

Ekal Third National Sports Event Connecting Gramin Bharat with Traditional Sports



Wrapped
in Love

Possibilities
Infinite

PRISM JEWELLERY

Jitendra Bhansali Group Company



Contact:

Sanket Jain | 98200 98884
sanket@prismjewellery.com

Amar Bhansali | 98200 94440
amar@prismjewellery.com

Pranay Shah | 98200 28461
pranay@prismjewellery.com

Dharam Bhat | 98730 08510
dharam@prismjewellery.com

Raumil Sanghavi | 9833208447
raumil@prismjewellery.com

309 - 311 , A-1, Shah & Nahar Ind. Estate, Sitaram Jadhav Marg, Lower Parel (W),
Mumbai - 400 013, Maharashtra, India. Tel No.+91-22-43484348

EKAL PRAYAS

A Family Magazine With Social Concern

March-April, 2025 Vol-16 No. 1 ₹ 50/-

Editor

Manju Srivastava

Co-Editor

Siddhartha Shankar Gautam

Editorial Board

Nishi Agarwal

Praveen Arya

Editorial Coordinator

Harsh Malik

Art Consultant

Sandeep Kumar

Head Office

Ekal Prayas, 1st Floor, Plot No. 8, Local Shopping Complex, Okhla Phase - II, New Delhi - 110 020.

Phone: 011-4050 3331. Fax: 011-4050 3332.

E-mail: ekalprayas@ekal.org

Awake, Arise and Achieve



Dear Reader,

The successful organization of the Ekal Third National Sports Competition was recently concluded in Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha. This event showcased the growing enthusiasm for sports in rural India. The current and former students of Ekal Vidyalaya demonstrated their perseverance, hard work, and skills, excelling in various sports disciplines. From the state's first citizen to prominent personalities from the political, social, and sports arenas, many encouraged and uplifted these rural children. The sportsmanship displayed by these children, rising above caste, religion, and language, is undoubtedly a reflection of the Panchmukhi Sanskar-based education imparted by Ekal Vidyalaya. My best wishes to these young talents for bringing glory to our nation. The relentless efforts of Odisha's volunteers and committee members have further strengthened the family spirit of the Ekal Abhiyan (Campaign).

It is a moment of immense joy and pride for our organization that Padma Shri Sri Ram Bahadur Rai, a senior journalist associated with the Ekal family, and the Chairman of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, has been honoured with the Padma Bhushan. Additionally, Kolkata's renowned industrialist and philanthropist Shri Sajjan Bhajanka has been awarded the Padma Shri. On behalf of Ekal Abhiyan, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for their good health.

During my three-month stay in Australia, I had the opportunity to witness Ekal Abhiyan's activities in Melbourne, Hamilton, and Auckland. I can confidently say that Ekal Abhiyan's reputation and uniqueness have deeply influenced the Indian diaspora, inspiring them to stay connected to their roots.

Apart from this, Ekal's work continues to progress through Vanyatras (forest journeys), various meetings, and cultural-social programmes. As we welcome the festival of colors, Holi, may it fill your lives with positivity and joy.

Looking forward to connecting with you again in the next edition.

Yours,

Manju 'Didi'

manju@ekal.org

Contents

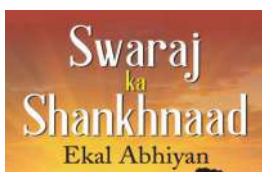
COVER STORY



Ekal Third National Sports Events...

Siddhartha Shankar Gautam

01. Ms. Manisha Jain Joins...	20
02. Nagarik Samman Samaroh...	21
03. Stuti Shah stands for Ekal	28
04. Standing Tall – Kamlesh Shah, USA	30



Ekal's Historic Journey

(Excerpts from Swaraj Ka Shanknaad)

05



The Role of Gram Swaraj....

Rambhadur Rai

07



Ekal Run-6th Edition

FTS, Kolkata

18



Ekal Abhiyan Expands...

Ekal Team, Australia and New Zealand

22

Published and Printed by Manju Srivastava from 1st Floor, Plot No 8, Local Shopping Complex, Okhla Phase-II, New Delhi - 110 020. Owner: Ekal Sansthan Printed at - Viba Press Pvt. Ltd., C - 66/3 Okhla Industrial Area - II, New Delhi - 20. Editor - Manju Srivastava. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form with written permission only. All disputes are subject to the jurisdiction of competent Courts in Delhi/New Delhi only.



Durastream™
CPVC COMPOUND

SKIPPER
— PIPES —
SKIPPER FOR LIFE



INDIA'S SAFEST PIPES

Toll Free: 1800 889 9779
www.skipperpipes.in

Follow us:     



Continued...

Ekal Abhiyan has now completed 35 years. The age of 35 is considered significant in the life of any organization or individual. This is the age when the family and society expect a young adult to start earning after completing his education. This is exactly the point at which Ekal stands exactly right now. As a child turns into a grown up, his body takes a larger shape and his intellect finds new horizons. Shyam ji, Ekal's charioteer, underwent a similar metamorphosis at this stage of his life.

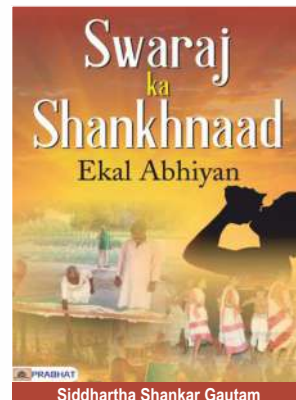
the rural hinterlands. No plan was formally launched unless it would be approved in the laboratory of rural experiments. This immensely effective working style was the strength of Shyam ji. He didn't let any plan be imposed from the top. Rather, he made it compulsory that workers from the bottom level should be engaged in the planning and execution. Hence, this project was slow and took many years to take proper shape. It however emerged as a grand success.



Amazing Ekal

When the Ekal schools were initially started, the only target was to make the vanvasi children literate. Gradually as the mission expanded, it was felt that an urban organisation must be formed to supervise this project, and thus the Vanbandhu Parishad (Friends of Tribal Society) came into being. It took another 10 years to make this organisation effective and result-oriented. Its success was largely because of the active and colossal role played by Shyam ji and his team. This ensured that every plan or scheme would be tested in the waters of

As this programme became national, it was thought that it must encompass adult education also. Educating only the children was not enough. It was also essential to educate their parents, or else the education of the children would remain incomplete. So, the education programme was altered to mould it in a way that could help both students and their parents gain sufficient education. Ekal Abhiyan slowly developed new contours like Aarogya (Healing), Village Development and Jagran (Awakening). Shyam Ji had



realized the fact that the awakening of rural folks would be a Herculean task. For, had working among villagers been an easy task, most of the government sponsored development programmes for villages would not have failed. Just one scheme, the Aarogya Yojana (Healing Scheme) had taken four to five years for its experimentation alone. In 2005, the Karyakarta Kumbh (a grand meeting of workers) was organized in Indore. In this meeting, the volunteers were taught the importance of swavalamban (being self-sufficient). Up to this stage, though Shyam ji was moving ahead with his mission, there was no clarity about the success it had achieved. For gaining any substantial success, the first step of this mission required the team to win the hearts and confidence of villagers. But Shyam ji was sure that his team would be able to win over villagers after the years of rigorous efforts they had put in. An interesting development took place in these crucial years. The government started taking keen interest in the education of rural children. Till now, only the Ekal team was educating rural/tribal children, but the government officials also became active on this front. In fact, the Ekal team started playing second fiddle to the government in certain areas where it was once leading. The number of children formally enrolled in the Ekal schools began to dwindle and the number of voluntary





students increased. Hence, Ekal's role expanded from being only the educator of children to being the educator of adults (named Gram Siksha) too. In simple terms, Ekal became a leader not only in Bal Shiksha but also in Gram Shiksha. It was a very significant change in the life of the rural people.

Now, with the panorama of the overall development of the villages visualized, it was observed that the major hurdle to true progress was the villagers' addiction to alcohol. Without finding a remedy for this problem, the whole education mission might prove to be futile. There was only one solution to this problem—Satsang or Sanskar Siksha (value-based education through religious gatherings). It was evident to the world then, and is now too, that material education sans ethical education proves to be disastrous. The Ekal team turned to finding ways to amalgamate both of these educational methods in a balanced way so that they both could become complementary to each other.

The Importance of Organisational Structure

Let's understand the background. The importance of structure in any organization has as much significance as the veins and arteries in the human body. In the same way that veins and arteries ensure the supply of blood to the heart and various other parts of the body, it is the structure of any organization that makes it functional. At the threshold of its inception, the Ekal school had two aspects—first, the one started in Odisha as an experiment and named 'the night school'; and second, the one started by Madan Babu in Dhanbad, Jharkhand, aka the first experiment of the vanvasi vidyalaya. Later, they both merged to emerge as one Ekal vidyalaya (One Teacher School). In Odisha, people were encouraged to revisit their religious roots and turn to education. There, the first school was established as

a night classroom in Chakapad district. At that time, many villagers had questioned the very basis of being educated—why should we study? To address this query, Swami Lakshmanand ji suggested that Satsang (spiritual discourse or sacred gathering) should be organised to convince villagers about the importance of education. His logic was that since there had been a tradition of Satsang in those areas, they would be ready to listen to even educational discourse in such gatherings. Thus, villagers were told that if they wished to welcome Lord Jagannath in their villages, they would have to first learn to recite Jagannath Bhagwat. They were willing to learn to recite Jagannath Bhagwat for their love for Lord Jagannath. Therefore, villagers' faith in Lord Jagannath took them towards education. Here, the teachers didn't demand any remuneration, as faith was enough for both the teacher and students. But when the Ekal schools were opened in South Bihar (Jharkhand), religion did not provide sufficient inspiration and thus teachers had to be paid honoraria. This generated a need for regular funding.

Initially, Ma Madan Babu took the responsibility for collecting funds, while Dr Rakesh Popli and Sri Mahesh Sharma toured the villages and shepherded youngsters to join the Ekal schools. They also trained these youths to run the Ekal schools. Since Ma Madan Babu was a coal baron, he had a lot of influence in the area. So, even the children joined these schools along with the youngsters. A huge amount was collected in the name of Ma Madan Babu. The Ekal vidyalaya (schools) were officially established in 1989 with the formation of the Vanbandhu Parishad. Thereafter, the Ekal team worked on its organizational structure to run the mission successfully. It has been 35 years since Ekal began its journey. Then, its source of people was rural, while

its source of money was urban. When Ekal stepped into the vanvasi villages, it focused on generating empathy for vanvasis, educating them and taking care of their health. Ekal has never wavered from its commitment and has kept moving ahead. Its three pivots have played their respective roles in its journey—the urban organization, rural organization and associate workers. It is the joint efforts of these three pillars that has earned Ekal international fame. ■

(To be Continued...)

Form IV (See Rule B) EKAL PRAYAS

1. **Place of Publication** : Delhi
2. **Periodicity of Publication** : Bimonthly
3. **Printer's Name** : Manju Srivastava
Nationality : Indian
(a) Whether a citizen of India : Yes
(b) If a foreigner, the country of origin : XXX
Address : 1st Floor, Plot No 8, Local Shopping Complex, Okhla Phase-II, New Delhi-110 020.
4. **Publisher's Name** : Manju Srivastava
(a) Whether a citizen of India : Yes
(b) If a foreigner, The country of origin : XXX
Address : 1st Floor, Plot No 8, Local Shopping Complex, Okhla Phase-II, New Delhi-110 020.
5. **Editor's Name** : Manju Srivastava
(a) Whether a citizen of India : Yes
(b) If a foreigner, The country of origin : XXX
Address : 1st Floor, Plot No 8, Local Shopping Complex, Okhla Phase-II, New Delhi-110 020.
6. **Name and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital**
Name : Ekal Sansthan
Address : 1st Floor, Plot No 8, Local Shopping Complex, Okhla Phase-II, New Delhi-110 020.

I, Manju Srivastava, hereby declare that the particulars given are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-
Manju Srivastava
Publisher

Dated: 01.03.2025





The trustees of Ekal Sansthan and the Chairman of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Padma Shri Sri Rambahadur Rai, were honored with a shawl and a bouquet at IGNCA upon the announcement of his being awarded the Padma Bhushan. The felicitation was conducted by Shri Rajesh Goyal, In-charge of Ekal Abhiyan Trust, Sri Akhil Gupta, President of Ekal BLSP, Sri Prem Asudani, Working President of EVFI, Smt. Manju Srivastava, Chairperson of Ekal Sansthan, and Sri Praveen Arya, Trustee of Ekal Sansthan.

Everyone wished Sri Rambahadur Rai good health. On this occasion, Shri Rambahadur Rai has written a special article for Ekal Prayas, for which the Ekal Prayas team extends its gratitude.

- Editor

The Role of Gram Swaraj in a Developed Bharat

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj of the Government of India has released a report based on a 2024 study. A key question that arises is: How effectively are panchayats functioning across the country? This question holds significance due to India's social, regional, and cultural diversity, making local governance an essential subject. The more transparent local governance is, the greater the scope for development. Unfortunately, a lack of transparency remains a persistent issue. However, transparency is not the only concern; another key issue is that the foundation of local governance lies in the Panchayati Raj system, whose core is the Gram Sabha.

The mention of Gram Sabha immediately brings forth the dream of Gram Swaraj (village self-rule) in every citizen's mind, raising the question—how long will it take for panchayats to become truly empowered? This has a historical context that is at least 120 years old, highlighting that Gram Swaraj was central to India's freedom movement. Dadabhai Naoroji referred to it as self-governance, while Mahatma Gandhi called it Swaraj. Gandhi outlined four key aspects of Swaraj:

1. Swaraj is a sacred and Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint.
2. By Swaraj, he meant governance based on the will of the people.

3. The system of governance should be in harmony with the nature of villages.
4. Swaraj is synonymous with Ram Rajya (ideal governance).

Gandhi's first and last dream was Swaraj. To realize this dream, the framers of the Constitution recommended adopting the Panchayati Raj system.

The report from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj provides insights into how the system functions across different states. While there are some positive aspects, most findings are concerning. The Constitution provides for a Panchayati Raj system, which was





implemented through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. This amendment, though delayed, was the first step toward realizing the dream of Gram Swaraj. It was expected to deepen democratic roots and open doors for prosperity in villages. The amendment introduced a three-tier Panchayati Raj structure (village, block, and district levels), set a five-year term for panchayats, and established a State Election Commission to oversee elections. Today, elected panchayats exist across India.

These panchayats are formed through a structured electoral process, with around 3.5 million representatives, including members from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, and other backward groups, who benefit from a reservation system. The Constitution grants panchayats responsibility for 29 developmental tasks. However, a critical question remains—have state governments transferred these powers to the panchayats? The constitutional amendments aimed to ensure decentralization of power with direct public participation, but the study reveals that the goal is still far from being achieved.

Why is this the case?

- Is it because governments are indifferent?
- Is it because the bureaucracy does not want the Panchayati Raj system to be effective?
- Are policymakers fearful of the Panchayati Raj system?
- Does the political leadership lack a true understanding of Gram Swaraj?

- Are there structural flaws in the current Panchayati Raj system?

These are just a few of the many questions that arise when analyzing the issue from different perspectives. The findings of the Panchayati Raj study reinforce the significance of these concerns.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a goal for the nation—building a developed India. A developed India will also be a prosperous India, and the foundation of such a nation will be Gram Swaraj. This is not just an imagination but a historical reality. Historian Dharampal's research has provided historical evidence of this, and global historians now acknowledge that in the 17th century, India accounted for 38% of the world's economy. This is an eye-opening fact, proving that during that time, India's villages were self-governing, self-reliant, and prosperous, making the entire country wealthy. These three qualities make Gram Swaraj an attractive model even today.

It is evident that achieving the goal of a developed India requires making the Panchayati Raj system more capable, effective, and result-oriented. Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly emphasized that governance will function according to the Constitution. One of the objectives of the Panchayati Raj study is to determine whether panchayats are operating in line with constitutional provisions.

In India, panchayats exist in two forms, both derived from constitutional provisions:

1. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which aimed to establish a well-defined, empowered local government.

2. The Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (commonly known as the PESA Act).

The story of the PESA Act is complex, with various challenges and developments. In ten states with Scheduled Tribal areas, panchayats function under this law. Some regions have a historical legacy of self-governance dating back 2,000 years. Historians studying the Jharkhand region have discovered that even during the Mughal era, indigenous self-governance systems existed. These systems allowed local communities to make decisions about land, forests, and natural resources, including the trade of medicinal herbs. During the Constituent Assembly debates, tribal representatives raised these issues effectively. However, old laws continued, leading to protests and the demand for "Our Village, Our Rule."

This demand turned into a movement, which the Government of India could not ignore. As a result, a decision was made to draft an appropriate and comprehensive law for Scheduled Areas, leading to the formation of the Dilip Singh Bhuria Committee. Based on its recommendations, the PESA Act was enacted to empower tribal self-governance. The stronger the foundation of this self-rule, the higher its potential for success.

One major feature of the PESA Act is that it formalizes tribal traditions within a legal framework, allowing the three-tier Panchayati Raj system to function effectively. The Act grants constitutional recognition to tribal governance traditions, but it also presents a significant challenge to the bureaucratic system, which remains





more aligned with exploitative forces than with indigenous communities.

The study by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has highlighted several obstacles to the implementation of PESA:

1. District officials often oppose the principles of PESA.
2. State legislatures do not prioritize the Act.
3. The necessary legal protections for PESA are inadequate.
4. There is a strong nexus between bureaucrats and industrialists, hindering progress.

As a result, progress under PESA has stalled. Raising public awareness is crucial to overcoming these barriers. Without a shift in mindset, PESA cannot be effectively implemented. Additionally, members of Parliament and state legislatures often act as obstacles to self-governance, fearing that a strong Panchayati Raj system will diminish their influence.

Key questions remain

- How can the Panchayati Raj system gain momentum in Scheduled Areas?
- What steps should be taken to empower Gram Sabhas?

The solution lies in awakening the consciousness of the people in Scheduled Areas. Organizations committed to Gram Swaraj must play an active role, including training grassroots workers to understand the constitutional structure of the Panchayati Raj system and the rights of the Gram Sabha. These trained workers can support Gram Sabhas by



equipping them with technical and skill-based knowledge while respecting local traditions and customs.

The 'Ekal Abhiyan' should play an active role in promoting Gram Swaraj. For this, the training of volunteers is essential. They must understand the constitutional framework of the Panchayati Raj system and the rights of the Gram Sabha within it. With proper training, these volunteers can support the Gram Sabha, equipping it with technical and skill-based knowledge. They should also be well-versed in the region's culture, traditions, and customs. This knowledge will help create a positive environment, enabling the Gram Sabha to make well-informed decisions.

Through this process, the Gram Sabha will become aware of its rights. Its meetings should be held regularly, ensuring participation and consensus-based decision-making. To achieve this, a scientific method of collective pressure must be developed. Small subject-specific groups should be formed, ensuring each group is well-trained and not easily misled. These groups will gradually make the administrative system more accountable.

For the effective management of water, forests, land, and other resources, the Gram Sabha should

form different committees. The Gram Sabha must recognize and actively support this initiative, which can be achieved through continuous efforts. Members of the Gram Sabha should also be made aware of the Forest Rights Act of 2006. There should be an in-depth study of how natural resources can be preserved, balanced with environmental concerns, and utilized for employment generation.

The Gram Sabha has the authority to resolve local disputes, and efforts should be made to ensure the effective implementation of this right. It also has the power to regulate the sale and use of intoxicating substances within its jurisdiction, and the community should be informed about this authority.

The central and state governments need to periodically compile government orders, policy directives, and laws related to Panchayati Raj. A list of experts on these topics should be maintained for consultation when necessary. Additionally, if a government employee assigned to the Gram Sabha is not performing satisfactorily, a mechanism should be established to take appropriate action against them. This will enhance the efficiency of the Gram Sabha. ■

Rambhadur Rai
Chairman, Indira Gandhi
Rashtriya Kala Kendra





Ekal Third National Sports Event Connecting Gramin Bharat with Traditional Sports





For the past 35 years, Ekal Abhiyan has been working on the inspirational thoughts of Swami Vivekananda, bringing innovative approaches to education and cultural values among rural children. Swami Vivekananda had a deep interest in sports. He believed that life should not only be successful but also meaningful. His vision for India's youth was for them to become fearless in achieving their goals and to be physically and mentally strong. He emphasized understanding and living life through sports.

Inspired by this philosophy, Ekal Abhiyan structured the Abhyudaya Youth Club to organize sports festivals at various levels. This year marked the successful third edition of the event. After being held in Lucknow and Nagpur in previous years, this time the Ekal National Sports Competition was hosted in Bhubaneswar, setting new milestones.

At Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, students and alumni associated with Ekal Abhiyan participated enthusiastically in various



Flag hosting by Governor Dr. Haribabu Kambhampati

traditional games, displaying exceptional sportsmanship and giving their best performances.

On February 8, 2025, the National Sports Competition 2025 was inaugurated at the grand Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar by the Honorable Governor of Odisha, Dr. Haribabu Kambhampati.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including Sri Alok Kumar, Joint General Secretary of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS); Sri Srikrishnachandra Patra, Minister of Science and Technology, Odisha; Swami Jeevanmuktanand Puri, from Shankaracharya Ved Vidyalaya, Jaleshpatta, Kandhamal; Sri Priyaranjan Choudhary, Co-Convenor of the Sports Organizing Committee; and Sri Amarkrishna, National Vice President of Abhyudaya Youth Club.

Honorable Governor Dr. Haribabu Kambhampati formally commenced the sports competition by releasing balloons. The official opening announcement was made by Swami Jeevanmuktanand Puri, while Sri



Yuva & Sports Minister Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse with winners





Sri Madhavendra Singh, Sangathan Prabhari, Ekal Abhiyan

Amarkrishna administered the oath of sportsmanship to the participating athletes.

Sri Madhavendra Singh, the Sangathan Prabhari of Ekal Abhiyan, briefed the guests about the journey and continuous progress of Ekal Abhiyan. He highlighted that the sports competition is organized under the Abhyudaya Youth Club and emphasized that the goal of this event is to establish Ekal Vidyalayas as a nurturing ground for sports talent.

In his address, Sri Alok Kumar stated that sports is the most widely watched and followed activity in the world. It is not just a form of entertainment but a complete and fulfilling activity. The rural children participating in this event have been selected from over 2 million children, which is a remarkable achievement. He extended his best wishes for the continued success and expansion of this initiative.

EKAL ABHIYAN ABHYUDAYA YOUTH CLUB

1ST PLAYER LIST

S.N	NAME OF PLAYERS	SAMBHAG	GAME
1	Meghali Pegu	East Purvattar	Long Jump Girls
2	Allem Majhi	East Purvattar	200 Mtr Race Boys
3	Diganta Boro	West Purvottar	Long Jump Boys
4	Nilima Kope	Odisha	Female Yogasana
5	Alok Naik	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
6	Hitesh Naik	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
7	Dinesh Kumar Ray	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
8	Bikash Sethi	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
9	Chakadola Naik	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
10	Prakash Munda	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
11	Amit Nag	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
12	Bhuban Dharua	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
13	Bhuleswar Kisan	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
14	Sita Munda	Odisha	Kabaddi Runner Boys Team
15	Soumika Ghosh	Bengal	100 Mtr Race Girls
16	Payal	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
17	Nitya Bhardwaj	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
18	Chadani Rai	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
19	Asneha	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
20	Khushboo	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
21	Sakshi Rai	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
22	Aashatha	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
23	Anjali Rai	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
24	Neha	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
25	Annu Bhardwaj	East UP	Kabaddi Winner Girls Team
26	Khushabu	South UP	200 Mtr Race Girls
27	Ayushi	South UP	High Jump Girls
28	Satnam	West UP	400 Mtr Race Boys
29	Divyanshi	West UP	400 Mtr Race Girls
30	Partap Singh	Jammu	100 Mtr Race Boys
31	Jashanpreet Singh	Punjab	High Jump Boys
32	Aashish Kumar Namdev	Mahakaoshal	Male Yogasana
33	Gavrav Arjun Warghade	Maharashtra	45 Kg Wrestling
34	Gavrav Arjun Warghade	Maharashtra	48 Kg Wrestling
35	Vikram Kunde	Maharashtra	51 Kg Wrestling
36	Sahil Suresh Date	Maharashtra	55 Kg Wrestling





Chief Minister Sri Mohan Charan Majhi giving trophy to the winner



Sah-sarkaraywah Sri Alok Kumar

Honorable Governor Dr. Haribabu Kambhampati extended his best wishes to the athletes, emphasizing that the Ekal Sports Competition not only fosters sportsmanship but also promotes unity. He described the Ekal National Sports Competition as a living example of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' (One India, Great India). He highlighted that children from underprivileged and tribal regions across the country would showcase their talents through sports. He congratulated everyone on the successful organization of the event and encouraged all participants to

uphold the spirit of sportsmanship and strive to become winners.

On this occasion, Sri Praveen Pathak, a gold medal-winning yoga instructor associated with Ekal Abhiyan, was honoured on stage. The vote of thanks was delivered by Sri Alok Agrawal.

On February 9, 2025, medals were awarded to the winning athletes by Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India; Sri Sukanta Kumar Panigrahi, Member of

Parliament from Kandhamal; Sri Ashok Gandhi, Trustee of Ekal Gramothan Foundation; Sri Deepak Tyagi, President of Tyagi Sports Academy, Hapur; Sri Vinay Agarwal, President of Ekal Youth Bhubaneswar; Sri Natabar Bang, Prabhag P2 Patron; and Smt. Shweta Agarwal, President of the Women's Committee, Vanbandhu Parishad, Bhubaneswar.

Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse congratulated all the winning athletes and called them the shining stars of the nation. She expressed her hope that these children have the potential to

Report Summary

Ekal Abhiyan Pramukh, Dr. Lalan Kumar Sharma, presented the report summary, stating that the Ekal Abhiyan is currently active across all of India, except in Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

In the Ekal National Sports Competition, a total of 942 athletes and 234 trainers participated from 412 villages across 192 districts in 23 states.

From an organizational perspective, the competition saw participation from 30 divisions, including: 51 Yoga participants; 267 Athletics participants; 85 Wrestling participant; and 539 Kabaddi participants.

The competition featured the following events: Athletics: 100m, 200m, and 400m races (for both boys and girls); High Jump & Long Jump (for both boys and girls); Wrestling: 45kg, 48kg, 51kg, and 55kg weight categories (boys only); Kabaddi (for both boys and girls) and Yoga (for Ekal Acharyas and Acharyas).



Dr. Lalan Sharma





Distinguish guests at the closing ceremony

bring glory to India at the Olympics. The medal distribution ceremony was conducted by Sri Deep Kumar, Co-Campaign Head of Ekal Abhiyan.

On February 10, 2025, during the closing ceremony of the Ekal National Sports Competition, the Hon Chief Minister of Odisha, Sri Mohan Charan Manjhi, encouraged the athletes and praised their dedication. The event was also graced by Sri Suryavanshi Suraj, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Odisha; Sri Babu Singh, MLA from Ekamra Bhubaneswar; Dr Lalan Kumar Sharma, Ekal Abhiyan Pramukh; Sri Anil Kumar Bansal, National Sports Coordinator; and Sri Mansukhlal Sethia, Patron of Ekal Abhiyan Odisha and Co-Provincial Head of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Before the closing ceremony, Kumari Dimpy, an Ekal Acharya from

Shivsagar, Kukurasuwa village, Assam, showcased her yoga skills, which were highly appreciated by the audience.

In his address, Chief Minister Sri Mohan Charan Manjhi expressed his joy, stating that this was the first time such an event was held in Odisha, and he was delighted to witness it. He recalled Swami Vivekananda's words: "If children do not come to schools, then schools must reach the children." He praised the Ekal Vidyalaya Abhiyan for bringing Swamiji's vision to life, noting that today, over 4,500 Ekal Vidyalayas are successfully operating across Odisha.

The Chief Minister emphasized that India's visionary Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi, envisions young Indians excelling in sports and making a mark at the international level. The Ekal Abhiyan is working towards realizing this vision. He also highlighted that in

just seven months of BJP governance in Odisha, significant initiatives and facilities have been introduced in the sports department.

Announcing increased budget allocations for sports development, he stated that efforts were underway to build mini stadiums across 314 blocks in Odisha and establish sports clubs in all locations to promote athletic talent.

Honorable Chief Minister Sri Mohan Charan Manjhi presented trophies to the following outstanding performers: Best Male Kabaddi Player – Sri Anshu Bharadwaj (South Himachal Division); Best Female Kabaddi Player – Ms. Neha Kumari (Eastern Uttar Pradesh Division); Best Coach – Sri Rakesh Chaubey (Eastern Uttar Pradesh Division), for training athletes who won 11 gold, 2 silver, and 2 bronze medals.

Odisha and Eastern Uttar Pradesh Dominate Kabaddi, Maharashtra Excels in Wrestling

In Kabaddi, the boys' team from Odisha division created a sensation by defeating the boys' team from South Himachal division in the final match. Meanwhile, in the girls' Kabaddi competition, the Eastern Uttar Pradesh division secured the gold medal by defeating the Brajmandal division.

In Wrestling: 48 kg category: Gaurav Arjun Warghade from Maharashtra division defeated Anuj Yadav from Eastern Uttar Pradesh division. 51 kg category: Vikram Kunde from Maharashtra division outperformed Rohit Kumar from Punjab division. 55 kg category: Sahil Suresh Datay from Maharashtra division won the gold medal by defeating Kunj Bihari from South Uttar Pradesh division.





Inspiration for Sports Emerging from the Soil of Villages of Bharat

The soil of Indian villages is not just fertile land; it is also the birthplace of values, traditions, and self-reliance. The very essence of this soil attracts children towards sports, filling them with natural energy and enthusiasm. In villages, sports are not just a means of entertainment but play a crucial role in personality development and physical and mental growth. Ekal Abhiyan is actively working to bring this inspiration to life by promoting sports at the grassroots level.

The primary goal of the Ekal Sports Initiative is to encourage children and youth in villages to recognize and nurture their talents. This program not only enhances physical fitness but also instils qualities such as discipline, teamwork, self-confidence, and competitiveness. For village children who lack the resources available in big cities, this initiative serves as a golden opportunity.

Ekal sports competitions are not just about contests; they provide a platform for rural youth to establish their identity at national and international levels. In recent years, thousands of talented athletes have emerged from villages, proving that talent is not dependent on resources. With proper guidance and opportunities, village children can also set new records in the world of sports.

Moreover, this initiative by Ekal Abhiyan fosters social harmony through sports. Regardless of caste, religion, language, or regional differences, sports offer a common platform where every child gets equal opportunities to grow. This effort not only strengthens the sports culture in rural India but also nurtures self-reliance and leadership qualities among young athletes.

Ultimately, Ekal Abhiyan's efforts go beyond merely promoting sports; they serve as a powerful medium to unveil the hidden potential of children in Indian villages. This initiative not only gives their lives a positive direction but also plays a significant role in establishing India as a strong sporting nation.

Best Division (in terms of player registration) – Sri Sanjay Surya (Central Uttar Pradesh Division) Additionally, representatives from the Sports Authority of India were also honoured: Sri Ratan Kumar (Wrestling, Belgaum, Karnataka); Sri Vinod Singh (Athletics, Ranchi); and Sri Srinivas Rao (Hyderabad).

The Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Sri Suryavanshi Suraj, warmly welcomed all Ekal athletes from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Attock to Cuttack. In his address, he emphasized: "The children participating here today might be seen competing in the Olympics tomorrow. They only need the right guidance."

He highlighted that the Odisha government is running several schemes to promote rural children in sports. The Odisha government is sponsoring the Indian Kho-Kho team and is also planning to sponsor traditional sports. Additionally, 4,100 crores have been allocated to develop sports infrastructure across Odisha's blocks to enhance training facilities.

Sri Mansukhlal Sethia, Patron of Ekal Abhiyan Odisha, expressed admiration for the dedication of Ekal students, who, despite the scorching heat, remained seated attentively to listen. He stated: "Today, in Odisha's Kalinga Stadium, we are witnessing

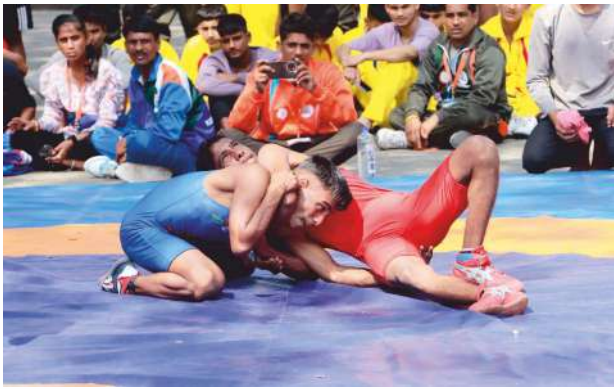
'Unity in Diversity – the essence of India.'"

He extended special gratitude to the Sports Minister, government officials, youth, Ekal volunteers, committee members, and women for the successful execution of the Ekal National Sports Competition.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Sri Anil Kumar Bansal, after which a heartfelt tribute was paid to the late Sri Chaitanya Jena, a dedicated Ekal worker, marking the official closing of the sports event. ■

Siddharth Shankar Gautam
Prachar-Prasar Prabhari, Ekal Abhiyan









Ekal Run-6th Edition

A Celebration of Fitness, Community, and Philanthropy

The 6th Edition of the Ekal Run, organized by the Kolkata Chapter of FTS Yuva, took place on 12th January 2025 at Godrej Waterside, Kolkata. The event witnessed overwhelming participation, with over 4,500 runners joining in various timed categories: 21km, 10km, 5km, and a non-timed/fun run of 3km. Participants from all age groups came together to embrace fitness and philanthropy, symbolizing the spirit of community service and unity.

The event attracted runner groups, corporate teams, educational institutions, and community partners. Participants received T-shirts, medals, goodie bags,

and food boxes, while winners were honored with mementos. The festivities included energetic Zumba warm-up sessions and an enthralling performance by the Kalari team from Kerala, showcasing the ancient martial art of Kalaripayattu.

A highlight of the event was the launch of the FTS Gurukul Project, which aims to conduct enriching knowledge sharing sessions for children aged 6 to 10 years. Additionally, an Ekal Vidyalaya model was set up at the venue, offering attendees insights into its transformative role in rural education across India. The primary objective of the event was to raise

awareness, foster engagement, and generate funds to support the organization's noble cause.

Distinguished Guests and Brand Ambassadors: The event was graced by several eminent personalities. The inauguration was led by Paralympic Athlete and Javelin Thrower, Sri Navdeep Singh. Distinguished guests included: Smt. Richa Singh Debgupta (Chief of Strategy & Operations, Fortis Healthcare); Sri Nilotpal Kumar Pandey (DIG, South Bengal Frontier, BSF); Brig. N. Romeo Singh (Deputy DG, NCC Directorate, West Bengal & Sikkim); and Sri Prashant Bhatt (Prant Pracharak, RSS).



Dance performance to celebration of the event





Prominent brand ambassadors included: Sri Vineet Kansal (G.M., RP Sanjiv Goenka Group); Sri Rahul Dev Bose (Actor); Ms. Debadrita Basu (Actress); Smt. Jasmina Thacker (Chartered Accountant and Executive Director, EY GDS - Assurance Quality Services); Dr. Dhananjoy Saha (Deputy Director, Higher Education Department, Government of West Bengal); Sri Rohit Chettri (CrossFit Athlete); Smt. Tanusri Sarkar (Principal Consultant, PwC); Smt. Sriya Manihar (Fitness & Lifestyle Influencer); Smt. Garima Banka (Fashion & Lifestyle Influencer, Event Planner); Smt. Ritu Saraf (Digital Creator) and Sri Siddhant Digvijay Jaitha (Influencer).

The event was supported by senior members of the organization, including Sri Sajan Bansal, Sri Ramesh Saraogi, Sri Anil Kariwala, and others who played a pivotal role in its success.

Corporate Sponsorship and Media Coverage

The Ekal Run was backed by prestigious sponsors, with M/s Skipper Limited as the Title Sponsor, M/s Century Plyboards (India) Ltd, and Dr Choice as Co-Sponsors, and M/s Infinity Group as the Venue Sponsor. Other supporters included Anmol Industries, E-went, The Logical Lamp, Pritam Electricals, SN Hyundai, Keventer, and more. The event received widespread media attention, with coverage in Kolkata's leading newspapers & on the popular radio station Friends FM.

Organizing Team

The event was orchestrated under the leadership of the FTS Yuva Board Members, including: Sri Niraj Harodia (National Coordinator); Sri Gaurav Bagla (President); Sri Abhay Kejriwal (Vice Presidents); Sri Vinay Chugh (Advisor); Sri Raunak Fatesaria (Secretary); Sri Rohit Bucha (Joint Secretary); and Sri Rishav Gadia (Treasurer).

The 6th edition of Ekal Run was a resounding success, blending fitness, culture, and charity to uplift the spirit of the community and support a larger cause. ■

Media
FTS Kolkata



Releasing the Souvenir to commemorate the occasion



Swordsmanship display by artists





Manisha Jain

Ms. Manisha Jain Joins Ekal Vidyalaya USA as Executive Director



Ranjani Saigal

Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Manisha Jain as its new Executive Director.

Ms. Jain succeeds Smt Ranjani Saigal, who has served in this role for nearly 12 years. Under Smt Ranjani's leadership, Ekal Vidyalaya significantly expanded its support for single-teacher schools in remote and underprivileged areas of India, providing education to millions of children lacking access to formal schooling. Beyond education, she championed Ekal's integrated development initiatives, including digital literacy, healthcare, skill training, and sustainable agriculture - empowering communities toward self-reliance.

"Ms. Manisha Jain brings an unwavering commitment to our mission and the communities we serve. Her passion and drive for excellence will propel us into an exciting new chapter of growth. As Executive Director, she will spearhead bold initiatives, strengthen partnerships with our donors, expand Ekal's reach, and inspire our community with her heartfelt dedication. We are confident that her visionary leadership will elevate our organization's impact and foster meaningful, lasting change. She is an outstanding educator and proven leader who distinguished herself

throughout our search process. We are thrilled to welcome her as our new Executive Director," said Dr. Subra Dravida, President of Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA.

Ms. Jain's journey with Ekal began seven years ago as a dedicated volunteer and donor. She later became President of the New England chapter, where she played a pivotal role in strengthening volunteer engagement and donor participation, leading to impactful fundraising events and significant progress for the chapter. Prior to joining Ekal Vidyalaya full-time, Ms. Jain served as the Chief Executive Officer of Juju Productions, a music and video production company, where she forged strategic partnerships, led external communications, and organized cross-cultural events. A dynamic and versatile professional, she brings over three decades of experience in education, education management, and community service. Her proven track record in expanding community service initiatives is complemented by her passion for fostering collaboration and her results-driven leadership approach.

In 2020, Ms. Jain launched the "Sew We Care" initiative, which successfully donated close to 25,000 pieces of homemade PPE to local hospitals and organizations. Her leadership and service have been recognized by esteemed

organizations, including the India Association of Greater Boston, Volunteering for Seniors, United India Association, and IIFFB. She was also honoured as one of the 20 Outstanding Women of 2020-21 by India New England News and received the "Excellence in Community Service in Healthcare" award.

Reflecting on her new role, Ms. Jain shared, "I am deeply honoured to lead Ekal Vidyalaya's continued growth, knowing that every step forward brings the invaluable gift of education to millions who might otherwise go without it. I am excited to unite an even broader network of supporters across the United States and beyond to strengthen our collective impact and elevate Ekal's transformative mission. This opportunity allows me to integrate my passion for educational excellence, service to humanity, and the holistic development of India into a unified effort."

Ekal Vidyalaya extends heartfelt gratitude to Smt. Ranjani Saigal for her invaluable contributions and wishes her the very best in her future endeavours. At the same time, we warmly welcome Ms. Manisha Jain and look forward to an inspiring and impactful new chapter under her leadership. ■

**Team Ekal Media
USA**



Nagarik Samman Samaroh

Honoring Sri Sajjan Bhajanka

Friends of Tribals Society (FTS) National Office, in collaboration with esteemed social service organizations, hosted the Nagarik Samman Samaroh at The Heritage School to honour Sri Sajjan Bhajanka, Past President and National Patron of Friends of Tribals Society and Chairman of Century Group, on being conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri Award.

The ceremony commenced with a warm and traditional welcome for Sri Sajjan Bhajanka, featuring floral greetings, the resonant sounds of Shankh Dwani, and the chanting of Vedic mantras by the students of Shree Gaurang Ved Vidyalaya. This was followed by a ceremonial lamp lighting by the distinguished dignitaries. The students of The Heritage School presented a soulful rendition of Vande Mataram and an inspiring theatrical act depicting the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Additionally, Sushri Kaira Bhajanka, granddaughter of Sri Sajjan Bhajanka, delivered a graceful performance of Ganesh Vandana.

The event was graced by an esteemed panel of dignitaries, including: Sri Sajjan Bhajanka, accompanied by his wife, Smt.

Santosh Bhajanka; Sri Ramesh Saraogi, National President, FTS; Padma Shri Prahlad Rai Agarwala, Chairman, Rupa Group (Presiding Speaker); Sri R.S. Goenka, Emami Group (Chief Guest); BK Padma Behen, Brahma Kumaris; Sri Ramesh Kumar Maheshwari, National Working President, FTS; Sri Sajan Bansal, National Patron, FTS; Sri Hari Krishna Chaudhary, Chairman, Kalyan Bharti Trust and Sri Govind Ram Agarwal, Honorary President, Marwari Relief Society

Each speaker reflected on the remarkable contributions of Sri Sajjan Bhajanka, highlighting his unwavering commitment to social service, education, and philanthropy. BK Padma Behen delivered an enlightening discourse on achieving inner peace amidst modern life's demands. A specially curated video presentation by Century Group showcased Sri Sajjan Bhajanka's inspiring journey across personal, professional, and philanthropic spheres. Additionally, an Ekal film was screened, emphasizing the transformative impact of the Ekal movement in rural education and tribal empowerment.

Following the speeches, Sri Sajjan Bhajanka was felicitated by FTS along with numerous organizations, including: Heritage Group of Institutions; Prerna Foundation; Akhil Bharatvarshiya Marwari Sammelan; Arogya Foundation of India; Bharat Chamber of Commerce; Burrabazar Library; Calcutta Citizens' Initiative; Calcutta Pinjrapole Society; Concern for Calcutta; Hariyana Charitable Society; Hariyana International School; Hariyana Sewa Sadan Trust; Hariyana Shiksha Kendra; Hariyana Nagarik Sangha; Help Us Help Them; Jan Jagran Seva Trust; M.C. Kejriwal Group of Institutions; Maharaja Agrasain Dham;; Mahavir Seva Sadan; Marwari Relief Society; Marwari Yuva Manch; Merchants' Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Parcham; Purvanchal Kalyan Ashram; Sanskriti Saurabh; Seva Bharti (New Alipore) Trust; Shree Burrabazar Kumarsabha Pustakalaya; Shree Gaurang Ved Vidyalaya; Shree Kalyan Arogya Sadan; Shreehari Satsanga Samity; S-Vyasa and Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Vivekananda Kendra.

Prominent members from FTS, Shreehari Satsanga Samity, and Arogya Foundation of India who attended the event.





AGM MEETING OF MELBOURNE CHAPTER

Smt. Manju Srivastava (Manju Didi), an esteemed Ekal Trustee, has been relentlessly working to expand the reach of Ekal Abhiyan in Australia. As part of her continued efforts, she visited Melbourne and led a crucial AGM meeting of the Ekal Melbourne Chapter on January 19, 2025 at the residence of Smt. Neelam Gupta. Her unwavering dedication to strengthening Ekal's presence was evident as she shared insights, strategies, and personal experiences to inspire greater community involvement.

Manju Didi delivered a compelling visual presentation on Ekal's activities and the current status of Ekal schools in India. She shared personal experiences and challenges faced in advancing Ekal's mission, highlighting the need for expanding school sponsorships across Bharat. She also stressed the vital role of youth in Ekal's initiatives and their participation in various committees.

In addition to the Executive Committee members, several senior community leaders attended, including Dr. Santosh Yadav and his wife (representing UPAA and AYUSH), Dr. Reena Dubey (President of Hindi Niketan), and Mr. Vikrant Thakur (representing HSS & SEWA International).

The meeting acknowledged the commendable work of the Melbourne Committee since its inception. Under Manju didi's guidance, outgoing President Sri Vipin Gaindhar announced the new Committee, which

blends experienced and new members: **Patron:** Sri Vipin Gaindhar; **President:** Sri Rahul Gupta; **Vice Presidents:** Sri Sunil Bhalla, Sri Rajiv Wadhwa; **General Secretary:** Smt. Kanchan Joshi; **Joint Secretary:** Sri Kanishka Goel; **Treasurer:** Smt. Mona Bhasin; **Org. Secretary:** Smt. Mandvi Sharma; **Youth Conveners:** Sri Divyansh Sharma, Sri Pulkit Gupta; **Social Media Convener:** Sri Chinman Gupta; and **Special Invitee:** Dr. Anil Asthana.

Following the announcement of the new Committee, Manju didi addressed queries from Dr. Santosh Yadav and others regarding specific aspects of Ekal's functioning in India. The discussion led to a resolution to hold monthly chapter meetings, either virtually or in-person, and to organize cultural Ekal events to strengthen connections with the Melbourne community.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to ambitious sponsorship goals. The Committee expressed deep appreciation for the hospitality of Smt. Neelam Gupta and recognized the efforts of Smt. Manju Srivastava for her dedication, travel, and inspiring guidance to the Melbourne Chapter.

Vipin Gaindhar
Patron, Australia



Formation of the Hamilton Chapter in New Zealand



A significant step was taken toward expanding the reach of Ekal when a meeting was held on February 9th at the Western Community Centre, Hamilton, New Zealand. Organized at the behest of Prof. Manjushree, the gathering aimed to discuss the logistics of forming an Ekal Chapter in Hamilton, a city yet untouched by the organization's influence.

The meeting commenced with an introduction of Prof. Manju Srivastava by Sri Sanjay Joshi. Taking the stage, Manju Didi introduced the assembled audience to the concept of Ekal, outlining its journey, the motivations behind its inception, and its remarkable achievements thus far. Attendees were inspired to learn that Ekal has successfully established over 92,000 schools and is striving to reach the milestone of 100,000 schools by 2030.

Formation of the Hamilton Chapter:

Manju Didi invited attendees to take on roles within the proposed Hamilton Chapter. In response, Dr. Sneha Sadani and Smt. Usha Gaddam enthusiastically volunteered. Additionally, Sri Nandan Modak emphasized the need for a structured committee, outlining the responsibilities expected from its members.

To maintain momentum, it was decided that a follow-up Zoom meeting would be held in the evening with all committee members.

Committee Meeting Discussion:

During the Zoom meeting, Ms. Sneha posed a critical question: What are the duties of the committee members? In response, Manju Didi explained that their primary functions would be fundraising and spreading Ekal's message. She highlighted the organization's financial transparency, noting that Ekal's accounts are audited by a world-renowned firm. She also referenced key milestones such as the Tata Dhan Academy, Aspiring Minds reports, and the prestigious Gandhi Peace Award, which was declared in 2017 and awarded to Ekal in 2019.

A discussion followed regarding whether the Hamilton Chapter should operate independently or as a subsidiary of the Auckland Chapter. Manju Didi emphasized that forming an independent chapter would be the preferred course of action.

Proposed Activities for the Hamilton Chapter: The committee brainstormed various strategies to promote Ekal's mission, including:

1. Organizing musical programmes
2. Hosting small gatherings at homes
3. Incorporating Ekal introductions into cultural and musical events
4. Disseminating Ekal news and updates, such as Ekal Prayas and Ekal News, through the committee
5. Sharing Ekal's Annual Reports and success stories with supporters

Additionally, Manju Didi highlighted Ekal's presence on social media platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube via Ekal Bharat. It was agreed that sharing YouTube clips would be an effective way to engage potential supporters.

Conclusion: The two meetings held on the same day laid a strong foundation for the Hamilton Chapter. Prof. Manju Srivastava's unwavering passion for Ekal continues to drive its expansion, ensuring that its message reaches wider audiences. Her dedication was evident throughout her New Zealand visit, making a lasting impact on all those involved in this initiative. ■

Ekal Media Team
Australia/New Zealand





Ekal Abhiyan Expands: Manju Srivastava Launches the Auckland Chapter

Smt. Manju Srivastava visited Auckland, New Zealand, from Adelaide, Australia, with a clear mission—to establish Ekal Chapters in Auckland and Hamilton while spreading awareness about the Ekal Abhiyan. The NZ Ekal team warmly welcomed Manju Didi and organized an inaugural talk on February 8, 2025, at the New Lynn Community Centre. The event was graced by the presence of Dr. Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India in Auckland, as the Chief Guest.

Addressing a diverse audience that included young professionals, senior members, and business leaders, Smt. Manju Srivastava captivated attendees with an engaging and insightful session. The interactive Q&A segment further deepened the audience's understanding of Ekal Abhiyan's holistic approach beyond just children's education.

A defining moment of the evening was the announcement of Smt. Shivani Aurora as the President of the newly

established Auckland Chapter. She graciously accepted the prestigious role, marking the beginning of a new era for Ekal in the region. Additionally, Sri Niranjan Kirtikar was appointed General Secretary, and Sri Ashish Goyal as the Organizing Secretary, with a directive to expand the committee as needed to further Ekal's mission in Auckland.

From the moment she arrived, Manju Didi demonstrated her leadership and determination, swiftly identifying key office bearers and inspiring individuals to take up responsibilities. Her unwavering commitment and persuasive vision played a crucial role in forming the leadership team for the Auckland Chapter, setting the stage for Ekal's growth in New Zealand. ■



Dr. Madan Mohan Sethi, Consul General of India in Auckland and Manju Srivastava with executive members of the chapter





EKAL SRIHARI ORGANIZES BOX CRICKET TOURNAMENT

Prathmeshwar Titans Win Ekal Srihari Cricket Title



Participants of different teams

The Ekal Srihari Youth Committee successfully organized a two-day Box Cricket Tournament at CB Place Ground. A total of 40 teams participated in the tournament, including 24 men's teams, 8 women's teams, and 8 children's teams.

In the men's category, Prathmeshwar Eleven emerged as the winner, while Ajay Eleven was the

runner-up. In the women's category, Sephrix Team secured victory, with Sugandha Marvels finishing as the runner-up. In the children's category, Ekal Jagrut Team won the title.

The chief guest for the event was Sri Jaiprakash Agrawal. Special guests included Sri Vasudev Shyamlal Yadav, Sri Ratanendu Khaitan, Sri Anoop Poddar, Smt. Isha Kaul, Smt. Sheetal

Tyagi, Smt. Jaya Desai, and Smt. Sushmita Khemani. Several other esteemed members of the council were also present on this occasion.

The tournament was organized with the objective of fostering enthusiasm and a sportsman spirit among the participants. Everyone took part with great energy and excitement, making the event a grand success. ■





Farming is joy for Arjun Mehto

From a Victorious Soldier to a Proud Farmer



"What will we do sitting idle? If we don't work, our bodies will become weak." These words belong to 81-year-old Sri Arjun Mehto, a resident of Naunaks village in Buxwaha tehsil, Giridih district, Jharkhand. Inspired by the philosophy of Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, he has dedicated his life to serving the nation in two distinct ways—first as a soldier and now as a farmer.

Sri Arjun Mehto served in the Indian Army from 1960 to 1985, which included two wars—against Pakistan in 1965 and again in 1970. However, after his retirement in 1985, he chose to dedicate himself to farming, making agriculture his new mission.

A Simple Yet Inspiring Philosophy: Sri Mehto believes in the power of hard work and discipline. "As long as the body is active, we should keep working in the fields. Hard work keeps us fit. Even a small plant can break a rock—it never falls sick."

Apart from farming, he also enjoys reading and writing. His energy and enthusiasm remain unmatched, and he firmly believes in staying active as the key to a long and healthy life.

A Family Dedicated to Knowledge and Agriculture: His daughter, Guddi Devi, is the principal of a government school in their village, while his son, Pradeep Agarwal, has received professional agricultural training and has joined his father in farming.

Adapting to New Technologies:

Sri Mehto is a strong advocate of modern farming techniques. He actively participates in agricultural fairs organized by the Ekal Gramothan Resource Center in Khamosi, where he learns about and implements the latest farming technologies. He also attends training programs organized by the Jharkhand government's agriculture department.

Sustainable and Diverse Farming: He owns a large piece of farmland where he cultivates a variety of crops, including wheat, pulses, tomatoes, chillies, cauliflower, bananas, mustard, sugarcane, and onions. He uses a motorized irrigation system and spends his entire day working on his farm, returning home only at night. His wife, Uma Devi, ensures that meals reach him directly in the fields.

Smart Agricultural Practices: Sri Mehto follows sustainable farming methods, relying on organic compost and promoting indigenous seeds. Due to the shortage of organic grains, he often sources them from Giridih. He strongly believes that if organic grains were more readily available, there would be no need for chemical fertilizers.

A Financially Empowered Farmer: By embracing seed farming, he has significantly increased his income. Instead of selling seeds to middlemen, he directly sells them to farmers in nearby villages. During the seed-growing season, his earnings range



from 90,000 to 1,00,000 per acre, compared to 20,000-25,000 from regular farming.

A Model of Health and Contentment: Sri Mehto proudly states, "I have completed 81 years of life, yet I have never been seriously ill. I have never taken medicines or supplements. I will fall sick only when it's time to leave this world."

An Inspiring Personality: His disciplined lifestyle and positive outlook serve as a motivation for both young farmers and the new generation. His message is simple—hard work, self-reliance, and dedication to one's craft bring true happiness. ■

Amrendra Vishnupuri
Kendriya Pramukh,
Samvad and Sahitya Vibhag





23rd Annual Day Celebration by FTS Mumbai

The Friends of Tribals Society (FTS), Mumbai Chapter, celebrated its 23rd Annual Day with immense enthusiasm and grandeur. The event was held in the presence of 950 distinguished guests, members, and donors.

The evening began with an inspiring documentary on FTS's flagship initiative, the One Teacher Schools operating in tribal areas. The film highlighted five core dimensions taught to tribal children, showcasing their impact in integrating them into the mainstream and fostering holistic development.

The programme was anchored by Sri Ghanshyamdas Mundra, National General Secretary of FTS, who outlined the evening's agenda and welcomed the esteemed dignitaries to the stage. Key attendees included: Chief Guest: Sri Anoop Mehta, Special Guest: Sri Madhusudan Agrawal, FTS Mumbai President: Smt. Nayantara Jain, FTS Mumbai Secretary: Smt. Uma Pachisia and Patrons: Sri Jitendra Bhansali and Sri Pradeep Goyal

Smt. Nayantara Jain, President of FTS Mumbai, delivered a heartfelt

welcome address, expressing gratitude to the dignitaries and attendees for their continued support. Smt. Uma Pachisia, Secretary, presented the annual working report for the Mumbai Chapter for 2023-24, highlighting the accomplishments and ongoing efforts of the organization.

Sri Madhusudan Agrawal, introduced by FTS Mumbai Chapter Treasurer Sri Gagan Baya, was felicitated with a bouquet by Vice President Smt. Chandralekha Roongta. The Chief Guest, Sri Anoop Mehta, introduced by Vice President Sri Srigopal Pachisia, was honored with a bouquet by Smt. Kunjiben Bhansali.

In his keynote address, Sri Anoop Mehta lauded the exceptional work of FTS Mumbai in uplifting tribal children through education. He emphasized the transformative role of the donors and members in empowering tribal communities and inspiring future generations.

Unveiling of Souvenir: The event also featured Sri Ramvilas Maheshwari, introduced by Project Coordinator Smt. Chhaya Kabra and felicitated by FTS Mahila Samiti

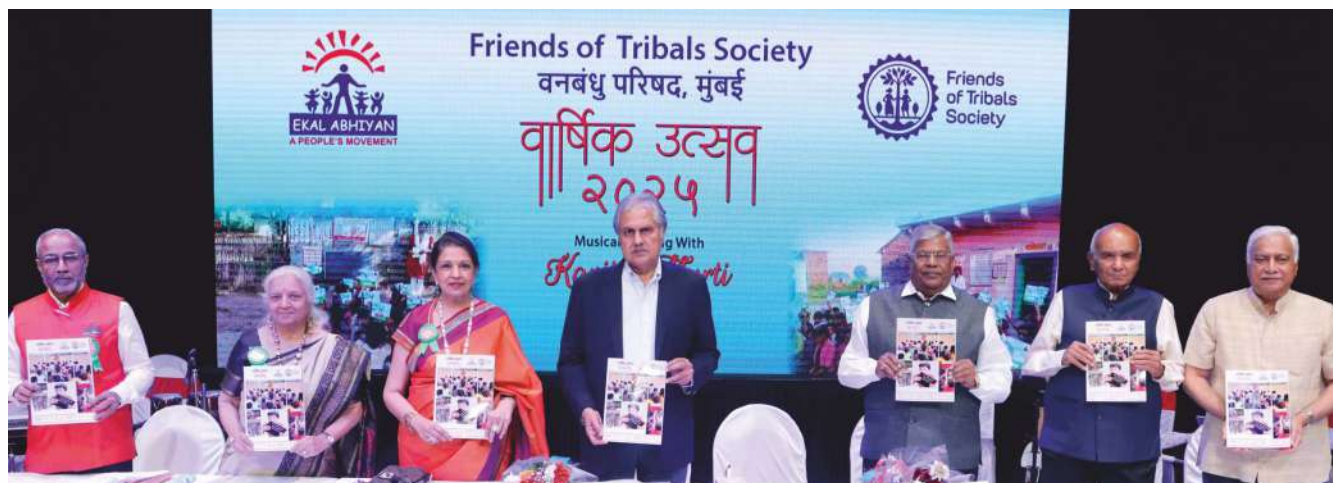
Secretary Smt. Manisha Daga. He unveiled the Annual Souvenir, accompanied by all dignitaries on stage.

The cultural highlight of the evening was a soulful musical performance by the renowned artist Smt. Kavita Murti, introduced by Smt. Chandralekha Roongta and welcomed by FTS Mahila Samiti member Smt. Urmila Tapadia.

The event was seamlessly conducted by anchor Sri Prashant Rao, who was welcomed by Organizing Secretary of FTS Mumbai Mahila Samiti, Smt. Abha Singhi.

Vote of Thanks: The President of the FTS Mumbai Mahila Samiti, Smt. Sushma Daga, extended a warm vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants, organizers, and supporters. The evening concluded on a joyous note with the commencement of the musical programme, leaving attendees inspired and rejuvenated.

FTS Mumbai, continues to stand as a beacon of hope and progress, steadfast in its mission to transform lives through education and empowerment in tribal communities.





Stuti Shah stands for Ekal

Ekal Canada wishes to recognize our youngest donor of the year Miss Stuti Shah who emptied her piggy bank for the learning of needy children of villages in India. What a gesture!

It is often stated that the tree is as solid as the soil that nurtures. Knowing this, I started to ruminate; how did this girl collect the courage to do it while the greatest delight of her age children is to count and recount the money in the piggy bank. The jingle of the coins delights the children, holding the thinly rolled dollars and talking about it...this was given to me on Diwali, on my birthday...my Chacha ji gave me, these toonies I got as a Kanjak and so on...is the pleasure of the kids. I tried to find out who lives with her. To my delight, I found out that she is being nurtured by her grandparents from both sides, the stories told by her Naana,-Naani, and cultural, spiritual and Sanskar Shiksha richness of Daada,-Daadi, and strict discipline of parents has been molding her personality. My salutations to the family!

Stuti, soon, you will have an opportunity to own and hold a picture of your own adopted Ekal School with its students and their teacher, which would offer you a rare joy. I, however, would encourage both parents Mital and Binish to provide Stuti an opportunity to visit her school during their next visit to India. Visiting your own school is an extraordinary joy. As much as you plan to visit your school, the village community prepares for your visit. They are as excited to meet you as you are to visit the school! On your arrival you are offered a garland,

or a bouquet of flowers. Meeting the teacher at the school is a very comforting and fulfilling moment. Personally, when I visited my school, I felt I had arrived home!

Mital and Binish, you will find the teacher enthused to display the learning of her students, and the students wanting to be the first one to be picked for that. You will have the delight of listening to their songs, stories, and overall learning. Stuti, the teacher and the community give a soul replenishing welcome. In a very short time, you will be embracing a thousand bonds of delight.

Coming back, however, from the school grounds, you will feel like a different person. How much love these villagers have for you, let me give you a glimpse: When we were ready to return, the children were ready to embrace me as much as I wanted to embrace them. One thing that touched me most transpired like this: With tears of joy in her eyes, the 19 year old young Acharya Seema voiced:

दीदी, आते रहा करो ना,
हमारा हौंसला बढ़ता है।
इतने में पास खड़े
गांव के सुखिया बोले
'जिस वृक्ष को आप लगाते हो,
वह वृक्ष भी अपने माली का स्पर्श
ढूँढ़ता है।

To translate the conversation in English: "Didi, please pay us visit, your visit encourages us". Standing alongside the village chief added, "the



tree seeks the touch of the gardener that planted the tree!"

It is hard to decode what transpired between the two of us during this dialogue. If I try to explain, the essential essence of our communion fizzles; it simply evaporates in the thin air. However, the words were an appeal of the teacher for us to frequently visit the school, which inspires them and makes them feel that their volunteering spirit is appreciated.

Stuti dear, you are planting a tree, and that tree might become huge!

In the meantime, I would suggest the parents personally encourage Stuti to plant a tree in your backyard and let her relate to her tree being as old as her school and let her live the spirit of her School each day!





Sankranti Samman Samaroh by Kolkata Mahila Samiti

The Sankranti Samman Samaroh, organized by the Mahila Samiti of the Kolkata Chapter, was held at Ekal Bhawan. The event was attended by Karyakartas from Purulia, West Midnapore, and Bankura Anchals. The programme commenced with the lighting of the lamp, followed by the singing of Ekal Geet and bhajans by the Karyakartas.

Smt. Sudha Bhattar, the Working President of the Mahila Samiti, warmly welcomed all attendees. Sri Natwar Bang, Prabhag Sangrakshak (P2) and Organizing Secretary of the FTS Kolkata Chapter, highlighted the dedication, hard work, and effective methods employed by the Karyakartas.

A total of 78 Purnakaleen Karyakartas from the three Anchals, along with nine Purnakaleen Karyakartas from the Ekal Abhiyan at the Ekal Bhawan office, were felicitated during the event. On behalf of all the Karyakartas, Smt. Dipti Maity expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Mahila Samiti for their love and support.

Sri Ramlal Mundhra, Treasurer of the SHSS Kolkata Chapter, presented a song with an uplifting message: "Be happy today, don't worry about tomorrow. Keep smiling through life's journey." Smt. Alka Modi, Patron of the Mahila Samiti,

bestowed her blessings upon all the Karyakartas, while Smt. Shashi Poddar, Sankranti Prabhari, delivered the vote of thanks. The programme was hosted by Smt. Nilam Patwari, Secretary of the Mahila Samiti. A total of 35 members from the Mahila Samiti attended the event.

Prominent dignitaries present at the programme included Sri Vijay Maheshwari, National Joint General Secretary of FTS; Sri Bulaki Das Mimani, National Vice President of SHSS; Sri Manoj Modi, General Secretary of the Arogya Foundation of India; Sri Subhash Murarka, Secretary of the SHSS Kolkata Chapter; Sri Girdhari Lal Chugh, President of the Dakshin Kolkata Samiti; Sri Manoj Chetani, Secretary of the Dakshin Kolkata Samiti; Sri Ramesh Chandra Gupta, National Joint Treasurer of FTS; Sri Shyam Lal; Sri Durga Prasad Poddar, Executive Committee Member of the FTS Kolkata Chapter; Sri Shreeram Mundhra, Executive Committee Member of the FTS Kolkata Chapter; and Sri Ramesh Chandra Jhavar, Executive Committee Member of the FTS Kolkata Chapter.

The event was a resounding success, celebrating the dedication and efforts of the Karyakartas while fostering a sense of unity and encouragement within the community.



Karyakartas facilitated for their hard work

In Just Four Days 400 kg of Organic Gulaal !



In just four days, the Ekal Yuva Indore team has successfully produced over 400 kg of organic Gulaal, "Rang,"; a testament to their dedication and hard work. This incredible feat would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment of our Indore Team. Special recognition goes to Ms. Amita Mangla, whose tireless efforts ensured all necessary resources were in place to bring this project to life.

A heartfelt thankyou to Ms. Preeti Khandelwal and Ms. Sarita Mundra for their selfless contributions, dedicating their time and energy at every step of the journey. Credit goes to Ms. Chetna Jain for meticulously overseeing the project and ensuring every detail was executed flawlessly. It was remarkable on the part of Ms. Chandani Rochlani for beautifully designing the stickers and to Ms. Rasu Jain, who initiated this wonderful endeavour three years ago. The support and dedication of Ms. Monnica Kansal and Ms. Ruchi Gupta have also been invaluable.

A special cheers go to the incredible rural women who worked tirelessly behind the scenes. These unsung heroes are the true backbone of this initiative, and Ekal Indore salutes their relentless spirit and hard work. Join Ekal Yuva in making a difference and spreading joy!!





Sri Kamlesh Shah, Chairman of the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of the USA, was born in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in October 1950. Raised in a family of educators, he inherited values of hard work, integrity, and compassion from his parents. Despite their modest means, his parents were deeply committed to helping the underprivileged. His father, driven by a passion for education, established the first school in Barejadi, a small village near Ahmedabad. After six years, he handed it over to the gram panchayat and went on to establish another school in a slum area of Ahmedabad in 1959, which continues to educate the children of labourers today. His mother, a pioneer in their community, pursued higher education despite societal norms and became a teacher. From his father, he imbibed ambition, and from his mother, he learned



roots (India) and his workplace (USA). Despite lacking initial capital and local contacts, his perseverance and strategic expertise propelled INDUSA to success. By 1992, the company was firmly established and expanding rapidly.

By the mid-1990s, INDUSA counted several Fortune 500 companies among its clients. The firm was recognized as one of the fastest-growing small businesses in the U.S., earning rankings in Inc. Magazine's top 500 and Entrepreneur Magazine's top ten minority-owned businesses. Deloitte & Touche listed it among the top 50 technology firms in Chicago, and Kamlesh was a finalist for Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year award in 2000. Despite his professional achievements, he remained deeply rooted in his values, generously

Kamlesh Shah Committed to Ekal by Tan, Man and Dhan

spirituality and empathy for the less fortunate.

A brilliant student, Sri Kamlesh Shah excelled academically, securing scholarships and excelling in key qualifying exams. He pursued a B.E. in Mechanical Engineering and Management. His professional journey saw him rise swiftly through the ranks, eventually becoming the general manager of a rapidly expanding management consulting firm. Under his leadership, the company flourished,

growing from a two-person team to 500 employees. In 1987, he moved to the United States to join his family, carrying with him a wealth of experience in strategic planning and organizational leadership.

Upon arriving in the U.S., Sri Kamlesh Shah turned down lucrative corporate offers, choosing instead the challenging path of entrepreneurship. Recognizing emerging trends, he founded INDUSA Technical Corp. in January 1989, a name symbolizing his

contributing to causes that strengthened India.

Sri Kamlesh Shah's association with Ekal Vidyalaya began in the early 2000s through Sri Anil and Smt Darshna Bhatt. Initially joining as a volunteer and donor alongside his wife, Dina, he quickly became a driving force, inspiring many in his community to support the cause. In 2000, the couple donated \$600,000 to Ekal. Recognizing his dedication and innovative approach, the Ekal Vidyalaya Board invited him to join in 2001. His





Sri Kamlesh Shah and karyakartas with digital van

leadership skills and vision led to his election as Chairman of Ekal USA. Under his guidance, the organization strengthened donor trust and expanded its impact on tribal communities. Even during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, his leadership ensured record-breaking virtual galas, raising over \$6 million each year.

Sri Kamlesh and Dina Shah have extensively traveled across India, visiting numerous Ekal-affiliated villages. They have significantly contributed to Ekal's infrastructure, donating an Integrated Village Development (IVD) center in

Shamlaji, Gujarat, and pledging another in Ukai, Gujarat.

Education remains at the core of their philanthropic vision. They believe that every child, especially those from tribal communities, deserves quality education and strong values. They see education as the key to eradicating challenges faced by India's tribal population and ensuring long-term social and economic development.

Married for 46 years, Sri Kamlesh and Dina Shah have two daughters, both physicians, and a granddaughter,

Karishma. In their retirement, they focus on spiritual growth, embracing their Hindu heritage. Having studied numerous scriptures, they deeply resonate with Hindu philosophy, which emphasizes unconditional love and selfless service—values they believe align perfectly with Ekal's mission.

They view Ekal as the ideal platform for nation-building, strengthening rural India by fostering education and self-sufficiency. Their unwavering commitment remains to contribute in every possible way—Tan (body), Mann (mind), and Dhan (wealth)—toward Ekal's mission. Their vision is to empower tribal communities, reduce urban migration, and prevent conversion, ensuring a stronger, self-reliant Bharat.

Through their leadership, generosity, and dedication, Sri Kamlesh and Dina Shah continue to leave an indelible mark on India's educational landscape, building a brighter future for generations to come.

Ekal Media
USA



Sri Kamlesh Shah and Smt Dina Shah at IVD centre Shamlaji, Gujarat



Step into Jagriti Dham to Experience **ELEGANCE, COMFORT & CARE**



JAGRITI DHAM
Luxury Eldercare Living in Kolkata

Initiative of



infinity

Luxury Eldercare Living in Kolkata



30 minutes from IIM Calcutta, Joka
inside Merlin IBIZA Campus, Diamond Harbour Road

EXCLUSIVE OFFER
100% REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT



State-of-the-art Ayurveda Centre -Jivagram, Now at Jagriti Dham



COMFORTABLE ROOMS

Fully furnished, well-lit
air-conditioned rooms
with attached balconies,
ensuite bathrooms,
pantry & emergency bells



HOLISTIC LIVING

Yoga room, library, gym,
AV theatre, games room,
card room, conference
hall, indoor and outdoor
dining areas, green lawn

HEALTH IN TOTALITY

Medical support,
emergency assistance,
health check-up by resident
doctor, in-house nurse, care
manager, tailor-made care
plan & nutritious meals



AYURVEDIC CENTRE

On-site Ayurvedic and
Wellness Centre,
providing holistic healing
and rejuvenation



COMMITTED SERVICE

Housekeeping, laundry
service, free WiFi, 24X7
manned security, CCTV
surveillance in common
areas, and receptionist



ENGAGEMENT

Vibrant calendar of
events and engaging
activities to foster
social interaction and
personal enrichment

“Our Bank - Punjab National Bank”

For Booking or Site Visit: +91 7596038215 | www.jagritidham.com



CENTURYPLY[®]
CLUB PRIME



CENTURYPLY[®]
CLUB PRIME
Raho Befikar

**CLUB PRIME SE
BETTER INVESTMENT
HAI TOH BATAO!**



+91 33 39403950



1800-5722-122

To know more, SCAN