



TRIBAL MENSA NURTURING PROGRAM

MENSA INDIA PUNE CHAPTER

Sita- Wildflower in Tribal Niche

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Monthly Report- October 2007

The white car from the city, I saw it yet again. My exams were almost over and I was ready to go home for Diwali holidays. *Aba* (father) must be on his way to take me back home. And then I saw the white car, in the dusty road approaching my school. I ran towards it. Sameena *tai* stepped out and spoke to me. I asked her where she had been, I had been waiting for the program she had spoken to me about.

I had already visited **Nishta Centre** which will be the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Centre. Now I wonder when it all, will begin. Looking at the eagerness in my eyes, Sameena *tai* told me that as **Diwali** brings the New Year, so will it bring with it perhaps our first workshop at Nishta Centre, Kamshet. Sameena *tai* said, "Sita we will meet after Diwali, and you will get to learn and see and feel and hear all those new exciting things. I have come to your school to talk to your principal and teachers about the program." *Tai* asked me how the exams were I replied, "They went on fine". She asked me, "Sita, what will you do once you go back home?" I replied, "I will help my *aai* at home and tell my brother and sister about the Mensa test I gave and about my selection for the program".

Then Sameena *tai* walked towards the Principal's office and spoke to Sir. She gave some letters to Sir. It contained consent letters and request letters for cooperation during the Nurturing Program, information required of the teacher who will accompany the students to the centre and the responsibility to be taken by the teacher during their stay at the centre. These consent letters will be given to all the principals of the 8 schools from where the 50 Tribal Mensans will come. One copy of these letters will remain with school authorities, another copy will be forwarded to Mr. Kapse, Project Officer, Ghodegaon and a third copy will be for tribal Mensa Nurturing Program office.

Before my exams had begun, we had gone to Kamshet to the Nishta Center. since the beginning of October, Nishta: Tribal Mensa Nurturing Centre at Mauli Nagar, at Kamshet was under construction and repair. I was overwhelmed when I heard the efforts being taken by so many people to build such a home for me. The work that was done with the help of

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Vijay dada, Amit dada and **Kiran dada** included plumbing, electrical connections repair and construction of a shed outside the bungalow. By 9th October everything was ready and on that day, an opening ceremony was held for Nishta centre, my new home.

On that day at the centre a lot of people had gathered. There were mentors and resource people supporting the project Dr. Gore and Dr. Vadhokar trustees of Sevadham Trust, Mr. Subhashrao Deshpande, Mr. Vivekrao Kulkarni, Dr. Sujala Watve and Dr. Vanita Patwardhan from Jnana Prabodhini, Mr. Kapse from Integrated Tribal Development Project and Dr. Laak from University of Utrecht, The Netherlands. Among other important guests were **Nishtha tai** who had donated the property to Sevadham Trust, Mr. Kelkar from Praj Industries, Dr. Sujata Vaidya, and principals and teachers of 2 schools from Maval talukas from where children have been identified as Mensan.

The ceremony included a presentation by Dr. Narayan Desai stating the progress of the project till date and future plans. It also included a small presentation by Dr. Devasena Desai, founder, director of Manas Tatva about the Tribal Teacher Training Program which will be launched by the end of this year. The children present at the ceremony were each given a Mensa certificate by Subhashrao Deshpande.

On that day they had also displayed all the material collected by them for my home. Like there were a lot of educational DVD's and VCD's, so many books and also posters giving an idea of the various activities conducted by Mensa India Pune Chapter with an aim to nurture intelligence. At the end of the program, we all were served *Puran Poli*, the sweet taste of which still lingers in my mouth. My home, my beautiful home was buzzing with the happy murmur of all the people present there. I also had the chance to meet children from another school who will be a part of the program. I don't know them, maybe in time I will know who they are.....

I am grateful to you all for making this beautiful home which I can call mine. I await to come back to it again and again.

Sameena *tai* gave me some good news when she met me in my school. With the blessings of all the people supporting the project, **Dr. Narayan Desai** (Principle Investigator of Tribal

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Mensa Nurturing Program) has been awarded the **Templeton International Fellowship** to attend the **Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development** in May 2008, at **The University of Iowa**, Iowa City, Iowa, USA. This symposium will be an opportunity to put the Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program on an **international platform**. Ideas shared by different people working in the field of talent development and research scholars from around the world will aid the program by giving their suggestions and feedback.

Rohit dada (Mr. Rohit Desai) from the company, **Symantec** has been grateful enough to organize a **donation campaign** in Symantec companies all around Pune. This was to collect in-kind donation in the form of clothes, stationary, games, books which can be used by us at the centre. 15 such boxes were collected and we are thankful to Rohit *dada* and **Jatan Nagda** for organizing the same.

As Diwali is approaching, Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program will be sending Chatra Prabodhan (magazine published by Jnana Prabodhini) to all the schools. For this **Raghvendra kaka** (Mr. Raghvendra Desai) has generously contributed an amount in the favor of Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program. Similarly **Nishta tai** presented Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program with a cheque as donation.

After the 9th October ceremony, Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program team organized a **Research Methodology Workshop** conducted by **Dr. Laak** and **Dr. Hoksbergen**. These professors come from the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands and specialize in research methodology and statistics. In this workshop, researchers from various fields presented their ideas. The researchers came from the field of psychology, ecology, education, and other social sciences. Dr. Laak This workshop which was held in collaboration with Jnana Prabodhini Institute of Psychology assisted these researchers to put their ideas into a concrete format so as to lead them towards developing a scientific research proposal.

Sameena *tai* felt that this workshop was helpful as it helped her understand the form in which a research needs to be documented and pursued. The participants who presented their ideas will re-work on their research proposals by meeting once a month and incorporating suggestions and clarifying technical doubts. At the end of it, they will receive a

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certificate from the University of Utrecht with 2 credits for research methodology and will create scientific proposals approved by Dr. Laak and Dr. Hoksbergen.

At the office, work is going on the **database**. Thanks to **Varsha tai**, they will be able to finish creating database of 2200 children by the end of Diwali. All Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program accounts have been cleared till date and we are thankful to a lot of people who await patiently as the office processes their payments.

Jnana Prabodhini Institute of Psychology has given Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program a discount to buy various **psychological tests** which will help to make assessments of the children. There will be psychologists like **Sashi tai** who will be present during the Nurturing Program to create a profile of each child. Only when we taste the *curry* do we know what is missing after which we may add the right ingredient to bring out that mouth watering taste. Similarly it is necessary that before, during and at the end of each month, an evaluation and assessment is carried out. This will help the resource people to monitor the program as well as assess the effect and identify future requirements of the nurturing program.

The support for Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program is increasing. Sameena *tai* told me that she met **Dr. Vijay Bhatkar**, he is known as the architect of PARAM computers and is fully supporting he project. He has promised to provide guidance to young researchers and technical support when needed by Tribal Mensa Nurturing Program.

When *Aba* comes I will tell him, "*Aba* I have passed a very important exam." *Aba* will say, "Oh! Very good Sita, your school exam result has come early this year, is it?"

"No, *Aba* it is not a school exam. Some people had come from Pune city and they had given all children a test. This test was very different and very interesting. And I passed it!" I will say.

"Is it so, let me talk to your teacher," *Aba* will say. Then I am sure the teacher would tell *Aba* how hard I worked for the test and how good I scored on it. The teacher would also tell *Aba* about the future programs for those who have passed the test. The second phase which is the **Nurturing Program** will run for 18 months at Kamshet. And here children like me who have been selected from 8 schools will come together once a month for 3 days.

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This is how my meeting with Sameena *tai* was. It unfolded the events of the whole month. It instilled in me the hope which had faded a bit about the future about interesting and different prospects for me. And it is this aspiration to which I will light a lamp on Diwali.

The aspiration of meeting yet again, the aspiration of new beginnings, the aspiration of a new home, of new learning and the aspiration of a new life.....

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

(Monthly Report, October 2007)

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