



Annual Report of Auro-Mira Service Society 2020-21



This is a report of the year gone by...

Most of the world would have been very happy to call this phase a bygone era and would have wished to forget about this unusual context of our lives. Or even better, to wake up and brush it aside as just yet another bad dream, this time about a virus called Covid.



For children, the year has not been very productive. It is easy to say that online classes have been able to cover the curriculum. One reads this in the papers everywhere, unfortunately this

is not entirely correct. AMVM caters to children who are first-generation learners. Mobile and internet connectivity is not there in the villages. One gets sporadic connectivity at a few spots on the hills, etc but that is not good enough to take classes. In any case, online classes for small children are not possible without some type of parental supervision as these gadgets have too much temptation hidden in them.



The report this year is very short. There have been no visitors, no senior students from Delhi or anywhere else, who came to volunteer, either individually or in a group. No outreach programmes in the village. In fact, there has been minimal interaction with the villagers. There have been no trips of our children this year. The report is a skeleton of our previous reports.

A recap of where we ended the previous year:

The older children had gone on a trip to Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The first group had returned at the beginning of March and the second one barely managed to get back before the lockdown started. In fact, they got into the last train that left Howrah station before the lockdown started. The children reached Kechla in a near empty train, had not interacted with many people, religiously worn their masks and after returning to Kechla had gone into a



self-imposed quarantine.

The school was closed for all the younger children who come from home. When the same thing was told to the older children, they took offence to it. This school had started in 2008. It has functioned over all these years without any holiday- neither for a festival nor the children went home on Monday afternoon. So, the argument of the children was that this was their home. 'We are not in any other village. Each of us is in our own village.' None of them was willing to budge. In fact, most of the ex-students who are studying outside have always come and stayed in this home of theirs whenever they are back during their holidays. This time as well they just moved in as they said that they needed to study, and internet connectivity was available only in the school and not in the village.



This was quite a dilemma for us. The culture of the Paraja tribe is such that the young boys and girls of the village do not stay at home. They stay collectively in a sort of dormitory that they make for themselves in the village. This part of the culture is also highlighted in Gopinath Mohanty's novel 'Paraja'. As all the children were from the village and the School was actually their home, there was no way one could counter the argument.



The other argument put forward by them was that there was much more social distancing in the School than the village. All of them have single room houses inhabited by many people. No one in the village follows any discipline and movement of people from/to outside is rampant. In hindsight, the argument seemed extremely justified. The village has, in the past year,

celebrated every single festival and ceremony like they always do, with actually above normal fanfare and fervour. There have been as many people coming from outside as normally do. Even people coming from outside the state have not been quarantined. In comparison, the children in the School have had no interaction with the outside world. In cases where some interaction may have taken place, the person who has come from outside was strictly quarantined.

Coming back to the dilemma that the School faced at that time: one option was to force everyone to go home for an indefinite period of time. A home where



it was clear that there would not be any social distancing or precautions. The other option was to allow the children to continue to stay, with a strict condition that till the time the Covid situation got normal, they would only be able to talk to their parents and relatives from a distance. We decided on the second option to ensure that learning continued without any interruption for these first-generation learners.



This year has also created instability in the minds of all children including ours in Kechla. The uncertainty with regard to the closure of the school, the absence of regular teachers and visiting volunteers all has played with the minds of the children. Keeping this in mind one of our main goals was to ensure a stable and creative environment for the children where they were learning in both academic and non-academic ways. We did this through collective prayers, collective work and celebrations. However, this was possible only for the older children.

Think of a farmer who, with a lot of passion and hard work, has planted his field and is then compelled to abandon it. The School finds itself in a similar situation with the small little children. All the younger children who are at their homes, are frittering and whiling away their time. They have all forgotten everything they had earlier learnt. There is no certainty as to when and how many of them would come back to School. These children accompany their parents to the markets and also visit their relatives in other villages. One wonders whether the decision to not allow children who are staying at home, to come to School at all was a wise one. However, one cannot turn the clock back and change this...

To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can give to a child. The Mother



AMVM is a residential learning centre for the tribal children in the Koraput district of Odisha. The aim of the learning centre is to provide quality education to enable self-initiated learners who are able to lead positive and constructive lives.

From the time of its inception in 2008, the school has grown from strength to strength with many students now studying in higher classes and even college.

Some children have been admitted to other schools in the state while others continue in AMVM and do higher studies through open school and IGNOU.

This year there were a total of 167 students in the learning centre. Out of this

Students doing Graduation from IGNOU.

B.A (Hons. in History)- Kamli Krisani

B.A (Hons. in Psychology)- Bikanti Mali

B.Sc (Ist year)- Jagat Nag

B.A in English and History (2nd year)- Tulsa Jani, Chandrama Jani, Kokila Jani

B.A in English and Hindi (2nd year)- Darshana Gouda

B.A (Hons. in English) Ist year- Gauri Muduli, Lalu, Krisani, Bhavna Gouda

B. Com (Hons.) Ist year- Basant Gouda



Students in Class 12th

Science subjects- 1 student

Humanities subjects- 13 students

Students in Class 10th



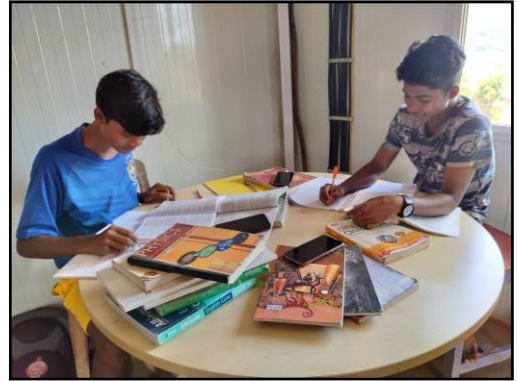
Supposed to have appeared in April'21- 5 students

To appear in October'21- 7 students

To appear in April'22- 2 students

Besides these students, the following students are otherwise studying outside and are not included in our total number of 167 students, but have spent most of the time of the previous year with us: -

1. Vrinda Krisani- BVA 2nd year from B.K. Arts College, Bhubaneswar
2. Hari Krisani- B.Sc (Physics Hons.) Ist year from Vikram Dev College, Jeypore
3. Kamlu Paraja- B.A (English Hons.) Ist year from Vikram Dev College, Jeypore
4. Mahadev Jani- Class 12th Science from Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama School (CBSE), Hata Muniguda, Rayagada



5. Pitambar Muduli- Class 12th Science from Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama School (CBSE), Hata Muniguda, Rayagada
6. Vivek Mali- Class 11th Science from Vikram Dev Junior College, Jeypore
7. Eramani Krisani, Preparing for entrance exam of B.Sc Nursing

All these students stayed in the school campus without going home even once and focused on their studies with sincerity and dedication.

The school recognises the need for learning and growth in our students and keeping this in mind, our school functions for 365 days in the year (other schools function for 200 to 220 days).

We work to create an atmosphere that fosters a deep love for learning and the comfort of a home. We have close to 100% attendance with most students in any year.



We are no longer with the younger ones due to Covid-19. They have been at home the whole year. The time has taken us away far from our dear ones. Even though they live in the same village, we see them on the road, playing in the fields, etc, but they are not allowed to come to school. We are missing their laughter and their joyful spirit.

Ten children completed class 10th this year.

Activities

We encourage a variety of activities to enable the all-round development of the learners.

Yogasana

Children get up at 5.30 and after freshening up, go for the morning yogasana session. All children have shown a positive inclination towards yogasana and do it regularly. Bina didi helps the very young children and Aani didi, who herself underwent yogasana training, helps the older children to practise yoga.



Shramdan

After Yogasana they all go to their respective corners for 45 minutes of Shramdan. Now the children have taken the initiative to keep the place clean. They regularly clean the hostel and



school campus and also work in the garden. The children have been divided in 5 groups- A to



E. There are five different activities they involve themselves in, by rotation. These

are- Kitchen work, Toilets cleaning, Gardening, Hostel cleaning and School cleaning.

Cleaning



The children take the responsibility to keep the premises clean. Along with the school premises, they thoroughly clean the library and also the groups. They clean the kitchen area and the toilets regularly. They clean the common areas of the hostel.

Kitchen

Teachers as well as students take initiative to work in the kitchen. Most of the children as well as teachers honed this life skill during the pandemic. Children help in cutting vegetables or sometimes help to cook or hand over a few things while cooking. The big girls can do all the kitchen work independently.



Gardening



We grow our own vegetables and fruits. These are all organically grown. We gave more importance to the kitchen garden this year. We grew our own organic vegetables for this whole year.

The older children also spent a few days at the construction site. They helped in cleaning the terrace and in painting their own furniture. While working they were under supervision of teachers so that there would be no hazards.

Girls Hostel Construction



The construction of the Girls' Hostel continued at a reasonable pace. The aim was to complete this, but as there were long days of lockdown, the work got delayed and we still have some work remaining. We still have a lot



of painting work remaining, quite a bit of landscaping and making of paths, terrace waterproofing, some sanitary fittings, clothes drying area and some other miscellaneous works. Hope we are able to complete all this in the coming month so that we can work on our new basketball court.

Important Days and Celebrations



Celebrating events and festivals is an integral part of learning and building a strong cultural belief in a child. AMVM celebrates major national festivals and important days of the Ashram to reinforce cultural & social values, and a spirit of harmony in the children. Children are exposed to the essence of various festivals through music, stories, dance and food. Celebrations of festivals and important days fosters a feeling of friendship and bonding.

March 29th

March 29th marks the anniversary of The Mother's first visit to Pondicherry and her meeting with Sri Aurobindo.

Everyone went to the ashram individually to do pranam. This time the group meditation was not allowed due to the Covid.

April 4th



The 4th of April marks the anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival at Pondicherry.

Children went to the ashram to do pranam.

April 24th

24th April is the day we celebrate as the final arrival day of the Mother in Pondicherry. On this auspicious occasion children saluted the mother's flag and the environment thrilled with the Vande Mataram song. In the evening a special meditation was held in the Ashram meditation hall. Colourful lights and lamps were lighted to commemorate the day.

Swing festival (Rojo), 14th June



A three-day festival generally celebrated in Odisha stands out as a special day for girl children. It is also a festival to respect women in general and Mother earth in particular. That day children don't do any

digging work in the garden as Mother earth should not be hurt.

On this special day, children made two swings for the girls. They were decorated with colourful dupattas. Some girls wore saris and put alata on their feet and swung on the swings, singing folk songs related to the festival. The boys cooked food for everyone. Special sweets like Poda Pitha was made out of rice, black gram, coconut and jaggery for the children. Children also made Kakara Pitha. Everyone enjoyed the festival and the sweets. However, the absence of Sulochna didi was felt deeply as she could not join us due to Covid-19.

Rathayatra, June 23rd

Ratha Yatra, or Chariot festival is celebrated in Odisha for Lord Jagannath and associated Hindu deities.

An Idol of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra were made using papier mâché. They were settled on the altar and every day for nine days in the evening, devotional songs were sung by the children as well as the adults.



School Foundation Day and Tara Didi's birthday, 5th July



July 5th is a special day at AMVM as on this day our school was started and it is Tara didi's- our Chairperson's birth anniversary.

All the groups put up different programmes.

There were two puppet shows- *Three Fish* and *Squirrel and The Fox*, both by progress group.



Gratitude and Humility groups performed a dance on the popular song based on Mahashiv Bhakti- *Namo Namo Shankara*. They also put up a musical offering, singing a hymn based on Raag Bhoopali-

'Gaiye Ganapati Jag Vandan' and playing *Raag Hamsadhwani* on the flute with Tabla as accompaniment.

The children of Aspiration group performed a dance on a tribal song, -*Dung Dunga Bajli*.



Our senior children were very enthusiastic about their offerings.

Bhavna and Vrinda danced to the song- *Chaugada Tara*. Bhavna and Gauri danced on the song- *Piyu Bole and Piya Bole*. Suryodhan sang - *Yeh to sach hai ki bhagwan hai* beautifully.

Tree plantation was performed in the school and hostel campus to commemorate the occasion.

Chachaji's Birthday, August 13th

The birth anniversary of Shri Surendranath Jauhar, a freedom fighter and the founder of The Mother's International School, Delhi is celebrated every year in the school. As he was an Arya Samaji, a Hawan was performed in the school courtyard. In the evening, stories written by him were enacted by Pranjal Bhaiya (Chachaji's grandson) and a few other children.



Babaji Maharaj's Birthday, August 14th



Shri Ramkrishna Dash who is lovingly known as Babaji Maharaj is a revered figure in Odisha. He devoted his life to spreading the teachings of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo. A special meditation was held in the school to mark his birth anniversary.

Sri Aurobindo's Birthday and India's Independence Day



The school celebrated this special occasion with a lot of enthusiasm and patriotic fervour. The day began with meditation in the Ashram. It was followed by marching and salutation to The Mother's flag by the students and teachers.

Later, there was a programme in the school. It began by concentrating to The Mother's music. Srinath Bhaiya sang - *Jaya Sri Aurobindo*.

The children of Aspiration group played the Orchestra.

Gratitude and Humility group girls danced to the song- *Aarambh hai prahand bole*.

The children of Gratitude and Humility group prepared four scripts on- *Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sri Aurobindo, Lokmanya Tilak and Subhash Bose* in English. They presented these on Independence Day.



Masa.

The Joy group children recited the poem - *Chetak* with full enthusiasm and spirit.

Papaji, Anuradha didi and Surekha didi recited a poem which Papaji composed on Sri Aurobindo.

The teachers put up a Kumauni dance on the song- *Ber Pako Baro*



The programme ended with the national anthem. Ganesh Bhaiya, Bina didi and Sangita didi played the same on the sitar and the violin everyone saluted the national flag.

Raksha Bandhan, August 3rd

Raksha Bandhan is a beautiful celebration at AMVM. It brings forward the spirit of harmony and friendship between everyone at our school. This year the children made rakhis for the cows and the cows were worshipped in the evening.

Janmashtami, August 12th

Krishna Janmashtami marks the birthday of the beloved lord Krishna. It is a favourite festival for everyone. The children sang Krishna bhajans with love and devotion. Joy group presented a dance on the song - *Banka na kanhaiya* and Progress group sang - *Kude Yamuna mein Kanhaiya*, a song about Kaliya Daman.



Bhavna and Chandrama played -*Raag Keerwani* and the song -*Hey Govind and Hey Gopal* on the flute.

Aspiration group also presented a song -*Nat Nagar ki hai sari leela*.

Vishwakarma Puja

All the children gathered in the new hostel building to pray to Lord Vishwakarma, the architect God. All the tools were cleaned and they were worshipped along with Lord Vishwakarma. The



programme started with a short meditation with the Mother's music. Then children offered prayers to the creator of weapons with devotional chants and songs. We along with the construction workers prayed together for the safe working condition and for the perfection in the work. At the end of the puja, Special Prasad was distributed.

Ganesh Chaturthi, August 22nd

An idol of Ganesh ji was made by Hari, Niraj, Rohit and Sachindra. The celebrations began with meditation.

Joy Group began by singing -*Jay siddhi vinayak jay Ganapati*. This was followed by Gratitude and Humility group doing a Bihu dance to the song- *Rasa ki Rohili*.

Progress group presented a drama namely - *Narantak and Devantak*.
Tulsa, Gauri and Chandrama sang the song -*Eka dantaya vakratunda*.



Joy Group also performed a dance on the popular song -*Oh my friend Ganesha*. This was very sweet and appreciated by all.

Chandrama and Bhavna played -*Raag Bageshri and Jay Ganesh jay Ganesh deva* on the flute.

Papaji recited the - *Ganesh Stotramala* which depicts the various names of

Lord Ganesha.

Diwali, November 14th

The children of all the groups made diyas and prepared candles using the papaya stem and decorated them in the school and the hostel campus.

A special candlelight dinner was arranged. In the meditation hall, the part of Mahakali from the book, The Mother, was read. Children invoked the Goddess with their enchanting mantras and devotional songs.

Children of Progress group onwards put up a science exhibition.



Christmas, December 25th

Christmas is a very looked forward to festival with the children. They were very excited about their performances and were happy when Christmas Day arrived. They all sang different carols.



Humility sang - *Chamka ek tara*. Gratitude and Humility sang - *Every tiny star*. Aspiration group sang three songs- *Yishu mere naal naal*, *Dekha tara* and *Gloria*. Progress sang - *Jingle bells rock*. Joy group sang - *In France they have papa noel* and *Candles on the window*. Some of the older children danced to *Jingle bells*.



Everyone enjoyed the sweets given by Santa Claus.

New Year Eve, December 31st



Joy group danced on an Odia song written by papaji - *Barasake Thare Asichhi Majare*. A few children from Gratitude, Progress and Joy group enacted some parts of the Ramayana, which was composed in Odiya in a

poetic form by Papaji.

Neela with some girls from Aspiration group put up a dance. Mayank, Manisha, Chandrama and Bhavna also danced. Gratitude and Humility group shared jokes and gave a Bhangra performance.

Vrinda and Tulika sang - *Teri ungli pkad ke chala*. Faith group children did a dance on the song - *Ghar more pardesia*.



Bina didi played the sitar and everyone together sang the song *Paani*.

There was midnight meditation to welcome the new year.

Sports Day, January 9th-10th

Like previous years, this year we celebrated our sports day on 9th and 10th of January. But this year sports day was celebrated in different forms when compared to other years. This year we focused on athletics and games instead of physical demonstration like other years. No guests, parents and villagers were



invited for the sports day activities. The sports day was inaugurated by lighting of a diya by Gayatri Didi and concentration with The Mother's music to invoke The Mother's Grace and protection for all the participants. This was followed by *March past* and singing of *Bande Mataram* by everyone.

This year we focused on races like *100m, 200m, obstacles race, baton relay, fun races for younger ones, different jumps like long jump, high jump and triple jump*. Children started practise one month before and all children participated.

Games like football match and basketball match were played among the children.

The obstacle race was great fun for all. Around 12 obstacles were set up in a circular path. All the children were asked to complete the obstacles one by one without missing. Time taken by each student was noted. The obstacles were



from height and Tarzan swing jump.



tight rope walk, balancing beam walk, walk on canisters, jumping hurdles, crawling through narrow path, crossing through tunnel, river crossing, mirror walk, maze, jumping

Tug of war is one of the interesting and fun activity for all children and diya. Everyone participated with full enthusiasm.

The second day began by concentrating on The Mother's music followed by creative marching by older children of the school. Fancy dress was the last item presented by the Joy group children of the school. It was very interesting. Everyone enjoyed it very much.

Children made colourful fish using papier mâché as the medals for the sports day participants.

The sports day was concluded with a *Shanti path* and receiving medals and sweets from The Mother.



Republic Day 26th-January

The Children watched the Republic Day parade on television.

BasantPanchami, February 16th

In the meditation hall, the part of *Maha Saraswati* from the book- The Mother- was read. Everyone sang chants and hymns to invoke The Mother's power.

Aspiration group sang - *Maa Saraswati sharade* song. Joy group sang - *Maa*



sharade and sharade varade and Progress group sang - *Saraswati maa saraswati*.

The children of Gratitude and Humility groups put up an orchestra. The flutists played - *Raag Hamsadhwani* and the song - *Aasman ke Chhat pe*. Shankar, Chandra and Abhijeet played the tabla and Bhavna and

Sangita

didi played - *Raag Saraswati* on the flute.

The Mother's Birthday, February 21st



Aspiration group performed a play written by The Mother - *Ascent to truth*. Humility group did a play on the life of The Mother in Hindi. Gratitude group presented The Mother's quotations about attitude. Progress group presented a play in English called - *Hope for the flower*.



The teachers put up a play in English, directed by Pranjal bhaiya - *I must know the truth*. Bhavna and Sangeeta didi played - *Raag Raageshwari* on the flute.

Pallavi, Manya and Prerna played harmonium and sang a few Sargam Geet.

Visitors

Hassanand Bhaiya

Curse can also change into boons if the luck is with someone.

Hassanand bhaiya (about 84 years old) along with his wife had come to Kechla in the month of February 2020 for about 3 weeks. Covid-19 changed their plans of spending a short period in Kechla. With their limited belongings, they had to spend around six months in Kechla. Initially it must have been very painful for them as they had to be away from their family members, but slowly they managed and adopted us as their dears. Every day they walked to the hostel to meet us and their sweet talks used to make each moment precious. Every Monday in the assembly we would be waiting for him to listen to his first-hand experiences during the partition of India and Pakistan. Children wait to listen to stories from him and listening to the songs in his enchanting voice.



Mayank



Mayank from Delhi spent a few months in Kechla. After he reached he was quarantined for

15 days and then tested. He helped Jagat and Hari with their math and also taught statistics to Basant. He also guided the students in basketball. He thoroughly enjoyed his stay in Kechla and is keen to come back.

In the words of our senior girls, *The Year Gone By.*

This year has been a different one, difficult in many ways as well as enjoyable as many new things have happened.

Because of Covid-19, the school was not running optimally so many of our activities and study periods got curtailed, we got more free time and in the evening after games we watched TV for 45 min and on Mondays we had half day of school.

We had a lot more time as our schedules were not so tight, so we attended a Maths workshop and science workshop online. These workshops were like teacher training on how to initiate these two subjects with young children. As we teach the younger ones in our school, this was very good for us and it had acting, games, short plays and research.



This year we did our sports day differently. We could not invite anyone from the village, so we did not do any performances, but we did athletics like running, long jump, high jump and hurdles.

We enjoyed doing gardening and growing our own vegetables and we painted our own furniture for the new hostel.



Our online classes have been going on for years, but this year they have increased. On online we are not able to concentrate like we do in normal classes. Also, there are internet issues due to rains, winds, electricity and the internet service which make the connection unstable, so learning is interrupted and incomplete.

However, we have been doing our classes everyday.



This whole year we have not gone home, and we miss our parents, our homes and mostly home food like chicken.

We really want this period to pass now, the whole world to be healthy and well, normal like before, so that our young friends can come back to school and we can have the freedom to move around freely, swim in the reservoir, sleep under the stars, dance in the village and celebrate the harvest festivals with our whole family.

Dear Sweet Mother please accept our prayer.

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