



SRI SRI VIDYA MANDIR



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ANNUAL REPORT 2016





## Mission Statement

To ensure transformation of the Indian Tribal through education of the Tribal Child.

Inspired by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Founder of the Art of Living Foundation, and moved by his personal encounters with poverty-stricken tribal families in India, Brij Chawla and a small team of volunteers started building schools in the highly remote and inaccessible tribal villages of Jharkhand in 1999.

Today, Tribal School Project runs 20 schools that provide free education, from Kindergarten to High School, to around 3,700 Indian tribal children.

*Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's vision is to have "a broad-minded education, accompanied by a warm heart. Education is not just information. It is culturing of our behaviour and attitude. It is our ability to perceive things better. We need to bring in creative ideas. We should empower village youth, and bring them self-esteem."*



**TRIBAL EDUCATION = Seeding the long-term upliftment of the tribal community... starting with today's generation**

## Student Strength at Sri Sri Vidya Mandir (As on 31st March 2016)

Sl. No.	School Location	State	Girls	Boys	Total
1	Khunti	Jharkhand	108	98	206
2	Kudri, Torpa	Jharkhand	77	66	143
3	Babuline	Jharkhand	73	56	129
4	Chakdoha	Jharkhand	78	104	182
5	Chhatradanga	Jharkhand	98	115	213
6	Chhota Dhadika	Jharkhand	103	119	222
7	Deoli	Jharkhand	103	95	198
8	Haludhbani	Jharkhand	90	110	200
9	Henduljuri (H S)	Jharkhand	144	171	315
10	Henduljuri (Primary)	Jharkhand	153	161	314
11	Kalchiti (Primary)	Jharkhand	125	121	246
12	Kalchiti (Middle)	Jharkhand	47	61	108
13	Kesharpur	Jharkhand	90	107	197
14	Dhiridhi	Jharkhand	54	34	88
15	Pathra Sai	Jharkhand	—	—	—
16	Salgadi	Jharkhand	96	129	225
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>1,439</b>	<b>1,547</b>	<b>2,986</b>
17	Pandua, Jhalda	W Bengal	122	154	276
18	Mahuda, Jhalda	W Bengal	82	159	241
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>204</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>517</b>
19	Metropolitan	W Bengal	37	45	82
20	Garcha	W Bengal	27	23	50
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>64</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>1,707</b>	<b>1,928</b>	<b>3,635</b>





## “Would You Really Care For Me?”

Today’s poverty-stricken Tribal People are the yesteryear’s neglected tribal children.

Support our effort to educate today’s Tribal Children to empower tomorrow’s tribal community:

- Be a **SPONSOR**
- Be a **VOLUNTEER**



### Vyakti Vikas Kendra, India

164/C/50, Lake Gardens, Kolkata - 700 045, Ph: 4064 4205/2422 6553  
 Mobile: 9836581929, E-mail: bbc108@yahoo.com, Web: aoltribal.org

#### Yes, I'd like to sponsor a tribal child

Contribution per child : Rs. 6,000/- per annum or Rs. 500/- per month

##### My Option

- One Child Rs. 6,000
- Two Children Rs.12,000
- ..... Children Rs.....
- At this time I would like to make a donation of Rs. ....

Name .....

Address.....

..... Pin .....

Phone No..... Mobile .....

E-mail : .....

Date of Birth.....

##### Please tick the appropriate:

I would like to send my contribution Half Yearly/ Annually.

I will contribute Rs. .... /month.

Please send your representative to collect the amount in first week of the month.

Please accept my first contribution of Rs. .... in cash / cheque. The cheque is to be made in favour of **VVKI - Tribal Welfare**.\*

Please send receipt at the address given above.

PAN .....

(Please attach a xerox copy of PAN Card)

Signature

\* Donations are eligible for Tax Relief under Section 80G

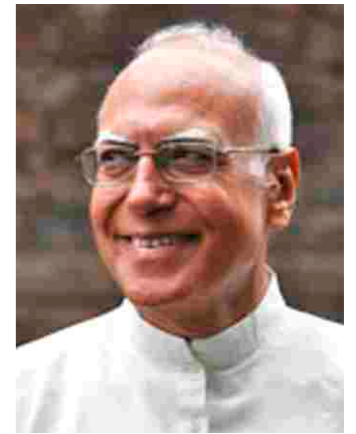
## From the Chairman's Desk

### 'Small Step on a Long Journey'

Way back in 1999, with inspiration from H. H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (Founder of Art of Living Foundation), we saw a dream – a dream of getting back our 90 million indigenous or tribal people from neglect to mainstream.

**We believed that Tribal Development MUST happen and COULD happen! And that was possible with a focus on the Tribal Child.**

Ravaged by malnutrition, exploitation and abuse, and thrown into the darkness of illiteracy, these unfortunate tribal children grow up into faceless adults – unable even to satisfy the basic needs of life. For them, life offers miserable challenges, right from infancy.



### Since the beginning

The beginning was made in a primitive village Chhatradanga in Ghatsila Block of District Singhbhum (East), Jharkhand, India on 15th April 1999 (their local New Year Day).

The idea was to set up a school where children would not be subjected to “conventional teaching” alone with its strictly-set syllabi imparted through typical classrooms, homework and examinations. The thrust was on making the child ‘**an active participant in the learning process**’. Instead of “teaching” them, it was a conscious effort to help them in “learning”. Activities such as yoga, mediation, sports and singing were to help them to become focused individuals (not academic whiz kids). The outcome of these efforts is for all to see, which this report highlights.

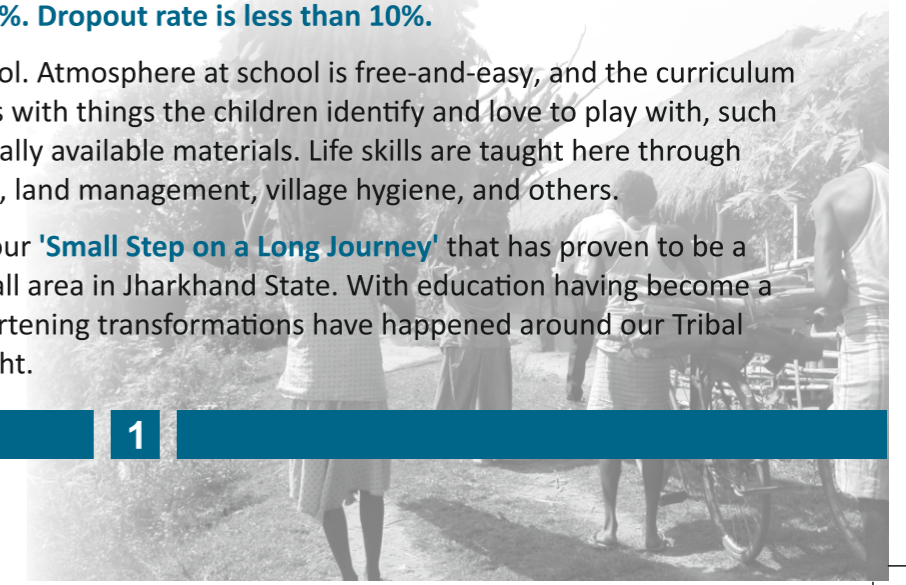
**Sri Sri Vidya Mandirs are free schools.** Apart from free education, students are provided with all their educational needs – books, stationery, uniforms, etc, as well as regular and nutritious mid-day meals.

Yet, we faced several challenges. The first and largest challenge was to convince the villagers of the necessity of education, and this was a daunting task. The second biggest challenge was finding teachers who would be closer to our educational ethos.

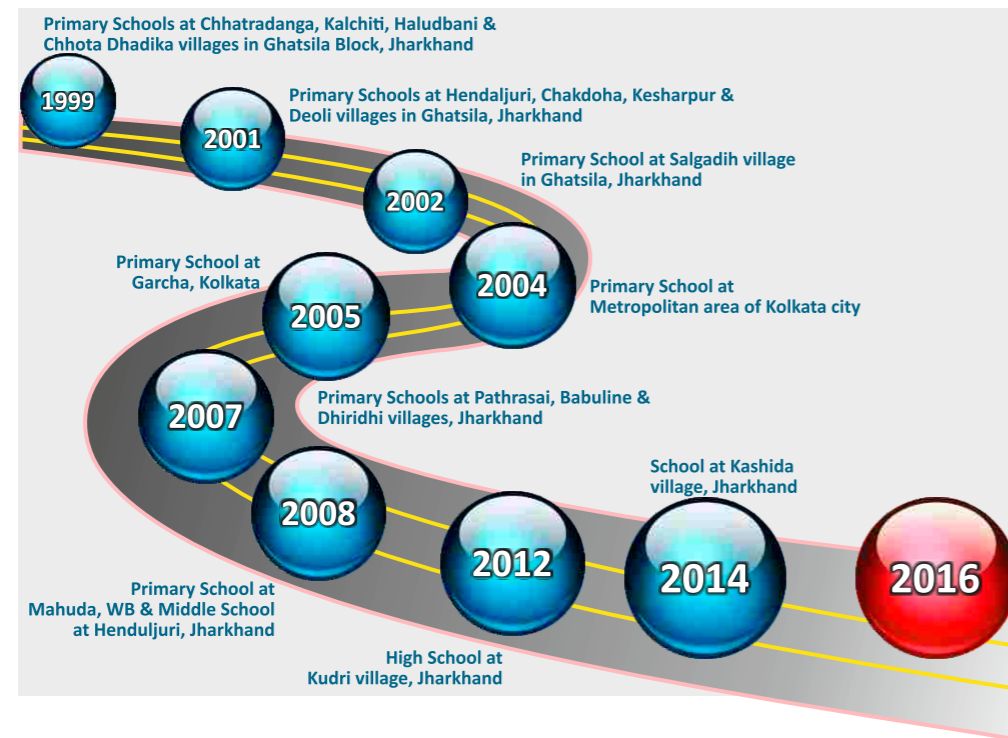
We faced and dealt with these, and many other challenges. The efforts paid off. **Today there are 20 schools in the Ghatsila, Dumuria and Khunti Blocks of Jharkhand – catering to about 3,700 students from 60 villages.** The success of the project can be seen from some basic figures: **Over 45% of the students are girls. Attendance is over 90%. Dropout rate is less than 10%.**

The children simply love to come to school. Atmosphere at school is free-and-easy, and the curriculum flexible. Teaching methods involve games with things the children identify and love to play with, such as, pebbles, sticks, marbles and other locally available materials. Life skills are taught here through interesting activities, like organic farming, land management, village hygiene, and others.

Today, we look back with satisfaction at our '**Small Step on a Long Journey**' that has proven to be a giant leap towards development of a small area in Jharkhand State. With education having become a regular aspect of life for these tribal, heartening transformations have happened around our Tribal Schools. Our convictions proved to be right.



## Milestones



## Seeding Hope

The Tribal School Project is about educating today's tribal children, who will be the seeds of progress towards bearing the fruits of development for their future generations. The focus of the Project is not on mere academic accomplishments, but on **holistic development of the child's moral values, eco-consciousness, community-oriented spirit, practical wisdom and spiritual maturity.**

Schooling for tribal children must be mindfully focused on equipping them with knowledge and skills for capacity development, suited to their tribal community. Self-reliance is the key, which is why meditation and yoga are part of the daily school routine. These help to calm their minds and sharpen concentration. Students are taught the elements of health and hygiene, and made to practise environmental-friendly habits; thus imbuing in them essential human values.

Special focus is laid upon **providing education to tribal girls** (who have traditionally been ignored). Besides meeting the NCERT academic curricula and syllabi, the holistic approach to teaching-learning emphasises nurturing of practical wisdom.

The Project aims to nurture these children as entrepreneurs, teachers, doctors, engineers, masons, tradesmen, etc. The road is a long one, but we believe that as long as we walk the journey together, the future will surely be a bright one. **These children are the hope of the tribal community.**



## Impressions

### A student says...

*"I have just passed my school final examination and have scored 79% marks. I am happy not because of my academic performance only, but also because of the values I learnt from my school. Knowledge from books is, of course, important, but more than that, I cherish the moral values we get from our elders and from school. To know your environment, to be aware of your duties, are all really very important. **This school has taught me to be a world citizen. It has taught me my duties towards my elders, my village, my community, and to my nation.** With all these qualities, now I am sure I will do something worthwhile in my life, and contribute to the upliftment of the society."*



### A teacher speaks...

**Smt. Ranjana Sathpathy**, Senior Sanskrit Teacher, Henduljuri High School, says,



*"I have gained a lot of experience since joining Sri Sri Vidya Mandir at Henduljuri High School. First of all I have developed self-confidence. Working here has given me an opportunity to learn how to communicate with the tribal children, in a language they understand and appreciate. Sri Sri Vidya Mandir is different from other schools in many ways. There are many facilities available here, such as computer labs, mid-day meals, yoga, medical check-ups, singing, drawing, dancing and a well-equipped teachers training centre. Here, the essence of knowledge needed to be a perfect human being is imparted, and in a very effective manner. I am very happy and proud to be a part of this organization."*

### Smt. Anindita is both a teacher and a student.

Married young, she had earlier dropped out of school. Now, on a course alongside her daughter, she is Head Mistress and also teaches English at our Tribal School. She says,

*"I missed out on education when I was young, which is why I am very aware that education is very crucial for the future of these tribal children. It is education that will help them get out of their poverty cycles."*



### ■ Mid-day meals

A research paper by Stephanie Bonds from the University of California, Berkeley, found mid-day meals to be extremely successful in raising enrolment rates, particularly among children from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds. The effect, the paper says, was more pronounced for those with the least educated parents and lowest economic status.

We vouch from our experiences that this is so true. Our mid-day meals for underprivileged children (in all areas – rural, tribal and slum) is aimed to:

- Avoid classroom hunger
- Address malnutrition
- Increase school enrolment
- Increase school attendance
- Improve socialisation among castes
- Make the school environment more friendly (when they serve each other, and eat together)

#### What We Do

We add 'Nutri Nuggets' (a soyabean product) in adequate quantity to exceed the minimum prescribed stipulation of protein intake. The prescribed quantity is 20 grams of pulses, but we provide 30 to 40 grams per 100 grams of rice, which is one-third of the quantity of rice.

Additionally, most of the schools use organic farming practices to teach the benefits of natural farming to students. It is from here that we get vegetables for the children's mid-day meals. During winter months, when vegetables are available in abundance, we serve more vegetables to increase the nutrient content of the meals.

#### Students' Participation

- To ensure children's participation in the mid-day meal program, every child is asked to bring in a

small piece of firewood and one or two pieces of some vegetable grown at his/her home or farm. All vegetables thus collected are mixed together, and cooked with the fuel brought in by the children.

- To imbibe feelings of belonging, food is served by the elder students to the younger ones.
- Children wash their own utensils. They are taught to save water while doing so, and to remember to keep the premises clean.
- All mid-day meal cooking is done by 2 to 3 parents in rotation – for which they are paid. It is seen that when parents cook themselves, they ensure that the quality and quantity of food is adequate for every child. Parents who cook are served their meals at the schools.



### ■ Academic Excellence

"Success is dependent on effort, and success is the sum of small efforts."

**2015: Yet another year of academic achievements, with the third successive batch passing the Jharkhand Board examinations with 100% pass percentage.** Our High School itself is fortunate to have a group of 12 teachers – well-trained, experienced, dedicated and capable of fulfilling the needs of today's student generation from underprivileged backgrounds.



### ■ Award Day

All students who passed were presented with wrist watches by our teaching faculty. The teachers were proud to honour the successful students who achieved so much in spite of having faced several odds.



ONE SUCCESS STORY from 2015-16



**Naresh Hansda** started his Sishu Class from Henduljuri Primary School in 2004. Extremely regular with his classes, he scored 75% in the Board Examinations from Henduljuri High School. Naresh went on to join St Xavier's School at Ranchi for his Intermediate studies. With dreams in his eyes, sheer determination, and blessings of his parents and teachers, he studied earnestly and completed his Intermediate, but unfortunately did not qualify in the Engineering Entrance Examinations. But as they say, "Where there is a will, there is a way." Naresh used his 'wasted year' to learn from and correct his mistakes, worked hard towards his target, that too with double enthusiasm. Next year, he came out with flying colours at the Entrance Examinations, and got admission into **BIT Sindhri**.

On 19th August 2016, Naresh visited his alma mater and gave a message to his junior schoolmates. "Have a dream and don't set it on your eyes, as it might flow down with tears. Set your dream in your heart, where every heart beat will remind you of your dream.

And then no one will be able to stop you from achieving it. Set your target to your own ability," were his inspirational words. He advised them "to not make excuses for every problem, but to find solutions... because no one other than oneself can solve one's own problem."

He went on to say that undoubtedly his parents' blessings and motivations helped him go so far, but the guidance of SSVM teachers and Chawla ji paved the road for him. The discipline, punctuality and inspiration he got from school made his journey ahead smooth and easy. He faced many hurdles, but never lost hope. His positive attitude was the greatest knowledge he received from Guruji while at Sri Sri Vidya Mandir – so he said.

Teachers

Our success is to a large part owed to the combined effort of our teachers. They have continually awakened joy withing the pupils, so as to ease the learning process for these first-generation learners. Our schoolchildren have naturally moved towards creative expressions and application of knowledge.



Skill Training

**Women Empowerment** is not a slogan but a creed with Art of Living.

To empower our girl students, a proper **Sewing Centre** was established. Besides training our own students (Class VI onwards), we impart free sewing skills to village women desirous of learning this craft.

The session 2015-16 was remarkable because this year, under the dynamic leadership of Smt. Ranjana Sathpathy, production of the Sewing Centre exceeded by nearly 25%. After providing uniforms to all our 20 schools, this year the Centre could cater to outside needs also.

We are happy to observe that sewing brings in the much-needed steady income to both, the mother and the girl child.

Also, our **Technical Training Centre** provided Basic and Advanced training in Electric Wiring – both Household and Industrial – to about 100 youth. The trainees were our own school students of Classes IX and X, along with some local village youth.



## ■ eLearning and Solar Power System

### Mission Statement

Our citizens of tomorrow who are students today shall be living in the age of full electronic media. We must therefore ask these questions today: Are we giving the kids proper technology-based education? Are we giving proper exposure to our tribal in the use of computers and the Internet?

All conventional methods of teaching/learning must be constantly supplemented with latest innovations to keep pace with changing times.

### Problem

Our strong desire to introduce eLearning met with a huge stumbling block – of running these sophisticated gadgets in the absence of steady supply of electric power with balanced voltage! The management struggled for three years, while depending on the locally-available grid supply, but the mission ‘Digital Classrooms’ could not be accomplished due to erratic voltage and the ‘God knows when power will be available’ situation.

### Solar Power System

However “where there a will there is a way.” The solution we found was simple, but expensive. Gradually, and in phases, all schools were provided with **Solar Panels**, along with needed hardware. Today, solar power is available in Henduljuri High and Primary, Haludbani, Kesharpur, Babuline, Kalchiti Middle and Primary, Chhatradanga, Deoli, Chhota Dadhika and Chakdoha. One school at Salgadi village in the remote Dumaria Block, and two schools, one High School and one Primary School, in the Khunti district, are also using solar power. **The total number of beneficiaries of solar power through these schools add up to nearly 3,300 people.**

### Internet Connection

In spite of the provision of solar power supply, we found that we could not optimize the use of the much-needed hardware in the absence of **Broadband connections**. Then, RailTel came to our rescue. Now, ever since June 2015, all our schools in Ghatsila block have Internet connections, with reasonable speeds.

Sitting in their village classrooms, these children are excited and curious, as they **explore a world hitherto beyond their imagination.**

Attendance has improved. **Teaching and learning are no longer limited to textbooks.**



## ■ Excursions

Sri Sri Vidya Mandirs recognise the importance of school excursions for the holistic development of the child. These are regarded as valuable learning experiences.

### Aims of Excursions:

- Working together in a team environment is nurtured.
- Children’s get a clearer perspective of the real world. The Tribal Child who has never seen any place outside his village gets a first-hand knowledge of the world where he is going to work in the future.
- Their performance in different cities helps our donors to know the impact their donations are making on the life these first-generation learners.



### ■ *Plantation*

**Trees symbolise the spirit of service, as they serve – dead or alive.** They sustain ecological balance when standing tall, and protect and serve as wood after death. We humans too need to give something back in the same altruistic spirit.

**In tribal culture, before axing a tree, tribal people would ask permission of the tree to be cut, promising to plant five trees as compensation for one cut tree. Today, these rituals are sadly being abandoned as irrelevant.**

Our schoolchildren have learnt to revere trees. Plantation is a major activity taken up by them, often with the help of their parents. The school compounds and several tracts of land that were barren and desolate a decade back, have today been transformed into lush herbal and fruit gardens. The fruits, naturally, are for all to share.

**An ancient text says: “God is a forest. Worship the forest.”**



### ■ *Mobile Dispensary*

Medicare facilities have been virtually non-existent in the tribal villages surrounding our schools.

Now, our Mobile Dispensary, with a qualified doctor, visits these villages to conduct regular check-ups of the schoolchildren and their parents, as also of the other villagers in these areas.

**On each trip about 60 to 70 patients are provided with free treatment. About 12 such camps are held every month.**

This year we completed about 15 years of this medical service.

**We are happy to note that in 2015-16 we have been able to help the population of 60 villages surrounding our schools – through 110 camps covering 6,000 patients.**





## ■ Computer Education for Teachers



### What Teachers Need to Know

Teachers need to be well-versed with resources and technologies in order to connect their students with the suitable sources of information and knowledge. Only then can children be empowered to self-explore, whether it be exploring newer ideas or exploring ways to handle situations. In 2015-16, emphasis was laid upon convincing teachers to change their teaching approach to keep it in tune with the ever-changing realities of the world. Now that we are working at this, **it will help these first-generation learners to take full advantage of the Internet Revolution.**

### Benefit for Students

The outcome showed that this kind of professional development not only made the teachers feel better about their practices, but it also made learning more effective and gainful for the students. Creating an environment where teachers themselves find opportunities for continual self-learning is the likeliest way to ensure greater achievements for the students on their path to survival and success.

## ■ Staff Enrichment Program



## ■ Storytelling Competition

Stories are an inseparable part of our formative years. It is indeed rare to find kids who don't love stories.

Storytelling competitions were initiated at our schools in 2015. Students of a particular school tell stories before their schoolmates, and often in the presence of students and teachers of nearby Sri Sri Vidya Mandirs.

### The objectives of these competitions are:

- To nurture the ability of these children to put their thoughts together, and to then put these thoughts into words
- To give pupils the opportunity to use English in an interesting, authentic and a creative manner
- To enhance their confidence in communicating in English
- To enhance their confidence while speaking in the presence of others, especially strangers
- To hone their speaking and elocution skills



## Annual Sports Day

26th January, 2016 was an occasion that brought together our students from the Ghatsila Block in an amazing display of their talents at sports.

**The Annual Sports Day – named as ‘Rangoli’ – was true to its name.** The word ‘rangoli’ denotes a riot of colourful celebration with a festive spirit; which is what the day was – for the children, their teachers, their families and the several guests who had poured in from nearby towns and cities.

The meticulous March Past, conducted to the sounds and strains of inspirational lyrics, bore testimony to the marchers synchronization with life. Fun-filled field events followed, with every child making efforts to participate in all possible events!

The focus was of the children was singular – to simply show their best. (Fortunately, these tribal are ignorant of the concepts of competition and winning/losing, and hence not exposed to the accompanying tensions and anxieties). Their participation itself was their prize! Noticeably, the ones who did not make it to the Victory Stand were as happy as the ones who had made it, as if saying, “We are together, through thick and thin.”



## Teachers are also Learners

Our country faces huge shortage of good teachers, and the situation is much more complex when it comes to finding qualified teachers in tribal areas to teach first-generation learners. This is one more reason why tribal children have always been so far from mainstream education.

At Sri Sri Vidya Mandirs, this difficulty is being overcome by our **Teacher Training Centre** that has done a commendable job in providing training to teachers.

**This training is given by our in-house teachers, as well as by visiting faculty.**

Staying updated is the key to success in any field, especially in the field of education; and our teachers have constantly worked towards this – by attending various workshops and other educational training programs.

The results are rewarding. The concept of ‘learn-while-doing’ was imbibed in our teachers, and this has improved the schools’ academic performances, as well as raised students’ attendance.

**12 teachers training programs were held in 2015-16 for various levels of teachers, from our 20 schools.**



### ■ Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

As we all know, **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission)** is a campaign that was launched by the Government of India in 2014. This mass movement initiative that operates throughout the country aims to create awareness of the significance of cleanliness within the Indian people, and to motivate them to ensure a Clean India.

Children and teachers of our school are committed to continue this important program initiated in 2014 to improve the aesthetics and hygienic conditions of their villages .

Each school has adopted a nearby village, and pledged to the implementation of the spirit of the Abhiyan by involving all the villagers, especially the local Panchayat members.

**In this way, our 20 schools have adopted their 20 villages under this scheme during this year.**



### ■ International Day of Yoga

Yoga is an ancient discipline that originated in India almost 6,000 years ago. As we know, incorporating yoga into our routines can keep us healthy and focused.

All students of Sri Sri Vidya Mandirs practise a few minutes of yoga every day before starting their classes. Additionally, International Day of Yoga was observed with a **Group Yoga Program**, which had a very special flavour. The aim of this special day was to make the entire community aware of the benefits of yoga.

Students, teachers and other staff members got together to do yoga on 21st June 2015 – International Day of Yoga. **All our schools took part in this momentous program.** Parents of the students as well as Panchayat members were also invited to be a part of this event, which was held at the Block and Panchayat Headquarters.



### Bal Mela

It was November 2015. The students of the Junior Sections were very excited after their periodic assessments. They and their teachers wanted to do something new to celebrate, and came up with the plan of having a 'Bal Mela' (Children's Fair).

Students of four neighbouring Sri Sri Vidya Mandirs got together at a common place in the outdoors. The idea was to enjoy the sun during the winter months, along with having fun with outdoor games and educational puzzles. There were, of course, lot of prizes that the kids were aiming at. The event went on for almost 5 to 6 hours, after which the children were taken back to their homes through school transport.

**This Bal Mela was so very well appreciated by the locals – after all it was the first such event, not just for the schools, but also one where the children of the surrounding village joined in.**

The event has been a great learning experience, since it encourages interest, understanding and appreciation among the children. More importantly, this provides opportunities for teachers and children to interact informally and exchange ideas.



### Celebration

*"Life is a celebration of the awakenings of new beginnings, and the wonderful surprises that enlighten the soul."* ~ This vision of H. H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar lays importance upon moral and spiritual development of students. Each person needs to take out time for learning, growing, loving, and exploring; and we have several occasions to celebrate – formal and informal – in our country. **Perhaps the best thing about any celebration is that it makes our lives richer and more wholesome.** Celebrations allow us to relax and unwind in the midst of our busy lives. In fact, we often use celebrations as excuses to enjoy ourselves.

At Sri Sri Vidya Mandirs, we always think of ways to incorporate celebrations into our lives by bringing children together in informal friendly settings. We go ahead and 'make a big deal' out of occasions such as religious festivals, Independence Day, Teacher's Day and others. 13th May, which is the birthday of our Founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, is a big occasion every year for us to express our gratitude towards Him. The day is celebrated with several cultural activities, followed by distribution of sweets.

