

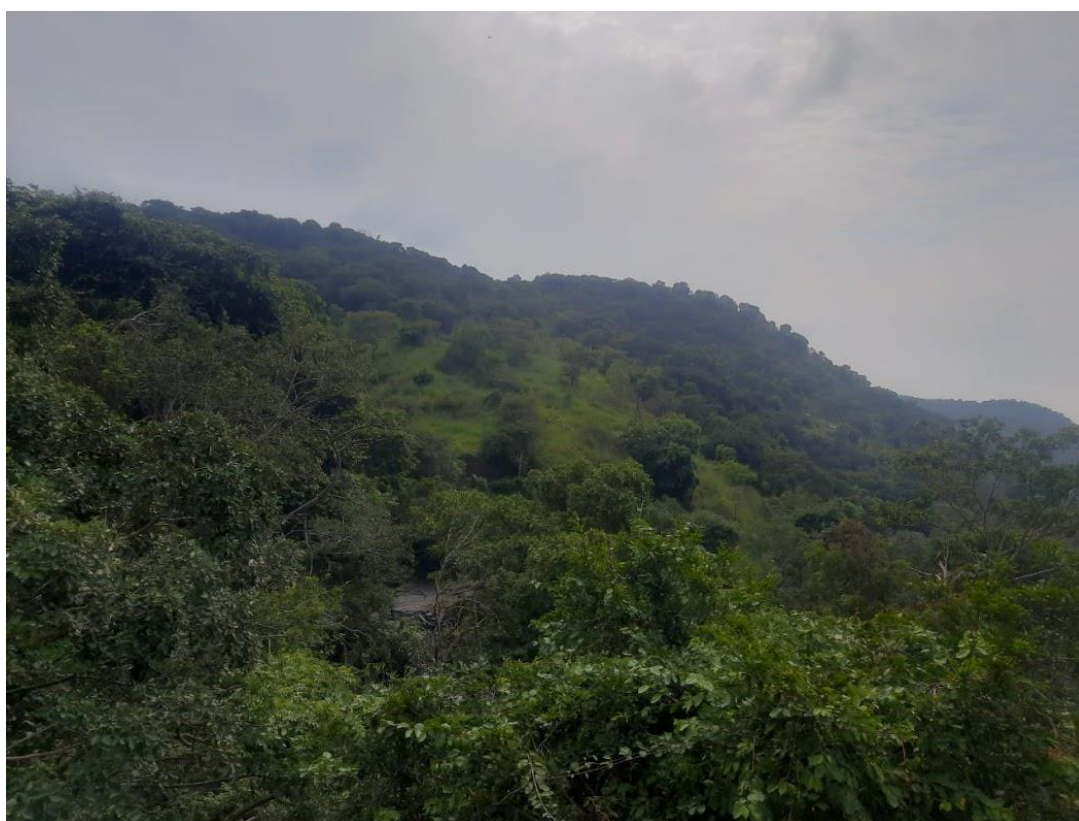
**KAIGAL EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM
KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA**



**REPORT FOR THE YEAR
JUNE 2020 – MAY 2021**

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1 A year unlike any before

These are unprecedented times - a relentless pandemic, disrupting lives and livelihoods, forcing us to examine our societal systems and explore alternatives. Our core objectives behind the Kaigal program have never been more relevant – conserving the local ecology and empowering the rural communities with education and meaningful livelihoods. Our efforts during this last year have been focused on educating and helping the communities stay safe while maintaining the land and keeping the conservation and livelihood activities going.



2 Work done over this year

2.1 Sanctuary Schools – during the pandemic

Schools were closed in mid-March, prior to the total national lockdown, catching many of the parents in the tribal community off-guard as many of them were away at work. As the community scrambled to reach back to the villages, the teachers took the responsibility and the schools were operated at a skeletal level for the initial days to provide hot lunch and a safe space for the children. During the lockdown, we continued to provide dry rations for the families, and our teachers took turns to visit the community to keep tabs on the

pandemic situation. Once the initial lockdown was lifted, the schools began delivering a mid-morning snack and hot lunch for the students and teachers. Children were organized into small groups and food was served in staggered timings, strictly following all the COVID protocol measures. Teachers met the children outdoors and taught them the basics of hand hygiene, physical distancing and wearing clean masks. The schools provided a set of masks for every child and teacher, soaps for hand washing and hand sanitizers in class rooms. Teachers also met the community members individually to create awareness on the safety measures they needed to follow at home.

The learning activities of the school were commenced for the children above 8 years from the months of August/ September, in small groups of 2-3 students outdoors and through individual one-on-one interactions with the students. Children were given learning materials, activities and books, and were encouraged to work individually and from their homes. The teachers met the children three days during a week in this manner to support their learning. Regular hand washing was ensured before meal times and at regular intervals, besides also cleaning and sanitizing the school every day.

The lessons were focused on strengthening the numeracy and literacy for the children; outdoor activities like gardening and forest walk were also timetabled into the operations to allow for an enriching learning experience, as much as possible. Clay work, drawing and craft work were also part of the school activities and children were kept purposefully engaged with learning. After the first wave had fully subsided, the pre-school children were allowed to stay in school for stories and games for a short period of time after their mid-morning snack.

The older students who had enrolled for the NIOS exams were also supported in their studies through online classes – held at the school computer resource centre – as the centres for NIOS study were closed.



The endeavour in the Sanctuary Schools during this entire year was to ensure the physical safety and health of the children, while maintaining a continuity of learning for the students. With the relentless pandemic and the continued school closures, our interventions off line could very well be the model for continuing learning for the students in rural settings under marginalized and impoverished contexts where on line learning is not feasible.

2.2 Teacher development program

During this year, regular structured learning programs were designed and implemented for the teachers. During April, Jayapal enrolled in an online course on “Understanding Learning Outcomes” by the Azim Premji University, and completed the requirements successfully and was awarded a certificate of completion. Teachers were mentored on continuous learning using digital resources and also learnt the use of online meeting platforms like Google Meet and Zoom for interacting regularly. It is not an exaggeration to say that the teachers stepped up to the demands of this new normal for their own learning and teaching students, in a remarkable manner. The programs for teachers focused on reading books on education, teaching and learning and sharing their reflections as short blogs, a few which have been published on our website. See - www.feelforearth.net

2.3 Learning Centres in neighbouring villages

During this academic year, we further strengthened the working of the learning centre in Vengamvaripalli village and opened another one in Ramasamudram village. The learning centres have community facilitators from the villages themselves. We recruited new community facilitators in addition to those who were already working. A 6-week workshop on a blended program was conducted for the facilitators for coordinating the after school program in the learning centres to supplement learning for students, from mid-January. As part of this program, a tool-kit of learning resources was created for primary schools. These centres were operational in March and April, post which they had to be closed due to the second wave. The facilitators are now being trained to develop materials in preparation for the reopening of the centres for this academic year, as permitted by the Andhra Pradesh government. Between these two centres, we were able to reach around 80 students (between 8 and 12 years of age) in two villages.

2.4 Community Education – COVID Awareness

The teachers also took an active role in reaching out to the communities regarding COVID awareness and prevention measures. They translated into Telugu an information booklet prepared by Dr Jayaprakash Muliylil (former professor, CMC, Vellore) and Dr Guruswamy

Thangavel (Assistant Professor, Sri Ramachandra Hospital, Chennai) and created presentations and audio clips to share with the people. This was addressing a very important need of reliable communication regarding the prevention and management of the spread of COVID-19. Once the vaccination was opened up, the Kaigal team also played an active role in creating awareness about the need for vaccination and encouraged and facilitated vaccination for their respective community members.

2.5 Kaigal Centre used for field research

During this year, the Kaigal Centre hosted one PhD and two PG students from IISER, Thiruvananthapuram for their field research. Jayapalappa and Satheeshwar assisted the scientists in their field work and in the interactions with the local farmers.

3 Participating in program for online learning

3.1 Designing and implementing online learning

Sriranjani was acting as a consultant to a project for demonstrating technology integrated pedagogies for learning and teaching, especially more relevant during the pandemic times now.

Several courses for teaching Mathematics, Physics and Kannada were designed and conducted during the academic year 2020-21 catering to government schools and aided schools. Two programs were also designed and delivered for Kendriya Vidyalaya teachers across the country. Online classes for students from government schools were also designed, optimising on the available technologies.

3.2 Designing and delivering an international course

Sriranjani participated as a Lead Facilitator for an international Massive Open Online Course, [Teaching Mathematics with Technology](#), offered by the Commonwealth of Learning. With an enrolment of more than 1300 teachers, this course introduced teachers to methods of bringing in exploratory learning through the use of technology tools.

4 Documentation and publications

This year also saw the launch of our two websites, www.feelforearth.net and www.workforearth.org containing updates about the KEEP program and the Kaigal Trust respectively. The websites also have a space for teacher blogs and field reflections, where teacher experiences and on the ground activities are being shared.

Based on our work with the tribal communities and work in other contexts, an article was written in the mainstream media on how education can be restructured

at the time of a pandemic

(<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/panorama/reclaiming-education-during-a-pandemic-866035.html>). This article was further carried in an international blog maintained by UKFIET (Education and Development Forum) – <https://www.ukfiet.org/2020/reclaiming-education-during-a-pandemic>.

5 Outcome

This has been an unusual year and it is a testimony to the strength of the community and the team members that we have been able to come through continuing our core areas of work, in line with our objectives. The program had re-invented itself and responded to the situation on the ground, in view of the pandemic. Staff members took turns to stay at the resource centre and maintain the operations, especially in view of the extended traffic limitations as well as keeping in mind COVID safety measures. The team members reached out to the community spreading awareness about health and COVID safety and also took up health camps for the children in our tribal schools. In short, the Kaigal Conservation Centre emerged as an important resource and intervention centre for the local communities providing timely information and assistance, in addition to our educational programs for the children.

Two important outcomes that needs to be spelt out

Our interventions with school children during this pandemic could very well be a model for working with students in rural settings under marginalized and impoverished contexts where on line learning is not feasible.

The Kaigal Team stepped up to the challenges of the diverse demands in these pandemic times to come together for their own learning, in teaching students and in reaching out to their local community in a remarkable manner.



6 Plans for the current year

1. The focus for this year will continue to be on educating the communities and supporting the learning for children. We have begun the learning activities in the schools, for this year, along similar lines as last year and a teacher development program is also in place. We will be exploring the use of digital learning resources more to deliver the learning, keeping in mind the current uncertain conditions regarding school reopening and the commencement of physical classes.
2. Strengthening the community learning and resource centres in Vengamvaripalli and Ramasamudram will be our next focus area for this year. The centres will support the school children in these villages to cope with the learning disruptions, providing them additional learning opportunities. We also plan to continue the development of learning materials; this will also be done in a remote, distance mode.
3. A resource portal is being developed and will be updated with the learning resources and curricular interventions that are being piloted in our schools; these could serve as exemplars and resources for similar interventions elsewhere.