

Dear Sir / Madam,

We beg your acceptance and perusal of this Newsletter, embodying a short statement of our humble efforts towards our mission of changing destinies of homeless/family-less children.

With 182 children, 22 Resident Sevaks, 48 full-time workers, numerous volunteers and well-wishers, Parivaar Ashram is a place of vibrant activity.

Centre-wise & Gender-wise distribution of children					
Parivaar Ashram, Bakhrahat	Girls	Boys	Total		
	74	72	146		
Parivaar, Bonogram	14	22	32		
Total	88	94	182		

School Admission Distribution for the year 2006-07.

	Class	Students	
Future Gems	One	10	
	Two	15	
	Total	25	
Infant Jesus	One	14	

	Two	19	
	Three	29	
	Four	14	
	Total	76	
Vidyanagar Multipurpose School	Six	3	
	Total	3	
Vidyanagar. Balika Vidyamandir	Five	2	
	Six	1	
	Total	3	
Raspunja Prankrishna Vidyalaya	Six	1	
	Five	3	
	Total	4	
Raspunja Girls School	Six	4	
	Five	7	
	Total	11	
Total Children admitted in outside Schools			122
Parivaar In house (to be prepared for Class I for next academic year)	One	9	
Parivaar In house (to be prepared for Class II for academic next year)	Two	14	
Total children			23
New children (Under Training & Testing and in Fast-learning Bridge Course)			37
Total children in PARIVAAR			182

ADMISSION PROCESS OF CHILDREN INTO PARIVAAR

Parivaar Ashram is a residential and overall life development institution for homeless, 'family-less', and other destitute children. Typically Parivaar receives about 5 to 10 cases of such children everyday referred by different field organizations, relatives or neighbors of the child in case, concerned individuals, members of local bodies, Panchayats etc. After filtering Prima Facie information, cases for site visit and detailed investigation are short-listed. Site investigation team of Parivaar visits the child's existing location and collects detailed profile, facts and information of the child, based on interaction with the child's referring persons / entity and other possible sources. This site report is then discussed and deliberated upon, and the severity of the need of the child to be admitted for a long term into Parivaar Ashram is validated and decision thereof is made. The important parameters looked into while admitting into Parivaar Ashram are as follows:

1. The child's age during admission into Parivaar should be between 4 to 10 years.
2. There should be no possibility of child's dropout from this long-term stay at Parivaar Ashram at least he or she becomes of age and is able to make decision for himself / herself, grow to his / her potential and find a place as a socially dutiful, worthy individual.
3. Parivaar acts as the custodian of the child and makes decision in his / her best interest.
4. The child will continue to be in and under the care of Parivaar, even after their legal age of adulthood i.e. 18 years just as in any family parents and the family continues to support their ward financially and otherwise until the child (who shall be a youth by then) has found a place for himself / herself as described above.
5. Generally, along with one child all his / her siblings are also admitted into Parivaar as all of them are destitute/homeless/'family-less'.

Generally children admitted into Parivaar are from categories like orphans, street and pavement dwelling children, children with critically / terminally ill mother and no father and other family support, children from other crises background like abandoned children and vulnerable children from prostitute infested areas. A large number of children are from rural areas as well.

Typically a child is admitted into Parivaar within the age group of 4 years to 10 years. All these children without exception have no exposure to education whatsoever. The youngest (aged 4,5,6) among these who are rightly aged to start their academic life are admitted into most initial classes (Kindergarten/Class 1) since their age is in accordance with the class they are admitted into. They are able to progress in their studies without any difficulty as there is a strong battery of teachers at Parivaar Ashram, who teach these children after their day school. Children who are older (aged 8,9,10) and still do not have any exposure to education, are first trained in-house at Parivaar by our battery of teachers and then made to be admitted into a class suitable for their age. For example, a nine-year-old child would be admitted in Class 4 or at least Class 3. These children may struggle a bit initially once admitted into a higher class in a formal school. But we have invariably seen that because of rigorous study hours (4 to 5 hours in addition to the school hours) and focused efforts of our in-house battery of teachers (one teacher for each eight children on an average); the performance of each child in every successive examination improves. For example, we have seen most children who are admitted into higher class first get a rank of 30s in a 50 children class, which gets improved into first 20s in the next examination and within a year improves to top 5 or top 10 in their class. The children get admission into school by appearing into school's admission test and competing for limited seats with other children, most of them who comes from educated parentage and background.

Parivaar has always been following this principle - A child before being admitted into Parivaar may have been an orphan/homeless/family less/destitute child, but after being admitted into Parivaar the child is no more so. He has then got a home and a family. Thus the first thing done is to de-tag and de-label this unhappy epithet of 'homeless child'. Therefore Parivaar does not push the admission of children into schools merely on sympathetic background as we are not sure what behavioral treatment the child will get from the school authorities/teachers/co-students/parents of co-students if they get admitted into schools even though underperforming. Dignity has to be earned and our children do so by getting admission in good schools on the

basis of their merit and re-strengthen it by their continuous good performance in their school. It may happen that a child may not get admission into School A, failing to clear its merit test, but gets admission into School B and advances from there, always having a chance to excel in future with all the support of his newly found home and family of Parivaar.

Some Meritorious Performances by Parivaar Children

Amongst the 93 children admitted in schools in the last year's academic session ('05-'06), children have done remarkable well and are performing on more than equal terms vis-a- vis other children studying in those schools who come from families having educated parents and backgrounds. Also a notable point has been that the performance of each Parivaar child continuously improves with time and with each successive examination. Some shining example of such meritorious performances are:-

Santosh Das stood 4th amongst 300 students in Class 5 in Vidyanagar Higher Secondary School, the best school in the area. Notable point is Santosh; before he was admitted into Parivaar in 2004 never had any exposure to education for the first 10 years in his life and was admitted straight to class 4 in 2004. His performance is continuously improving and he is now proving his merit as a brilliant student.

Sanjana Dey stood first in Class 4 in Infant Jesus School Bakhrahat. Sanjana was admitted into Parivaar in January 2004, and was among the first 10 children admitted into Parivaar. She too was admitted straight into school for the first time and topped the list of students most of who are coming from educated background and parentage.

Other highly impressing academic performance were accomplished by Roshni Khatun (standing 2nd in her class in Future Gems English Medium School), Riya Shaw (standing 3rd in her class in Future Gems English Medium School), Yasmina Khatun (standing 3rd in her class in Infant Jesus School), Jumrati Sheikh. (standing 4th in his class in Future Gems school English school). All the 93 children admitted in schools

last year have progressed to the next higher class and there is no doubt that performance of each individual child will tremendously improve with time and they will also follow in the footsteps of the children mentioned above.

A Typical Day at Parivaar

The children in Parivaar barring those who are 4 years or 5 years old get up at 5 A.M. There are first physical exercises drills till 5:30 A.M., followed by Prayanam, Dhyana and 'Sanskar Siksha Upadesh' session, which includes imparting teachings on moral and spiritual lines. Kitchen at Parivaar is a busy place where activities starts as early as 5 A.M. Meals are cooked in spirit of feeding the divine and partaken by all inmates (adult Sevaks as well as children) as Prasada. There are 5 meals served in Parivaar. First amongst them, is the early breakfast comprising of milk and biscuits. At 9:30 P.M. a regular heavy breakfast is served. In addition the children take tiffin-boxes to their school with prepared dishes just like any other children would do who come from their families. Lunch is served at 1 P.M and evening snacks at 5:45 P.M. Teaching by our Parivaar teachers is conducted in different slots like 7:00 A.M. to 9:30 A.M., 2:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. and 6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. Since children go to different schools, scheduling of various groups into these slots is quite complex and is done according to their respective school timings. Playtime is 4:30 to 5:45 PM and an accomplished state-level athlete trains the children in different sports like cricket, football, and volleyball besides athletics and aerobics. At 6 'o' clock daily evening, Prarthana-Arati is conducted at the shrine in Prarthana Bhavan. It is most spiritually nourishing time for everyone. All the Parivaar workers and children unfailingly attend Prarthana-Aarti which is of 45 min duration. Younger children go to sleep at 9:30 P.M. and older children go to sleep at 10:30 P.M. after some self-study.

The most strenuous role at Parivaar is that of House-Brother and House-Sisters. In the boys arena of Parivaar Ashram, each Bal-Sadan is supervised by a House-Brother (simply "dada" for children and others). Their work stretches from anywhere from 15 hours to 18 hours right from 5 'o' clock in the morning to 11 'o' clock at night. Early in the morning they have to get the children ready for the day, starting with Pranayama and 'Sanskar Siksha'. They then prepare the children for school, applying oil to the children, helping them to take bath, combing their hair, polishing their shoes, preparing the bag of each child by seeing that particular day's school time-table and sending them to school. Similar is the work of House-Sisters in our girls' arena.

This tremendous effort that they put day-in day-out, week after week, without any break whatsoever, is something extraordinary and has been accomplished only because these Sevaks take pride in the glory of Seva. Serving the children and all others in a reverential, spiritual attitude their energies get redoubled and restrengthened. Everything they do is for the best of the child and even scolding and a beating or two is only an expression of deeply ingrained love.

Health Supervision and Caretaking

The diet at Parivaar is very balanced and nutritious consisting of milk, fruits, curries, green vegetables and other nutritious items. We have aqua-guards in each Bal-Sadan. So the water consumed by all the inmates is Aqua-Guard filtered. This largely takes care of many potential water-borne ailments. Special emphasis is given to hygiene and cleanliness.

We have doctors visiting every week. Two 24 hour Resident Nurses living at the Ashram. All the children and Resident Sevaks are covered under Group Insurance and all the hospitalization expenses of these 200 insured persons is reimbursed upto Rs 20,000 per person per annum. Many children and staff have underwent major operations. Another resident worker was operated for stones. One of our lady resident workers underwent tumor operation and was hospitalized for 20 days. Two of our children underwent plastic surgeries because they had suffered major burns in their early life (before being admitted to Parivaar).

Each child at Parivaar has a separate medical file in which all periodic inspections by the doctors are documented in a proforma and maintained in that child's file. All prescriptions, ailment histories, allergies are also documented. Thus, a continuous health and medical history of each child is being continuously developed and recorded. As a result, any new doctor can be consulted and just by going through Health File of the child he gets the exact snapshot of the health status and health history of the child.

Parivaar organized Hepatitis-B Vaccination for 550 people (including Parivaar children, workers, and villager residents of Barkalikapur and neighbouring areas). Camps were organized on 3 different dates (24th December, 28th January and 25th February), as 3 dosages have to be administered for this vaccine. Vaccines were purchased from a reputed Pathology Lab. Refreshments were provided to all the people. A sum of Rs 1.5 Lacs was spent in the Vaccination Camps.

Notable efforts of some of our well-wishers

Our well-wishers who have visited Parivaar, and who have grasped the spirit of the work being done here, have their dedication and participation further strengthened after their visit. On return to their respective places they become inspired campaigners for Parivaar's work. One of them, Shri Ramesh Kacholia, came to know about Parivaar in May 2004 and ever since has been tremendously dedicated to involving more and more people in Mumbai for supporting Parivaar.

Another among Parivaar's keenest well-wishers is a spirited couple based in Austin, Texas – Shri Lalit Kumar and Ms. Sreedevi Menon. Lalit and Sreedevi have been responsible for getting lots of new friends for Parivaar from amongst the Indian community in the US. After being in touch over 2 years over phone and e-mail, they came for the first time to Parivaar Ashram in Jan 2006 and were overwhelmed by their experience. Returning to Texas both Lalit and Sreedevi ran the 42 Km Austin Marathon and through this event raised USD 15,000 for Parivaar's work.

Shri Deepak Ahuja has been one of the oldest Parivaar well-wishers. Deepak has been regularly visiting Parivaar from the US four times in the last two and half years and had spent one and a half months at our Ashram in October and November 2005. Involved in all tasks, right from cooking to teaching to setting up aerobics drill as a regular practice at the Ashram, Deepak's selfless nature and tremendous Sevabhava won hearts of all inmates of Parivaar - workers and children alike.

Parivaar has a silent and highly dedicated well-wisher from Pennsylvania Shri Rahul Ganjiwale. Like in 2004, Rahul again visited Parivaar in 2005 during his annual trip to India, spent 8 days at our Ashram and charmed everyone.

Rajeshji of Singapore has been in touch with Parivaar since there were only 15 children. Ever since then he has been involving many more persons in Singapore for supporting Parivaar's mission. Rajeshji along with his whole family visited Parivaar in January.

Locally, Parivaar is blessed to have sagely guidance of many people. Amongst them Shri Dilip Roy needs special mention. Dilipda and his 'Behala Sri Ramakrishna Pathyachakra' has regularly provided many highly dedicated full-time workers to Parivaar through their relevant widespread contacts among people and institutions working with the same Seva ideology. Thus a highly crucial filtration is done at the time of recruitment of workers into Parivaar which ensures the smooth orientation of new workers, ensuring the sanctity of the internal environment at Parivaar, and that only the most Sevabhavi people enter Parivaar's ranks.

Parivaar Ashram - Infrastructure Development

Parivaar has been developing Infrastructure after purchasing land at Village Barkalikapur, P.O. Bakhrahat, 30 Km from Kolkata city. Land worth Rs 26 Lacs has been purchased in 2 phases. After that continuously construction work is in progress and suitable infrastructure is being developed. Our ever increasing number of well-wishers have been very generously supporting this 'labour of love' we have undertaken by their hard-earned money. Towards the Infrastructure development of the Parivaar Ashram generous contributions have been received.

Construction and development at the Parivaar Ashram site started on 4th February, '05. In the last fifteen months the following has been completed:

Three Bal Sadans (each 1030 sq. ft. in area) having a Living Hall, Study Hall, Caretaker's room, store, bathrooms and toilets.

Cost incurred $3.75 \text{ Lacs} \times 3 = \text{Rs. } 11.25 \text{ Lacs}$.

Annapurna Bhavan (1825 sq. ft. in area). It is composed of spacious dinning arena for more than 200 diners, Kitchen arena, and Kitchen & accessories store.

Cost incurred = Rs. 6.5 Lacs.

Prathana Bhavan [1650 sq. ft. in area]

Cost incurred = 5.7 Lacs.

Sevak Sadan (Double - Storeyed): Single rooms for resident gent workers.

Cost incurred = 8 Lacs.

Arogya Bhavan: [900 sq. ft. in area]. This has a sickbay for housing sick patients, a doctor's inspection chamber and medicine section where all medical files for each children and resident Sevaks are kept.

Cost incurred : Rs 3.5 Lacs.

Two-Storeyed Balika Sadan: (2000 sq. ft in area) has been completed and is currently housing 30 girls. Its costs were Rs 8 Lacs.

The construction for 7,200 sq. ft. New Bal-Sadan Block will be completed by June end '06. Its total costs (civil work, electrification, plumbing, and carpentry) will be about Rs. 28 Lacs. It will house about 100 children and will be divided into 4 parts.

The work for Administrative Office Block has started from March 1st '06. It will cost Rs 5 Lacs.

Construction for 2000 sq. ft Education Complex has started from 1st May '06. It will have 8 spacious Class rooms and will cost Rs 8 Lacs.

Construction for another 3000 sq. ft. double-storeyed Bal-Sadan has started from 1st May and will be complete in 4 months. It will accommodate 45 children and will cost Rs 11 Lacs.

Construction for another 2000 sq. ft double-storeyed Bal-Sadan has started from 1st May and will be complete in 3 months. It will accommodate 30 children and will cost Rs 7.5 Lacs.

Some Special Events

6th November was a special day for Parivaar Ashram as Swami Jitatanandaji of the Ramakrishna Order, currently Head of Swami Vivekananda's Ancestral Home and Cultural Center, Kolkata visited Parivaar. Revered Maharaj inaugurated the Sevak Sadan (Residential block for resident workers) and Aroyga Bhavan (Medical Center). Revered Maharaj then inaugurated the newly built shrine in the Prarthana Bhavan having images of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivakananda. Maharaj assisted by another monk performed the first Aarati at the new shrine. Maharaj then gave an inspirational discourse to the

children, Parivaar workers, and other well-wishers from outside and many other guests who had graced the occasion.

On 23rd of December Janma-Tithi celebration of Holy Mother Sarada Devi was observed at Parivaar. Detailed Discussions on the teachings of the Holy Mother as to how we can mould our character and life in accordance with her life and teachings took place.

Christmas Eve was also celebrated and an image of Jesus Christ was also placed in the Prarthana Bhavana.

On 12th January Swami Vivekananda Jayanthi celebration was observed. Parivaar Sevaks and many children presented Swamiji's teachings from different dimensions. At the end of the function everyone felt elevated. In the week of Swamiji's birthday, essay competition was conducted in many village schools on the theme "Swami Vivekananda and Modern India". Prize distribution of the competition was done 6th of January. Shri Pranabesh Chakaraborty, convener of 'Swami Vivekananda Bhava Samanvaya Parishad' and editor of 'Nirbhik Pathik', a journal based on Swamiji's teachings, was the Chief Speaker on the occasion.

On 14th of February Swami Girishananda and Swami Tatvapraganananda of Ramakrishna Mission Saradapeeth visited Parivaar and inspired and further strengthened the Parivaar workers in the mission of Seva they are dedicated to.

On 1st of March Janma-Tithi celebrations of Sri Ramakrishnadeva was observed at Parivaar. Special Discussions on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna took place. Books and literature on Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda were distributed all Parivaar workers.

Visit of Director, IIM Calcutta to Parivaar and his subsequent narration during the Institute's Annual Convocation Speech.

The Director IIM Calcutta Prof. Shekhar Choudhary in his 30 minute speech on Annual Convocation on 1st April, 2006 spoke for 5 minutes on Parivaar to the audience comprising students, faculty, researchers, Industry captains, and other illustrious guests. The Director had visited Parivaar along with Deputy Dean of MIT Sloan School of Management in March, a couple of weeks before the Convocation. What impact the visit to Parivaar Ashram had on him can be seen from the following excerpt of the Parivaar portion from his speech.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy to inform you that there is a very important social sector initiative taken by one of our recent graduates. 'Parivaar', a social service organization, was started by Shri Vinayak Lohani, an IIT Kharagpur and IIM Calcutta alumnus of the 2001-03 batch. Shri Lohani did not seek final placement through the Institute's Career Development and Placement office. Inspired by the spiritual and humanistic ideals of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda, he decided to devote his life to the upliftment of homeless children. It started with just 3 children in a small rented building with almost no financial resources, and today there are currently 162 children who have found a new Home, Family and Future at Parivaar. Parivaar Ashram at Bakhrahat, about 30 km from Kolkata in 24 Parganas (South) district, is spread over 2 acres of land. Currently Parivaar runs two (2) Bal Ashrams. A facility with a capacity of 400 hundred children is now under construction.

The children admitted into Parivaar Ashram can be broadly classified as homeless and family less and are from categories like orphans, abandoned children, street and pavement children, railway platform children, children from red light areas and other such highly vulnerable children. The children are admitted at a very young age

(generally 3 to 8 years) and have no exposure to any kind of education. It is a great challenge to train them initially to enable them to get admission into a class that corresponds to his/her age in a quality formal education school. To achieve this the child admitted in Parivaar undergoes an in-house Rapid Learning Course for a period of one year. The admission into quality formal schools is not easy as the children have to go through rigorous competitive entrance examinations conducted by various schools. Thus the child has to compete on his/her merit.

Since the category of children Parivaar works with needs total rehabilitation, which includes meeting all living costs like food, clothing, education, recreation, etc., the average cost per child is very high compared to education and other day-care initiatives. Parivaar works with the idea of providing support to each child with a minimum commitment of 12 to 15 years, right from his/her kindergarten stage till he/she grows up and makes good in life. Parivaar has been successful in this by attracting funds through financial contributions from individuals. A point to note is that 300 IIM alumni have enrolled as regular Parivaar donors and more than 200 IIM Calcutta alumni have donated to Parivaar.

For one who is so well qualified, having graduated from two of the most acclaimed institutions in the country getting jobs in top MNCs would have been a cake walk. However, Vinayak chose a life of sacrifice for a larger cause. For one so young such sacrifice is even more poignant. A visit to the Parivaar Ashram where the hitherto uncared for children are laughing, playing and living happily in gay abandon is a most humbling experience. The Institute community is extremely proud of the achievements of our alumnus Shri Vinayak Lohani.

Some other Visitors' Remarks

Shri Lalit Kumar and Ms. Sreedevi Menon

(Lalit and Sreedevi are based in Austin, Texas and work in Dell Corporation. They, along with their mother, stayed for 4 days at Parivaar in January.)

We have been working with Parivaar very closely for the past 2 years but had not got a chance to visit the site till the beginning of this year. One of the most memorable moments of our life; is how best we can describe it. Etched on our minds is the experience of being greeted by all the kids in their traditional bangla sarees, then one hug leading to being surrounded by the kids; all of them hugging, inching to get close to us, touch us and talk to us breathlessly. The next 4 days were in a haze, we spent time watching the children's routine, eating with them, going to their evening classes, chatting with the house brothers & sisters, getting to know all the workers - cooks, teachers, housebrothers / house-sisters, their motivations; cooking with them. Playing chess with the kids, flying kites, skip rope jumping, and simply wallowing in the endless & unconditional love and affection they showered on us.

Vinayak has done an excellent job in instilling the best 'sanskara' into the kids and it shows. The best thing was talking with the kids and trying to understand their dreams - some of them wanted to be doctors, other engineers, some wanted to be like 'Vinayakda' etc. They all have dreams now - and that was the best thing we could ask for.

There are no frills like TV etc there - and living with them one wonders if there is a need for anything beyond what they have. They are so full of love; the moment we arrived there, we were hugged and surrounded from the word go and they wouldn't let us alone the whole time. Language was not a barrier and looking at them now, one is amazed at the psychological recovery and progress they have made from just a few months back

It was quite an experience to see the kids getting ready for school each day - they need to be washed, packed, clothed etc - all things that kids need when they go to school. They all line up at the Parivaar gate every morning and get into the rickshaws - all dressed up in their school

uniforms. They come back home to Parivaar and immerse themselves in study - around 16 teachers do an excellent job of making sure all the homework is done, they understand what the concepts are, and that they continuously excel academically etc.

The kids get up at around 5 am everyday, do a round of Physical training & morning meditation, have breakfast, get dressed, go to school, come back and have lunch and study. The entire environment at Parivaar has had some great effect on the kids; many kids are so much calmer now and much more relaxed than when they came in.

Our last day was very difficult for us, with the kids running after us and bombarding us with Q's - why we were going back, why we could not stay and if our flight would go over their bldg. and if we could wave out to them from the plane !

We came away feeling humbled, energized & touched and knowing that Parivaar was truly our Parivaar too. Thanks to Vinayak for giving us an opportunity to get to know these wonderful human beings & be a part of their lives.

Shri Rajiv Vij

(Shri Rajiv Vij is the Asia Head of Franklin Templeton Investments and is based in Singapore. He visited Parivaar in February.)

I had been interacting with Vinayak through e-mail and finally managed to visit Parivaar in mid-February. I spent half a day with Vinayak at Parivaar and came away thoroughly impressed.

The selfless manner in which Vinayak has dedicated his life to providing support to underprivileged children was inspiring. I was particularly struck by the focus in Parivaar on building strong personal values and character in young children. I found the time being spent with children on teaching spiritual values to be rather unique – one I think will ensure Parivaar is contributing some great human beings to the world as these children grow up. It also left me wondering about the ignorance of these simple but key values in today's urban living – values, which are a heritage of our past but are being lost in the relentless pursuit of material success.

Not only did the children seem very happy and comfortably settled in Parivaar, but I was also glad to see the joy in the eyes of the various staff members who felt proud and so content with the meaningful work they were doing.

I strongly believe that Parivaar is surely a paradise on earth and everyone connected with the institution is truly blessed.

Wish Vinayak, the staff and the lovely children at Parivaar all the very best!!

Shri Rahul Ganjiwale.

(Shri Rahul Ganjiwale is an IT professional based in Pennsylvania, USA and spent 8 days at Parivaar in December '05.)

It was my second visit to Parivaar for some 8 days in Dec 2005. This time around Parivaar had its own newly built sober infrastructure called Parivaar Ashram, housing some 150 children at this new Ashram. So much has changed from my previous visit, larger number of dedicated workers and double the number of children. What was the same, was the spirit of Parivaar, and my old friend Vinayakda. It was heartening to be back again to a place where love, courage,

sacrifice and selfless devotion all reside in plenty. Ashram architecture, which has gradually expanded over a period of one and a half years now, had different Bal Sadans, Prarthana Bhavan, grand Dining Hall (Annapurna Bhavan), guest rooms, Sevak Sadan (accommodation for resident Sevaks) etc. Construction was still going on during the visit; Vinayak mentioned that in near future the Parivaar Ashram would have capacity to house 500 children. During, my quite stay at Parivaar, I learned about the every day operational activities, local difficulties and got to interact with dedicated workers.

Many of these children were familiar faces from my last visit and they all remembered me. We all played cricket together and I have never been cheered more for hitting sixes ever in my life than what I received from the exuberant children. Vinayakda hit shots all over the place and all the children cheered with joy. Glow of happiness on the face of these children is reflection of the selfless dedication and pure love of Vinayak and his team. I also learned that most of these children though have their traumatic past yet have made great progress in their studies. This great cause and equally great service makes all our humanity proud and honoured.

The Driving Spirit of Parivaar

The scale of service conducted at Parivaar at present may appear small and inconsequential as compared to the magnitude of such service required in the whole country, but the significance of this work cannot be gauged quantitatively. It lies in an entirely different sphere - that of manifestation of the spirit of 'Seva'. The Seva (service rendered in a spirit of devotion and a spiritual attitude) carried out at Parivaar seeks to embody a sublime vision of Man's Glory and Excellence and relationships with his fellowmen. This is the vision of the Divine in the heart of man bequeathed by our spiritual tradition over millennia, reauthenticated and revitalized in our modern age by Sri Ramakrishna - Swami Vivekananda, and of Seva as the way of interpersonal relationship.

The worker at Parivaar derives their inspiration from this source of 'dynamic spirituality' (spirituality translating into action and conduct towards others) as different from mere 'static

piety'. It is a great source of strength and character and work-efficiency, and deep concern for all human beings. It is also different from shallow, superficial modern humanism that treats man only as material being, and endeavours to advance human welfare in terms of merely sensate comforts and pleasures, ignoring his spiritual and divine dimension.

The essence of Parivaar thus lies in the spiritual orientation of the workers so that they can become aware of their own spiritual nature and not only nurture and educate the children and others whom they are serving, but tremendously inspire them by becoming role-models to them, and by bringing about a permanent character transformation, awakening in them a sense of human dignity and worth, thus beginning of unfolding of the divine dimension within them.