire at the hill top.



2nd March: All went for a picnic. We prepared aloo ki sabzi, puri and halwa for lunch. We ate on leaf plates (pattal and dona). We all helped each other in all the work from cutting vegetables to serving food. After lunch, the students of MK guided the students of AMVM and they made sketches of the scenery around them. Everyone enjoyed swimming in the Kolab reservoir. In the evening, the students of MK gifted books to the students of AMVM. We had a presentation of the play prepared in the theatre sessions





which was liked by all. The students of MK shared their experiences with everyone. The students of AMVM made beautiful cards for the students of MK.



3rd March: The students of MK returned. They boarded the motor launch. Students of AMVM went to the bank of the Kolab reservoir to see them off.



Trip to Northeast of India

Trip – 1 – From 30th October to 15th November

A group of 44 students, ranging in age from 10 to 21 years, accompanied by 9 teachers, embarked on a journey to explore four states in the North-East region of India: - Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Sikkim. Enroute, we also made a brief visit to West Bengal. This enriching expedition spanned 17 days- from the 30th of October to the 15th of November.



For the younger members of the group, this excursion marked their second extended trip and their inaugural venture into mountainous terrain. The children were brimming with excitement and exhibited boundless enthusiasm throughout the journey. The natural splendour of the North-Eastern states captivated our senses, with picturesque mountain peaks, verdant valleys, cascading waterfalls, and lush tea gardens adorning our route. Our mode of transport primarily comprised buses and taxis, albeit the extensive distances between destinations necessitated considerable travel time, resulting in relatively limited opportunities for leisurely exploration and



enjoyment of the breath-taking landscapes. Nonetheless, the journey itself became an integral part of our collective enjoyment, despite some experiencing discomfort due to altitude sickness and the challenging mountain roads.





Our sojourn in Calcutta encompassed visits to prominent landmarks such as Calcutta Zoo, Science City, the Victoria Memorial, and Sri Aurobindo's Bhavan. In Assam, we explored the cultural enclave of Guwahati Kalakshetra and paid homage at the Kamakhya Temple, albeit the crowds precluded entry into the sanctum sanctorum, allowing only for a darshan from the exterior.

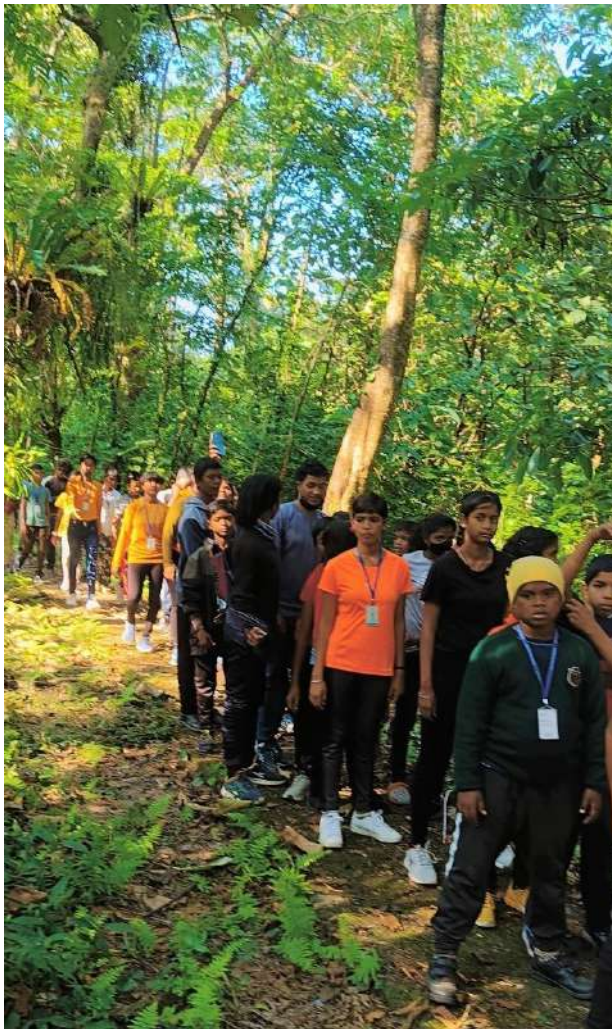




While traversing towards Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, we sojourned for two nights enroute, halting at Tezpur in Assam and Rupa in Arunachal Pradesh. At Tezpur, we immersed ourselves in the historical narratives depicted at Agnigarh, where the tale of Usha and Anirudh was vividly portrayed through intricate models. Our stay in Rupa, characterized by the warmth and hospitality of its inhabitants, provided a unique experience within a Buddhist Gumpha (Monastery).

Upon reaching Tawang, we encountered sub-zero temperatures, with the mercury plummeting to -1 degree Celsius. Our journey across the formidable Sela Pass, towering at an altitude of 13,700 feet, was punctuated by an unexpected snowfall, much to the delight of all present, especially the children, for whom it was a maiden experience. The following day, we ventured to the Bumla Pass, straddling the Indo-China border, where we were greeted by a landscape

blanketed in ice. The piercing cold was palpable, accentuated by the altitude, standing at an imposing 15,200 feet. Our interaction with the diligent army personnel stationed there provided invaluable insights into the historical backdrop of Indo-China conflicts.



Regrettably, a few children fell ill upon our return from the Bumla Pass, underscoring the challenges posed by the harsh climatic conditions. As we retraced our steps from Tawang, we spent a night in Rupa, where we were introduced to the cultivation of Kiwi plants and the harvesting of their fruits.





Our itinerary then led us to the verdant expanse of Kaziranga National Park, where an overnight stay preceded an exhilarating Jeep safari, affording us glimpses of elephants, deer, and rhinoceroses, among other wildlife.

In Meghalaya, we marvelled at the majestic cascades of Elephant Falls and Seven Sisters Falls, as well as the intricate formations of Mawsmi Cave. Our sojourn in Gangtok, Sikkim, was punctuated by visits to scenic locales such as Banjhakri Waterfall and



Tsomgo Lake, culminating in a pilgrimage to Baba Mandir enroute to Nathula Pass. Additionally, we were enraptured by the spiritual ambiance of Sidheswara Dham and the serenity of Buddhist monasteries in Namchi.



In retrospect, our expedition to the North-Eastern states of India was a holistic amalgamation of cultural immersion, natural splendour, and historical enlightenment, fostering bonds of camaraderie and creating enduring memories for all participants.





TRIP TO NORTH EAST

Trip – 2 – From 24th February to 13th March



The trip to Northeast India was planned many months ago and the bookings in the trains were also done on the very day the counters opened for these tickets. The itinerary was planned and we tried to use the 19 days fruitfully. Keeping the health and hygiene in mind we started preparing a few eatables in the kitchen. As we were going to travel in the high altitudes, the kit list was listed carefully and given in advance and children were ready with their baggage. After meticulously checking the things of the students, they were put in a room. The food and the necessary things for the trip like medicine kit were packed carefully. A group of 36 including the teachers and the Progress group children embarked on their journey in the early morning at around 4:30 AM, as we had to cross the narrow railway bridge by walking to reach the station. Some shared the van of the school and most of the students went on bikes. The parents saw-off their children as the train blew the whistle. The train Sambaleswari express left the station around 7:45 am. Everyone settled on their seats as they were decided earlier and, in a while, everyone enjoyed the hand-made thepla, milk cake, our own garden's banana and boiled eggs. The train reached Howrah Station in the morning, one and a half hour late on 25th. Two mini buses were waiting for us. The buses took us to Maharashtra Niwas. Everyone wanted to get fresh.



Without wasting any time, we started for Acharya Jagdish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden that exhibits a variety of rare plants and the 250 years old great banyan tree spreading on an area of 3.5 acres. The beautiful flowers and the water plants were really fascinating. The older children clicked photos and took videos to highlight the beauty on the



social media. The morning breeze and the fragrance of the garden soothed our tiring body and we filled ourselves with the trees' energy. From there our buses headed towards the Indian Museum which had been founded in 1814 and is the ninth oldest museum in the world. This place was huge and had many galleries, such as birds, industrial botany gallery, coin gallery, human evolution gallery and many more. We had a great time looking at the



things in the museum. But it was difficult for us to retain even a few things as the time was very short. We only glanced at the things and pacified our eyes but the mind was rebelling. The famous Victoria Memorial was our next destination and we were all eager to see this famous memorial which we had heard of in our social science book. The statues there were really exquisite. We were all happy clicking





our photo with Queen Victoria. Hats off to them who have put an effort to preserve Queen Victoria. Hats off to them who have put an effort to preserve our history in a confined gallery. The picturesque and beautiful gardens, the majestic buildings, many antique sculptures will always be a golden memory for all of us. The lunch was skipped and the dinner was packed and we all moved in the bus to the Howrah station for our next destination- the Kamakhya Temple in Assam. The next day the train arrived in the Kamakhya Station around 10:30 am. We boarded the



tourist bus that did not take long to reach the temple. The premise of the temple is really big and was crowded. We did not expect to enter the sanctum sanctorum but with Her blessings we got an opportunity. The queue was long, we had to wait, but the visit was worthwhile. After the Darshan we ate prasad in the Annapurna temple there. The delicious khichdi, kheer, sabji and papad rejuvenated us. From there we went straight to the hotel blue moon where we were to spend the night. In the afternoon we visited the Gandhi mandap, a



a museum constructed in memory of Mahatma Gandhi on Sarania hills and the place from where we could see the Kanchanjunga Mountain. The sight was beautiful, the whole Guwahati city could be seen lining to Brahmaputra River. It was already evening so we went back to the hotel, took bath and got ready, later we visited the War Memorial constructed as a tribute to the brave soldiers of Assam at

Deghalipuhuri Lake. From there we went to a small dhaba and had rice and fish for our dinner. The next day we were ready early and came down with our luggage. The hotel provided bread and butter which we finished standing outside while waiting for the two buses. We were very excited as it is a beautiful state. The never-ending winding roads, the flora, the small streams and the bus on the cliff and the green valleys were spellbinding. We stopped on the road for a while to enjoy the natural scenery of the place. We saw the beautiful Umiam Lake. We reached Cherapunji and visited Thangkharang Park (forest environment) followed by Mawsmai Caves. No words can



explain the splendour of the cave. Children studied the cave and Pranjal bhaiya enlightened the children how to differentiate stalactite and stalagmite. There was a hotel where we enjoyed our lunch. The lunch was digested by a small jig with the live songs and band presented by two young men. We spent a lot of time in Cherapunji seeing the cave and then visited the Noakhali falls. In the evening, we went to Shillong and stayed in the 'Travellers' Inn'. The uncertain weather created more excitement and curiosity for the place.

Early in the morning we left the hotel with packed breakfast for the Bangladesh border. The hills were beautiful. The betelnut trees added more beauty to the place. The broomstick grass was spread all over the hills. These are two things people depend for their livelihood besides tourism. The bus driver enlightened us about the border we share with Bangladesh. We visited Dawki with the cleanest Umangot River. We could see the place from very close. Both the Indians as well as the Bangladeshis share the same river. Many of us wanted to communicate with them but we were not allowed. Children tasted the jujube and tamarind pickle and the taste were awesome and we ended with buying a few packets. From there we travelled to Riwai to see the magnificent living root bridge and later moved to eyewitness the balancing rock.





We visited Mawlynnong, the cleanest village in Asia. We spent time with a few villagers and playing with their children. After interacting with them we felt not only the village is the cleanest but their hearts too. In a hotel everyone enjoyed the rice and fish served with love and care.



Our next visit was to the Lady Hydari Park which had a mini zoo, beautiful gardens and lake. We relaxed in the park and later moved towards Wards Lake but as we stay near a big water body it was not much attractive. We then went to visit the police bazar. Some children bought lollipops and sweets to enjoy. Then we went to give our salutation to the son of God, Lord Jesus. The architecture of the cathedral was fascinating. The well-built statues, the cathedral and the prayer provided a spiritual environment. Though the population in Shillong is not very big but the traffic is quite terrible. The distance which can be walked in half an hour, took the bus an hour. In the

morning after breakfast, we left for Kaziranga. We stopped on the way to purchase delicious pineapples which we enjoyed for the next few days. We stopped for lunch at Dalibi Dhaba. As we were



keen to get a first-hand experience of tea gardens, we contacted Mr Anirudh ji in the month of February. On the way we stopped and were guided by him through the tea garden. He himself was present to welcome us and enlighten us about tea, its types, difference between Darjeeling tea and Assam tea, what is CTC, about the harvesting time and the processing part of tea leaves in the factories. We reached

Kaziranga late in the evening but were very excited seeing the animals. We saw quite a few animals and enjoyed the bus ride on the clear road. We stayed in the Green Reed hotel which was a quiet and serene place. Over dinner we planned for the Elephant Safari and got ready very early in the morning.

The bus took us to the spot. We hired 9 elephants for the 36 of us. We all mounted the elephants without any fear. They followed the trail and we enjoyed watching the rhinos, deer, wild buffaloes, eagle holding a fish, crane, wild elephants, etc. The elephants were so obedient that they would always follow their masters' instructions. They would salute and trumpet and do the exercise, scare the rhinos, etc. to show off their talents. The cherished moment lasted only for 45 minutes. After breakfast we left for Arunachal Pradesh.





Arunachal Pradesh where the mountains kiss the sky, the evergreen trees never fade their colour is no less than heaven. The path was narrow, but our destiny was as wide as the sky. Each time our bus took a new turn, a new excitement took birth. The old and the broken buses were left on the road may be to make the drivers conscious of their driving. The quotations by the BRO every few metres on driving life, etc. were well chosen; keeping the road and the road takers in mind. The time passed in the bus. Noon, afternoon, dusk passed in a blink and finally a bolero came to guide us towards the spot of our night stay. Finally, we reached Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Mission School, Sangti valley, Dirang circle. The night was dark and silent but the love of the students and the matajis made it as bright as

broad daylight. The students escorted us to our room with our luggage. The room for us was neatly arranged. We shared common toilets with the children but they were very clean. After getting fresh we went for snacks after which a grand dinner was waiting for us. The cake made of orange pulp and hot Maggie, warm milk with Bournvita served with love added extra energy to our body. The students showed us the whole school and we met each and every loving soul there. Their names were so very new for us that we could remember only a few.



The next day we got ready very early and the day started with a prayer. In their meditation hall the children chanted their daily mantras. We too contributed a small part as the time was over. As Puri and Sabji was in the schedule for the Sunday's breakfast, some of us helped in the kitchen for a while and then had our breakfast. We wished we could have spent more time, but the days were pre planned, so we had to leave for Tawang. With heavy hearts and a bag of oranges from the school garden, we left the place and captured the beautiful souls in our camera.

On our way to Tawang, we stopped at SeLa to enjoy the cold and the snow. The chilled wind pierced our hearts through our skin. Some of us had hot coffee and the children enjoyed hot chilli pakoras sold in the army canteen. We spent only a very short time but the



soldiers we saw working in this weather will be remembered for ever. We left for Jaswantgarh. With the increasing snow we forgot the cold and wanted to jump down from the bus to touch them, to clasp them. When we reached the place, first we visited the Baba Mandir. As Pranjal Bhaiya met the sardar soldiers, he started communicating in Punjabi and one of them was so glad that he guided us about the whole temple and showed us all the places personally. The Karha Prasad served hot with ghee was too delicious. He explained the long history very briefly. Jaswantgarh- named after the martyr Jaswant Singh Rawat an Indian Army soldier who bravely fought the Indo-China war in 1962. We paid homage to the martyrs and went for lunch to the army dhaba. The hot dosa and aloo paratha were appealing. The next halt was near the Jung Falls which is also known as Madhuri Falls after the name of the Bollywood Heroine Madhuri Dixit. That was the fall under which Madhuri Dixit danced for the Koyla Movie. We crossed the power generating centre but were too late to take the children. In the evening, we reached Tawang. Our stay was in the Kemang Army Camp. When we reached the night was even darker as we are habituated with light at night. We were served a hearty dinner



prepared by our dear soldiers. We went to help them in the morning to prepare breakfast but were declined. As we are always living a comfortable life under their protection, in the camp too we got the same. The nights were cold but their love and service had a warmth which we felt throughout our stay.

4th March was an exciting date that we were waiting for. In the morning the 5 vehicles were ready and after breakfast we left for Bumla which is at 15,200 ft altitude and the oxygen is very little. As the vehicles moved towards our destination, we felt that it was a journey towards heaven. The mountains, the treetops, the stones, and the army camps. The side of the roads were full of snow. This was in fact



an unforgettable memory. The lakes were turned into ice. We stopped and spent some time on the way to play in the snow. They ran on the ice of the lake. They threw snow on each other. They waded



and tramped on the snow. We saw the Indian Army soldiers getting their training. We enjoyed the days as they were short but could feel the pain of our soldiers as they have to spend the painful life;



there were no medicals, no transport facilities if one gets sick. They take all the troubles and bear all the pains so that we can get a peaceful night. We reached Bumla. The nippy wind made the limbs numb. The scorched sun was favourable. We all had a cup of hot soup. The army Commander Subedar Major Inder Singh guided our group. We followed him to the zero line from where we could see the Chinese territory. He



discussed the Indo China War of 1962 and 1967. He also reassured us that all Indians will live a peaceful life as long as the Indian army is there. His beautiful speech was sharper than the wind which pierced through our bones and flesh- to touch our heart. Our hearts melted and flowed the tears from our eyes by seeing their dedication and elfless sacrifice for our motherland. We left him with a heartfelt of thanks and a prayer for our brave soldiers. The tri-colour flag waved proudly singing the gallantry songs about our immortal souls. We saluted the flag and left for our next destination. Through the window we enjoyed the natural scenic view and visited Asia's second largest Buddhist statue and monastery. From there we went to the War Memorial of Tawang. We spent a long time there waiting for the light and sound show. The show was really amazing, which depicted the culture, natural beauty of Arunachal, and the sanctity of the place. We returned to the camp where the

children devoured the chicken curry, rice and kheer prepared by the brave soldiers. We met Lt. Colonel Atish Ranjan and a Lt. Colonel lady, who was the head of education and training, who hailed from Nuapada, Odisha. She was overwhelmed meeting the children of our school. Lt. Col. Atish told us

about the Indo-China war, about the monastery and also explained how the life in Bumla was fatal, how the oxygen level affects our brain cells.

After breakfast we thanked the Indian Army soldiers and left for Rupa. On our way we visited a very beautiful Buddhist monastery in Dirang. We reached Rupa in the evening. We spent the night in the monastery. As a stove and utensils were available, with the permission we cooked noodles and boiled eggs for our dinner. We also shared with a few local children around. Ten children with Pranjal Bhaiya climbed up the hill to attend a ceremony in another monastery, about 16 Km away. After seeking the



blessings and prasad, they returned. We cleaned the room thoroughly and were happy to spend the night together in one big hall as they had no other rooms. In the morning, we could hear the bells and the Buddhist chants.

We got ready and left for Guwahati. The weather was then hot. We all missed the snow on the way to Bum La. By 5 O'clock we reached the same hotel "The Blue moon". After dinner everyone relished cake and Ice-cream as it was our beloved Bina Didi's birthday.



With a new excitement we left the hotel early in the morning with our luggage. The hotel served us nice hot toast with omelettes and juice. The same drivers who had spent a week with us reached the hotel in their clean and different clothes. They looked fresh in their hometown. We loaded our luggage



and started for sight-seeing. First, we went to Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden which is considered the largest of its kind in the Northeast. As we entered, we were greeted by the monkeys and the gorillas. We saw different animals like giraffe, different species of deer, many types of birds, ostrich, emu, bear, lion, tiger, zebra, etc. The zoo seemed animal friendly. It was clean and the zookeepers have tried to create a natural environment for the animals. The lady at the ticket counter was very friendly. Then we drove to Srimanta Shankaradev Kalakshetra. This cultural institute

displayed art of various Assam ethnic groups and rest of North-Eastern regions. As the time was short, we had to only glance at the beautiful pictures and sculptures. But our heart was not content. From there we went to the Regional Science Museum. Children enjoyed learning and experimenting in the science museum. The aquarium was a special attraction. The museum beautifully put up the human evolution and the evolution of technology with models, which everyone found interesting. The drivers were warning



all the time, we will be late for the sight-seeing in the river Brahmaputra and was true. The temple was closed. With little regret we enjoyed the sunset on its bank. After relaxing a while, we moved to





the station to catch the train for New Jalpaiguri. We did not want to go out of the station as it was full of rogues. A man near us lost his laptop. We were more careful. We all went by turn for our dinner to the Jana Aahaar Kendra. The food was expensive and horrible.

We spent the night in the train and in the morning, we reached our destination. Five seven seaters were there, and we started for Gangtok. On the way we had our breakfast in a proper restaurant where the food was

decent. Children chose according to their taste. Many went for chicken and Veg. Momos. Some chose Chhole Bhature and some children enjoyed bread with omelette. We all had a heavy breakfast as we knew that it would be evening by the time we reach the hotel. Our vehicles ran in the opposite flow of the river Teesta. We could see landslides all over. By the time we reached our hotel- The Tiara Residency, it was late. The weather was a little cold, but the warmth of the hotel people comforted us. The rooms were very well organized and were clean. After getting fresh we all walked to the nearby places. We spent some time in the monastery. The Buddhist monks were getting ready for their prayer. We all joined them. We sat quietly and they chanted their mantras. We could hardly understand a word. We saw the palace only through the gate as it was already closed. Only a few dogs came to greet us with loud barking. From there we followed the short cut to the MG road market. The market itself was very attractive. After going there, we realized it is more a garden and less a market. The roads were beautifully decorated with colourful flowers and fountains and the models of different animals. It was a point for the tourists to click photos. The spot I Love Gangtok was in demand.



After seeing the number of tourists in Bum La and Nathu La I realized that we Indians are too much in love with our motherland, I could not see any Chinese on their border.

On our return, we visited the Baba Mandir dedicated to Baba Harbhajan Singh Raut, which was a pilgrimage. Many people visit the sacred place. In the temple some medicinal water is available which can In the morning with packed breakfast we left for Nathu La, one more border which India and China share. We could see many tourist vehicles on the way. Everyone must have started very early as the weather in the afternoon at Nathu La is uncertain. With our special permits we went through the Army block which was very close to the India and China gates. A brave soldier guided us to the zero point. We saw the building and the gate made by China. We also saw a soldier of China who was guarding the gate. The army person who was with us explained about the Indo-China war and the important dates when the gates open for the Indians and Chinese to enter each other's territory.



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On our return, we visited the Baba Mandir dedicated to Baba Harbhajan Singh Raut, which was a pilgrimage. Many people visit the sacred place. In the temple some medicinal water is available which can cure chronic diseases. After paying our homage to baba we returned back. On the way we got a chance to sit on yaks. The yaks were decorated in colourful clothes, and they were looking very attractive. The yak ride was interesting. Everyone enjoyed it. Then and there near the lake we also experience snowfall which a novel experience for all of us. Through the window we enjoyed the rain. The drivers were worried about the weather. I don't know how our drivers were driving in the dense fog. I realized that apprehension inside and calmness outside also makes one courageous. At the hotel we had some biscuits and hot milk for snacks. Then we went for a short walk. We spent some time enjoying the hues of beautiful flowers. We got another chance to enjoy the flowers in the MG market.



The morning started with a delicious breakfast of puri and Sabji. We packed biryani for lunch. Then we left for Namchi, the sacred place of North-East. On the way we spent some time in the Temi Tea Garden. We found a few tea seeds which we collected to plant in our garden. After reaching the



temple we had our breakfast and went to visit the temple. The temple premises was beautiful and had a spiritual environment. The massive statue of Lord Shiva was magnificent. It was the temple devoted to Lord Shiva. The premise offered space for the four dhaam. The replica of the architecture of the temples of Puri, Badrinath, Dwarka and Rameshwaram were there. Having the replica of 12 Jyotirlings and the Char Dhams of India with a 33m high Shiva Statue was a special attraction. In the evening, we went to see the flower exhibition. From there we bought a few plants, bulbs and seeds to plant in our garden. As it was the last night at the hotel, the hotel people and the children of our school presented some cultural programmes together. We had local food for dinner.

In the morning, we had pasta for breakfast. Many children preferred bread and jam as they are not habituated to junk food. We left the hotel in 5 vehicles. Finally, we reached the New Jalpaigudi station. We had our lunch and spent a long time there. Then we boarded our train. The train was not very crowded. We reached the Kolkata station at around 4:45 AM

Two buses were waiting for us at the station. At the Maharashtra Bhawan we spent around half an hour to freshen up. Then we travelled to Dakhineswar Kali temple. We got a chance to pay our homage to the deity. We had our breakfast in the temple premises. Then we went by ferry for Belur Math. We were lucky to witness Sri Ramkrishna Paramhans's birth anniversary celebrations. Everything was well organized. We visited the science-city in Kolkata. Everyone enjoyed the 3-D show on Marine life. The show on Space was amazing. We felt as if we were roaming in the universe from planet to planet. After some fun in the science city, we moved to



NICCO park. We bought the tickets for unlimited adventurous games. We spent the time in the tough games for which one needs to pay extra money. The various games that all the children



played are Sky diver, roller coaster, river caving, car crash, moon raker, twist and turn, cyclone and many more. Once we explored the park our team was divided into sub-groups. Children chose the games according to their interest. They spent more time in the tough games. They had more fun than a bag full of monkeys. In the evening, we went back to Maharashtra Bhawan where we had kept our things and then went to the station.

We bought nearly a quintal of fruits; apple, orange, watermelon, etc. to enjoy in the train for our breakfast, lunch and dinner. We reached the Koraput on 13th March at night. The parents of the children were waiting at the station eagerly. An auto was hired, and our school van was waiting across the bridge. Then we reached our destination safely.







Knowledge is not the possession of the mind; it is the realization of the soul.

- Sri Aurobindo