

Annual Report for the year - Aug2010 - May2011

First term report August, September, October- 2010

We started Nadya Ornstein Panth Children's Centre at Pampanagar, Taveregere village, Kushtagi taluk, Koppal district, North Karnataka for devadasi, children from 02 August 2010, for 25 children of the age group 2+ to 5+, both boys and girls. The centre is running regularly for the past three months. Prakash is the one and only teacher at present.

We run the centre in Ambedkar Samudaya Bhavan. The panchayat of Pampanagar was good enough to give us the keys of the Bhavan and allow us to run the centre there. The hall is big with plenty of space for young children to move about freely.

We have converted the kalyan mantap into a learning centre with teaching materials arranged in the hall. We have divided the hall into 5 parts for 5 different activities with ample space for each activity.

The activities are as follows-1 Therapeutic activities

2. Creative activities
3. Constructive activities
4. Cultural activities
5. Learning activities

Under 1. We have doll play, kitchen play, clay, dabbling with colour paints and scribbling.

Under 2. Are threading beads, drawing, fixing jig –saw puzzles, tracing pictures, colouring outlines of objects, cutting these and sticking them in a book, finger painting, bamboo brush painting, and paper folding..

Under 3. Children use wooden building blocks of 3 sets of different sizes with accessories. Sand play is provided outside in the compound.

Under 4 at present children have action songs (nursery rhymes) in Kannada and stories. Dramatisation of stories by both teacher and children is part of it.

Under 5 are 1. variety of matching sets-animals, birds, fruits, vegetables, vehicles, flowers, colours, shapes, parts of the body and common objects.

2. Domino cards for the above mentioned items.
3. Names of children in Kannada, names of colours, colour cards, books on

Colours

4. First letter words, picture cards and matching cards for these words.
5. Simple passages for the above, simple readers, workbooks, handwriting Books

6. Number concept-charts, objects, cards, songs.
7. Matching games, individual and group reading materials.
8. Simple story books with illustrations.

All these materials are prepared by the teacher, there are some from the shops presented by friends.

The charts for the various activities are put on the four walls of the hall in order and the materials for the different activities are arranged on shelves in their respective places so the children can choose what they want easily by themselves.

Dolls house is arranged in one corner of the hall. This corner gives the appearance of a small room, children playing there are not disturbed by others. For outdoor play we use the same hall by shifting the shelves to the wall. The compound of the bhavan is not very clean. It is a public place.

The children are introduced to all the activities in the room. They sit for a while, reflect and choose the activity they need for their learning and work on it as long as they need it. There is no pressure put on the children by the adult teacher and this gives the children freedom to choose what they want for their learning and they learn to be responsible for it. They also enjoy their learning. They love to come to school. The teacher observes, helps the children engaged in various activities. The teacher is alert, attentive to the needs of each child. And is on the move all the time,

There is a helper who cleans the hall, prepares snacks for the children, sees to their needs—toilet, washing cleaning etc. She is also a devadasi, a loving and warm person and the children call her amma. She is happy to be involved in this work.

The helper and the teacher come to school by 8.30A.M and 9.00A.M. The school begins at 9.30.A.M. and goes on till 12.30.P.M. and all go for lunch. The 4 and 5 years come back at 1.30 and stay till 2.30. At present their attention span is this and this timing will be increased gradually. The teacher keeps the class ready for next day and goes, while the helper cleans the place and locks the centre and goes home.

15 children come to school on their own regularly and the new 10 are not regular gradually they will be. The helper visits these 10 children's houses and bring them. I have told Prakash not to do house visits at present because of the area, I do it sometimes. Once a relationship is build this will become a regular feature in the programme..

Though the parents are happy and satisfied to send their children to our centre, in their minds they have doubts about our stability in the place. The reason is before August we were running the centre irregularly. We used to come to Bangalore for training programme for 15 days in a month and had classes under a tree or in an open space.

So we realized the need for a parent –teacher meeting and had one on 20 September 2010. 13 out of 20 mothers came. They expressed their doubts and we assured them of our commitment to their children. This satisfied them and they promised to send their children regularly as long as the school exists. The meeting ended cordially and they asked us to have regular meetings at least once in two months and they are willing to come. We agreed to this. The women said “please do come and give us some courage. We don’t have it.

We have plans of having both English and Kannada mediums and the children have a choice. We want to provide “The best education “to our children. We are confident of giving this because we have the methodology and materials for this. There are innovative methods but the most important aspect is the teacher and his attitudes towards children and his values in life.

Parents are well aware that education is very expensive and they cannot afford it for their children. And here they get a good education for their children because of the good Samaritans, the sponsors. They expressed their gratitude and appreciation for them in the meeting.

Prakash said in the meeting that he has an ambition, and a dream. He plans to work with these 25 children for at least 10 to 15 years and form a healthy good value oriented youth who will change their community and also the society. The parents were happy that a young man is dedicating himself for their upliftment.

After the parents meeting the children come somewhat clean to school. The children have either one or two sets of dress. We are contacting persons who could contribute clothes to our children.

At present the children get biscuits and bananas for snacks. To get kerosene is a problem. We are contacting various people in the community for this. Once we get this we begin with nutritious food, eggs, and milk.

Children’s health needs attention. I enquired one young doctor in Bangalore whether she could come once in month and do health checkup for our children and their mothers. She said that she would think about it .We are also looking for local doctors. Hope we will find one soon.

Because of the change of climate, a drought area experiencing rare rain, the health of the people is affected especially the children. We send them to the only PHC available here which is packed with patients all the time with two doctors (husband and wife) working the whole day.

We couldn’t give any first aid to children because one parent advised us not to. The community is superstitious and so better the doctor prescribes. Though the children enjoy school and the learning aspect is going on well there are other aspects on which we are working on and which needs to improve-.health, hygiene, food habits and cleanliness.

We also contacted the education department for getting recognition for the school. What they said was first we need to form a Trust and work for 3 years. Then they give the permission.

Forming a trust is another item in our agenda.

We are also looking for committed youth who could be given two years training to work as teachers in the centre.

This in short and long what we are trying to do in Pampanagar at present. And the progress report of your sponsored child for the first three months of August, September and October will be send to you by the second week of November. The report is ready . We are working on a format.

Second term report – November, December,- 2010. January, February-2011

The number of children coming to the centre has increase to 31. There are more mothers and grandparents who want to admit their children/ grandchildren to the centre. We ask them to wait till June 2011.

There were 34 children attending school in December2010. Out of which 18 children were sponsored by 14 sponsors. One sponsor child and one non sponsor child died. One non sponsored child left Pampanagar. After a gap of five years, the man who is supposed to be the father of the child came and took his two children and wife to his village.

So at present there are 31 children who attend the centre regularly.16 children are sponsored by 12 sponsors. 4 more new sponsors joined and they sponsor the school. Then 3 donors contributed what they could for the school.

So far we had 3 parents' meetings and the 4th one will be in the last week of March 2011. We notice a change in the parents'. From being passive listeners in the first meeting they have come to the next step that is to talk in the group among themselves and with the staff. They haven't come to the stage of taking responsibility and voluntarily helping the school. That is a long way off.

At present there is appreciation of what we do and an un-voiced expectations as well. Once they get the courage to verbalize their expectations, then it will pave the path for discussion about their responsibilities and voluntary services to the centre.

The attendance for parents' meeting is satisfactory. It is between 60% - 65%. Though we like the attendance to go up to 85% - 95% In the present circumstance we have to be happy and satisfied with what we got.

All are working mothers. Those who work as laborers in other's fields go to work in the morning to faraway places and come back only in the evening after 6-00 P.M. children will be left in the house to take care of themselves. After back from work, they cook the food, feed the children and some have to attend to visiting men.

We usually have the meeting between 7.00 - 7.30 P.M. and finish by 8.30 P.M. All could not attend all the meetings. Some mothers sent the grandmothers to attend the meeting if they are not able to come.

This is the reality situation and now that we have become aware of these things we need to work patiently and plan what to do and how to solve this problem.

Coming to children's learning there is satisfactory improvement and change. The 4, 4+, 5 and 5+ come to school regularly on their own. They come by 8.30 A.M. and work till 1.30 P.M. , without going home in between as they did earlier.

From doll play they have shifted to creative activities and learning activities on their own. Occasionally they ask the teacher to allow them to play with dolls, clay, dabbing with paint and sand pit. They are allowed to do this and they play heartily the whole day.

Of the creative activities they are more interested in drawing, finger painting and fixing puzzles. Fixing puzzles is a challenge to them. When they achieve success in fixing one puzzle, they go to another and to another. They even try 30 to 40 pieces and some of them succeed. They do not show much interest in threading beads, coloring pictures, cutting and sticking. The teacher gives them these activities and they do it without much interest. They are interested in creating out lines in the computer and coloring them. This is good but we are aware that they should develop the skills in coloring, cutting and sticking for their own self confidence though these skills may not be necessary in the future world. Without they disliking this activity we are gradually helping them to enjoy these activities. To learn to enjoy working (developing their skills) and experience satisfaction of a job well done develops self-confidence.

In learning activities they are doing well. They could recognize and read their names. They also recognize and read the name and sound of the first letter in their names; recognize and read other words beginning with the first letter. They also can recognize, read and write 12 letters(first letters in their names.) Now they are trying to make 2 and 3 letter words using these 12 letters. They have games, activities, group work and individual work in learning these. The children look forward to these classes.

They are able to grasp the first number concept – few/many; big/small; more/less; etc. This is taught using games and activities.

Hand writing practice shows improvement. They enjoy action songs and stories. They are able to tell the stories in their own words, dramatize the story and also tell their own stories. They still have outdoor play in the hall itself so it's not very satisfactory.

The younger ones 2+, 3, 3+ feel more at home in the centre now. They move about happily singing, dancing, turning, jumping, and rolling on their own. They spent most of their time in dolls corner, building blocks and sand play. They also enjoy clay, dabbing with colors, threading big wooden beads, drawing, throwing a ball and play with pulling toys. They take part in songs and story.

On the whole now, they are not individuals playing on their own that was what they were in the last term, but now they join with their friends and play. They seem happy, talk to each other and also to the teacher. There are 2 or 3 in the group who haven't come to this stage yet. Sharing play materials is not there. They still hold on to the material and do not give it to others. They cry or hit the child who comes to take their play material.

Most of the children come to school regularly. There is more absenteeism in the younger group. There is always some children absent everyday. The percentage attendance for November is 68, December 63, January 72, February 83,

Absenteeism is due to various reasons. Most of these seem unavoidable. When we think of all these reasons which are hindrances to school work we seriously think of having a residential home. A young mother of 22years who lost her husband and her child has joined to help with the younger group of children. In the beginning she used to be very gloomy and crying all the time. Now there is a great change in her.

Our helper is doing a good job. She is responsible, kind and pleasant with the children and has a sense of ownership to the school.

In January we met the doctor of P.H.C. Though busy he gave us time. He showed interest in coming to our school and conduct a health check for all the children. He is willing to come after 5.00 P.M. on any day when we call him. He is busy till February and we will contact him this month.

We also contacted the organization Samraksha who work with H.I.V. patients. Our community needs help in this. They too said they are busy till February and to contact them in March. I did contact the director this month and she said that she will let me know what they could do.

We also met one of the executive committee member of SSA He visited our centre, appreciated the work we are doing. He said that he will do the needful. The main thing we need is the children should be allowed to continue their studies in our centre. On 22nd of this month he will bring the B.E.O. of Koppal district to visit our centre. He is hopeful that the B.E.O. would give the permission.

Finally the report cards of all the children for the second term is ready for the parents meeting.

Third term report – March, April, May – 2011

The main events of this term are-

1. Children's test / progress report – promotion.
2. Parents meeting.
3. Outings – 3days outing to Bangalore / a day in Samuha Campus.

There were 31 children in 4 different groups. 9 children in Preparatory, 5 Nursery B, 10 Nursery A, and 7 Bala Kendra (B.K).

Their performances in different activities were conducted and according to age and performance in different activities they were promoted to the next class. The progress report for the final term was prepared.

We had our 4th and final Parent Teacher meeting for the academic year 2010- 2011. Out of 25 parents 18 parents attended the meeting.

The parents went round the class room, went through the work done by their children and were pleased to see their performance. A few parents compared their children's performance with the others in the group and questioned the teachers. The one answer we could give was that the children who were regular performed well and irregular children suffered. The parents seemed to have understood this and promised to send their children regularly to school.

The report cards of their children were given to them and told them about the promotion to the next class. The parents whose children are promoted to std1 cleared their doubts, whether their child's name will be in the govt. school register, whether they get the benefits of government school and will our school continue? These doubts were cleared- The children's names are entered in the government school register and the B.E.O. has given permission that their child could attend our centre, do the examination in the government school and get promoted to the next class in their register. The books, uniforms and school bag they could go and get from the government school when the school reopens. The mid-day meal the school cannot supply to their children unless their names are marked in their attendance register.

The parents said "we are willing to send our child here because they get attention and good education so we can forgo something. We choose to forgo the benefits as long as we are sure that you will run the school and will not stop in the middle".

The 9 children from Preparatory were promoted to std1, 5 children from Nursery B were promoted to Preparatory

8 children from Nursery A were promoted to Nursery B, 7 children from B.K. were promoted to 4 Nursery A / 3 B.K. (because they were very young)

Out of 31 children 9 children left and 2 children died in September-2010 and December-2010.

9 children's names were removed from the register.. 2 from std 1, 4 from Nursery B, 3 from Nursery A. The reason for this was– In the beginning we took children who came to the centre with an interest to learn – And they did come with an interest to learn and took active part in all the activities and enjoyed school. Later we discovered 4 children belonged to other villages, whose stay here was temporary. Another 3 children's mothers did not have work in one particular place. They shift from village to village for work and periodically they come to Pampanagar for work and then they shift and then come after a long break. 2 children, (one very young) did not want to come to school and they stay in their homes. So we decided there is no point in having these 9 children's names in the register and mark them absent most of the time. But when they come, they could come and attend the school, participate in the activities as long as they are in Pampanagar.

So at the end of the year we are left with 20 children. 7 in std 1, 5 in Prep, 4 in Ns B, 3 in Ns A, and 1 in B.K. There were 3 sponsored children in the left group and one sponsored child died .this created a bit of problem and so we decided not to have individual children sponsored but the centre as a whole is sponsored. And it also avoided the problem of a particular child getting a gift from her/his sponsor which affects the group. Now the gifts are for the whole group and not for an individual child.

For this year being the very first year of the centre, we had very few simple aims so that the children could relax feel free and enjoy school – The aims were

1. Children come to school regularly
2. Enjoy school – feel a sense of belonging to the school.
3. Able to express their feelings without fear and express spontaneously.
4. Able to develop a sense of cleanliness.
5. Able to listen and follow simple instructions.

At the end of the year we were able to achieve these aims satisfactorily. Almost all the children enjoyed coming to school regularly, except the younger ones who were taken by the mothers when they go to their villages or when they get sick. The older ones were regular. They developed an attachment to the centre and to their teacher. They are not willing to go to any other schools even if they are given incentives.

The older children bathe themselves and come to school. The younger ones won't come to school unless their mothers or grandmothers bathe them. They cry and pester their mothers to bathe them. They keep the classroom clean, use tissue paper to wipe their noses, get their finger nails cut regularly, hair oiled and combed and wear clean clothes though they are old. They also began to express their feelings little by little to their teacher.

In the month of May- on 24, 25, 26, 9 children from Preparatory and Std.1 had an outing to Bangalore for the first time all of them have seen a train and travelled in a train. A few have travelled in a jeep/bus before. They were accompanied by the teacher and the helper. Samuha jeep dropped them at Koppal railway station and picked them from Koppal after their return.

In Bangalore they stayed at Alma Villa. APD kindly gave their school van to bring them from the railway station, take them for sightseeing to, Bannerghata Park and to H.T. (horticultural centre) at Kalasnalli. They spent time roaming about, climbing trees etc. at Alma Villa. This was the first time they were away from home and their family, the first time they travelled in a vehicle most of them got sick but they bravely faced it without any fuss and no serious problems happened. On the whole they enjoyed their trip.

Besides this they also had an outing for one day to Samuha Campus, Tawaragera before school closed for summer vacation.

On April.10. 2011 we closed the school for summer vacation.

This year we received from our sponsors Rs.1,83,915-00 and from that Rs. 1,53,579-00 spent and left with Rs. 30,336-00.

Everything had a happy ending with regard to the centre -children, the parents, the community and we ourselves as teachers of their community. Then an anxiety shadows our happiness, that is how to get funds for the work to continue and progress for the next year?.

We need persons with similar interest and thinking to support this programme. Together with one mind and heart and spirit we build a strong healthy, constructive community.

K T Margaret