



SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM
DELHI BRANCH
(Annual Report 2020-21)



DELHI CAMPUS GALLERY





Let us all try to be worthy
of Sri Aurobindo's century.



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THE YEAR GONE BY

While the year 2020 was unprecedented in many ways, stalling...even bringing certain activities to a grinding halt, it could do little to quell the Ashram's spirit of service towards the society. Despite all odds, the Ashram reached out to the society to cater to its intellectual and spiritual needs and for a healthy well-being. The platform changed from being face-to-face to largely online and web-based, but that only promoted better outreach in certain areas. The year also saw introduction of some new programmes, such as the much praised Vision Improvement Course initiated by the Ashram's medical centre.

While the Darshan days used to be occasions when many devotees turned up to seek blessings from the Guru and the Mother, the Ashram observed stringent measures to dissuade these during the pandemic year. At the same time, the spirit of every festivity came alive through soulful music and the dainty little lights of aspiration kindled in the evenings and in the hearts of every spiritual seeker. Visitors were permitted only on rare occasions when it was seen as safe, amidst full precautions to prevent spread of any infection.

Sri Aurobindo's 150th birth anniversary in the year 2022 is one occasion all of us await with eagerness. The senior Ashram community started its efforts for the celebration of this event early this year by meeting the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. Efforts in this direction were continued through meetings with the Minister of State for Culture and the Minister of Education. The meetings were part of the Ashram initiatives to realize Sri Aurobindo's vision of building the youth for an enlightened nation. Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch with immense knowledge and experience in the philosophy, methodology and experience in the fields of Integral Education, Free Progress System, and Project Based Learning skills also enunciated in the New Education Policy of India has been a beacon light for the schools and teachers of rural India.

While the action word for the year 2020 has been 'online', the Ashram community with its technical prowess immediately adapted to the virtual world for all its activities. The Ashram's YouTube channel has seen a steady stream of videos of events where physical presence of visitors had to be restricted in the larger interest of the society. Besides the Facebook and Twitter accounts have also been abuzz with posts on the Ashram events that were conducted during the year.

In the hope that normalcy returns soon in our lives, we approach the year that lies ahead with this prayer to the Eternal,

"It matters little that there are thousands of beings plunged in the densest ignorance, He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth." – The Mother's prayer dated March 30, 1914.

To free the self is but one radiant pace;
Here to fulfil himself was God's desire.

Sri Aurobindo



SOCIAL INITIATIVES IN 2020

ASHIRVAD BLOCK CONSTRUCTION



The Ashirvad Block located within the premises of Sri Aurobindo -Delhi , is proposed to be a residential centre for the young Vocational Trainees (VTs).

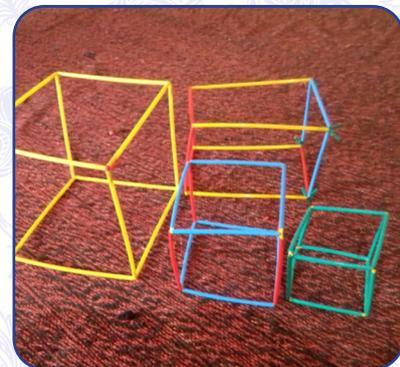
Each year over 40-60 VTs join the Ashram from different geographical locations of India. Considerable progress has been made in the construction of the block, despite the pandemic situation thanks to the generous financial contributions from our corporate sponsors.

INTEGRAL EDUCATION AND MATHEMATICS WORKSHOP

A comprehensive Integral Education & Mathematics workshop was conducted between November 25 to 30, 2020, on a digital platform for 136 teachers from nineteen schools from remote regions of India including Jharkhand, Nagaland, Tamilnadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Odisha. The participants were awarded participation certificates. The workshop was an attempt to inspire the teachers of mathematics to reimagine their pedagogy in the classrooms. Many children had never seen the kits used in the workshop before.



The workshop on Integral Education and Mathematics was based on the pragmatic approach as emphasized by the Mother.



The experts for the Mathematics workshop, Mr Srinath Maharana, Mr Prakash Sahoo and Mr Narayan Meher taught using Tangram, Ganitmala, Jodo blocks, Decimal and Number kits, Number sticks and other teaching aids.

INTEGRAL EDUCATION, HEALTH AND FITNESS WORKSHOP



The excerpts from the Health and Fitness workshop.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram -Delhi Branch organized two 6-day Integral Education, Health and Fitness workshop from September 21 to 26, 2020 and from October 26 to 31, 2020 to celebrate its glorious tradition of physical education. The workshop witnessed over 200 participants and was conducted on digital platform. The objective of the workshop was to ensure holistic development among students. Cardiovascular exercises, sensory games and other subject games were in the workshop curriculum to teach the children team work.

ORGANIC FARM FRESH VEGETABLES & FRUITS

The Ashram has initiated Organic Farming in the Ashram Premises since many years. We have ensured a healthy, sustainable environment for organic farming. The organic produce is consumed within the Ashram.





Ashram youth with Farm Fresh Vegetables & Fruits

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught.

Sri Aurobindo



SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING EDUCATION

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING EDUCATION

We, at Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi branch, are essentially focused on supporting education as we strongly believe that giving integral education to a child is our greatest achievement. It is our mission to touch as many lives as possible. To garner support for this cause we have initiated various sponsorship schemes from individuals and the corporate sector, which have gained momentum in the past years.

This year the pandemic has created unprecedented situation for the students as well as the teachers. The past few months have been difficult for everyone and specially for students. We have witnessed that students across all schools are demonstrating incredible energy, commitment and flexibility as they continue to respond to the mass disruption caused by the pandemic.

Our schools have adapted to new teaching techniques with virtual lessons. The disruption caused by the pandemic has created a need for teachers to be more creative than usual, employing new measures and in some cases developing completely new skills sets to ensure the successful continuation of the teaching-learning process.

Many corporate and individual sponsors have appreciated our work and extended financial support to us to enable us to overcome this crisis. The children of our schools in rural India benefited and their numbers continue to grow. The children in remote areas, tribal population and villages in the hilly areas are being educated under these schemes. The sponsored children are selected from low income groups and educated in good village boarding schools in their own state to avoid language problems. The entire expense of their tuition, boarding, lodging, training, books, clothes, travel and medical expenses is borne by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch. Additionally, a few students in The Mother's International School, from the economically weaker section are also provided scholarships under the sponsorship programme.

The Auro Mira Vidya Mandir, a free primary school for over 165 tribal children in Kechla, Odisha is also mainly supported by Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi branch as part of sponsorship programmes. The children preferred to stay in the school hostel during these tough times and were kept in very safe and healthy surroundings. All safety precautions to protect against Covid 19 were followed.

The sponsorship schemes have been largely used to support children and youth mainly under the following four main categories:

School Education

There are more than 500 Sri Aurobindo Schools all over the country which are run by devotees independently. A number of children in these schools are sponsored by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi branch. These children are provided with books, clothing, games and sports equipment among other essential items from time to time.

At the end of the academic year, the sponsors are provided with the progress report of each child supported by them.

Higher Education

Many of our Ashram Youth after finishing class XII are pursuing their online graduation in different streams. We sponsor their undergraduate studies and thereafter career-oriented courses.

Vocational Training Program

Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi branch also has a vocational training programme for the youth of weaker strata of the society to upgrade their skills and knowledge. As part of this programme, the youth undergo structured training of six months in the areas of cooking, carpentry, photo-framing and lamination, hand-made paper making, tailoring and weaving (for girls), civil and electrical maintenance, library science, computer and typing, and para-medical training.

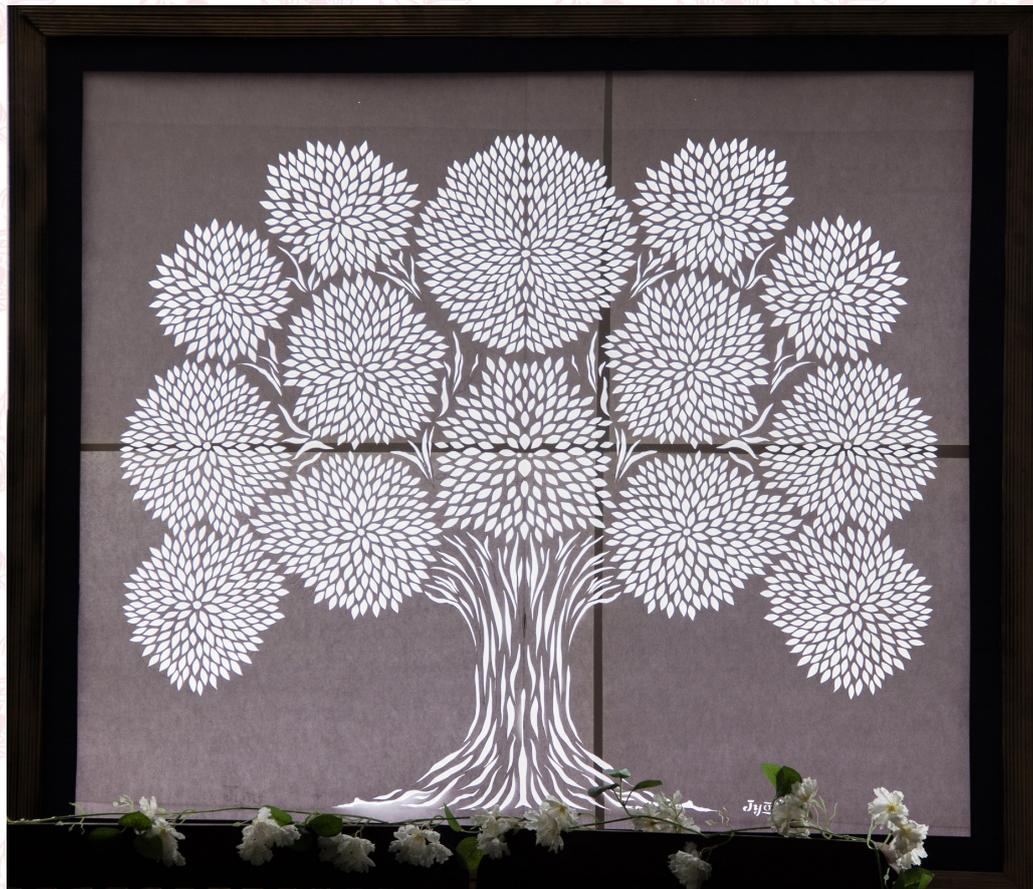
After the successful completion of the course, most trainees could be successfully placed in jobs. A few trainees, however, continue to work in the Ashram in various departments. The Ashram extends financial support to them and they are encouraged to take up courses of their choice. During 2020-21 there were on an average 28 vocational trainees in the Ashram.



Scholarships for School Education, Higher Education, Vocatioal Training, Art, Music & Yoga

The details of amount spent under various categories in the year 2020-2021 are as under:

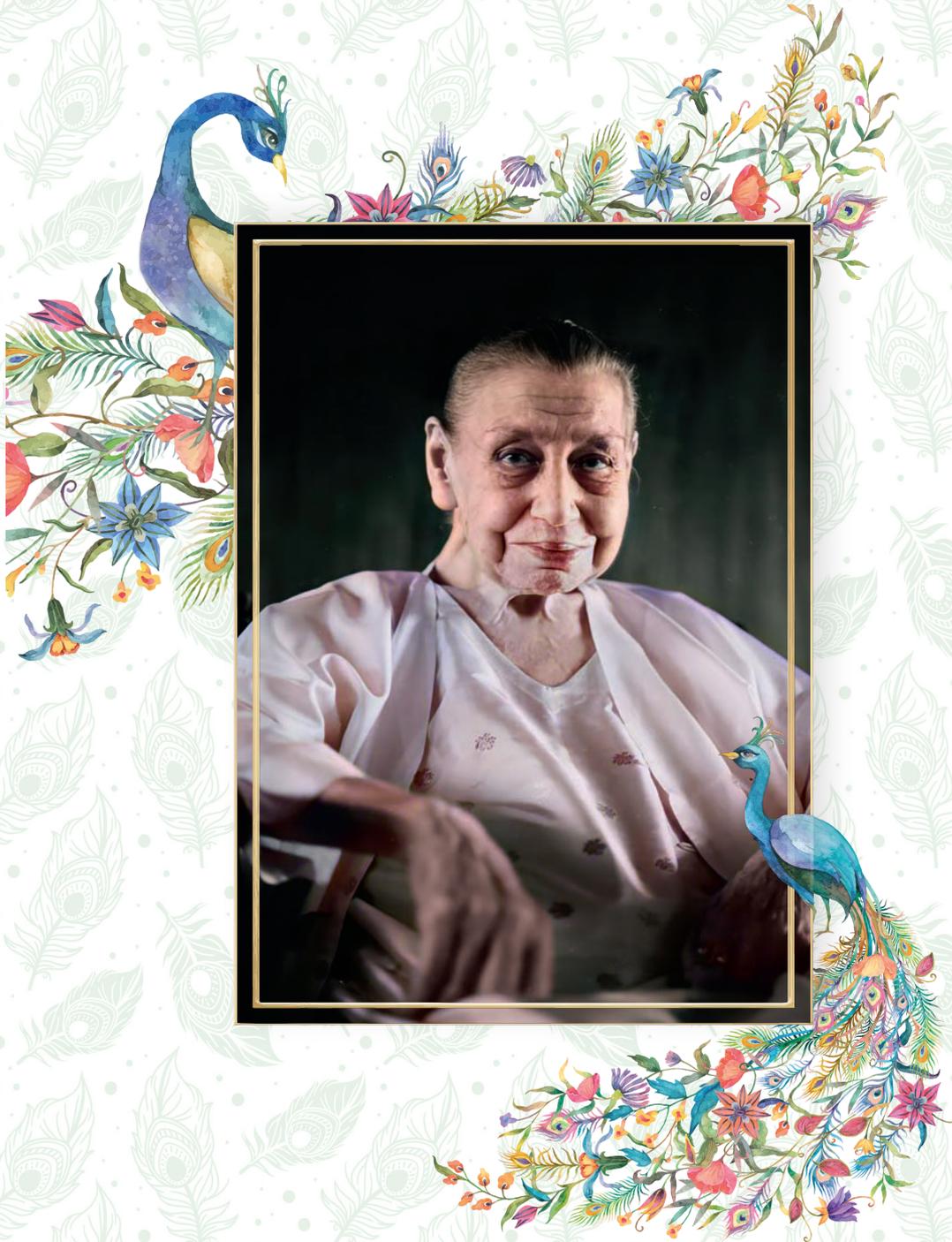
Details of Program	Number of students	Amount (INR)
School Education	161	56,98,000/-
Higher Education & other courses of Music, Art & Driving	17	1,15,805/-
Vocatioal Training Program	28	2,72,100/-
TOTAL	206	60,85,905/-



Art work by a Vocatioal Trainee

What we are attempting here is to prove to the world, through a concrete example, that by some inner psychological realisation and some outer organisation a world can be created where most of the causes of human misery will cease to exist.

The Mother



A LOOK BACK AT DELHI CAMPUS

ANNIVERSARY OF SRI AUROBINDO'S ARRIVAL IN PONDICHERRY

APRIL 4, 2020



Sri Aurobindo's portrait in the Ashram lobby to commemorate the anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry



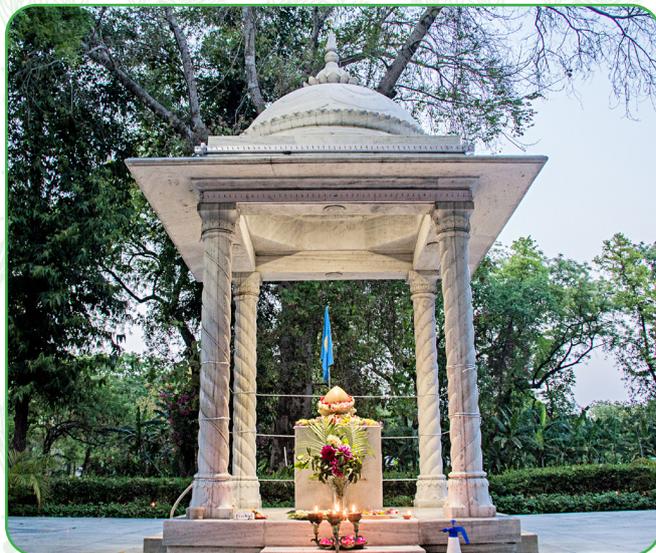
Tapasya courtyard decorated with lamps on the occasion

ANNIVERSARY OF MOTHER'S FINAL ARRIVAL IN PONDICHERRY

APRIL 24, 2020



Dr Ramesh Bijlani gave a talk on 'The Significance of the Mother's Final Arrival in Pondicherry'



Sri Aurobindo's shrine at the Delhi bedecked on the occasion



The book 'Learning Through Projects' brought out by Mirambika Free Progress School was released by Tara-Di



Tapasya Courtyard Decorated with flowers

The day in the Ashram started with an invocation for the divine Presence following which videos of the 'Darshan of the Shrine', 'The message of 24th April', readings from 'The Great Adventure' by Tara didi, a short film on the Mother's symbol among others were released on social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

TARA DIDI'S BIRTHDAY

JULY 5, 2020



Tara didi planted many trees in the Ashram campus on her birthday.

Tara Didi's 84th birthday was celebrated by inviting selfies from the friends of Ashram caring for their plants at home. Didi, a plant-lover herself celebrated her birthday in a green way by planting many trees in the Ashram campus.



Members of the Ashram Community also joined in the tree plantation movement.

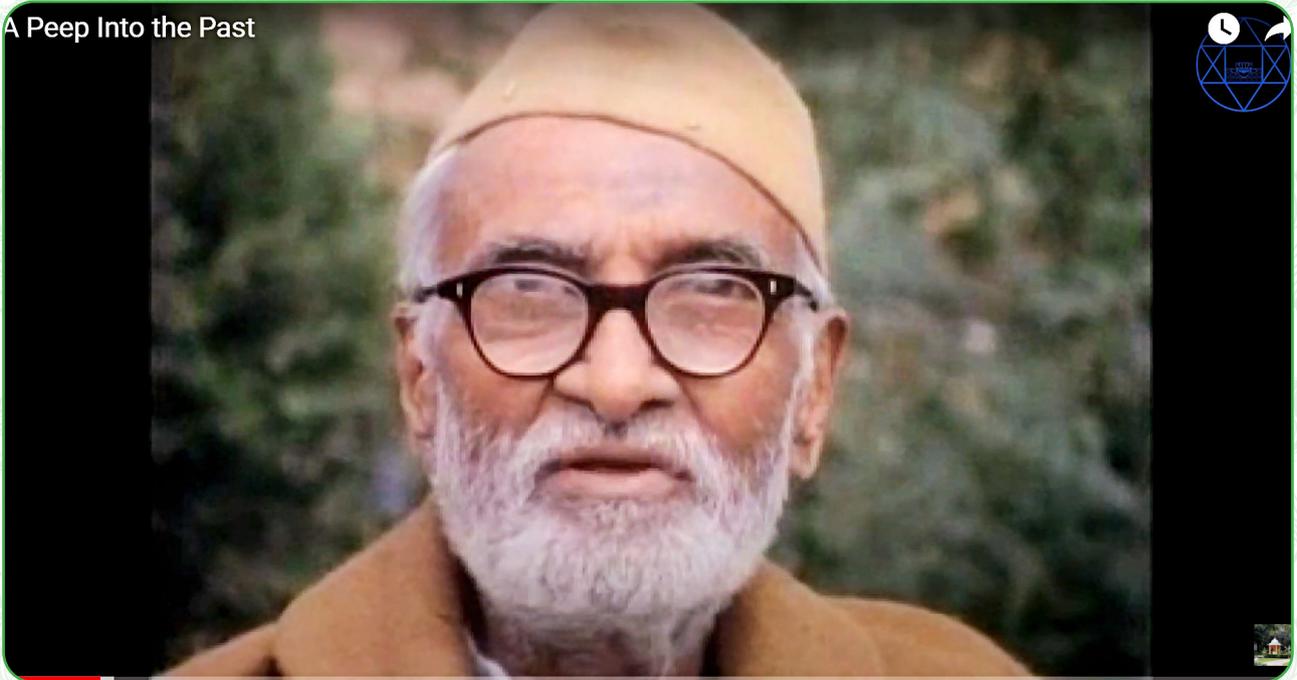
CHACHA JI'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

AUGUST 13, 2020



The film 'Jeevan Ek, Udaharan Anek' replete with anecdotes from Shri Surendranath Jauhar's interactions with the Mother, was an inspiring narrative by Dr Aparna Roy in fluent Hindi.

A Peep Into the Past



The film 'A Peep into the Past', depicted the first twenty-five years of SAADB from its inception in 1956 through 1981, the inception of The Mother's International School and The Mirambika Free Progress School.

SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY & INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

AUGUST 15, 2020

The Ashram was kept open from 6 am to 6 pm for visitors to the Shrine and the Meditation Hall. The national flag was hoisted by Tara didi in the morning followed by singing of the national anthem. This was followed by unfurling of the Mother's flag and singing of Vande Mataram. Overcrowding was discouraged and physical distancing was maintained.



Flag hoisting by Tara didi to commemorate India's Independence Day



Dr. Ramesh Bijlani gave a talk titled, 'Wish Macaulay Had Been More Explicit' which was uploaded on the Ashram's YouTube channel



A book titled, 'Relevance of Gita Teachings Today' written by Dr. Tarun Baveja, was released by Tara Didi on the occasion

CHACHA JI'S PUNYATITHI

SEPTEMBER 2, 2020



A havan was performed followed by offering of floral tributes at Chachaji's Samadhi



Ashram came alive with lights of aspiration kindled in the evening



Tara Didi read a few passages from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri, accompanied by a musical offering by the Ashram choir in the Meditation Hall

DIPAVALI CELEBRATIONS

NOVEMBER 14, 2020



As always a green Diwali was celebrated in the Ashram amidst the lamps of aspiration, devoid of crackers

SRI AUROBINDO'S MAHASAMADHI DAY

DECEMBER 5, 2020

Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's mahasamadhi Day in the Ashram began with an invocation of the Divine presence by Srila didi in the morning in the Meditation Hall. Ashram was kept open to visitors for devotional offerings at the shrine and the Meditation Hall.





Sri Aurobindo left his mortal body on December 5, 1950. The Ashram community offered floral tributes to commemorate the day at Sri Aurobindo's shrine. Lamps were lit in the evening



The students and staff of the Mother's International School (MIS) organized an online assembly

SRI AUROBINDO'S SAMADHI DAY

DECEMBER 9, 2020



The anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's samadhi at Pondicherry Ashram in the year 1950 was celebrated peacefully in the Delhi Ashram with evening bhajans and passages read from 'Savitri' by Tara didi.

DESCENT OF LIGHT

DECEMBER 25, 2020



Christmas 2020 was celebrated as 'Athletics Day' with enthusiastic participation from the young and the old in the Ashram. Winners were awarded prizes for various events like shot put, 100 m race, 400 m relay race and long jump among others.



The teacher trainees of Mirambika organized sensory games at the Hall of Grace, MIS.



The Ashram community kindled lamps of aspiration at Sri Aurobindo's Shrine and its vicinity later in the evening.



The Ashram choir made a musical offering of bhajans in the evening which were interspersed with passages read from 'The Descent of Light' by Tara didi in the Ashram Meditation Hall.

ADVENT OF THE NEW YEAR 2021

DECEMBER 31, 2020



The New Year 2021 was ushered in amidst readings from Savitri, lamps that adorned the Ashram campus and midnight meditation



The New Year calendar was distributed among the attendees

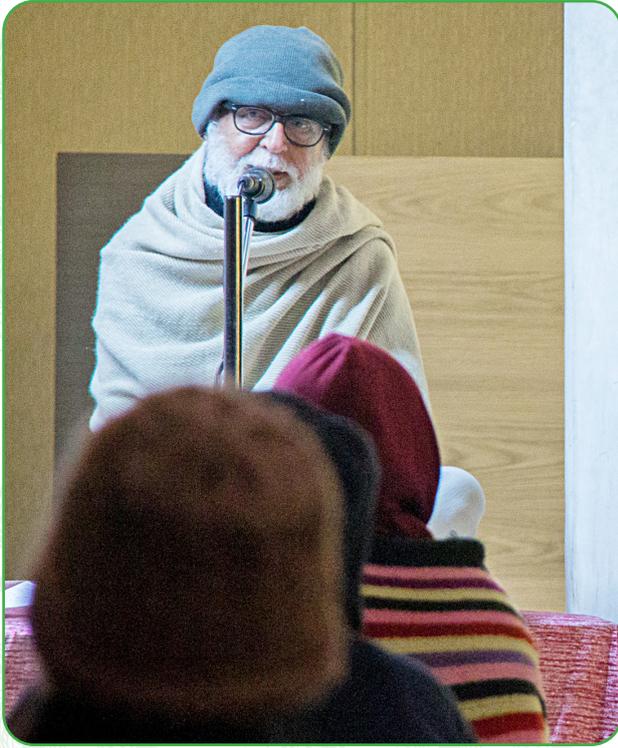


As a token of gratitude a special lunch was organized for the Ashram helpers on the occasion



NATIONAL YOUTH DAY

JANUARY 12, 2021



158th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated as National Youth Day in the Ashram through group meditation and a talk by Dr. Ramesh Bijlani in the Ashram Meditation Hall



Dr. Ramesh Bijlani gave an inspiring talk on the life of Swami Vivekananda which was posted on the Ashram's YouTube channel.

LOHRI

JANUARY 13, 2021

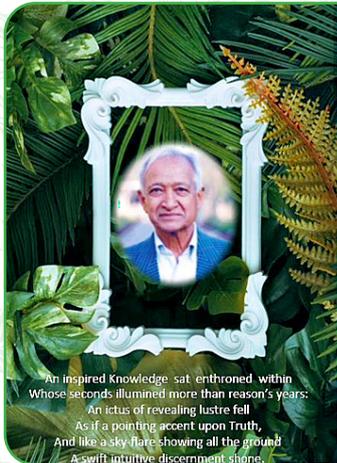


Lohri which marks the northward movement of the Sun was celebrated in the Ashram with distribution of groundnuts and revadi.

REMEMBERING SHRI ANIL JAUHAR

JANUARY 20, 2021

Shri Anil Kumar Jauhar's 94th birth anniversary was celebrated in the Ashram with many online events. Anil ji had led the Ashram and its associated institutions for almost three decades as Chairman till he left his mortal body in the year 2014.



The Students and Staff
of
The Mother's International School
come together
for
virtual Birth Anniversary Celebrations
of
Shri Anil Jauhar
Former Chairman - MIS
on
20th January, 2021
at
8:00 am
through the link:
Special Assembly
Shri Anil Kumar Jauhar's Birth Anniversary

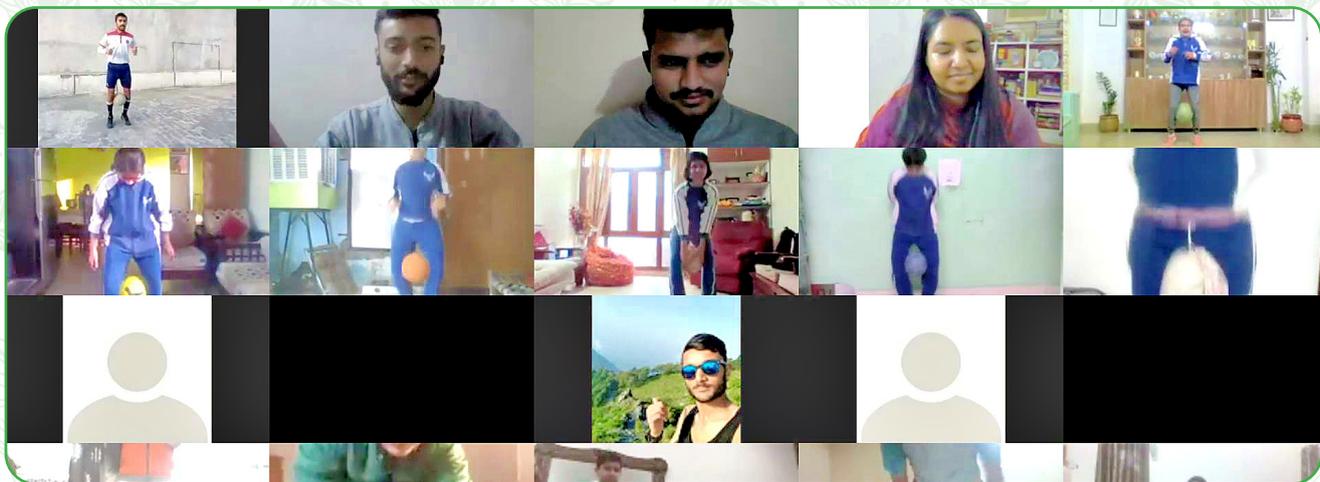
Programme:
8:00 am
Special Assembly
8:20 am
Talk Session by Dr Pulkit Sharma

An inspired Knowledge sat enthroned within
Whose seconds illumined more than reason's years:
An ictus of revealing lustre fell
As if a pointing accent upon Truth,
And like a sky-plate showing all the ground
A swift intuitive discernment shone.



The Mother's International School (MIS) organized a virtual Special Assembly in the morning

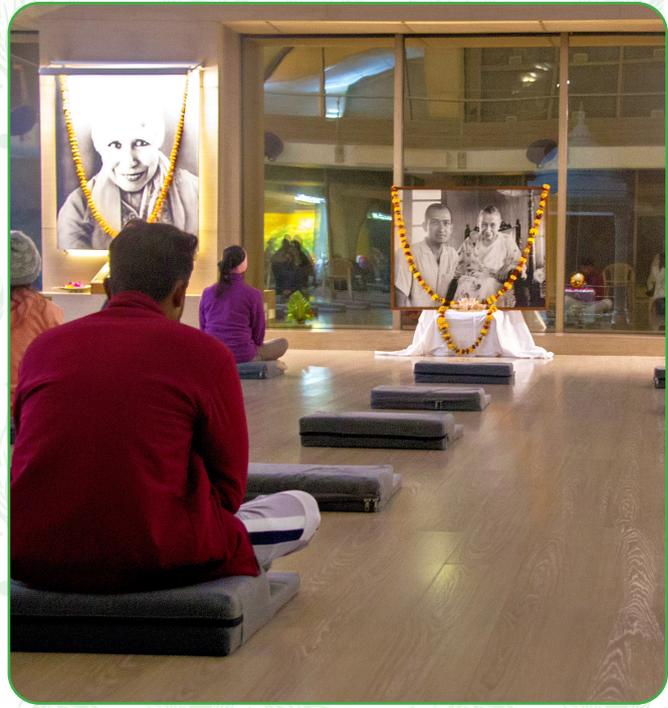
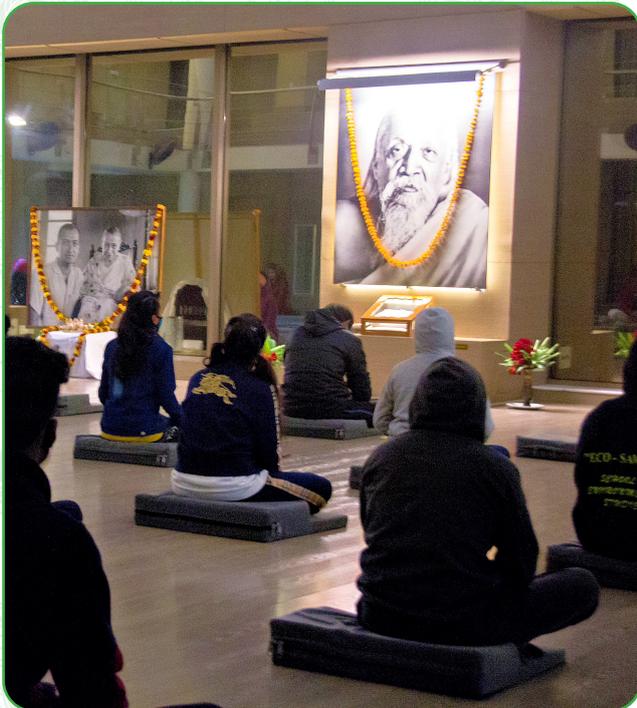
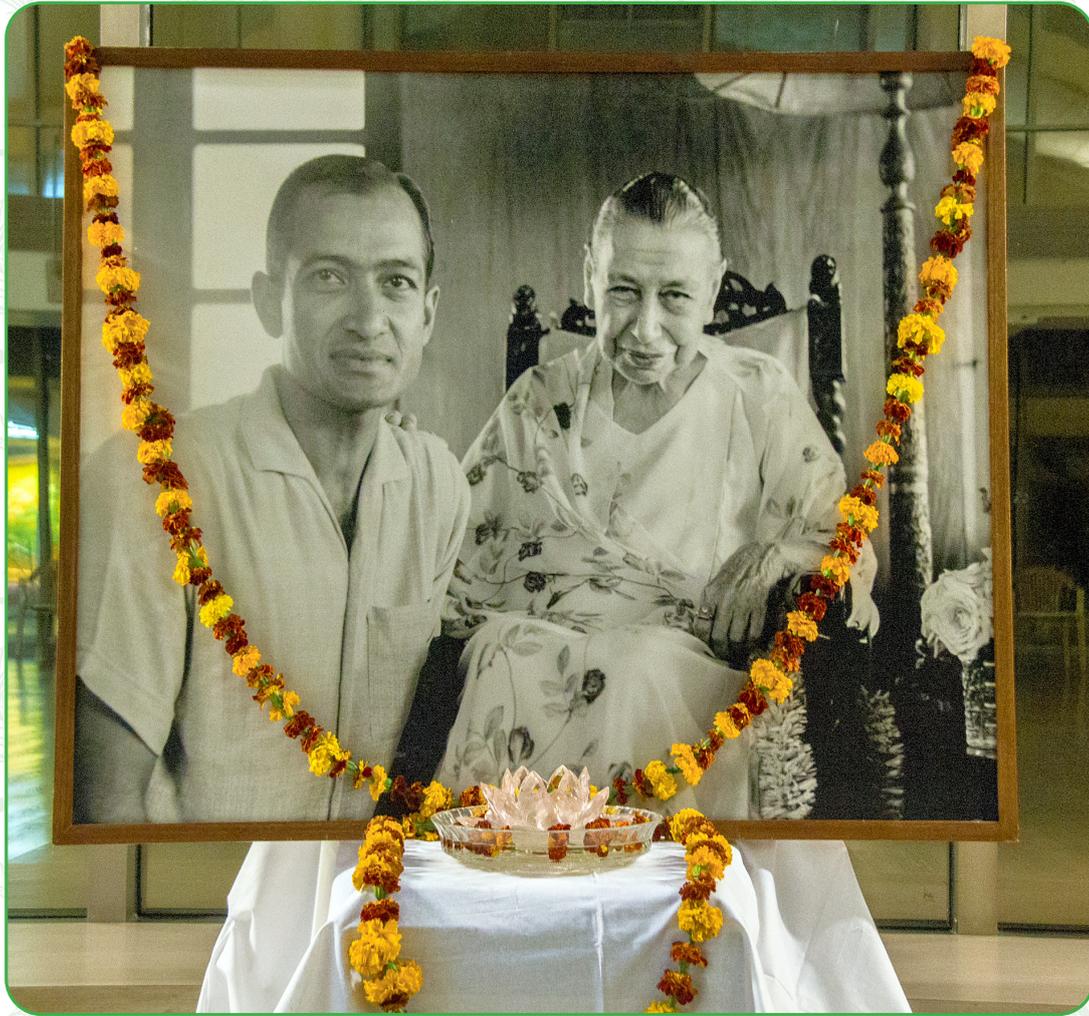
Dr. Pulkit Sharma gave a talk on "Giving Wings to your Dreams."



"Khelo MIS", an Online Sports Training Workshop, was organized by the Physical Education Department of MIS for its students.



Basketball and Football matches were held for the Ashram residents in which youngsters participated with great enthusiasm.



The Ashram choir rendered some soulful music in the Meditation Hall followed by a reading by Tara Didi. In the evening.

REPUBLIC DAY AND PUNYA TITHI OF KARUNA DIDI

JANUARY 26, 2021



Open-air programme anchored in Dr. Aparna Roy's impeccable Hindi marked the beginning of the Republic Day celebrations. Patriotic and devotional songs were rendered by the Ashram community and other devotees.



A devotional song in Punjabi on the ephemeral and evanescent nature of the phenomenal world in Karuna Didi's voice was played followed by a reading of Sri Aurobindo's poem, 'The Mother of Dreams' by Tara Didi, which was Karuna Didi's favourite.

MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF CULTURE

29 JANUARY 2021



Representatives of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch met with honourable Minister of Culture, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel regarding the celebrations for the forthcoming 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo which coincides with the 75th anniversary of India's Independence on 15th August 2022.

MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 2, 2021



Representatives of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch met with honourable Minister of Education, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal to discuss the vision and role of Integral Education as propounded by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

ASHRAM'S FOUNDATION DAY

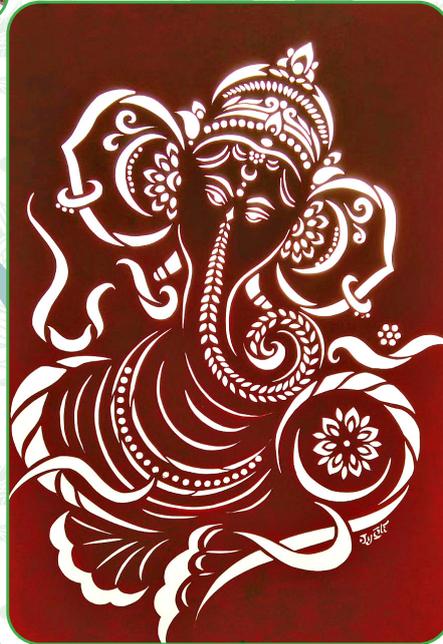
FEBRUARY 12, 2021



Morning havan amidst chanting of Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri Mantra gave a head start to the auspicious day



An exhibition 'The Divine Signature', of the Mother's original manuscripts with her signature, apart from pictures portraying her life was inaugurated by Ms. Nirupama Kotru, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.



Art and Paper crafts created by the Ashram Youth under the guidance of Nawal Singh were also displayed at the "Art for Ashram " Exhibition .



A group photo of the Ashram Community was taken on the occasion



Tara Didi read out passages from Chacha ji's autobiography and the messages that were sent by the Mother for the Foundation Day.



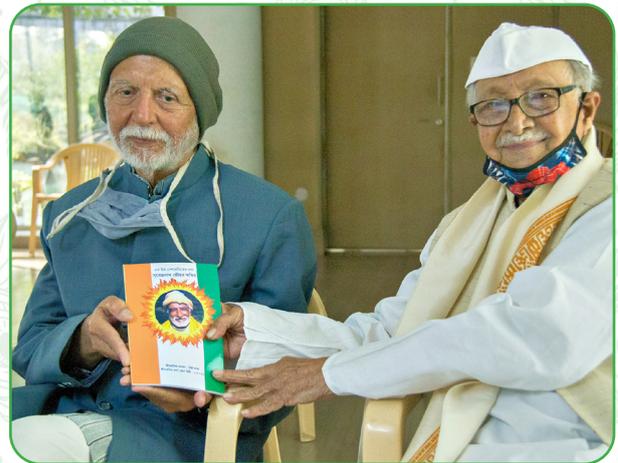
The Ashram's Foundation Day was celebrated at Van Niwas, Nainital, with devotional music rendered by Siddhant Negi.

BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOTHER

FEBRUARY 21, 2021



Photos taken on Darshan day of Srila didi's programme in the morning, Sumitra-Pratibha's programme and Premsheela's programme.



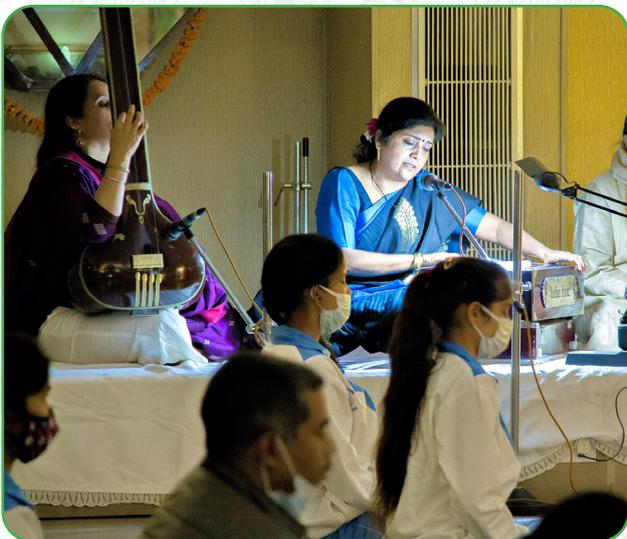
Tara didi released the Bengali book, 'Ek Ugra Deshpreni Ker Katha: Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar 'Faquir' translated by Dilip Patel and distributed by Nepal-da from Kolkata.



The Volunteer Trainees performed the traditional March-past to musical accompaniment, led by Vijaya Bharati and Baren Raul holding the Mother's flag.



The area around the Shrine and the Samadhi Lawn came alive with Lights of Aspiration late evening.



Dr. Mithu Pal rendered four songs, composed by Dr. Alok Pandey, on the four aspects of the Mother in her soul-stirring voice.



Dr Mithu Pal's musical event was interspersed by reading of the corresponding passages by Tara Didi.

SHRI ANIL JAUHAR'S PUNYATITHI

FEBRUARY 28, 2021



The punyatithi of the erstwhile Chairman of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch Trust was observed by chanting of sacred hymns and a reading by Tara Didi in the Meditation Hall.

KARUNA DIDI'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

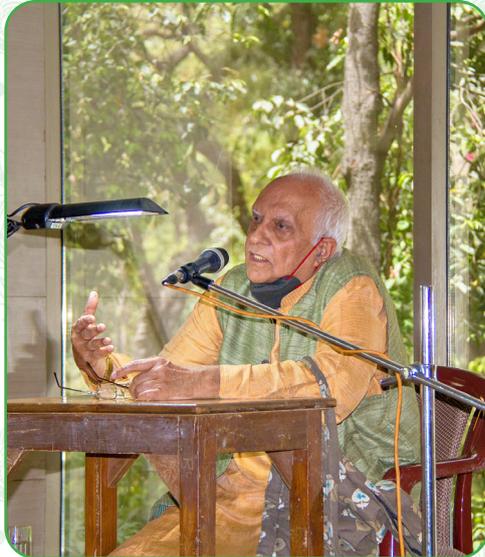
MARCH 24, 2021



The 91st birthday celebrations of Karuna Didi, who had been a dedicated musical prodigy during her life, were aptly conducted amidst a mellifluous music rendition by Vidushi Mukta & Monish Mehta, on March 20, 2021 – considered the day of her spiritual birth when she came to the Delhi Ashram in the year 1966. On her birthday, which falls on March 24th, another soulful musical offering was made by Dr. Arindam Mukhopadhyay with a garland of Ram and Kabir bhajans

SHRI PRASHANT KHANNA'S 75TH BIRTHDAY

MARCH 30, 2021



In order to celebrate Shri Prashant Khanna ji's 75th birthday the Ashram organized a programme of music, as a token of gratitude and thanks giving which was also joined by his daughter who flew down from USA especially for this. Khanna ji also addressed the visitors and gave a brief talk on destiny with reference to the Mother's coming to India.

Do not pretend--be. Do not promise--act. Do not dream--realise.

The Mother



TALKS, DISCOURSES AND WORKSHOPS

ONLINE TALKS

The onset of COVID-19 pandemic imposed physical restrictions on human beings on the one hand but on the other hand it intrigued the mind to discover new ways of reaching out to the people in the time of distress and supporting them emotionally. To quench the emotional and spiritual thirst of seekers and devotees, the Delhi Ashram started weekly online talks on “Life-Sketch of Sri Aurobindo” in Hindi via Zoom under the supervision of Dr. Aparna Roy. Eminent speakers like Dr Ramesh Bijlani, Dr Alok Pandey, Dr J P Singh and others graced the participants with their knowledge and guided them to embark on a spiritual journey by throwing light on multifaceted aspects of Sri Aurobindo.



Online talks on “Life-Sketch of Sri Aurobindo” in Hindi via Zoom under the supervision of Dr. Aparna Roy.

Good health is the exterior expression of an inner harmony.

The Mother



THE MOTHER'S INTEGRAL HEALTH CENTRE

THE MOTHER'S INTEGRAL HEALTH CENTRE

The Mother's Integral Health Centre at Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi branch has adopted an integral approach within the framework of an integrated model of health care. This requires that a person be treated as a whole and to restore balance and harmony between different parts of the being. In addition to an allopathic dispensary the Delhi Ashram also offers speciality clinics, viz. homeopathy, ayurveda, dental services, pediatrics, ophthalmology and more.

In the pandemic year, while Covid-19 wreaked havoc across the country, the Ashram's health centre responded by forming a Covid Management Team which actively monitored every person residing in the Ashram. The team adopted a multi-pronged approach to contain the infection and prevent its spread within the Ashram premises. The team also facilitated the timely hospitalization and treatment of the infected.

In order to check the spread of the virus every inch of the Ashram was sanitized

Sanitization

Thermal Scanning

Isolation & Quarantine

Social Distancing

Testing

Hospitalisation

Teleconsultations

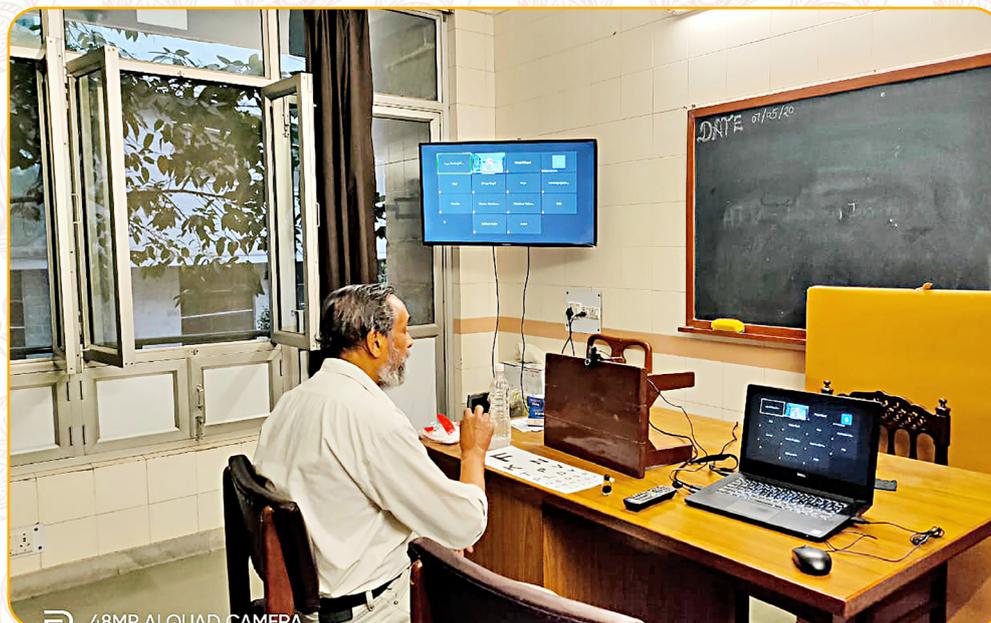
Vaccinations

Strategies adopted by the Covid Management Team

regularly, a non-contact Infra Red (IR) thermometer was used to read the temperature of every individual entering the dining hall. The sick who exhibited symptoms were immediately isolated and quarantined. A special contactless food delivery system was adopted to provide healthy and nutritious food to the quarantined patients. Social distancing was strictly adhered to at all places of gathering – e.g., dining hall, meetings and group activities; Rapid Antigen, RT- PCR, antibody and other tests were conducted on both symptomatic and asymptomatic people. Those who required hospitalization were immediately shifted to the Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre and Hospital and the AIIMS Covid Centre.

Allopathic, ayurvedic and homeopathic consultations were provided through the virtual mode by Dr. T. Baveja, Dr. S. Katoch and Dr. P. Kaur, respectively. Lastly, the team also facilitated the vaccination drive for the Ashram residents started from March 2021. This drive started with senior citizens who got vaccinated as per the guidelines of the government. The covid management integrated the processes of registration of individuals, their safe transportation to vaccination centres and post vaccination care.

An eye exercise camp was conducted online by Dr. Nirankar Aggarwal via zoom which used to be conducted offline before the advent of Covid-19. The eye camp was very successful and benefited many, who found it extremely helpful because of eyestrain having become very common due to excessive screen time during the pandemic.



Dr. Nirankar Agarwal conducting the online eye exercise camp



Immunization of Covid-19 Vaccine for Ashramite



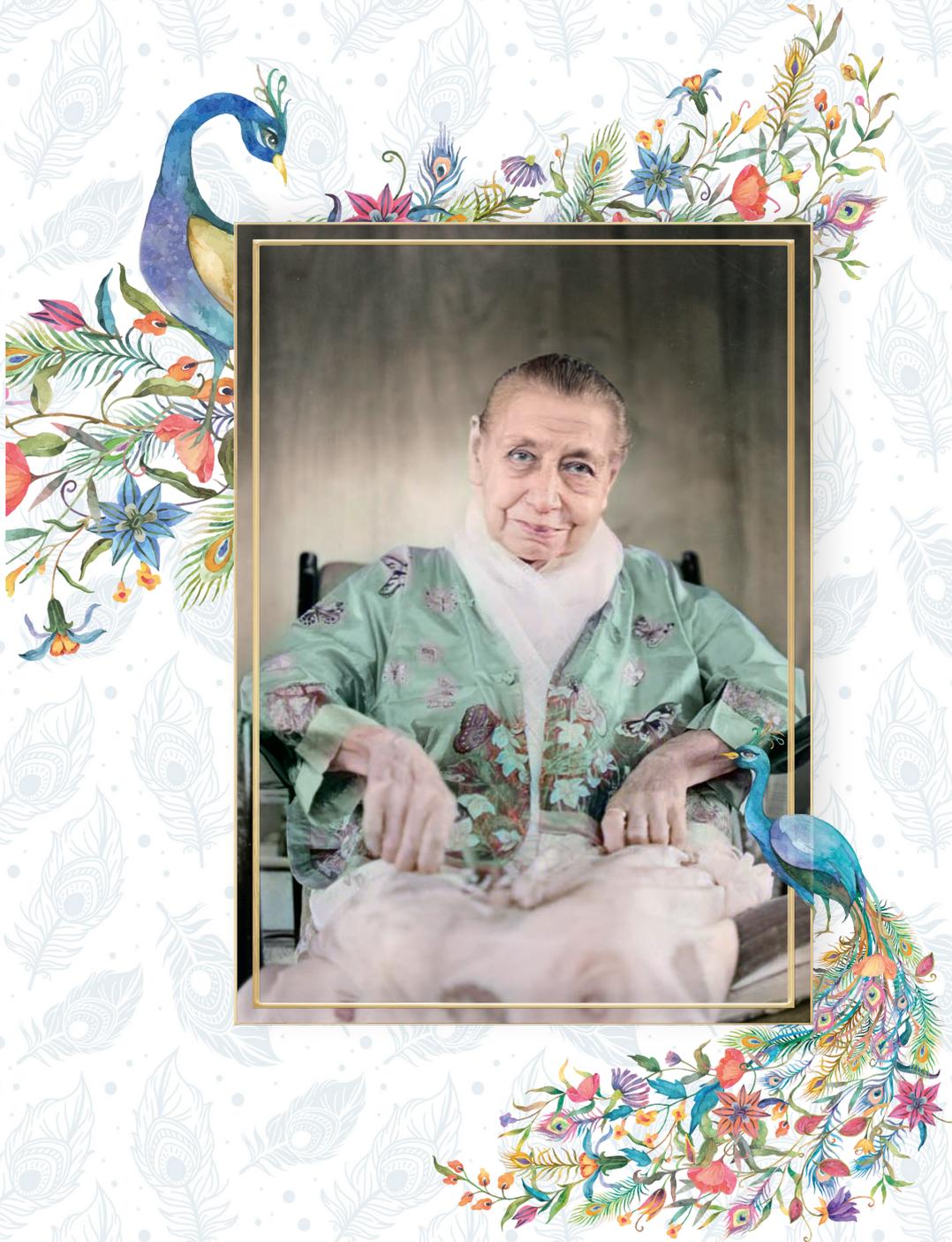
*Thermal scanning before entering
the Ashram dining hall*



*Fumigation in the Ashram
to keep mosquitoes at bay*

Always behave as if the Mother is looking at you,
because, she is indeed, always present.

-Sri Aurobindo



SELFLESS SERVICE

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

While the pandemic has been unprecedented in the havoc it wreaked on humanity, claiming many innocent lives, some too early, it has also rekindled the human spirit in hitherto unseen ways. We have witnessed people going out on streets to distribute food and clothing to the needy. The Ashram youth also rose to the occasion and contributed their share to the society. Amidst uncertainty and fear that gripped communities across the world, our youth at the Ashram have been exemplary in community outreach. Empowered with qualities of exemplary patience, courage, and resilience and the divine grace of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, they plunged wholeheartedly into the cause and reached out through several measures to their fellow Ashramites and the society at large.

For instance, they ran awareness campaigns intermittently to spread awareness about safety measures and protocols during the pandemic. These campaigns focused on emphasizing the importance of social distancing and sharing of information only from authentic sources to prevent unnecessary panic caused by rumours from malicious elements.

On the Ashram premises, they paid utmost attention to cleanliness by enforcing spring cleaning, regular spraying of areas using natural disinfectants and kept constantly revamping their strategies to meet newly arising demands.



Sanitization of the Ashram building and fumigation by the young vocational trainees



Tent was donated by a devotee as a sanitization tunnel equipped through which biocides and virucides are sprayed to disinfect and decontaminate articles.

Besides the above initiatives, the Ashram also distributed sanitary pads to the girls in the Ashram and involved the Ashram youth in water conservation.



Food being served on banana leaves to conserve water in the Ashram

They also maintained a sense of solidarity by encouraging each other, keeping communication channels open at all times to enable dialogue. Regular reading sessions were conducted online to keep the paths of knowledge acquisition illumined.

A variety of activities were organized for the vocational trainees such as bird watching, skating classes and music classes.



Young Vocational Trainees during bird watching, skating and music classes

CLOTHES DISTRIBUTION BY KASHIF'S TEAM

Kashif and his team visited the Ashram premises, collected used clothes and distributed them to the needy in the Yamuna pushta area. The Ashram youth was actively involved in facilitating the whole process.



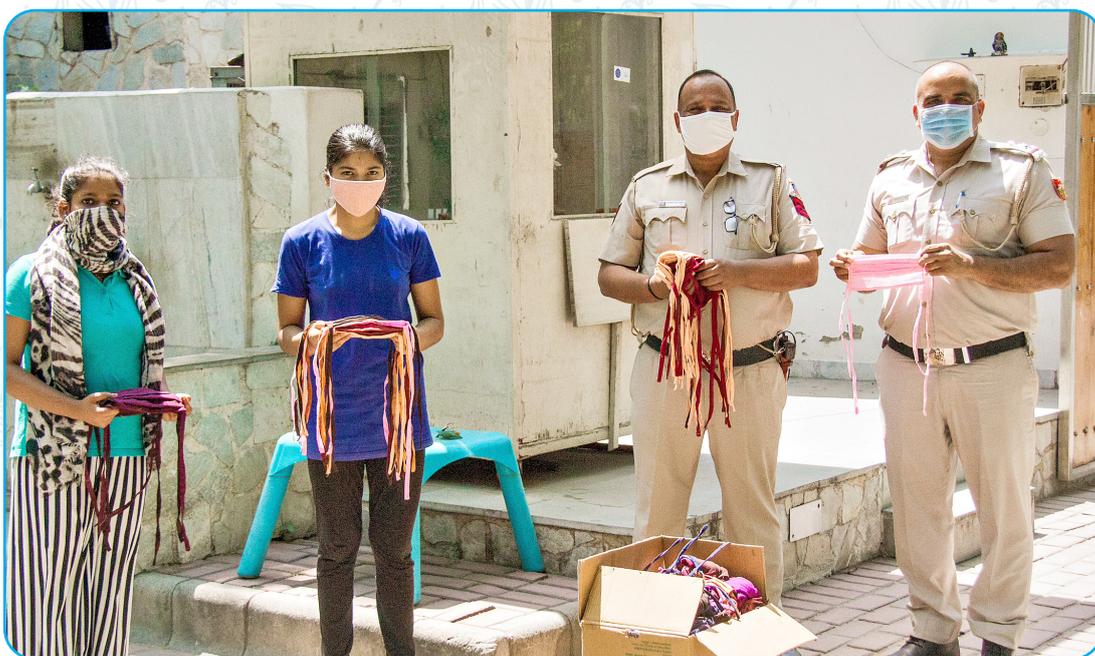
Collection of clothes for distribution



Sorting of clothes for distribution

MASK DISTRIBUTION TO DELHI POLICE

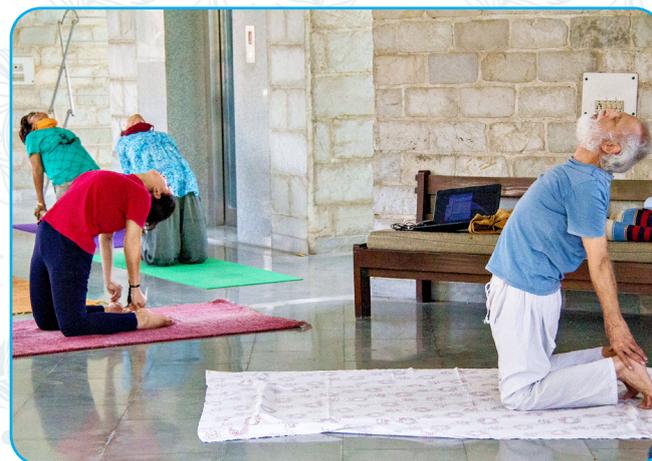
The Ashram initiated making of face masks for protection against Covid-19 by the young vocational trainees. These masks were then handed over to Delhi Police for distribution in its department for use by its workers.



Masks crafted in the Ashram were given to Delhi Police for use against Covid-19 protection

YOGA CLASSES FOR ASHRAM GIRLS

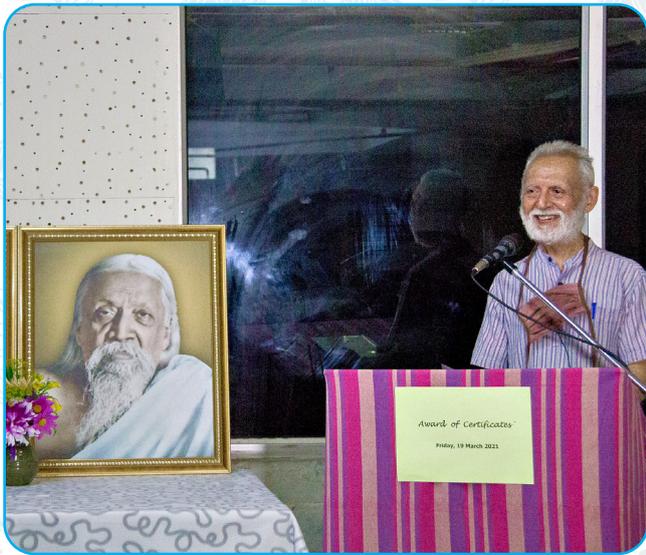
The Ashram organized yoga classes for the girl volunteers who were residing on the Ashram premises. Dr. Ramesh Bijlani conducted the classes on premises when the pandemic situation was relatively under control.



Girl volunteers performing yogasanas with Dr. Bijlani

Youth have always been an integral part of the Ashram. The present Covid-19 crisis has not only strengthened their will to work towards a common aspiration with more vigour and vitality but it has also brought to light, perhaps like never before, the words of The Mother – **'...You must keep your aspirations intact and your will to conquer all obstacles; you must have an unshakable faith in the divine grace and the sure victory...'**

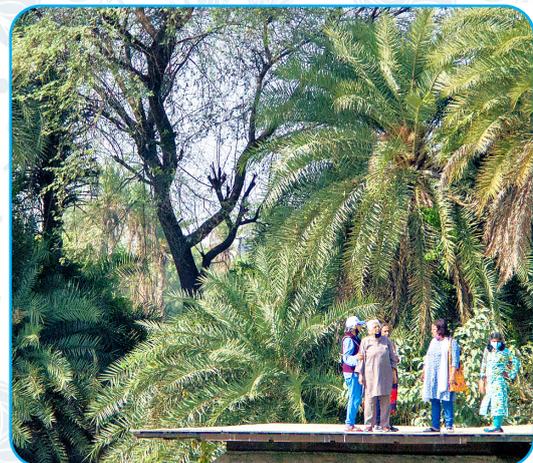
CERTIFICATE DISTRIBUTION FOR YOGA COURSE



Tara didi distributed the certificates to the students who successfully completed the three month long yoga course co-ordinated by Dr Ramesh Bijlani and Ms. Deepa Bisht with support from Dr Surinder Katoch, Dr Aparna Roy, Ms Monica Chand, Ms. Vidya Mundhra, Ms. Seema Dabi and Ms. Riya Choudhary

ANNUAL PICNIC

The Ashram community went on the annual picnic this year on February 27, 2021 to the Vatika Farms. The annual event was as fun-filled and invigorating as always, being replete with music, dance, poetry, storytelling, games and sumptuous meals.



Picnic at Vatika Farms, Gurugram

Turn all things into honey, this is the law of Divine Living.

Sri Aurobindo



MADHUBAN, TALLA RAMGARH

MADHUBAN, TALLA RAMGARH

Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch’s centre, named Madhuban, located at Talla Ramgarh in the Kumaon Himalayas is known for its picturesque beauty. Madhuban, with its floral beds, fruit orchards and vegetable gardens affords a great feast for the eyes. The mystic fragrance of the herbal garden and the tranquillity of the Ashram beckon a visitor and afford great respite from the hubbubs of urban life. While each year the place is abuzz with activities, the year 2020 – the year of the pandemic – was an exception in many ways. Visitors had to be restricted, camps could not be held, contact programmes for village outreach could not be carried out in the conventional way. Most celebrations involved only the small Ashram community and were carried out in-house only. Memories of these celebrations and their reports are shared below:

VILLAGE OUTREACH

SURVEY

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, any physical contact programme could not be carried out. However, the Ashram reached out to the village community through online classes. An online survey of the villages was conducted to determine the needs of the people in the villages. The survey also sought to understand the inherent perspectives of the village folk of Talla Ramgarh on education, health and livelihoods. The survey itself was conducted by the Teacher Resource and Education Centre (TREC) educators. Their findings have been documented in the form of a detailed report, which will be prove to be a great resource for mapping the Ashram’s work in the area, in future. The survey was sponsored by Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch and supported by the Foundation for World Education (F.W.E.) and friends of Madhuban, Dr. Anjali Capilla, Faculty, Lady Irwin College, Delhi University; Mrs. Vijayluxmi Bose from WHO; Ms. Ruma Chakravarthy, a music therapist; and Dr. Anju Khanna from Madhuban.



Ashram volunteers teaching school children



Tara did with the village children before Covid-19



Yoga session with children

ONLINE CLASSES

When the lockdown restrictions were eased, the Ashram community visited the homes of the peer educators and started online classes for the students who had their first year Diploma in Early Childcare and Education (DECE) exams. Computer classes were also held through the online mode.

SKILL-BASED WORKSHOPS

Skill-based workshops on weaving and crochet making were also carried on and saw the TREC girls learning and co-creating new patterns.



Anju Khanna conducting a skill workshop for the rural women

CRECHE FOR CHILDREN

A small creche was opened by two TREC peer educators Ms. Suman and Ms. Sugandha for twenty-two children as their mothers learnt skills under the Ashram's programme for livelihoods.

SASHAKT BHARAT

The village outreach programme 'Sashakt Bharat' was implemented in Madhuban in collaboration with GAIL India Limited. It was a 48-day skill building programme for fifty-five women and youth from the adjoining villages. Spread over three months, from January 2020 to March 2020, the programme focused on empowering the rural women and youth by teaching them knitting, stitching, food processing, organic farming and handicrafts. Children were also given scholarships for studies.



'Sashakt' Knitting workshop in progress at the Ashram



'Sashakt' Horticulture training for the village men

ANNIVERSARY OF RELICS ENSHRINEMENT

JUNE 7, 2020

Residents at Madhuban, the Himalayan Centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi branch in the Kumaon Himalayas at Talla Ramgarh in district Nainital, commemorated the anniversary of the enshrinement of the sacred relics of Sri Aurobindo by lighting lamps and through floral decorations.



Prabhu sthal was decorated with a variety of flowers on the occasion of relics enshrinement



Madhuban campus vibrant with Lights of aspiration

OTHER SPECIAL DAYS

Due to the pandemic situation, the Ashram had in-house meditations, amidst lights of aspiration and prasad for the small Madhuban community.

TARA DIDI'S BIRTHDAY

JULY 5, 2020

On the occasion of Tara didi's birthday, gifts were distributed among workers after the customary meditation.

CHACHAJI'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

AUGUST 13, 2020

An in-house drawing workshop was organized on the occasion of Shri Surendranath Ji's birthday celebrations this year, after the special mediation session.

SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

AUGUST 15, 2020

In the evening the Ashram youth participated in March past and flag hoisting followed by kindling of lights of aspiration in the Ashram.



March past and flag hoisting by the Ashram members to commemorate Sri Aurobindo's birthday

SIDDHI DAY

NOVEMBER 24, 2020

November 24, a very significant day, marks 'the day of victory' when the Supramental Consciousness descended into the physical, in the year 1926.



*This year special meditation was followed by reading of lines from the 'Savitri'.
In keeping with the Covid-19 protocols, very few attended the celebration.*

MAHASAMADHI DAY

DECEMBER 5, 2020

Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi day was observed as a day of silence in memory and respect of the Guru.

THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

FEBRUARY 21, 2021

This year a special meditation was organized for the Ashram maintaining social distancing and wearing masks. Prasad was distributed after meditation.

THE MOTHER'S FINAL ARRIVAL IN PONDICHERRY

APRIL 24, 2021

A special morning meditation was organized followed by a rendition of 'Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become' by the Ashram community to commemorate the Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry.

CONSTRUCTION

Repair work of the retaining walls was undertaken. Tiles were laid and other repair work was undertaken. A separate room was constructed for carpentry work. Besides, this, building of a green cover on Matri kunj was undertaken.

MADHUBAN GARDENS AND ORCHARDS

This year the Ashram did not receive many visitors to witness the beauty of the floral blooms but Mother Nature, was blissfully unaware of the woes of the pandemic. Flowers bloomed in abundance. Orchards gave bounty of fruits - walnuts, pears, peaches, apricots. Herbs like oregano, parsley, sage, lemon balm, rosemary, lavender, bay leaves grew and were sent to the Delhi Ashram. Vegetables like tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, salad leaves, brinjal, cauliflower, cabbage, carrots, spinach, peas, lady finger, capsicum, beans, gourds, pumpkins, ginger, garlic, turmeric, pulses grew for us to eat and share with the Delhi Ashram.

MADHUBAN COWS

The Ashram now has five cows and the milk is fresh and wholesome. The gardens get manure and organic pesticide is made from cow dung and urine. As the Covid-19 chapter ends we hope to share our learnings of organic crop production with the village folk through hands-on workshops.



Cows in Madhuban

All can be done if the God-touch is there.

Sri Aurobidno



KECHALA, ODISHA

ACTIVITES AT VILLAGE KECHLA, District KORAPUT, ODISHA

Auro Mira Vidya Mandir (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-motivated 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 being in college. Some children have been admitted to other schools in the state while others continue in AMVM and pursue high school education through open school, and college education through the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).



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 hardly there in the villages. One gets sporadic connectivity at a few spots on the hills, but that is not good enough for conducting online 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. There have been no visitors, no senior students from Delhi or anywhere else, who came to volunteer, either individually or in a group. There have been no outreach programmes in the village. In fact, there has been minimal interaction with the villagers. There have been no trips for our children this year.



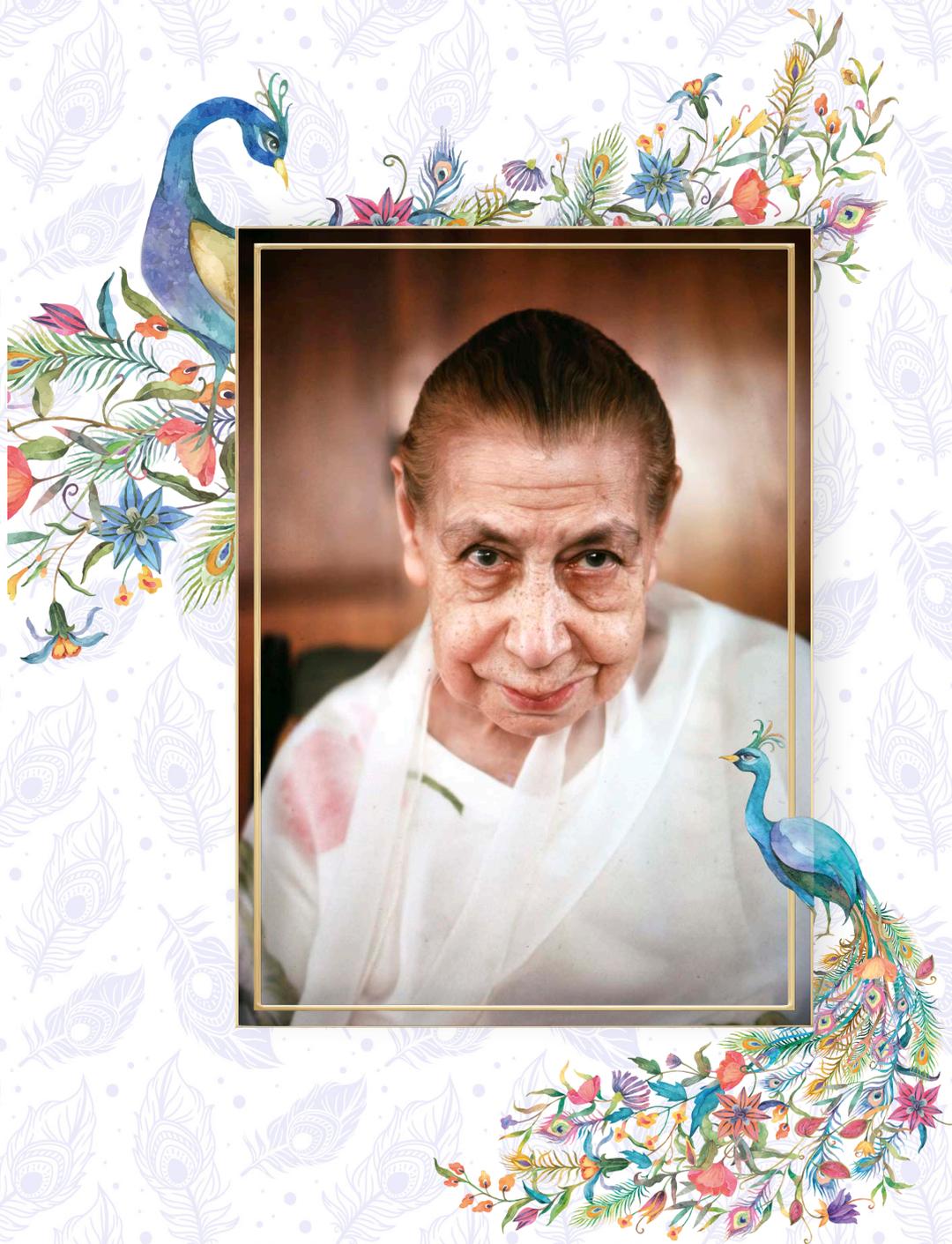
The pandemic year has also created instability and anxiety in the minds of the children in Kechla. The uncertainty with regard to the closure of the school, the absence of regular teachers and visiting volunteers, all has impacted the morale of the children adversely. In view of this, our primary goal became ensuring a stable and creative learning environment for the children. We did this through collective prayers, collective work and celebrations.



This year there were a total of 167 students in the learning centre. Out of these, twelve are pursuing graduation from IGNOU. Fourteen students each are in Class 12 and Class 10.

... in a book there is potentially - not expressed, not manifest -
the knowledge which is in the person who wrote the book.

-The Mother



BOOKS PUBLISHED

BOOKS PUBLISHED

Books are undoubtedly a man's best friend. In them we find what we seek. And so does the spiritual seeker. In keeping with the needs of the spiritual seekers, the Ashram reaches out through its many publications, some in print and some which are circulated electronically. 'Realisation', 'Sri Aravind Karmadhara' and 'The Call Beyond' are publications of the Ashram which have been circulated electronically for many years now. Besides these magazines, the Ashram has also been publishing a steady stream of books extolling the ideologies of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. During the year 2020-21, Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch published the following books.

'Ek Ugra Deshpremi Ker Katha: Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar 'Faquir''

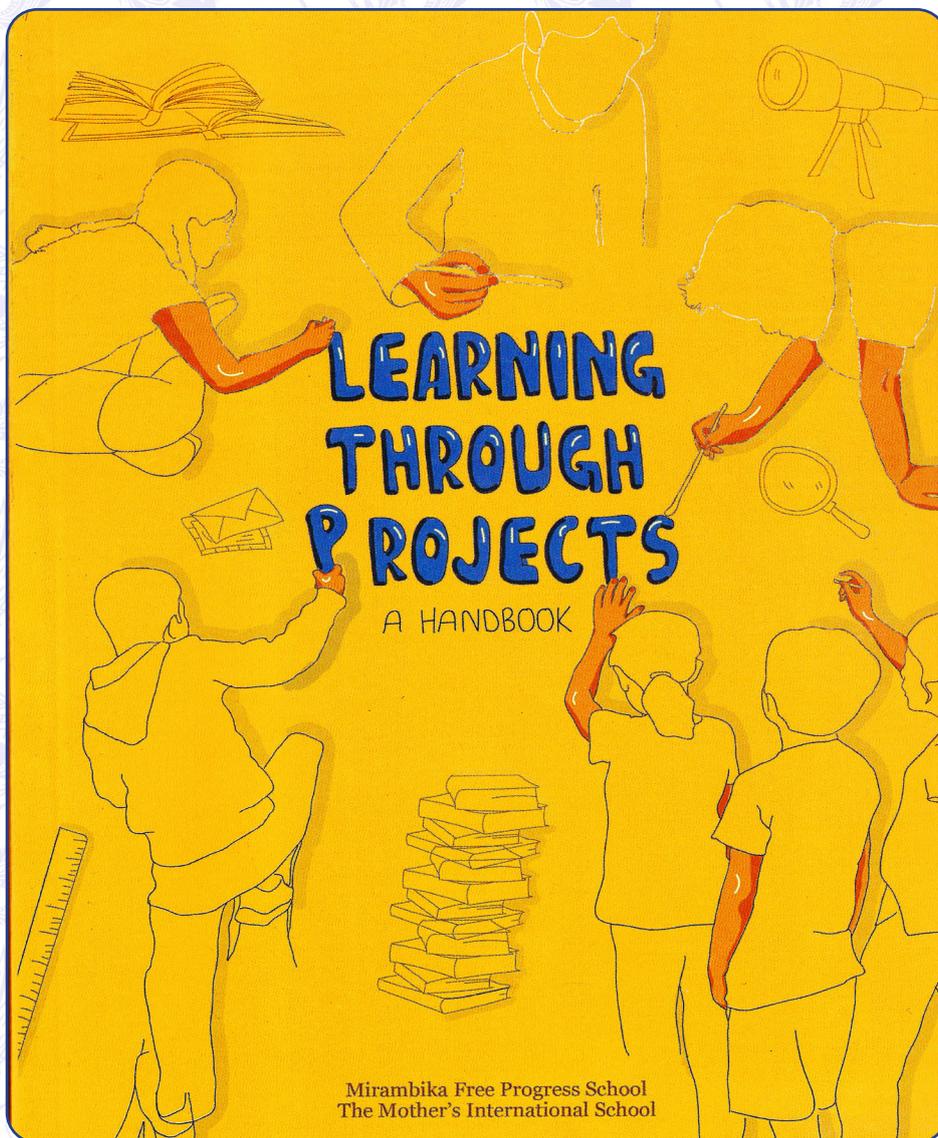
Chachaji's book, 'ek ugra deshpremi ki katha' has been translated in Bengali.



LEARNING THROUGH PROJECTS

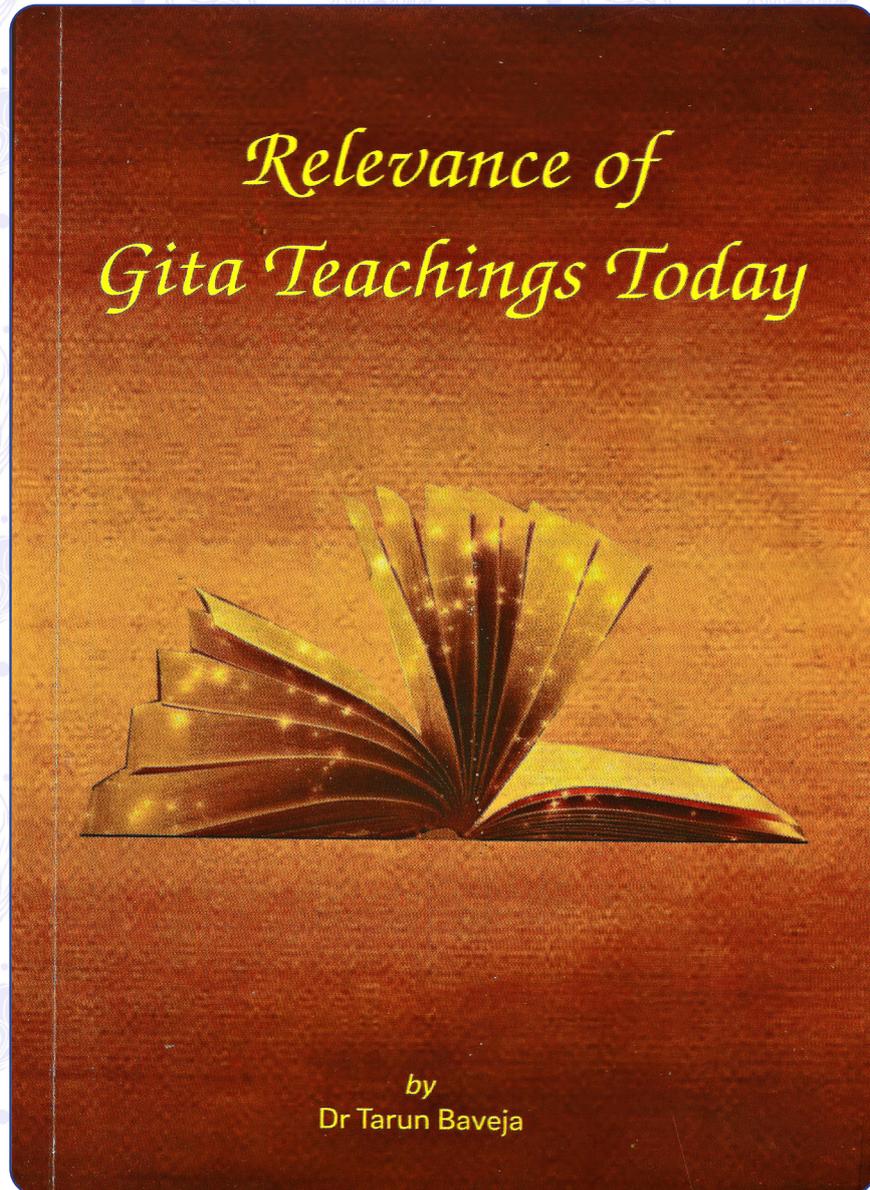
Practices and principles of true teaching fundamental to integral education are incorporated in the projects taken up with the children of MIS and Mirambika. Through this publication we re-evaluated our efforts in this direction.

Most of the projects presented in this book show examples of varied activities while at the same time providing opportunities to the children to use all their faculties namely, faculty of concentration, observation, memory, imagination, reasoning, synthesis, judgement and gain mastery over all of them in order to become effective learners in the long run.



Relevance of Gita Teachings Today

During the Corona Pandemic, Dr. Tarun Bhaveja conducted online Satsang by Whatsapp discussing about the relevance of the teaching of Srimad Bhagwat Gita in today's modern life. His talks are being published in the form of book 'Relevance of Gita Teachings Today'.



To know is good, to do is better, to be that is perfect.

The Mother



Annexures

SCHOLARSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS – 2020-21

STATE	SCHOLARSHIPS		REMARKS
	No. of Children	Amount Spent	
Delhi	3	1,24,000/-	To those doing miscellaneous academic a) Graduate and PG courses b) Music c) Delhi School d) Open School e) Certificate course in Computers f) Program in Digital Marketing g) Course in Painting h) Diploma in Yoga i) Course in Football j) Diploma in Tourism k) PHD l) Driving courses
Odisha	146	52,23,305/-	
Uttarakhand	12	1,80,000/-	
West Bengal	5	40,000/-	
Jodhpur	4	48,000/-	
M.P.	6	1,70,000/-	
Pondicherry	1	13,500/-	
U.P.	1	15,000/-	
Total	178	58,13,805/-	
Grand Total	178	58,13,805/-	

Organic Farm Fresh Produce April 2020 to March 2021 (In Kg) VEGETABLES

Sr.no	Name	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Grand Total
1	Arbi		2											2
2	Bathua											3		3
3	Beetroot	55									2	3	43	103
4	Beans									10	9	38	32	89
5	Brinjal	72	132	240	19	70	56	137	16	30				772
6	Broccoli									10	74.25	74	49	207.25
7	Bhindi	6	36	75	40									157
8	Cabbage	5									33	12	41	91
9	Carrot											81	5	86
10	Cauliflower	28							18	85	29.5		3	163.5
11	Celery												16	16
12	Cholai	220	81	96	11								45	453
13	Coriandar	2	9						1	5	3	20	43	83
14	Ganth Gobhi									34	11	1		46
15	Kasuri Methi										99.05	128		227.05
16	Kaddu	6	1											7
17	Karela	5	46	23	20	20	3	37						154
18	Lauki				13	81	79	38	25	40				276
19	Lemon Grass												6	6
20	Lettuce									4	1	15	3	23
21	Methi									65				65
22	Mint	28	10	4	16								41	99
23	Moringa (Drumstick)									6			4	10
24	Palak	200	52	34				57	52	300	325	500	224	1744.01
25	Parsley												4	4
26	Purple Gobhi										11.05			11.05
27	Red Radish		32						17	70	71	6		196
28	Radish									180	595.7	537	130	1442.7

Birds in Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch Campus



Bank myna

Acridotheres ginginianus



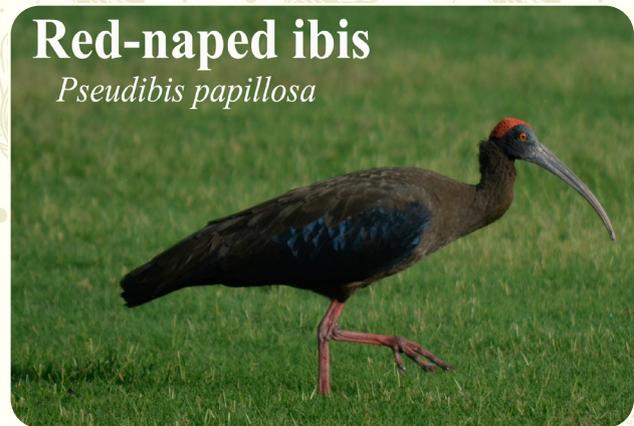
Red-whiskered bulbul

Pycnonotidae



Common Peafowl

Pavo cristatus



Red-naped ibis

Pseudibis papillosa



Shikra

Accipiter badius



Coppersmith barbet

Megalaima haemacephala



Oriental magpie-robin (Male)

Copsychus saularis



Red-vented bulbul

Pycnonotus cafer



The report is a compilation of work made possible during the year 2020-21 by the Mother's Grace, and is offered at Her feet.

ASHRAM FAMILY

The world is preparing
for a big change.

Will you help?



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