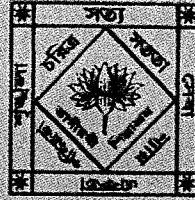


BHAGIRATHI SHILPASRAM



P.O. : Bhagirathi Shilpasram

Rly Station : Simurali (E. Rly)

Dist. Nadia - 741224; West Bengal, India.

Phone: 03473 225037 Email: bhagirathi_shilpa@rediffmail.com

ORIGIN

Bhagirathi Shilpasram, founded in 1942, is a 'Home' with a difference - an abode of love and care for orphans, destitutes and female children of red-light area.



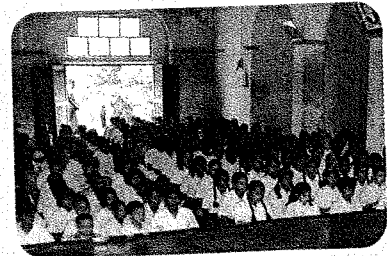
A charitable institution, Bhagirathi Shilpasram owes its origin to the benevolence of the late Lt. Col. Dwijendra Nath Bhattacharya a well known industrialist and founder of Bengal Enamel. The plight of destitute children during the devastating 1943 famine moved the philanthropist to set up the orphanage on a 15 acre plot on the banks of the river Bhagirathi at a village near Simurali Railway Station in Nadia district of West Bengal. He didn't have to wait long for recognition, as the then Government was quick to see the merit of his work. The Education Department of the then State Government had started to send children to the Shilpasram since 1944, although their numbers varied from year to year.

Bhagirathi Shilpasram was registered under Section 25 (previously section 26) of the Companies' Act as a Society to promote education, training, agriculture, medical treatment, charity and any other object essentially philanthropic in nature. The income of the Shilpasram is devoted solely to achieving the aforesaid objectives.

The activities of the Ashram attracted the attention of Post & Telegraph Department, Government of India, which established a Post Office in the Ashram campus named Bhagirathi Shilpasram post office.

FLOWERING GROWTH

The sapling planted nearly six decades ago by Lt. Col. Bhattacharya has now grown into a large flowering tree. The institution, which had a modest beginning with 180 children on its rolls,



has turned into a big Home, housing about 445 orphan girls and girls of red-light area, 35 destitute women, 15 girls received from Police / Hospital etc. In addition about 40 needy women from the locality are being trained in different vocations. Today there are nearly 76 residential staff (mostly women) on the Ashram rolls who are experienced in their respective fields.

DAILY LIFE OF INMATES

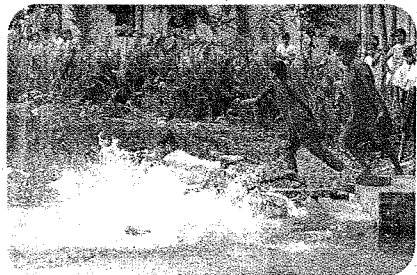


Strict discipline is maintained on the Shilpasram campus. Both the inmates and staff are required to follow a hard schedule such as (1) Rising bell at 5 a.m. (2) Toilet (3) Breakfast (4) Morning school for Primary Section

and Home study for Secondary Section (5) Ablution (6) Lunch (7) Junior High School and Vocational Training classes (8) Afternoon Tiffin (9) Games, Sports, P.T. Bratachari etc. (10) Prayer (11) Evening study (12) Dinner (13) Light off at 10 p.m. TV show on Sunday morning and evening.



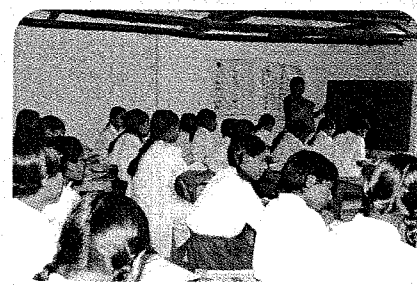
The inmates of the Ashram irrespective of caste and creed, colour and religion live together, eat together, play together, read together, and live as members of the same family sharing their joy and sorrow. The Shilpasram authority provide the inmates with all their necessities.



MAKING EDUCATION MEANINGFUL

At initial stages the Shilpasram authorities' principal aim was to see that the children were capable of making a living on their own when they left Home. The authorities realized this could be achieved if education was linked to employment. With this end in view, a Primary School was set up in 1944 along with Vocational Training centers. Primary education and vocational training were made compulsory for all inmates.

Although founded in 1942, Bhagirathi Shilpasram began to expand in 1978, when Children's Home for orphan girls under the supervision of the Social Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal and the female children of



red-light area under the Scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India were added with the existing one

functioning under the supervision of the Mass Education Department, Government of West Bengal.

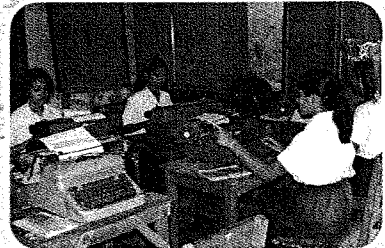
With the expansion and the stress laid by the Government on the inmates' education, the need for a secondary school was felt. In 1980, the Primary School was elevated to Junior High School and named after its late founder President, but the task of the Shilpasram does not end just here. There are arrangements for sending the inmates to a local Madhyamik / Higher Secondary School recognised by the Government for appearing in Secondary and Higher Secondary examinations. Besides, those who desire to go for higher education are actively encouraged to do so. Result: some of the inmates have already taken to degree course.



Bhagirathi Shilpasram school is yet to get Government recognition. The proposal for elevation and recognition for a secondary school was recommended by the Siksha Sthayee Committee of the Panchayat Samity, Chakdah in the year 2002. The school has all the secondary level facilities and has on its rolls 450 students, 24 qualified and experienced teachers.

TRAINING

Vocational training forms an important part of the Shilpasram's activities. It's mandatory on all inmates dropping out at the Junior High School level or below to have vocational training.



At present five kinds of training are available at the Shilpasram:

- (a) Handloom Weaving
- (b) Bamboo and cane work
- (c) Tailoring and Knitting
- (d) Short hand and Typewriting
- (e) Mushroom cultivation.

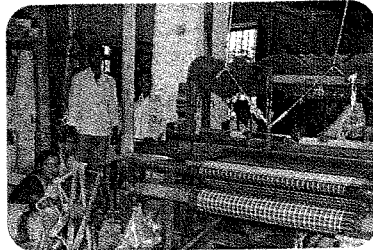
These production-cum-training centers of the Shilpasram catering outside order

also enable the inmates to earn while learning. This arrangement helps the inmates to seek employment / self employment on attaining maturity.

The Shilpasram authorities are aware that the training provided on the campus is hardly adequate for the rehabilitation of



the inmates. So a good number of inmates are sent outside for further training. Orphan girls are sent for nursing and midwifery training in different Government hospitals. Some were sent to Webel T.V. centre for training on T.V.



mechanism and some other to the Indian Diamond Cutting Institute at Surat in Gujrat for training in diamond cutting and polishing trade. A large number of inmates have been absorbed in these organisations. That apart, the

Shilpasram has rehabilitated many orphan girls by way of marriage. During the last 65 years of its existence, the Shilpasram rehabilitated over a thousand of its inmates.

MEDICAL SERVICES

The Shilpasram runs an Infirmary and a dispensary, attended by a part time Doctor (Allopath), one Doctor (Homeopath) and one full time Nurse. Those in need of special treatment are



sent to J.N.M. Hospital or Gandhi Hospital, at Kalyani, if necessary patients from Shilpasram get help of private specialist.

The Shilpasram has on its campus two big playgrounds. Moreover, the inmates of the Shilpasram get training in athletics, parade, physical exercise and bratachari activities, music and dance under expert guidance. The inmates participate in district level kho-kho, throwball, music, dance and recitation competition. The Shilpasram girls were awarded the champions of the championship award in march past and discipline amongst the 33 homes of the country at the Netaji Indore Stadium at Kolkata in the year 2001. The Shilpasram also has indoor game facilities. The community hall of the Ashram has a T.V. set for educational purpose and recreation of the inmates.

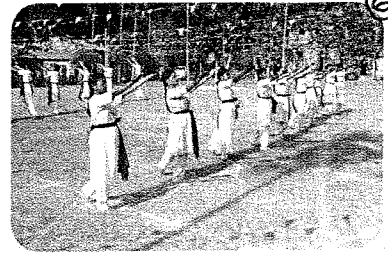
ANNUAL FESTIVAL

The inmates celebrate the **Foundation Day** of their Institute on February 17th every year by staging parade, bratachari, music, dance etc. The annual function is attended by distinguished guests. The inmates participate in the



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annual sports meet held on the Shilpasram premises every year. The events are followed by distribution of prizes. National events such as Independence Day, Republic Day etc. as well as birthdays of some great personalities of our country are celebrated at the Shilpasram premises.



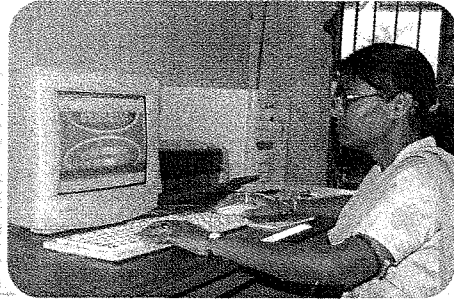
ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ The primary school of the Ashram has been upgraded to Junior High School. Girls who intend to complete Secondary and Higher Secondary Courses, are encouraged to do so from a nearby Higher Secondary School.
- ◆ Several Vocational Training Programmes have been introduced in the campus of the Ashram, like Shorthand and Typewriting, Knitting and Weaving, Bamboo and Cane handicrafts, Handloom Weaving, Mushroom Cultivation and soft toy making. Also girls after passing Higher Secondary courses are sent for General Nursing and Midwifery Courses at the expense of the Ashram.
- ◆ As the inmates, on attaining the age of 18years, have to leave the Ashram, many find themselves lost and rudderless. In several cases the Ashram has taken the responsibility of getting these girls married to suitable families in the nearby areas so that they can have a family of their own, as well as keep contact with the Ashram in times of distress, thus providing a 'Second Home' for them.

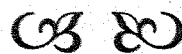
- ◆ Over the decades the expansion of the Ashram, has led to the growth of its infrastructure. Nearly 76 administrative, educational, health, welfare staff and sub-staff are now employed by the Ashram. Of these 90% are women who are in dire need and are gainfully employed by the Ashram.
- ◆ Moved by the plight of the inmates in this era of severe power-cut, the State Bank of India was pleased to grant Bhagirathi Shilpasram a 6 KVA Generator. This is truly a big achievement considering the remote rural location of the Ashram.
- ◆ Last but not the least, 19th November 2006 will always be a 'Red Letter Day' in the annals of the Ashram. On this day the Life President of Bhagirathi Shilpasram - **Smt. Bhagirathi Datta** was awarded '**Jijabai Stree Shakti Puraskar**' for the year 2003 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, in recognition of her selfless and unrelenting toil for the development of the Ashram and its inmates.

NEW SCHEMES

Bhagirathi Shilpasram, one of the oldest charitable Institutions in the state has formulated the following to meet the growing needs of its inmates :



- Efforts are on to acquire Government recognition for the Shilpasram's school and to raise it to Madhyamik standard. This would go to a long way to improving the quality of teaching and reducing the budget deficit of the school. The school is now run largely on subsidies provided by the Shilpasram. Besides, the school is pressed for space. The construction of a new building accommodating all classes upto 10th standard, is urgently needed.
- The Shilpasram has fresh vocational training plans in keeping with modern employment trends. These would help the inmates, who are all girls, to find jobs or start self-employment projects when they leave the Home.
- The buildings, sheds and boundary walls of the Shilpasram are in bad shape and need immediate repairs.
- The Shilpasram is in need of a jeep/van which could be used as ambulance in case of emergency.





AN APPEAL

An acute paucity of funds is standing in the way of the execution of the aforesaid schemes. The Shilpasram authorities, therefore make a fervent appeal to the generous public for liberal donations without which it would be difficult for the Institution to forge ahead. Such public donations as the Institution may receive are entitled to income tax reliefs, as the Shilpasram possess the I.T. Exemption Certificate U/S 80G of I. T. Act, 1961.

The Shilpasram is also registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act., 1976 which makes it eligible for receiving grants from abroad. All contributions in favour of Bhagirathi Shilpasram Development Fund may kindly be sent to :

The President

BHAGIRATHI SHILPASRAM

P.O. Bhagirathi Shilpasram,

Dist. Nadia - 741224

West Bengal

India

and / or

To its city contact office at :

BD - 274, Sector I

Salt Lake City,

Kolkata - 700064

West Bengal

India.