



TRIBAL MENSA NURTURING PROGRAM

MENSA INDIA PUNE CHAPTER

Sita- Wildflower in Tribal Niche

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Monthly Report- August and September 2007



॥ श्री गणेशाय नमः ॥

Flowers are in full bloom everywhere, they are yellow and orange, white and pink and the leaves on the trees look greener and the grass sways in the breeze. The monsoon has quenched the thirst of The Mother Earth, the trees, the dried river bed, and mine. I got wet in the rain and sat along the flowing, gurgling stream, near my school for long hours. We played in the rains, the boys bathe in the stream, we saw the cattle graze happily on the green grass that covered the ground around the school. It is the time of the year that makes me very happy, because it is this month of September when Ganapati *bappa* (Lord Ganesh) has stepped into our homes, our lives, and our prayers.

After adequate monsoons, Ganapati *bappa*, the *Sukhkarta* (Happiness and prosperity giver) and the *Vighnaharta* (The remover of obstacles) arrived, as the second phase of the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program started.

The month of August saw the completion of the first phase of Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program. In this **Identification phase 2200 students** were screened from **12 Tribal Residential schools** in four talukas of Pune district. **Jnana Prabodhini Institute of Psychology** worked at the scoring and interpretation of the test scores.

Out of the 2200, **64 students** were identified as **Mensan** that is, having high IQ (98 percentile and above). Out of the 64 Gifted children, 50 will be chosen for the second phase of the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program which is, the **Nurturing phase. 50 children** from **8 Tribal Residential Schools**, in Maval, Khed and Ambegaon talukas of Pune will participate in the nurturing program. As the project has its own administrative, financial and other limitations of resources it will be unable to include all the 64 Gifted children.

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Varsha tai who has joined the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program team from the month of September, is organizing the complete **database** of the Identification phase. A report has been sent to Kapse sir, Ghodegaon and the funding agencies that have supported the team throughout the first phase. The reports have also been sent to the eight schools, requesting the principals to cooperate and help in bringing the children together for the Nurturing program.

Each of the 64 children will receive a certificate which states that he/she has qualified for Mensa. **Kedar dada**, is very good with graphics and has been working at designing unique and creative certificates for those who have been identified as Gifted. He has also designed the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program logo as can be seen on this page.

Ganapati bapa has brought good news this year, for me. I, Sita have been selected for this Nurturing Program. I am grateful to Lord Ganesha for this opportunity. Shri Ganesh has made sure that a new door has opened for me. Now I will make sure that I enrich myself with all that I see, hear, touch and feel once I enter the door. There will be many others like me there, from different schools and villages. They will be my friends, my new family.

The first phase thus, involved identifying the schools for screening, organizing and training Test Administrators for the Mensa test and finally conducting the Mensa test in the 12 Tribal Residential Schools. The Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program proposal included screening of only 1000 children. With support from the funding agencies as well as the team from Jnana Prabodhini Institute of Psychology and Sachin *dada* and Sashi *tai* a number like 2200 was achieved. The database has been prepared and the certificates for all the children who qualified for Mensa will be distributed in October which will conclude the first phase of Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program.

Now they have come this far, what is further down the road???? is the question in front of the team. The purpose of screening Tribal children for Mensa was to nurture the Tribal Gifted children to become leaders of their own village and community. When one says nurturing, the questions that come to my mind are, How? Where? When?

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The answer to the first question, 'how' can be answered by **Anjali maushi** (Mrs. Joshi), **Devasena tai** and **Sameena tai** who are working on the concept for the **nurturing module**. The nurturing program has been conceptualized keeping in mind the main vision of developing Tribal Gifted Leaders from among the identified Tribal Gifted children. The main tracks which have emerged from the brainstorming sessions are exploration in the **physical, social, mental, emotional** and **spiritual** areas for the Gifted children. After going through this basic process of exploring one's own and others abilities, strengths and areas of improvement in all these areas, the Gifted children will **explore leadership and vision building** for themselves as well as their family, school, village and society.

Dr. Usha Khire, chief mentor and founder of Jnana Prabodhini Institute of Psychology has been providing constant support and guidance in the process of preparing the module. Having worked in the field of Giftedness for more than 30 years, she has been kind enough to share with the team members her experience of running programs with children and youth. A very young member of the group, **Amruta Limaye** who is a Mensan herself, currently studying in Mumbai is working on the human development aspect of the nurturing program. Suggestions from all mentors and people working in related fields will be assimilated and synchronized to develop, a, one of its kind Nurturing module for the Tribal Gifted children.

So many questions arise in my mind about the program. Why are they doing this program? People coming from the city, will they understand me and other children from the villages? What do they have to give me and what can I learn from them? I don't know how they have developed the program for us. I wonder with so many children and so many different interests of each of us, how the program will nurture our potential. Or is it going to be like a school day, where we will have a math period and then science and then history? Or will they give us lectures or make us write all day long?

I am looking forward to an unfolding of all these questions when we meet them starting from **November, 2007**.

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The second question 'where' can be answered by putting forth the idea of **Nishta Kendra** at Mauli nagar in Kamshet which will be used as the **Tribal Mensa Nurturing Centre**. Narayan *dada* has conceptualized the centre as:

Nishta wherein-

N stands for **Nature**, **I** stands for **Intellect**, **S** stands for **Synergy**, **H** stands for **Habitat**, **T** stands for **Tribal** and **A** stands for **Ambassador**.

Therefore, Nishta is **Nature and Intellect Synergy Habitat** for **Tribal Ambassador**.

A **Tribal Mensa Nurturing Centre development proposal** has been conceptualized for the above centre. It includes the purpose of this centre as well as the infra-structural development required to develop the centre for the nurturing program.

This centre within the next five years will be developed as an eco-friendly, scientific, nurturing niche for the Tribal Gifted children. The **centre in-charge** will be Narayan *dada*, Principal Investigator of Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program with an assistant in-charge, Devasena *tai*.

The Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program will run for **18 months** where the 50 Tribal Gifted children will come together at the Nishta Kendra **once a month** for **3 days**. They will arrive on Friday evening and will be at the centre until Monday morning.

There have been so many visits to the Nishta Centre, Kamshet in the last two months. Each time the team visits the centre, they think of all the minute details and facilities which will be required during the program. And then, they go about organizing and planning for those facilities. For this **Col. Joshi**, has been very helpful. He has made visits personally to Kamshet, to check the progress of the work and to visualize the future needs of the program. The team really appreciates his efforts and guidance.

At the Nurturing Centre **Dixit kaka** and his family are working hard to put things in working order for us. I thank them too.

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One interesting thing about the Nishta Kendra is about its name. Nishtha *tai*, a lady who is from a country called France and has been living in India for the last 40 years. She had donated the Kendra to **Sevadharm trust, Pune**. They have committed the Nishta Kendra to Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program for a period of **5 years**. Narayan *dada* and Sameena *tai* had gone to meet **Nishtha tai** last month. She is such an active person and full of ideas and enthusiasm. The team explained to Nishtha *tai* the concept that has been visualized for the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Centre. Nishtha *tai* was very happy that the Nishta Kendra will be used for nurturing the Tribal Gifted children and she has promised to be present at the opening ceremony of the Nishta: Tribal Mensa Nurturing Centre on 9th October, 2007.

It will not be long before I visit the centre myself. On 9th October, 2007 for the **opening ceremony** of the centre, the funding agencies, **Kapse** sir, mentors as well as other resource people connected with the program will be present. The **school principals** as well as some of the identified Gifted children will be present on that day. I am waiting eagerly to meet all the other children who have been selected, like me.

Prof. Laak who teaches in the University of Utrecht, which I have been told is far away in a country called The Netherlands has agreed to be present for the opening ceremony. It will be wonderful for the team to be supported by so many people.

Narayan *dada* seems to be slowly building an army of people. An army, that will take the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program all the way, an army who will build 50 Tribal Gifted Leaders in different villages of Pune. This Army is the foundation on which the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program will be built in the coming months.

One of these foundation blocks includes **Urban Mensan children** who are going to be present at the opening. They are all excited to know their counterparts from the Tribal areas and are reaching out to support the program.

So many people are coming together to help the team develop this centre. **Cynthia Ramseur** from U.S.A has sent National Geography and Discovery **CD's and DVD's** for us to be able to learn through different mediums. Thank you Cynthia *tai* (sister) for this wonderful

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gift! There are others who are looking into other details like collecting books, CD's, stationery, games and other material to well-equip the Nurturing Centre. Thank you all!

Mr. Rajesh Date has been kind to help the team with infra-structural facilities of the Centre. I am grateful to him too. **Abhinav Pustak Mandir** is all set to send books for us to set up a unique library to quench our thirst for information and satisfy our souls with inspiration.

Then there is **Kiran dada** who has been an integral part not only in organizing the Identification phase but also taking care of many of the administrative logistics of the Nurturing phase as well as in the development of the Nurturing centre. I appreciate the interest shown and the contributions made by each of the individuals.

This month, Lord Ganesha also gave an opportunity to the team of Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program to visit '**Samvad Shala**' for the hearing impaired and mentally retarded children at Lonavala. Mrs. Renuka Kotak was the crucial link in having the team and the school trustees of the Samvad Shala, meet each other. The school is just starting out and they have wonderful dreams of developing it further so as to accommodate more children from the surrounding areas. The teachers, there were full of enthusiasm and dedication. It must be very difficult to be motivated to mentor these children. And **Mr. and Mrs. Damle**, are two of the most inspired people working for this cause.

Through Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program, **Mr. Shrinivas Desai** and **Mr. Rohit Desai** donated clothes and toys for the children at the school. The team is thankful to them for being so generous. Through this army we have been able to reach out to hundreds of other people who have made inquires about the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program and are standing by to provide support and help.

Mrs. Renuka Kotak has also been helping the team to collaborate with people that may be beneficial for the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program. She is very touched by the idea and has constantly extended her support and appreciation to the team's efforts. Through her it was

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possible to meet **Mr. Tiwari** and **Dr. Ranjitsigh Bhogal** who are from **Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute**. They are involved with training teachers in yoga which will aid the mental development of children.

All these people and many more have been generous with their words of appreciation, support as well as their in-kind donation and other contributions. I and of course all the other children are thankful to them all.

I await meeting the other children who like me have been selected for the program. Maybe together one day we can do something to make you all be proud of your investment in our growth and nurturing. And with this desire I pray to Ganapati *bappa* who will aid us and bring us success and happiness in our journey.

Sita (Wildflower in Tribal Niche, Looking for Disha, to experience Santosh in My Life)

(Monthly Report, August- September 2007)

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