



Working towards a better tomorrow



Titali NEWSLETTER

APR - SEPT 2010

From Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

The April to September edition of **Titali**, Pankhudi's newsletter covers various activities which have taken place in the Pankhudi's projects – Sahayata, Protsahan, Divya Dishti and Sahayog in the past six months. With the help of our well-wishers, partner NGOs and sponsors we have been able to extend our reach to many more children across five cities in India.

After brainstorming for several hours, our team realized that Titali had the power to not just highlight the activities of Pankhudi as an organization, but also as a medium to connect the volunteers of aforementioned projects.

Thanks to PR & Resource office bearers at Pankhudi who have played the most crucial role of collating the information and drafting the articles. The credit for designing the newsletter goes to Pankhudi Design Desk.

Rutvij Kotecha
News Desk Coordinator

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If you would like to know more about our projects in various cities, please visit our website: www.pankhudifoundation.org or write to our representatives in the respective cities. For any query and information, please write to Ms. Vidha on **pr@pankhudifoundation.org**

To provide your valuable suggestions regarding Pankhudi Newsletter – Titali, please write to us on news@pankhudifoundation.org

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✦ Pankhudi Foundation Launches Aanchal

Ever since Pankhudi was conceptualized, one area that all its members were interested in was adoption promotion. However this being a complex issue, the founding member wisely decided to put it off for a while until they had gained some experience in building and managing volunteer workforce. The time has now come for Pankhudi to initiate activity in this area.

Efforts in this direction began recently with Pankhudi's launch of Aanchal - an initiative to support adoption in India. As the first step, an intern joined the team in Mumbai to gather information about the current process of adoption and the areas where Pankhudi could contribute. A sufficient amount of research was done to start the project in earnest and the Bangalore team has now taken the lead in launching it. We look forward to what we hope will be a productive and rewarding experience for the entire Pankhudi Parivaar.



✦ Pankhudi Foundation's All Cell Meet (ACM) – III (Managing Committee Meeting) @ Mumbai

Soon after the selection of a new set of office bearers in every chapter, it was time once again for the Annual Cell Meet at Mumbai during 11-12th June 2010. This is a very special meet where senior Pankhudians and office bearers from all chapters gather at Pankhudi's head office to discuss their achievements and challenges of the past year, and make plans for the coming year. It is an occasion where all the office bearers of Pankhudi come together and determine the direction they want the organization to take in the coming year. It is a time for everyone to meet, exchange stories and experiences, and come together as a team.

This year was no different. The event was hosted at IIT Mumbai and it proved to be two days of reviewing, planning and intense discussion. The first day had the heads of all the cells make a short presentation about the year that had just gone by. This was followed by presentations from all the chapters about the activities they had conducted in the past year. All heads, senior Pankhudians and office bearers got a chance to study the manner in which activities were conducted in all the other chapters. Hopefully every participant came out from that with a better understanding of the work which we have committed ourselves in, and with ideas to improve the activities across all chapters of Pankhudi Foundation.

The second day was all about the future – members of all the cells got together to brainstorm for the coming year and plans were drawn up to achieve the goals they established there. The meeting concluded with presentations by the cell heads about some of the most important policies of the organization for the benefit of the newer members. The final leg was completed at the Pankhudi Foundation office at Powai where heads of each cell made short presentations about the plans they had made for the coming year. The event was enriched by the presence of guest speakers: Mrs. Ashwini Kulkarni, (former lecturer at Nashik) who spoke about her experiences with children and methods of teaching, Mr. Sudeep Sharma, a senior BCG consultant who spoke about his experiences with finding his true calling and Ms. Purba Joshi (professor, IDC-IITB), who participated actively in our discussions about Aanchal, a new Pankhudi initiative.

Overall, each one of the participants left the event with a lot of new ideas to think about and a sense of team spirit and togetherness.



Parents Induction Meet 2010 at Pune chapter

The idea behind the Parent Induction Meet was to spread awareness about the importance of education amongst the parents. In order to make the session effective and interactive, a UNICEF movie was screened in which a girl child Meena is refused to study and to do the housework against her will. Video was followed by a discussion with parents.



The volunteers have realized that most people in the slums are reluctant to educate their daughters because they fear that they won't be able to find an appropriate life partner. Therefore, a skit was enacted in order to allay their fears and make them aware about the importance of education in the life of their children. A movie by the name "Going to School" from "Girl Star" collection was also screened to bolster the same point.

Mr. Pravin and Mrs. Rama Saptrishi, who were the special guests for the function, spoke a few words on the value of education.

Poonam, the eldest student in the class scored 83 percent in her class 10 board exams and she said "I am happy I achieved this and I want to study further." Her mother also echoed the same sentiments and said "We should let the girl child study. We should never discriminate between our sons and daughters."

The overwhelming response from the parents gave the volunteers an impression that they had managed to drive home their point. They are hopeful that the class strength would be significantly greater than the previous batch.

Summer activities at the Pune chapter

Stepping aside from the regular academics, the volunteers in Pune chapter decided to engage students in fun filled activities to tap their creativity and incite enthusiasm for learning. Since the students have always been inclined towards arts, the volunteers encouraged the students to draw pictures or make origami and collage. Interestingly, rather than being merely instructed by the volunteers, the students took initiatives to teach their fellow classmates what they were good at.



Over the vacation, two movies namely “Makdee” and “Finding Nemo” were screened and trips to Katraj Snake Park and zoo were also organized. The students had a chance to stargaze through the two telescopes on the terrace of College of Engineering, Pune. Mr. Tushar Purohit from IUCAA helped the students see various heavenly objects like the moon, constellations etc. In order to inculcate reading as a hobby, special reading sessions were organized by the volunteers.

The eagerness of a few students from Patil Estate encouraged the volunteers to start a new batch for teaching how to use computers. It has been observed that many students who are studying commerce aspire to secure jobs in government offices and in order to make them IT-savvy, volunteers have dedicated special time to coach them. Along with the basics, students are also taught various packages of MS Office.



The activities during the summer months have charged the volunteers and students, who now look forward to the new academic year with great keenness.

Exam Time at Pankhudi Mumbai

Pankhudi Mumbai has been teaching at Suman Nagar since the last five years. This year, a need was felt to bring more traction to our efforts and set measurable goals to track our performance. Hence, we decided to conduct a survey in Suman Nagar and take a batch distribution test (BDT).

In the past years, we have enrolled students throughout the year. However, this year, we consciously decided to freeze a batch at the beginning of the academic year, teach the neediest of the lot and monitor their progress through the next few years. We hoped the survey and test would help us to gauge the proficiency level of all children and help enroll kids who showed good potential, however, did not have adequate support platforms at school, home and/or tuition classes.

Thus, we conducted a survey on the 16th and 23rd of May. More than 100 Pankhudi and Non-Pankhudi families were covered and data pertaining to the education, income and their experience with Pankhudi were captured.

Later, a batch distribution test was conducted using NCERT material. The tests helped to judge the current level of proficiency in Maths and English and to make a plan for content creation.

Finally, taking into account factors like family income, needs of students and the test results, we formed two batches, comprising 40 students between the age group of 6-12 years. All students who could afford external tuitions were promised complimentary support. However, in our core batches we only admitted students who couldn't afford tuitions and hence needed our support.

After the survey and batch distribution tests were analyzed, we held a meeting with all parents and discussed our annual plan with them. We also decided to commence our weekend classes (Maths and English) from July.

An important take away from this entire exercise was that most families' monthly earnings were between Rs. 3,000 - 10,000 and most were hard pressed for finances. Yet, not a single kid from the locality was a drop out! In fact, many families sent their kids to tuitions and saw education as a pathway to better lives.

This raised an important question for all of us: Young India demands a better quality of life and education. Are we as a nation ready to meet this ever increasing demand?

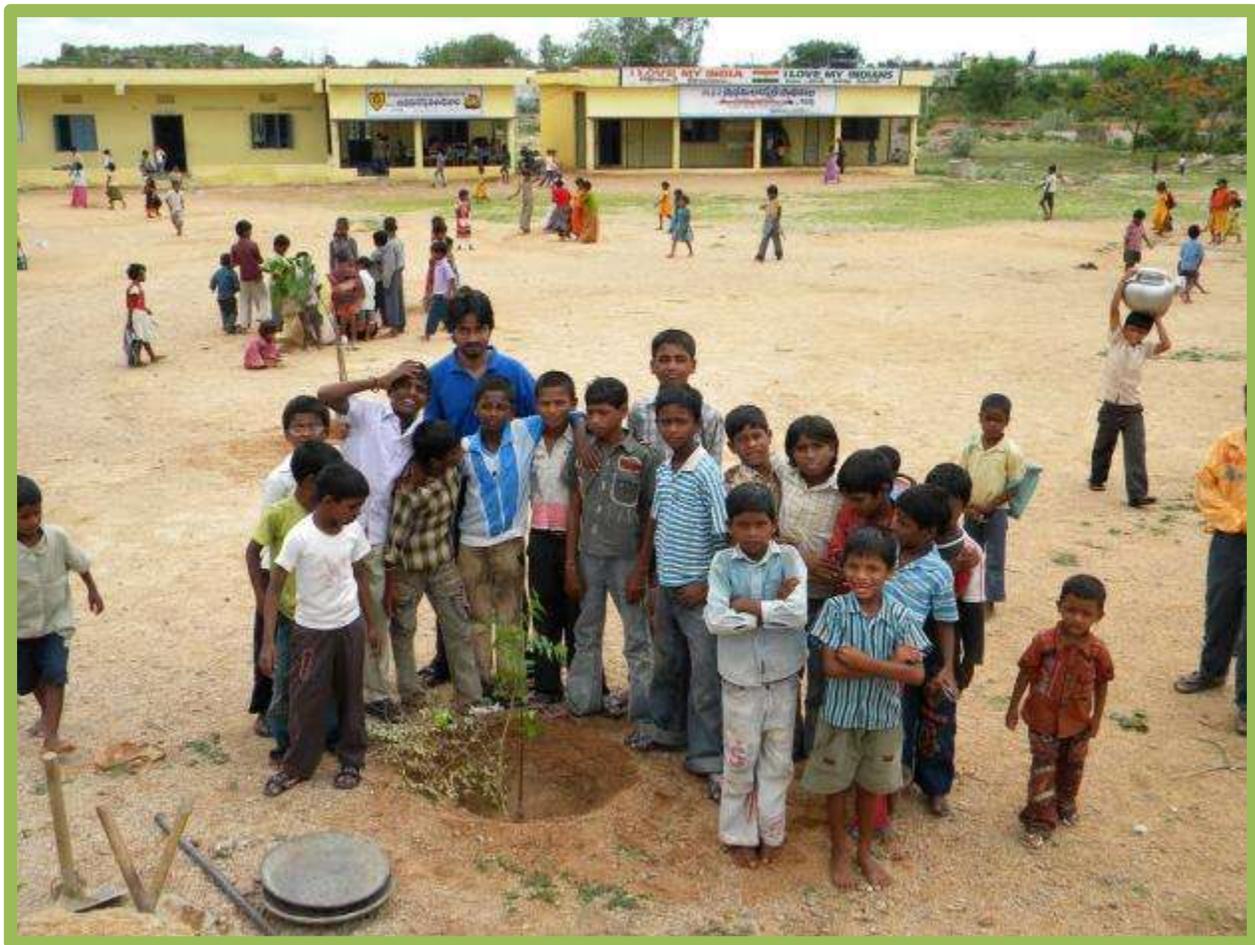


Plantation drive at UPS, Gowlidoddy, Andhra Pradesh

On June 19th 2010, volunteers from Pankhudi Foundation, Move the Wheels (MTW) and Divine India Youth Association (DIYA) met for a tree plantation drive at Upper Primary School (UPS), Gowlidoddy, Andhra Pradesh.

It was very generous of DIYA to bring saplings, fertilizers and plough for the drive. A variety of trees including Neem, Pipal and Bougainvillea, were planted in and around the premises of the school. Kids of 5th, 6th and 7th grades were divided into groups and each one of them was given a sapling to plant. They were assigned the responsibility to water and look after the plants on daily basis. To safeguard the trees from cattle and stray animals, iron fences will be constructed around them.

A total of 17 saplings were planted and having walked a step closer towards making India and the world a greener place, the kids and volunteers were equally pleased with the experience.



🦋 A visit to SOS Children's Village

On June 6th 2010, a group of Pankhudi volunteers visited the SOS Children's Village at Vottinagulapally, (near Hyderabad, India), a family based, long term care institution for children who are no longer able to grow up in their biological families.

The idea was to interact with the kids and engage them in fun filled activities. To begin with, the kids were invited to introduce themselves, mention their hobbies and ambitions in life. Their enterprising goals delighted the volunteers who gained a sense of respect for the management, for giving these children the confidence and vision to aim high in life.

After a few ice-breaking games like musical chairs, all reservations in the minds of kids and volunteers disappeared. They exchanged friendship bands and affirmed their friendship. As per the plan, a drawing competition was organized for the kids. Their discipline, creativity and skills literally stunned the volunteers. The innocent sketches depicting imaginary ideas, crude outlines yet strikingly vivid color combinations painted big smiles on the face of volunteers.

Since every kid's imagination is unique and his/her work of art is best in itself, the volunteers had a tough time choosing the best 10 amongst the 39 drawings. The kids accepted the results in a very sporting fashion and to the surprise of volunteers, no one complained about not having their drawings selected. Instead, the kids cheered their friends. To honor their participation, prizes and chocolates were distributed amongst them.

Although a short trip, each volunteer took back memories with him/her that will last for a life time. But the love they received and the new friendships they welded will always tempt them to come back. Thanks to the director Mr. M.G. Ramesh Kumar and staff for their gracious welcome!



Health and Hygiene Initiatives at Delhi's Priyanka Camp

At the Pankhudi Delhi Chapter, the past few months were spent in trying to improve the health and hygiene of the kids as well as the adults at the Priyanka Camp. We had been trying to setup health camps for the slum from the Smile Foundation's Smile on Wheels program for a while now and finally in April, weekly health camps with the help of a mobile medical unit were started to attend to the medical needs of kids and adults in the slum and its neighborhood areas. The mobile van caters to all kinds of medical check-ups and provides medicines free of cost, thus bridging the medical needs of the residents of the camp to a great extent.

We were also able to obtain assistance from a doctor of the Lady Harding Medical College who came to the slum and organized a talk on precautionary measures against common summer ailments. The main topics of focus were problems like malaria, dysentery and dengue, and the symptoms, causes and precautions for each. The talk was very helpful in informing the women on how to take care of their children's health and preventive measures for these ailments. The doctor also had a more personal interaction with the women, did some medical check-ups and answered various medical queries.



Lastly, since most kids had gone to their native village for the summer vacations, we were able to devote a couple of weekends in May and June having useful sessions for the kids and their parents on various educational matters. A TV and a DVD player was setup at the teaching room and the women residing in the slum were shown various health-related videos such as on contraceptives and AIDS.

A Trip to a Parle Factory

On 28th August, 2010, the children at Priyanka Camp, Delhi visited a Parle Factory in Noida accompanied by the team of volunteers. The visit was supposed to be fun as well as educational and the children certainly learnt a few things while at the same time having a lot of fun. The staff at the factory was extremely friendly and started the visit off with a short animated movie that showed the children what Parle did. This was followed by a round of questions about what the kids had just seen in the movie, and each child who answered correctly was given a little prize. After the quiz, the staff escorted the group through the factory and the children as well as the volunteers were fascinated by the manner in which old favorites like Mango Bite toffees and Parle Candy were being made before them. The visit ended all too soon and after a quick snack for the children, the group returned to the camp with a lot of happy memories of the day they had had.



✦ A New Partner at Shree Ramana Maharishi Academy for the Blind (SRMAB)

At Shree Ramana Maharishi Academy for the Blind (SRMAB) at Bengaluru, Pankhudi volunteers have been teaching computer skills to the visually impaired kids using JAWS, software which enables a visually impaired person to use computer. Students of grades V & VI hone their typing skills and focus on correcting grammatical and punctuation errors while students of grades VII to X work on tools like Notepad and MS Office.

Pankhudi Foundation recently got associated with Enable India to improve curriculum and training skills of Pankhudi volunteers. Enable India has also been requested to impart vocational training to students of higher grades to make them self-reliant after grade XII. Of late, workshops for the volunteer induction had been conducted by Enable India and efforts are underway to prepare a curriculum that relates the use of computers in real world. In order to increase the breadth of knowledge, the curriculum shall be designed to teach English and mathematics using computer exercises.

Both the organizations, Enable India and Pankhudi, are optimistic that the mutual co-operation at various fronts shall benefit the two organizations mutually.



🦋 Aashayein: At Desire Society

The Bengaluru chapter of Pankhudi recently started off another project at the [Desire Society](#), which is a home of 23 kids some of which are HIV affected and others are kids of HIV-affected parents. Pankhudians always enjoy spending time with the children at Desire Society. These children are talented, confident and always ready to learn new things.

The volunteers teach the kids English. The project was taken by Pankhudi as it falls under the purview of educating young minds. The HIV affected people are always looked down upon and with this initiative we are educating people to come forward and accept these people with open arms.



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