

AIM for SEVA BALIKA CHATRALAYA at NANDAYAL, AP

We, the Bhagavad Gita students of Swamini Sumatmananda were keen to visit this BEST girls Chatralaya, and interact with the girls there. We made plans with enthusiasm to leave at 6 am and ten of us accompanied by Swamini Sumatmananda left for this weekend trip.

There was an unusual delay of four hours and we finally left by road trip at 10 am , as a result of which we reached NANDHYAL CHATRALAYA at 5pm only! However the exhaustion of Long journey vanished when we were welcomed so warmly by the charming, smiling faces of the girls! They lovingly called us ' Mataji' and our fatigue was blown away!! They took us in, welcomed Swaminiji with Purnakumbham, did ' Padapuja' while chanting Guru Stotram, in Sanskrit, beautifully! It was wonderful indeed to see this traditional swagatam.

When we saw Pujya Swamiji Dayananda Saraswathi's picture at the entrance hall, We could only bow our heads in reverence to PujyaSwamiji's visionary initiative in founding the ALL INDIA MOVEMENT for SEVA. This is a great initiative to educate Tribal Boys and Girls, providing clean, safe environment and free boarding and lodging, close to their hometowns. This is possible with dedicated team of caretakers and corporate sponsors. Pujya Swamiji's goal was to have one for each district in India!! Now there are 14 hostels just in AP and Telengana. His vision and dream have borne wonderful fruit!!

His tireless effort and divine Anugraham makes everything possible.



This NANDHYAL CHATRALAYA for girls came up in 2004 and it is one of the BEST- Because these girls, about 62 of them, of Chenchu tribal background are really special, they focus well, grasp quickly and have a really charming demeanour, as we observed too! This Chatralaya enjoys good support from local community too, from one RamaKrishna Reddy garu who takes good care!

After freshening up, we had a great interaction with the girls on the terrace, with the setting sun in the background! The girls range from little ones of 5 years to high school teenagers. They chanted Sanskrit Shlokams and ShantiMantras with admirable pronunciation, sang Bhajans with energy and were unwilling to let us go!

We went to visit the ancient Mahanandi temple, part of the Navanandis from which Nandyal got its name. After being energised by a holy dip in the crystal clear temple tank, we had a Divya Darshan of SwayambhuMahaNandiswara and Kameswari Amman. The full moon added ethereal beauty to our visit to this powerful temple.

When we returned to the Chatralaya, we were pleasantly surprised to see the girls eagerly waiting for us! They wanted to entertain us with song and dance! After a quick dinner, we had a satsang with them. The younger girls did action rhymes and elder ones danced to folk songs, all beautifully coordinated! It was pure Ananda watching the girls sing and dance with such joy!!

Very talented girls and our compliments to whoever taught them. Girls are mostly from the Chenchu and Lambada tribes. Remarkable to see their bright faces, neat appearance and awareness about ' Bharatiya' culture!

The couple who take care of the girls, Moksha Reddy and Mallika are doing SEVA with lot of dedication. It is a huge responsibility ! We finally retired to bed, late at night.

Next day, we left for Ahobilam nava Narasimha Darshan, early in the morning. ShriKrishna Reddy garu accompanied us. This is one of the 108 Divyakshetrams, an important pilgrimage site for SriVaishnavaites. It is about 40 kms from Nandyal in the Nallamalla forests. It is firmly believed that lord Vishnu had manifested himself as Ugra Narasimha, in a natural cavern of the rock, killing Hiranyakashipu here, to save his ardent devotee, the boy saint Prahalada!

Lower Ahobilam has the temple of Prahalada Varada. We undertook a meditative walk in Upper Ahobilam up to Varaha Narasimhar. The trek is an arduous rocky path with natural beauty of Nallamalla forests surrounding it. You get a panoramic view of the cleft mountain from the top. We returned by lunchtime to the Chatralaya.

We had sponsored a special BHIKSHA lunch with the girls. They chanted prayers and sang bhajans before eating. So disciplined!! After lunch we had a SATSANG with all the girls in the Hall upstairs.

Each of us spoke for a few minutes introducing ourselves and motivating them. Swaminiji asked the girls to tell us about their experience of living in the Chatralaya.

It was great to see the confidence with which they spoke.

Rameshwari, class 10, spoke in English, giving her family background, how her parents were initially hesitant to send her here, 12 yrs back and now they are so happy she is getting a good education. She is a farmer 'sdaughter and wants to do engineering! It was a pleasure interacting with these special girls.

A very satisfying, though hectic and exhausting trip. PujyaSwamiji's vision of AIM for SEVA is a fantastic reality.

Highlight of the trip was meeting these happy, enthusiastic girls! Visits to temples was an added bonus!! Looking forward to the next trip!

Report written by JAISHREE, student of Swamini Sumatmananda