



A BREIF REPORT ON OUR ACTIVITIES

Narainpur is the gateway to Abujmarh Hills in Chhattisgarh. A 'marh' (Highlands) which is 'abujh' (unknown) is Abujmarh. True to its name, it still continues to be rather unknown and unsurveyed an area. Surrounded on all sides by a chain of hills and dense forests, this vast tract of land stretching into some 4,000 Sq. Km. is the homeland of 'Abujhmarias' one of the scheduled 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' (PVTG). The 'Abujhmarias' live in an inaccessible geographical terrain that remains cut-off from the rest of the world during the rainy season for almost six months. Because of their extreme geographical isolation for long, the Abujhmarias have very primitive economy, their mainstay being the slash- and-burn cultivation practiced on the steep hill slopes. They also collect forest produce like Chironji, Tamarind, Resin, Cocoons, Sinhadi, Mahua, Sal-seeds, Tendu-leaves, Lac etc. They make brooms of Fulbahari grass, some bamboo articles, and rope from grass. Parts of their dietary needs are met from the crops they grow but they have to depend solely upon the outside world for their meagre necessities like salt, chilies, tobacco, and clothes. Literacy is very low and ill-health stalks the land with malnutrition, anaemia and diseases like malaria, lung infections including T.B, skin diseases. The rate of infant and maternal mortality is quite high. Apart from being disadvantaged by extremely poor communication and few sources of income, they are economically exploited by various agencies. The tribal areas are thus beset with problems; low productivity, dispersal habitations, shifting cultivation, wanton destruction of forests, isolation and inaccessibility, weak co-operative and marketing infrastructure, rampant and never-ending land grab by outsiders leading to dispossession and systematic exploitation by vested interest are some of the common features which characterize the Abujmarh area.

No doubt it is an uphill task but India has to unite all such groups with the main stream of our national life if India is to take her rightful place in the comity of nations. The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narainpur, has been rendering services among the Abujhmarias (PVTG) in Abujmarh since its inception in 1985 to eradicate illiteracy, ill-health and poverty in a spirit of Service of God in Man, without any distinctions of caste, creed, colour, sex or religion.

As Swamiji understood long ago, "All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves". We try to motivate the target group to develop their self-confidence, innate qualities in a natural way by providing them the required conditions to do so, strictly in accordance with the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, without disturbing their innate tribal culture, to fight against poverty, ignorance and ill-health. With the support of State Government and Central Government, Charitable trusts and well wishers we have been able to render the following services for last 27 years in Abujmarh.

I. EDUCATION:

A Model Residential School – Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Vidyapeeth (from 1st to 12th class) is being run on Public school pattern in our base camp at Narainpur exclusively for the Tribal students, giving them maximum facilities, all free (the students are provided free accommodation, food, stationery, uniforms, medical facilities, etc.), with value based education, to ensure their all-round development, to make them physically strong, mentally agile, culturally enriched, to imbibe in them a spirit of independence and pride so that they can stand on their own and proudly join the main stream of the nation. The present student strength of the school is 1004 (650 boys and 354 girls) of which 75% students are from the Abujhmaria community. In our Model Higher Secondary School, there are 4 (four) streams viz. Science (both Mathematics and Biology), Commerce, Agriculture and Home Science. Mathematics and Science subjects are being taught in English medium from class III onwards.

In the most interior of Abujhmarh, the Mission runs 5 free residential schools - Vivekananda Vidyamandirs (2 Middle & 3 Primary Schools) at Akabeda, Kutul, Kachchupal, Irakbhatti and Kundla villages. The total strength of students during the current academic session is 683 (524 boys and 159 girls) of whom 85% are from Abujhmaria Community. The total strength of the students our Schools is 1687 (1174 boys and 513 girls).

Sports and Co-curricular Activities:

In addition to educational activities, our boys are also provided special training in sports like Kho-Kho, Volley ball, Gymnastics, Athletics, Football etc. During October-November every year, a 5-day Sports Meet is conducted in collaboration with Bhilai Steel Plant, Bhilai in which about 2000 tribal students of Narainpur, Orchha, Antagarh and Koileebeda Blocks participate. All students are provided free board and lodging facilities for all the days during the Meet. Every year our students participate in Regional, State and National level competitions in Kho-Kho, Gymnastics, Athletics, Football etc. Last year our Football team (under 17) became champion twice in the State (Subrata Cup in State level and under nineteen 'Chhattisgarh Open Football Championship') and represented Chhattisgarh in Subrata Cup All India Tournament held in Delhi. There is a large outdoor stadium and also a large gymnasium, both of national standard, within the Ashrama campus. The students are given training in Hindustani music, both vocal and instrumental, local folk dance, various arts, agriculture etc. The school's band is adjudged the best in the state, and has taken part in the Republic Day Parade in Delhi. Training is also imparted in various sports and in making varieties of handicraft such as candles, chalk, agarbatti, book-binding, jute-craft, stone-craft, woodcraft, bamboo-craft etc. during the Anand Mela as described later on.

Cultural Functions:

Celebration of different events and festivals of religious and national importance throughout the year such as the Republic Day, the Holi, Rakshabandhan, Independence Day, Janmastami, Ganesh Puja, Saraswati Puja, the anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Maa Sarada, Swami Vivekananda etc. are celebrated with grandeur and solemnity that forms a part of the attractive features of our institution.

Excursion & Diversions :

This apart, the school sends its students on excursions to different parts of Chhattisgarh as well as other states in the country (Class V, VIII, X and XII every year) so as to enable them to familiarise themselves with the diverse cultural traditions giving uniqueness, colour and vibrancy to our composite Indian culture.

The annual function popularly known as 'Ananda Mela' is organized for all the students of our Abujhmarh (interior centres) & Narainpur Schools to encourage and develop their local culture and traditions. In the month-long Mela the students exhibit their skills and hidden talents in Sports, local folk dance, drama, folk songs and patriotic songs.

The Ashrama also motivates, guides, and helps the students for pursuing higher studies in various fields by providing them monetary help, scholarships etc. We also send our students for agriculture training and in nursing course (B.Sc. and GNM) to our sister institutions in other states as well.

Most of our passed out students are now well established in the main stream of the society as engineers, doctors, professors, teachers and officers in different organisations. They are now serving the country as useful, self-reliant, and responsible citizens.

Computer Training Centre:

Keeping in view the needs of modern education, Vivekananda Computer Training Centre (V.C.T.C.) was started on 29th April, 2008 to train our students from class VI onwards under the careful supervision of competent instructors. Students from class VI to XII are being taught regularly.

Coaching Centre:

With a view to check the drop-out from schools, special coaching facilities in English, Mathematics and Science are being run for the local students studying in Government-run schools in Narainpur and surrounding areas. This project has been started with the help of Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission. Presently around 1433 students are enrolled in our free coaching centre. The students from distant villages are provided free to and fro transport facility. In addition, all students are given breakfast, milk, uniforms, sweater, books & stationery free of cost. The Coaching centre is known as Ramakrishna Mission Swami

Vivekananda Educational Complex with a big new building situated in a spacious premise opposite to the Ashrama campus.

The Mission's Video-on Wheels:

Video on Wheels known as 'Vivek Rath' has been playing an important role in educating the Tribal folk in various ways through film shows in near by villages. The programme is very popular and attracts people in large numbers.

II. HEALTH, HYGIENE & NUTRITION:

Vivekananda Arogya Dham (Our Hospital):

This 30-bed well-equipped hospital having an Outdoor and an Inpatient Section including Labour Room, a Pathology Laboratory, Blood Bank, X-Ray Department with three machines (one is portable), an ECG, Sonography Unit, two O.Ts., a Dental Section and a Physiotherapy department. Most of the beneficiaries (80 to 85%) are tribals who are given all facilities free of charge. Drugs required for most of the common ailments are provided free to all O.P.D. patients through the dispensing section of the OPD.

Vivekananda Chal Chikitsalaya:

Our Mobile Medical Unit has been rendering services at free of cost since 1986 to nearly 100 interior villages of the area.

Health Posts:

The Mission also manages five Health Posts inside Abujhmarh, through its trained health workers.

Eye Camps:

Eye camps are conducted and critical cases were brought to our hospital for surgery. They were provided with all the facilities (lodging, boarding, transportation, medicines and IOL) free of charge. Blankets are distributed to all the patients who undergo eye surgery during winter months.

Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre (NRC):

Since the Abujhmarh area is poverty stricken and bare of medical service, mal-nutrition is a common feature. In Abujhmarh we detected some 868 SAM (Severe and Acute Mal-nourished) children. The Ashrama runs 7 NRCs to bring the SAM children into normalcy funded and guided by UNICEF and ECHO (European Child Health Organisation). Each NRC is having one Health Officer, one ANM, 3 Counsellors and 2 cook and helpers. 378

children (below six years) so far as on 30th September 2012, have been brought into normal health and are being conducted regular check ups.

Health Promotion and Awareness:

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narainpur holds Health Promotion and Awareness camps with the financial support from State Government and UNICEF.

III. INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:

Vocational Training:

A Tribal Youth Training Centre (Vivekananda Vanvashi Yuva Prashikshan Kendra) is a residential training centre which trains 24 tribal youths annually in the trades like health workers, horticulture, carpentry, tailoring, motor driving, vehicle maintenance, welding, electric wiring and fitting etc. Almost all the trained youths are employed in their respective trades.

Industrial Training Institute (ITI):

An Industrial Training Institute has been started since 1st October, 2012 initially with seven trades – Tractor Mechanic, Driver cum Motor Mechanic, Electrician, Welder, Mason, Draftsman and Computer Operating and programme Assistant (COPA). The Institute will be of sixteen trades in near future.

Agriculture Training-cum-Demonstration:

An 'Agriculture Training-cum-Demonstration Farm' has been developed on a 52 Acre of land at Brehibeda, 2 km away from Ashrama. Tribal farmers are trained with modern techniques in preparing land, sowing, use of manure etc. They also undergo training in Dairy, Poultry, Duckery, Composite farming, Horticulture, Bee-Keeping and fishery. The Farm also conducts demonstrations in the farmers' fields to enrich their knowledge. Last year about 1378 tribal farmers were benefited through the demonstrations conducted by the Farm. As many as 30 Fish ponds were dug in nearby villages for the development of agriculture and fisheries in the area. About 35 training camps of short & long duration were also conducted in which about 2507 farmers were benefited.

To provide the tribal villagers with fertilizers, seeds, medicines, pump-sets, spawn, fishing-nets etc. in time, an agro-business and service centre has been started with the help of Vivekananda Gram Seva Samity in the campus of our Agricultural Training and Demonstration Centre, through which till now about 2150 tribal farmers have been benefited.

During the period from June 2008 to July 2012 we ran N.A.I.P.(National Agricultural Innovation Project) project financed by I.C.A.R. in two villages - Pusagaon and Palki. Its

main objectives are; i) Value chain on food products from small millets. ii) Improving Rural Livelihood Security through sustainable integrated Farming System Model and allied Enterprises to alleviate economic status of the poor villagers by generating income and employment and also to bring rapid and sustainable transformation in agriculture of this area with minimum dependence on external inputs while conserving the natural resources. A Community Hall is built at the farm to establish linkage with the farmers and to assist them with the modern technologies, strategies and innovative solutions. Further stop-dams and lift irrigation units were constructed to provide irrigation facilities to the farmers.

Creation and maintenance of infrastructure facilities in the interior villages is an important component in improving agricultural yield of the tribal villagers. To protect the farmers' fields from stray cattle 21.500 kilometers wire-fencing with pre-cast concrete poles was constructed. The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narainpur conducts exposure visits for the farmers and Trainees to different Research farms, Agriculture Colleges, Agro-based Industries in other districts and states to gather more knowledge in Agriculture in particular. Meetings and field visits are conducted in the villages to bring about awareness among the farmers regarding green revolution, composite farming, scientific & economical farming methods, poultry, fisheries etc. To encourage the villagers we distribute free seeds, fertilizers, spawn, chicks etc. to the BPL farmers.

Every year we organize 'Kisan Mela' exhibiting modern Agriculture tools and equipments, Agriculture products, Animal husbandry products and holding meetings in which Agriculture Scientists on different issues of Agriculture and mixed Agriculture. The Mela is usually organized in the Ashrama campus in which more than 10000 farmers participate.

A total number of 67 Vivekananda Gram Seva Kendras have been started in the interior villages to inspire the tribal farmers to take up active farming and to develop the Agriculture extension activities. Through these Seva Kendras so far 1535 tribal farmers have been benefited. A follow up meeting is held every month in which at least three members of VGSK, agro-scientists, govt. officials and bankers participate to discuss the progress of extension activities, and through discussion, new strategies with innovative solutions are adopted. At present due to our incessant effort and training they are also cultivating Rice, Mustard Oil Seed, Maize, vegetables and a few other types of grains.

IV. Fair Price Shop:

The Ashrama manages Fair Price Shops at Narainpur Main Camp as well as 5 in its branches in the interior of Abujhmarh to provide articles of daily commodities at a reasonable price. Since the area is having very poor communication and remains cut off from other places for 4 to 5 months during rainy season, FPS is a great help for the inhabitants of the area. Adequate quantities of articles of their day-to-day needs is stored in the interior Fair Price Shops to mitigate the demand of the villagers for during rainy seasons.

V. Sri Ramakrishna Prarthana Mandir, Library-cum-Reading Room, Exhibition & Book Sales Section:

All our Tribal services have their genesis in and draw sustenance from the life and message of Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna. A spacious Temple dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna has been built, which provides a serene atmosphere to all our students, associates and other devotees for regular prayer, worship and meditation. Sunday evening discourses on the Bhagawad Gita, lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda and other Incarnations and holy people are conducted for the benefit of the general public and youth. More than 7000 school children and youths participated during the National Youth Day celebrations every year. Youth conventions and National Integration camps are also conducted.

The basement of the Temple accommodates a Library cum Free Reading Room. With sufficient stock of books, it serves the students and general public to enhance and enrich their knowledge. A Pictorial Exhibition on the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji provides ample knowledge about the divine lives of the Holy Trio, and in the Book Sales Section Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-Vedanta Literature is available for sale.

VI. OTHER ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES:

In addition to all these activities and services as described above we are also running our own Bakery, Flour Mill, Dairy, a well equipped Automobile Garage, Construction & Maintenance Dept., Science Park, Children Park, Community Hall, a Dharmashala for patients' attendants and students' guardians, Auditorium, Horticulture Gardens, Saw Mill, Printing Press etc. for attending to all emergency & essential requirements of this large establishment at such an interior and backward place.

VII. AWARDS:

In recognition of its meritorious services in the domain of education, health-care and economic uplift being rendered by the Ashrama to the tribal community of Abujhmarh - all in the spirit of worship - the Mission has so far been conferred the following awards:

- a) THE MADRAS BASED BHAGWAN MAHAVEER FOUNDATION AWARD for 1996.
- b) THE INDIRA GANDHI SOCIAL SERVICE AWARD (1995-96)
- c) DR. BHAWAR SINGH PORTE TRIBAL SERVICE AWARD for the year 1997-98 by the M.P. State Government
- d) DR. AMBEDKAR NATIONAL AWARD for Social Understanding and Uplift of the Weaker Sections for the year 1996 awarded by His Excellency the President of India, Shri K.R. Narayanan at Rashtrapathi Bhavan, New Delhi on 14.04.2000.
- e) MARTYR VIR NARAYAN SINGH AWARD for 2000-2001 by the Govt. of Chhattisgarh in recognition of the Ashrama's sterling contribution towards

- creating social awareness among the Tribal populace of Abujhmarh and their over-all development.
- f) Pt. Ravi Shankar Shukla Award for 2002 for Social Understanding & Communal Harmony by Govt. of Chhattisgarh.
 - g) INDIRA GANDHI AWARD FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION FOR 2009
 - h) Bhilai Mitra Puraskar 2010 by Bhilai Steel Plant, Bhilai

VIII. VISHWAS: (Vivekananda Institute of Social Health Welfare and Service):

Among the Abujhmarh tribals, the woman is considered as a partner in economic endeavour rather than a burden on the family. So, once they are educated, girls can bring about much-needed social change rather speedily. Swamiji opined - "If you teach a boy, you teach only one individual; whereas by teaching a girl you teach a whole family". To achieve an all-round development and to provide health-care and socio-economic uplift of woman and child of the people, especially of the tribals, VISHWAS was formed. It is a sister institution managed by the devotees and well-wishers of Ramakrishna Mission. In Abujhmarh its developmental activities are being carried out in collaboration with the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narainpur. Its activities in brief are:

Maa Sarada Vidyamandir, Orchha :

VISHWAS is running a free residential Middle School at Orchha inside Abujhmarh since June 1995 for Maria girls. This year the number of students is 194. It also imparts necessary value based education to tribal girls, besides making them physically fit and mentally agile.

Maa Sarada Kanya Chhatrawas:

VISHWAS runs 6 hostels for Tribal girls of Abujhmarh. At present there are 443 girls in these hostels studying at Vivekananda Vidyapeeth, Narainpur and at 5 Ashrama Schools inside Abujhmarh run by the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama.

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS):

Under the Integrated Child Development Scheme, VISHWAS runs 85 'Anganbadies', and 96 'Mini-Anganbadies' in the far off villages of Abujhmarh. Through these Anganwadi centres, the following services are being provided to the tribal villagers:

- a) Nutritious diet to children.
- b) Regular health-check ups & immunization.
- c) Pre-natal and post-natal care to pregnant women.
- d) Creation of Self-Help groups
- e) Plantation programmes
- f) Providing elementary education etc.

Construction Works:

VISHWAS has by now constructed 11 Stop-dams, 7 Tanks, a 20 km-long IInd Class Road, 8 Culverts, 6 Girls' Hostels, One High School Building, 2 Health Posts, 30 Anganwadis, 4 Spring Wells, one Bamboo Craft Training Centre, 15 Anicut-canals, etc.

VISHWAS also runs a Fair price grocery shop in Orchha managed by women, 3 health posts in Ader, Garpa and Orchha villages of Abujmarh to provide primary health care to the villagers.

In recognition of its meritorious services in the field of Women and Child development in Abujmarh, 'VISHWAS' has been conferred "Mini Mata Award" for 2002 and "Bhamasha Award" by the State Government.

We also take this opportunity to express our thankful gratitude to Government of India, Government of Chhattisgarh, all the Government officials, Friends, Well-wishers, devotees and above all the dedicated employees for their untiring full support, help and cooperation. We are, however, sincerely hopeful that the help, support and cooperation will be generously extended to us.

10th October 2012.

