

Parivaar December 2007 Newsletter

State-wise & District-wise distribution of Children at Parivaar Ashram

State	District	No(s) of children
West Bengal	24 Pgs (N)	15
	24 Pgs (S)	84
	Birbhum	1
	Burdwan	3
	Howrah	8
	Kolkata	126
	Medinipur (E)	3
	Nadia	2
Bihar	Chhapra	3
	Navada	4
	Nalanda	2
Jharkhand	Singbhum (E)	30
Total No. of children		280

The Road Ahead in 2008 : Parivaar Ashram Girls' Residential Institution

In November, Parivaar has purchased land of about 145,000 sq ft for development of Girls' Residential Institution. The cost of land has been about Rs 70 Lacs (including taxes). This Girls' Residential Campus shall be run on a Day-to-Day basis only by women Seva-vratīs of Parivaar. First Phase construction for 200 girl inmates (and about 20 other resident Seva-Vratīs) is commencing from January '08 and target date of completion of first phase is 31st August '08.

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The campus is being divided into two parts. First one would be exclusively for girl inmates and Parivaar women Seva-vratīs. This is being called 'The Inner Campus'. There shall be a second part which will be the 'Outside Arena' for external interfacing and where some essential male workers shall be accommodated like a senior Parivaar Seva-vrati (for guiding the sister-workers when such guidance is needed), personnel for making purchases and doing external interface work, emergency personnel like maintenance workers, driver, master-cook etc. These personnel shall be restricted only to the 'Outside arena' and shall not be allowed inside in general circumstances.

About 'Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth' - Parivaar's own High Quality Formal School at Parivaar Ashram premises.

Parivaar has started its own Formal Day School 'Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth' located at the Parivaar Ashram premises from 1st May '07. It will act as a quality Higher Secondary School for the resident children of Parivaar Ashram as well as for the poorest of poor students from rural areas in Bakhrahat-Amtala-Ganga Raipur area in district 24 Parganas (South), West Bengal. In the first academic session i.e. May '07 to April '08, the School is having Classes from Kindergarten to Class 5. In this year only the resident children at Parivaar Ashram are studying in 'Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth'. In the subsequent 3 years plans are to raise the School to High School level. The objective of the school is to be:

1. A permanent ancillary institution to the Parivaar Ashram Residential Institution for destitute children so that for the years and decades to come the resident children at Parivaar can attend this School and receive quality education.

2. A high quality Higher Secondary School for the poor students from rural areas near Parivaar Ashram who shall receive free quality education till Class 12 level paving way for their growth and movement into Higher college education. There is a large percentage of students in rural areas who after studying till Class 6 or 7 drop out, mainly because of lack of guidance for education in higher classes and consequent repeated failures putting pressure on them to do something other than pursuing education. There is great loss of 'value' in this. This School will act as an asset-building institution transforming village students into productive assets for the society through education.

In our own Formal School 'Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth' (ABV), the quality and standard maintained is high. In the ABV, Standard Operating Practices are followed with the following features to ensure Quality Control:

- Even though it is meant for Parivaar's resident children but still our own children have to undergo admission test to get into it for any particular standard (grade). Failing to do so they are kept in the fast-learning bridge Course that prepares them to make the cut for the School and then admitted into the School.
- Teachers who teach at the Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth cannot teach in the tutorship program. This ensures that teachers both in the School as well as tutorship program are kept under challenge to perform and that there is no academic compromise.
- There are monthly Unit Tests, 2 Mid-Yearly examinations, and an Annual Examination. A Question Paper Approval Committee consisting of 4 officials not functional in the School approves the question papers set up by the respective course teachers. They check the content of each question paper for parameters like quality, clarity and course-pervasiveness. The Committee then approves the question paper judging the whole content on the above parameters. It may also issue modifications in certain questions if it helps to strengthen it based on the above parameters. The chief purpose of this exercise is to ensure that no sub-quality question papers are administered during the Examinations and the overall standard is always maintained at a robust level.

- Similarly at the Tutorship Level, monthly internal tests are there. There is no external Approval Exercise for these tests as these tests only act as preparation to the tests/examinations held at Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth and other outside formal schools attended by our children; and it is the performance of the children in these School examinations that acts as the final indicator of the efforts of the teachers both at School level as well as tutorship level.

Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth - Pictures











Vidyanagar Girls' Higher Secondary School (one of the outside Schools which our girl children of Class 6 and 7 attend)



Vidyanagar Boys' Higher Secondary School (one of the outside Schools which our Class 6 and 7 boys attend)

Orientation

A Brief of Scheme of Education for the resident children at Parivaar. Typically a child is admitted into Parivaar within the age group of 4 years to 12 years. All these children without exception have had no exposure to education whatsoever, before being admitted into Parivaar. There are 3 categories in which the children can be placed as far as their educational path is concerned and three different action plans are taken for them.

A) The youngest admittees into Parivaar (age 4 to 6)

The youngest admittees (aged 4,5,6) are those who are rightly aged to start their academic life, and are admitted into most initial classes (Kindergarten / Class 1) since their age is in accordance with the class they are admitted into. Right from the beginning they are able to progress in their studies without any difficulty as there is a strong battery of teachers at Parivaar Ashram, who teach these children after their day school. Also the pace at which at these children are taught is just right for their age as no fast-bridging has to be done for this category since they do not have an educational backlog vis-a-vis their age.

B) Admittees who have a big educational backlog

Children admitted to Parivaar who have age of 8 to 12 (aged 8,9,10,11,12) and still not having any exposure to education, are first trained in-house for one year at Parivaar through what we call 'Fast-Learning Bridge Course' by our battery of teachers, and then made to be admitted into a class suitable for their age. For example, at the end of the bridge course a nine-year-old child would be admitted in Class 4 or at least Class 3.

C) Children who have already got past either A or B, and are now already settled in regular academic path in Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth or other Formal Schools

The children who have in the previous years got past the above 2 stages i.e. who are now already settled in the regular academic path at a normal pace (i.e. one Standard (Grade) in one year) get admission into either Parivaar's own Formal School 'Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth' (which at present is from Class 1 to 5) or (for Class 5 onwards) into other good quality schools in the area through competitive admission tests. For all the students in this category too, 'After-the-school-tutorship' is of immense importance and is an essential component of our education efforts. There are two reasons for this:

1. The first reason flows from central theme of Parivaar that is 'Excellence'. Parivaar's vision is that all the resident children continuously excel from strength to strength and as per their abilities shape a bright future for themselves in various professional lines. Excellence and not mediocrity is what we aim for each child in Parivaar. Our vision is that our children excel from one level to a higher level.

2. Because of the fact that many of the children have been jumped into a higher class through fast learning bridge course it may so happen that some may initially struggle a bit when admitted into a higher class in a formal school. But we have invariably seen that because of focused 'After-School Tutorship' study hours (4 to 5 hours in addition to the school hours) the performance of each child in every successive examination improves. The children who get admission into outside schools by appearing into schools' competitive admission tests continuously match the performance of other children coming from regular households who did not have any education backlog. With respect to these children too, their performance betters with time.

Our team of teachers – both at Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth as well as Tutorship Program work very hard with each child, so that each child can continue to excel and learn to bring out the best from within themselves. Each day of their academic progress is noted by the teachers and other Resident elders of the Residential Institution (responsible for the overall caretaking of the children), and it is ensured that they perform and master that very day whatever is taught in the schools they attend. During the last week in each month, detailed tests are taken for all subjects for all the children both in their Schools as well as in internally in the 'After-the-School Tutorship'. This helps in continuous evaluation and correction resulting in improvement.

Parivaar has always being following this principle - A child before being admitted into Parivaar may have been an orphan/homeless/family less/destitute child, but after being admitted into Parivaar the child is no more so. He has then got a Home, Family, and Future. Thus the first thing done is to de-tag and de-label this unhappy epithet of 'homeless child'. Therefore, when Parivaar children (who are in higher classes of 6 and 7) have to seek admission in outside schools, Parivaar never pushes the admission of children into schools merely on sympathetic background. Self-Dignity and self-confidence have to be earned and our children do so by getting admission in good schools on the basis of their merit and re-strengthen it by their continuous good performance in their school. It may happen that a

child may not get admission into School A, failing to clear its merit test, but gets admission into School B and advances from there, always having a chance to excel in future.

Parivaar's recent initiatives in Tribal Areas and admission of tribal children: Jharkhand Initiative

Singhbhum (East) district in Jharkhand is the backyard of one of the most primitive and impoverished tribes of the country called Birhore tribes. The whole population suffers from malnutrition and generation after generation, people in this belt, live a life totally unlit by the lamp of education and in thoroughly sub-human conditions. Parivaar conducted extensive groundwork in a bunch of villages about 30 km from Ghatsila in Singhbhum (East) and through this about 100 children are to be admitted into Parivaar Ashram for long-term future building through education. **Already the first batch of 26 children has been admitted in May and they are progressing very well in education.** After a decade and a half, these children armed with the power of education and bright futures, may well be the agents of change in their

backyard of Jharkhand. Once the Parivaar Ashram Girls' Campus also comes up, then a large no.of girls from Singhbhum (East) shall also be admitted.

Similar outreach initiatives have been carried in highly impoverished tribal pockets in the districts of Bankura, Purulia, Midnapore (West) in West Bengal. In the year 2008, our target is to admit about 200 children (both boys and girls) from these areas.



The Group of Jharkhand children (admitted in May '07) who are now well settled in Parivaa



Parivaar's role in upgrading and transforming Ailing institutions (the Case Study of Ma Sarada Shishu Teertha : A Residential Institution for Tribal Girls)

Parivaar is now using its competence and band of highly dedicated and proficient Sevaks to benefit organisations doing similar work but lagging behind on various fronts. A case in point in this regard is Ma Sarada Shishu Teertha (MSST) located in Nadia district of West Bengal, about 150 km from Kolkata. This Residential institution houses 233 girls (from Santhal tribe) from all over West Bengal mostly in age-group of 6-18. The name of the institution is "Ma Sarada Shishu Teertha". It was started in 1984 but the condition of this institution has gradually deteriorated with time and with the new line of workers not developing, the institution was suffering tremendous hardships until Parivaar arrived on scene.

Parivaar's involvement since April has been in multifarious ways and is slowly bringing about a lot of change.

i. Financial:

We are regularly arranging on a monthly basis financial support to the tune of Rs 100,000 which is used for fooding, clothing, household amenities for the institution.

The Governing Body of MSST has been so overwhelmed by Parivaar' support that it passed a resolution that all operations shall be upgraded under Parivaar's direct supervision and guidance and Parivaar will have total freedom in planning, control and execution of Day to Day operations at MSST. They even want Parivaar to fully take-over this institution.

Parivaar is starting a separate Girls' Residential institution adjacent to the existing Parivaar Ashram for accommodating at least 500 girls; and once it is in place, a substantial number of inmates from MSST can be shifted there and can be made to progress in the academic path as other children at Parivaar do. That will also reduce the burden of 'Ma Sarada Shishu Teertha' also and bring it to a manageable proportion to be handled by local workers there.

ii. Management, Manpower and Systems-Processes Revamp

Parivaar is trying to upgrade all processes of Day to Day operations of this institution and trying to align them to the extent possible with the Standard Best Practices followed at Parivaar Ashram. For this Parivaar has already deputed some of its highly efficient manpower in field of Girls' Caretaking, Education, Nursing, Dining and Kitchen, Accounting, and Overall Supervision to MSST. The existing MSST manpower which were largely untrained are being provided training at Parivaar Ashram and helped to orient with new upgraded systems and processes to be followed.



Pictures from Ma Sarada Shishu Teertha

Parivaar has also started 24 hour Ambulance services for the population in the adjoining rural areas. Since there were no hospitals in the nearby area, all patients in critical condition had to be taken to hospitals in Kolkata. General village population used to face enormous hardship in taking the patient to hospitals in the city at odd hours with no means of public or private transport available at such times. Now they can avail of the Parivaar's Ambulance services.



Village Ambulance Service

Diwali Celebrations and Excursions during Durga Puja festive time

During Durga Puja children went to excursions to various places like Nicco Park, Science City, Botanical Gardens, Alipore Zoo and to see various Puja-Pandals in the Kolkata city.

Diwali was celebrated joyously and for 2 evenings (Diwali and following day) everyone enjoyed with fireworks.





